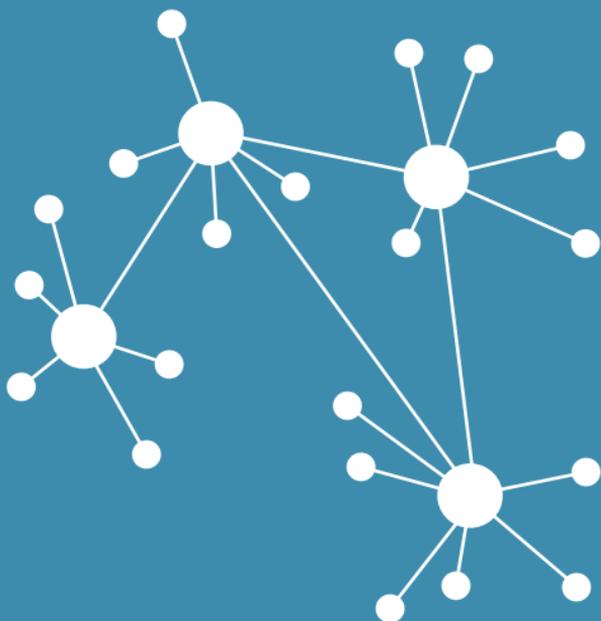


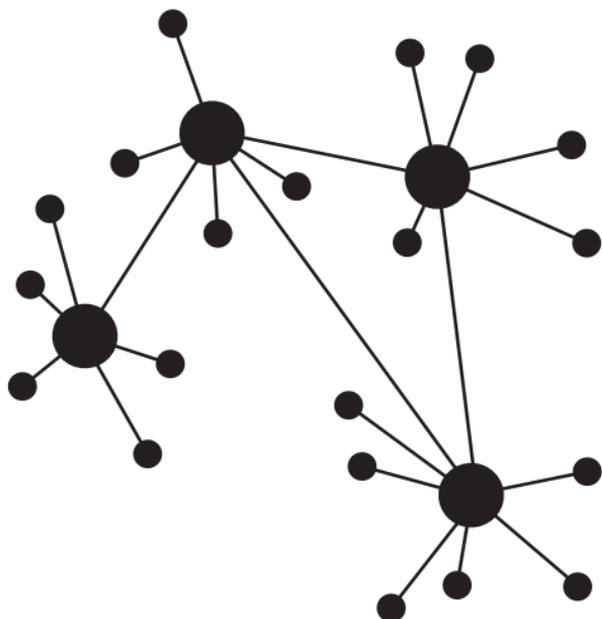
THE FUNAMBULIST PAMPHLETS
VOLUME 03



DELEUZE

Edited by Léopold Lambert
July 2013

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VOLUME 03: DELEUZE

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INTRO

BECOMING DELEUZIAN

Some of the following texts probably lack depth and consistency, because Gilles Deleuze is the first philosopher whose work truly influenced my way of thinking; as a consequence, I wrote articles about his books early on, when my texts were more built upon quotes than what they are now. The reader might find her some helpful aspect of Deleuze that often resonate with the way artists envision the world. Although he is, along with Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, the philosopher who is the most invoked/evoked by the creative community, we should not be mistaken: using his concepts for art or architecture requires a translation of what he himself made sure to call the creative production of philosophy, a translation of a philosophical concept into the language of the specific discipline. It is tempting to use a literal transcription of his concepts into these disciplines, because his discourse is often spatialized and materialized. Nevertheless, such literality is doomed to remain a false claim of legitimacy for one's work acquired through evoking the name of Deleuze. Conversely, an effort to translate his ideas into the creative process rather than simply use his name allows us to develop a "becoming Deleuzian." I use the notion of becoming in a rather obvious manner here. I recall Deleuze's own use of the word, embracing the process rather than a finality, and relying on our *minor* characteristics rather than our dominant ones in a political manifesto that never really exited his philosophy.

01

EPISODE 1: MINOR ARCHITECTS AND FUNAMBULISTS: A SHARED ARCHITECTURAL MANIFESTO

Jill Stoner's new book, *Toward a Minor Architecture* (MIT Press, 2012) could constitute an excellent manifesto for The Funambulist, since it uses a number of common references (Kafka, Borges, Ballard, Guattari, Deleuze, Bataille, Foucault, Robbe Grillet, Torre de David, etc.) in order to express the political power of architecture. It also draws a strategy of resistive architectural processes, that she calls "minor architecture." The title of the book, as well as its object, is a direct homage to Deleuze and Félix Guattari's book: *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (1975).

Minor, in both books, has to be understood in its double sense that both French and English communicate: minor in opposition to major, but also minor/miner (*mineur* in French) as in mining, or undermining: a discipline that mines or exploits the matter of a dominant order. Kafka is one of the best authors to evoke as we analyze these processes of resistance. Although he was Czech, he wrote his books in German and thus developed through the language of the colonist what Deleuze and Guattari call an "exercise of deterritorialization," which is proper to any form of resistance against the dominant exercise of power — whatever the power — on a territory — whatever the territory. He is also the author of a

novella entitled *The Burrough*, which literalizes the action of undermining. For Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka writes like a dog digging a hole, a rat digging its burrow.

Kafka is also the starting point of Jill Stoner's book. In her opinion, the spaces of *The Trial* are the most expressive examples of architecture's oppression of the bodies. Each room is a prison in which the main character Josef K. can feel a strong claustrophobia increasing his endless delirium:

Kafka is perhaps the consummate master of absolute interiority. His literary space has only elusive interiors, narratives that have no end, no beginning, no real center, in fluid language that can barely be contained. But the architectural spaces within his fiction are interiority uncompromised. Particularly in the novels, doorways (but not windows) proliferate. Kafka's doors are always a way in, never a way out. His strange and paradoxical geometries establish connectivity, but without continuity. Interiors multiply relentlessly inward; they nest, like the prose of Raymond Roussel, within an inviolable edifice of enclosure. Firmly they deny any possibility of escape.

In *The Trial* all rooms are stifling; everywhere is airlessness, unventilated heat, and claustrophobia. Private rooms double as offices or passageways; Josef K.'s own chamber opens into the bedroom of Fraulein Burstner, which becomes the strange first venue of his ordeal. An inspector sits behind a desk that has been moved to the middle of the room, three other men lurk in a shadowy corner, peering at framed photographs

hanging on the wall. In the midst of this bureaucratic setting “[a] white blouse dangled from the latch of the open window.” Every scene is similarly crowded by suited men and incongruous assemblages of objects, a commingling of officiousness and domesticity within rooms. (Jill Stoner, *Toward a Minor Architecture*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012, 23)

Architecture is oppressive — or weaponized, as I usually prefer to write — for two reasons: first, its physicality constitutes a sum of obstacles for the body, from a simple concrete slab or asphalt pathway that prevent the minor/miner body to operate, to the six hermetic surfaces that confine the body to a prison cell. The second reason is that its production is almost always in collusion with means of production elaborated by the dominant exercise of power. Both conditions are difficult to escape. Resistance, however, does not lie in an absolute escape, but rather in the slow undermining of a system from within:

To object (v) to the object (n). To register objections is to draw lines through objects of power, objects that are the result of institutions, which in turn rely on knowledge. Knowledge itself is a massive heavy object, with enormous foundations and a reliance on gravity. Theories and philosophies are constructed on the backs of canonical precedents. Like doctrines, they are dangerously authoritarian. Religions, monarchies, systems of law, corporations – these historical patrons of architecture have provided us with the objects upon which minor architects can write (or draw) their objections. (Jill Stoner, *Toward a Minor Architecture*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012, 67)

"We must be minor architects," invites Jill Stoner, "we must express our latent but powerful desires to undo structures of power." Such an assessment is not a manifesto for a non-powerful architecture, or for an architecture that would not express relationships of power: such things are unthinkable. Rather, it calls for the continuous struggle against the dominant distribution and application of power. As Guattari points out, "desire is the fact that in a closed world, a process arises that secrets other systems of reference, which authorize, although nothing is ever guaranteed, the opening of new degrees of freedom" (Félix Guattari, *Soft Subversions*, Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 1996, as quoted by Jill Stoner).

Whether we attempt to be minor architects, digging in the subterranean matter of our system, or funambulists, walking with agility on the powerful lines that striate the world, our approach is the same: to recognize, analyze, and articulate the physical and political forces that are inherent to architecture. Another reason to fight in favor of the 'minor' consists in the fact that the 'major' exists only as an ideology. The failure of modernism is a good illustration. Modernism invented a body that was supposed to be the normative body when, actually, it was an ideal body. Nothing stranger than a body that is both normative and ideal; it is nevertheless the condition of all majority. The absolute standard of a given dominant power cannot be embodied by a single person, and therefore all can be involved in what Deleuze calls processes of *becoming*, in order to embrace this minor identity, and thus act through it.

To finish this section, I wanted to include a small excerpt of Jill Stoner's book that manages to summarize this manifesto in a few lines:

A minor architect is a minor destructive charac-

ter, a tinkerer and hacker, journalist and editor, alter ego and subaltern. But tinkerers may sabotage as well as fix, and wildfully take apart rather than assemble. Hackers may scramble code as often as decipher it, and editors (to save us from our wordiness) ruthlessly slice the excess away. [...]

Interiors proliferate outward; they escape. Objects proliferate in place; they fragment. For the architect/subject, to become minor is to exchange focused ambition for scattered flight and love of masters for that rejection of master languages with which we began. (Jill Stoner, *Toward a Minor Architecture*, Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012, 91)

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02

EPISODE 2: ABÉCÉDAIRE

Abécédaire is a 7.5 hour long interview with Deleuze by Claire Parnet, his former student and close friend. It was produced and directed by Pierre-André Boutang in 1988. It is, in my opinion, a useful entrance door to start exploring Deleuze's philosophy, as his language in this video is simpler than the one he uses in most of his books.

This document is entitled *Abécédaire*, i.e. an inventory of the letters of the alphabets, considered one by one, as both Parnet and Deleuze converse on a series of topics and problems, to each of which is attributed a letter of the alphabet. The very index of these topics has a certain poetic quality that recalls the inventory poems by Jacques Prevert:

A for *Animal* (Animal)

B for *Boisson* (Drink)

C for *Culture* (Culture)

D for *Désir* (Desire)

E for *Enfance* (Childhood)

F for *Fidélité* (Fidelity)

G for *Gauche* (Left)

H for *Histoire de la philosophie* (History of Philosophy)

I for *Idée* (Idea)

J for *Joie* (Joy)

K for Kant

L for *Littérature* (Literature)
M for *Maladie* (Disease)
N for *Neurologie* (Neurology)
O for *Opéra* (Opera)
P for *Professeur* (Professor)
Q for *Question* (Question)
R for *Résistance* (Resistance)
S for *Style* (Style)
T for *Tennis* (Tennis)
U for *Un* (One)
V for *Voyage* (Travel)
W for Wittgenstein
X and Y as Unknown Variables
Z for *Zigzag* (Zigzag)

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Originally published on June 21st 2011

03

EPISODE 3: WHAT IS IT TO BE “FROM THE LEFT”

When I wrote this section, *Abécédaire* had not yet been translated into English.¹ The following text is my own translation of the end of the section *G comme Gauche* (L for Left), where Deleuze defines what he thinks “being from the left” means. The second part contains an explanation in very simple words of the concept of *becoming* that he created with Guattari in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* (see first section):

G COMME GAUCHE (L for Left) ///

Gilles Deleuze, *Abécédaire*, produced and directed by Pierre-André Boutang (recorded in 1988, released in 1996).

Claire Parnet: What is it to be “from the left” for you?

Gilles Deleuze: Well, I will tell you that there can't be any government from the left. This doesn't mean that there are no differences between governments. The best we can hope for, is a government that would be in favor of some of the left's requirements, but a government from the left, this does not exist. So, how to define what is it to be “from the left”; I would define it in two ways.

¹ A version with English subtitles is now available from MIT Press.

First, it's a problem of perception. A problem of perception, that is to say what is not "from the left." We can see that in postal addresses. Not to be from the left means starting with myself, my street, my city, my country, other countries further and further. We start by us, and as we are privileged, we live in a rich country; we wonder how we can do to prolong this situation. We can feel that there are some dangers, that this situation can't last too long. So we say "Oh, but the Chinese are so far away, how can we do so that Europe can sustain itself in time, etc."

To be from the left is the opposite. This is to perceive, as it is said that Japanese people perceive. They don't perceive like us; they primarily perceive the perimeter. They would say: The world, the continent Europe, France, etc. etc. the rue Bizerte, Me. It is a phenomenon of perception. This way, we first perceive the horizon.

Claire Parnet: Japanese people are not really from the left!

Gilles Deleuze: This is not a good argument. Because of this perception, they are from the left. In the sense of the postal address, they are from the left. You first see the horizon, and you do know that it can't sustain itself in time, that this is not possible, that those millions of people who starve from death... it can still last for a hundred years, but eventually we cannot stand for this absolute injustice. It's not a moral problem, it's a problem of perception. If we start by the whole, that's what it is to be from the left. It means that we can call and consider that those issues are the ones to be solved. And that does not mean at all that we should say that we should diminish birth rates, etc., because to say that is just another way to conserve Europe's privileges. That's not it. This is really about finding the worldwide arrangements that will solve those issues. In fact, to be from the

left is to know that the Third World issues are closer from us than our neighborhood issues. It is really a problem of perception; it's not a problem of beautiful soul. This is, mainly, what is to be from the left for me.

Secondly, to be from the left, for me, it's a problem of *becoming*; never stopping to become minor. In fact, the left is never a majority, and for a very simple reason. Because majority presupposes, even when we vote, it's not just the biggest amount that votes for something...majority presupposes a standard.

In the Western World, the standard that every majority presupposes is: male, adult, heterosexual, living in the city. Ezra Pound, Joyce said some things like that, it was perfect. This is what the standard is. Thus, naturally what will have the majority is that which will punctually achieve this standard. That is to say, the image of the male, adult, heterosexual, living in the city. This is true to the point where I can say that majority is never anybody. It is never anybody, it is an empty standard. Simply, several people, a maximum amount of people recognize themselves in this empty standard, but in itself the standard is empty. So then women will count and intervene in the majority or in secondary minorities according to their group, relatively to this standard. But what is there beside that? There are all the *becomings* that are minority *becomings*.

What I mean is that women are not women naturally, women have a *becoming* woman. So if women have a *becoming* woman, men as well have a *becoming* woman. We were talking earlier about *becomings* animals...Children have a *becoming* child, they are not children naturally. All these *becomings* are the minority *becomings*.

Claire Parnet: So only men don't have a *becoming* man, that's tough!

Gilles Deleuze: They can't, this is a majority standard. The adult male is not a *becoming*. Men can have a *becoming* woman, and this way have to engage into processes of minority *becomings*. The left is the totality of processes of minority *becomings*.

So I can literally say: majority is nobody, minority is everybody. This is what is to be from the left; this is to know that minority is everybody and this is where occur the *becomings* phenomenons.

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04

EPISODE 4: THE *RITOURNELLE* (REFRAIN) AS A TERRITORIAL SONG INVOKING THE POWER OF THE COSMOS

The *Ritournelle* is a concept created by Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari for their book, *A Thousand Plateaus*, published in 1987. It is the subject of the eleventh plateau, which is entitled “1837: Of the refrain”. *Ritournelle* has indeed been translated in English by *refrain* but, to the the extents of my English knowledge, it seems to me that this translation does not fully unfold the same meaning. In the *Abécédaire*, Deleuze, as we will see below, uses an onomatopoeia in order to explain this word: “Tra la la” as a kid would hum. This concept is a territorial one, as Deleuze states (my translation):

When do I do “Tra la la” ? When do I hum? I hum on three various occasions. I hum when I go around my territory... and when I clean up my furniture with a radiophonic background... meaning, when I am at home. I also hum when I am not at home and I am trying to reach my home...when the night is falling, anxiety time...I look for my way and I give myself some courage by singing “tra la la.” I walk towards home. And, I hum when I say “Farewell, I am leaving and in my

heart I will bring...” This is popular music “Farewell, I am leaving and in my heart I will bring...” This is when I leave my place to go somewhere else.

In other words, the *ritournelle* (refrain), for me, is absolutely linked to the problem of territory, and to processes of entrance or exit from the territory, meaning to the problem of deterritorialization. I enter in my territory, I try, or I deterritorialize myself, meaning I leave my territory. (Gilles Deleuze, *Abécédaire*, produced and directed by Pierre-André Boutang).

The *Ritournelle* is therefore a form of incantation for a claimed spatiality. It is also a sort of song that, despite its supposed lightness, is calling for the power of the cosmos. As Deleuze continues (my translation):

It is as if the stars would start to play a small song of cow bells or actually this is even the opposite, that the cow bells are, all of a sudden, promoted to the status of celestial noise, or of infernal noises. (Gilles Deleuze, *Abécédaire*, produced and directed by Pierre-André Boutang).

With this concept in mind, one song struck me when I first heard it — and it still does now — because it embraces this ambiguous status of a simple repetitive motive that eventually calls for the power of the cosmos. It is a song used by Pina Bausch for her last Tantztheater (Dance-theater), *Vollmond* (2006), which was composed by Jun Miyake: “Lilies in the Valley.” In this regard, it was cleverly used by Wim Wenders for the trailer of his upcoming movie about Pina Bausch.

There is another example in Deleuze and Guattari, although not directly to illustrate the concept of *ritournelle*. This example is the famous *Boléro* by Maurice Ravel (1928), which is built on a very repetitive scheme but, little by little, becomes as powerful as a hurricane. The following excerpt is from the chapter, “1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming Imperceptible,” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and can be read while watching the choreography created by Maurice Béjart for *Boléro* (1960):

Boléro is the classic example, nearly a caricature, of a machinic assemblage that preserves a minimum of form in order to take it to the bursting point. Boulez speaks of proliferations of little motifs, accumulations of little notes that proceed kinematically and affectively, sweeping away a simple form by adding indications of speed to it; this allows one to produce extremely complex dynamic relations on the basis of intrinsically simple formal relations. (Gilles Deleuze Gilles and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987)

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05

EPISODE 5: THE BODY AS A DESIRING MACHINE

In 1972, Deleuze and Guattari published *Anti-Oedipus* as the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, before *A Thousand Plateaus*. This book consists of a frontal and caustic critique of psychoanalysis, as it has been conceived by Freud and later by Lacan. Accusing psychoanalysts to have the same relationship to their patient that priest have to their flock, Deleuze and Guattari — who was himself a student of Lacan — blame Freud and Lacan for making castration an equivalent of the religious original sin, as well as for interpreting the unconscious as a theater. The two French philosophers contest the idea that dreams and fantasies are a representation of the desire, and they invent a vision of the unconscious as a factory, and of the body as an assemblage of machines producing desire.

These desiring machines are directly inspired by Antonin Artaud and his notion of bodies without organs. An example that Deleuze and Guattari do not explicitly quote but that seems highly relevant is William Burroughs's *Naked Lunch* (1959):

The physical changes were slow at first, then jumped forward in black klunks, falling through his slack tissue, washing away the human

lines...In his place of total darkness mouth and eyes are one organ that leaps forward to snap with transparent teeth...but no organ is constant as regards either function or position...sex organs sprout anywhere...rectums open, defecate and close...the entire organism changes color and consistency in split-second adjustments... (William Burroughs. *Naked Lunch*, Grove Press, 2004).

This text can be put in relation with the first paragraph of the *Anti-Oedipus* that describes this factory constituted by the body. I would like to draw attention to the style of Deleuze and Guattari; the form of their discourse is as powerful as its content.

It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said it. Everywhere it is machines — real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts. The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth a machine coupled to it. The mouth of the anorexic wavers between several functions: its possessor is uncertain as to whether it is an eating-machine, an anal machine, a talking-machine, or a breathing machine (asthma attacks). Hence we are all handymen: each with his little machines. For every organ-machine, an energy-machine: all the time, flows and interruptions.

Judge Schreber has sunbeams in his ass. A solar anus. And rest assured that it works: Judge Schreber feels something, produces something, and is capable of explaining the process theoretically. Something is produced: the effects of a machine, not mere metaphors. (Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000)

This paragraph introduces a new discipline created by Deleuze and Guattari, the *schizo-analysis*, which consists, at the same time, in the destruction of what they consider as the transcendental masquerade from the psychoanalysts, as well as a study of the immanent production of these desiring machines that biologically and chemically produce the desire of our bodies.

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06

EPISODE 6: MINOR LITERATURE

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 10: LITERATURE*]

This book could almost be dedicated to Guattari in addition to Deleuze, as almost all chapters consider their common work. This section goes back to the book *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, published in 1975. In this essay, the two authors attempt through Franz Kafka's work, to create a manifesto for what they call a "minor literature." Minor, here, is of course ambiguous, as it can mean secondary, from the minority, or related to a mine. They have always refused any form of transcendental judgment on a work, and they probably welcomed this term's ambiguity.

"The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation," write Deleuze and Guattari. Kafka's work develops these three conditions both in its contents and in its form. Kafka was part of minority within a minority: Jewish and Czech in a region of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. His writing — in German — particularly registers for Deleuze and Guattari in the following paragraph that concentrates the essence of the minor literature:

We might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary

conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature. Even he who has the misfortune of being born in the country of a great literature must write in its language, just as a Czech Jew writes in German, or an Ouzbekian writes in Russian. Writing like a dog digging a hole, a rat digging its burrow.

And to do that, finding his own point of underdevelopment, his own patois, his own third world, his own desert. There has been much discussion of the questions “What is a marginal literature?” and “What is a popular literature, a proletarian literature?” The criteria are obviously difficult to establish if one doesn’t start with a more objective concept — that of minor literature. Only the possibility of setting up a minor practice of major language from within allows one to define popular literature, marginal literature, and so on. Only in this way can literature really become a collective machine of expression and really be able to treat and develop its contents. (Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

I could insist on the political side of Kafka that deconstructs transcendence and describes the power of immanence as I have in the past;¹ nevertheless, the notion of language is more important here, as it refers to the notion of revolutionary *becoming* that involves one or several people to continuously create a resistance against the normalized standard. Deleuze and Guattari express this will in two sentences:

1 See the article “The Kafkaian Immanent Labyrinth as a Postmortem Dream” on thefunambulist.net

How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language? Kafka answers: steal the baby from its crib, walk the tightrope. (Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986.)

This tightrope gives its name to *The Funambulist*, which, hopefully, carries the spirit of its minor becoming.

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07

EPISODE 7: WHAT REMAINS FROM FRANCIS BACON

After politics, music, psychoanalysis and literature, I want to conclude this series of seven “episodes” with a short chapter on Deleuze’s vision of painting through the work of Francis Bacon. Deleuze interpreted the work of the Irish painter in a book entitled *The Logic of Sensation* published in 1981.

In this book, Deleuze describes how the lifetime work of Bacon was painting “the scream” itself rather than “the figure that makes the body scream.” The body is therefore the continuous medium of work for Bacon. His paintings registers what Deleuze calls the *becoming* animal, and each body expresses the pain that they suffer in their very flesh — Deleuze uses the term ‘meat.’

This book also insists on what Deleuze considers as a common mistake: that the painter always starts from a white page. On the contrary, Deleuze argues that he starts from a dark page and the painting consists in the withdrawal of everything that is not fundamental to it. He uses the example of Cézanne in order to illustrate how little each great painter manages to achieve, but how precious is the result of a lifetime of struggle to truly understand and represent an element of life:

FRANCIS BACON: THE LOGIC OF SENSATION (excerpts) ///
By Gilles Deleuze (translated by Daniel W. Smith, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2005).

There is a very important experience here for the painter: a whole category of things that could be termed “clichés” already fills the canvas, before the beginning. It is dramatic. Cézanne seems to have effectively passed through this dramatic experience at its highest point. Clichés are always already on the canvas, and if the painter is content to transform the cliché, to deform or mutilate it, to manipulate it in every possible way, this reaction is still too intellectual, too abstract: it allows the cliché to rise again from its ashes, it leaves the painter within the milieu of the cliché, or else gives him or her no other consolation than parody. D. H. Lawrence wrote some superb passages on this ever renewed experience of Cézanne’s:

After a fight tooth-and-nail for forty years, he did succeed in knowing an apple, fully; and, not quite as fully, a jug or two. That was all he achieved. It seems little, and he died embittered. But it is the first step that counts, and Cézanne’s apple is a great deal, more than Plato’s Idea.... If Cézanne had been willing to accept his own baroque cliché, his drawing would have and really give a complete intuitive interpretation of actual objects in some of the still-life compositions.

. . . Here he is inimitable. His imitators imitate his accessories of tablecloths folded like tin, etc. — the unreal parts of his pictures — but they don’t imitate the pots and apples, because they can’t. It’s the real appleyness, and you can’t imitate it. Every man must create it new and different out of

himself: new and different. The moment it looks “like” Cézanne, it is nothing. (D. H. Lawrence, “Introduction to These Paintings” [see Chapter 6, note 2], in pp. 569, 576, 577, 579-80).

Clichés, clichés! The situation has hardly improved since Cézanne. Not only has there been a multiplication of images of every kind, around us and in our heads, but even the reactions against clichés are creating clichés.

Even abstract painting has not been the last to produce its own clichés: “all these tubes and corrugated vibrations are stupid enough for anything and pretty sentimental.” (D.H. Lawrence, *Lady Chatterley’s Lover*, New York: Grove Press, 1959, p. 346)

Every imitator has always made the cliché rise up again, even from what had been freed from the cliché. The fight against clichés is a terrible thing. As Lawrence says, it is already something to have succeeded, to have gotten somewhere, with regard to an apple, or a jug or two. The Japanese know that a whole life barely suffices for a single blade of grass. This is why great painters are so severe with their own work. Too many people mistake a photograph for a work of art, a plagiarism for an audacity, a parody for a laugh, or worse yet, a miserable stroke of inspiration for a creation. But great painters know that it is not enough to mutilate, maul, or parody the cliché in order to obtain a true laugh, a true deformation. Bacon is as severe with himself as was Cezanne, and like Cezanne, he lost many of his paintings, or renounced them, threw them away, as soon as the enemy reappeared. He passes judgment: the series of crucifixions? Too sensational, too sensational to be felt. Even the bullfights, too dramatic. The series of Popes? “I have tried very, very unsuccessfully to do certain records — distorted records” of

Velasquez's Pope, and "I regret them, because I think they're very silly . . . because I think that this thing was an absolute thing." What then, according to Bacon himself, should remain of Bacon's work? Some of the series of heads, perhaps, one or two aerial triptychs, and a large back of a man. Nothing more than an apple, or one or two jugs.

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08

TRANSPIERCE THE MOUNTAINS: INDIAN MEDIEVAL HISTORY BY ELIE FAURE

In their “Treatise on Nomadology” (in *A Thousand Plateaus*), Deleuze and Guattari introduce their concept of *holey space* by the following injunction:

Metallurgical India. Transpierce the mountains instead of scaling them, excavate the land instead of striating it, bore holes in space instead of keeping it smooth, turn the earth into Swiss cheese. (Deleuze Gilles & Guattari Felix, “Treatise of Nomadology – The War Machine” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

This evocation of India comes directly from an excerpt of French art historian Élie Faure’s *Medieval Art History* (1937), which dedicates a chapter to seven civilizations (India, China, Japan, the Tropics, Byzantium, Islam and Christianity) during the Middle Age. The excerpt to which Deleuze and Guattari are referring is in the first chapter about India where Faure describes the birth of Indian granite caves — maybe the Ellora caves in Maharashtra:

There at the shore of the sea, at the base of a mountain, they encountered a great wall of granite. Then they all entered the granite; in its shadows they lived, loved, worked, died, were born, and, three or four centuries afterward, they came out again, leagues away, having traversed the mountain. Behind them they left the emptied rock, its galleries hollowed out in every direction, its sculptured, chiseled walls, its natural or artificial pillars turned into a deep lacework with ten thousand horrible or charming figures. It is in these monolithic temples, on their dark walls or on their sunburnt façade, that the true genius of India expends all its terrific force. Here the confused speech of confused multitudes makes itself heard.

Here man confesses unresistingly his strength and his nothingness. He does not exact the affirmation of a determined ideal from form. He encloses no system in it. He extracts it in the rough from formlessness, according to the dictates of the formless. He utilizes the indentations and the accidents of the rock. It is they that make the sculpture. If any room is left he adds arms to the monster, or cuts off his legs if the space is insufficient. If an enormous wall of rock suggests the broad masses of monsters that he has seen rolling in herds, rearing their heads on the banks of the rivers or at the edges of the forests, he cuts the wall into great pure planes to make an elephant of it. (Faure Élie, *History of Art: Medieval Art*, Garden City Publisher, 1937).

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Originally published on February 13th 2012

09

PROCESSES OF STRIATION AND SMOOTHING SPACE IN URBAN WARFARE

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari titled *A Thousand Plateaus* in reference to the way it should be read: one plateau after another, no matter in which order. This section focuses on three of the fourteen chapters composing that book; they are entitled:

227: Treatise on Nomadology; The War Machine
7000 B.C.: Apparatus of Capture
1440: The Smooth and the Striated

These plateaus focus on two transformative processes that Deleuze and Guattari call *smoothing* and *striating* as two antagonistic operations and interpretations of territory.

Smooth spaces are the territory of the nomads, while striated spaces are created by the sedentary. Their conflict is a confrontation between the State and the War Machine, the *logos* and the *nomos*, chess and go, movement and speed, arborescence and rhizome, royal science and nomad science. The whole chapter about Nomadology is built on those manichean antagonists and their incompatibility with each other. However, as established by Manuel De Landa in his book *War in the Age of Intelligent Machines* (Zone Books,

1991), only State's armies that adopt a nomadic way of operating are victorious in the long term. Strategies of capture are therefore constantly elaborated by the State in order to appropriate the War Machine. This conflict is fundamental for architecture in the relationship this discipline has always maintained with military strategies.

Deleuze and Guattari elaborate a definition of the smooth space and the striated space based on their absolute opposition at every level. The following paragraphs will attempt to make an inventory of these two types of spaces.

The State is a settled institution that establishes a set of rules and provides to its subject the assurance that the more they will conform to these rules, the more they will socially evolve within a pre-established hierarchy. The War Machine, on the contrary, is fundamentally non-civilizational in the way that it is not interested in the notion of progress. Its structure can be organized in a protohierarchical way, but the latter remains sufficiently fragile to be easily overthrown in case of strong disagreement.

The first symbols used to establish the confrontation between striated spaces and smooth spaces are made by attributing to each the principles of two games, chess and *go*. Chess attributes a function and therefore a skill to each entity composing both armies. Its production is a strategy based on hierarchical relationships between these entities. As far as the practice of the warfield is concerned, both armies try to conquer the biggest part of land in order to exercise control over it. Conversely, the game of *go* is based on fast movements of territorialization and deterritorialization, intensifying a conflict in one zone, then leave to it to attack the next one. The function and power of every pawn are the same, thus allowing interesting potential turnarounds. Another extremely



interesting aspect of this comparison not mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari consists in the fact that chess pieces operate with the walled frame of the squares, whereas *go* moves pawns along the lines, like funambulist soldiers.

Both chess and *go* dramatize the opposition between two armies that operate symmetrically, with the same organization and strategy. It would be interesting to elaborate a set of rules for a game that would confront a nomadic War Machine like *go*'s army and a State army like chess.

What Deleuze and Guattari call Royal Science is interesting for architects, since they use them as an example to express the essence of this sedentary discipline. In fact, architects tend to avoid the notion of spontaneity and improvisation in favor of planning and control. That is why the architect — maybe they ought to say the engineer — appears in this regard as the paradigm of the royal scientist. They oppose to this the example of the Gothic journeyman who applies a nomadic science by improvising design directly on the construction site, depending on the forces felt *in situ*. On the contrary, architects establish plans that are the direct expression of their transcendental control over the matter and architecture's users. The examples of Orleans and Beauvais cathedrals are evoked as failures of the nomadic science to provide a perfect, safely built environment, allowing a dose of uncertainty in the design. This notion is interesting in that the State cannot accept this degree of un-control, based on its original promise of security, contained in the social contract. The fact that these two cathedrals have been built according to nomadic science's principles and eventually collapsed is a manifesto for considering risk and danger as a fully integrated part of the lethality of life and the awareness of it.

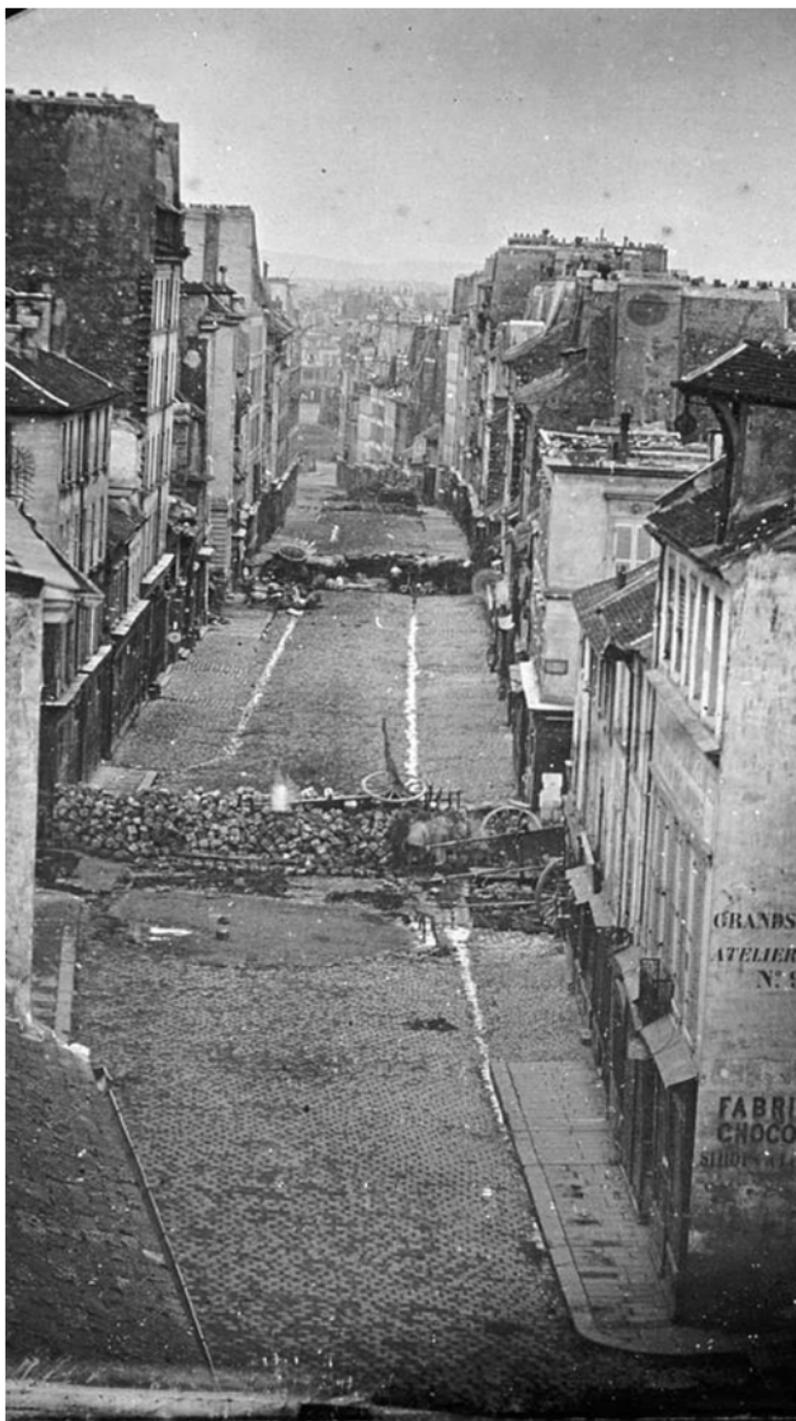
The act of striating space is fundamentally inherent in the



birth of agriculture and, therefore, private property. Indeed, agriculture first brings value to the land; this results in parcelization and ownership. Agriculture additionally brings a population to become sedentary and therefore increase the need for implementation of new tools. This process of innovation is called progress and is the base of a civilization's growth. Architecture embodies the striation, and thus defines the limits of the land. Private property is claimed and wars can begin. This narrative is perfectly expressed by the myth of creation of Rome. Romulus established the limits of the city by digging a trench (or building a wall, depending on the version). When his brother Remus leaped across it, Romulus killed him as a sentence for the original violation of private property in Roman history.

Architecture creates an inside separated from the outside; its property is being claimed by people or institutions. Lines of property are being virtually traced and architecture materializes them into violent devices actively controlling bodies. The wall is quintessential and paradigmatic in this regard and operates at every scale, from the domestic wall of an apartment to the United States' border with Mexico and other various scales of gated communities. The original city's limit from Romulus, however, disappeared during the 19th century to let the city diffuse and spread into a quasi-total ambient milieu.

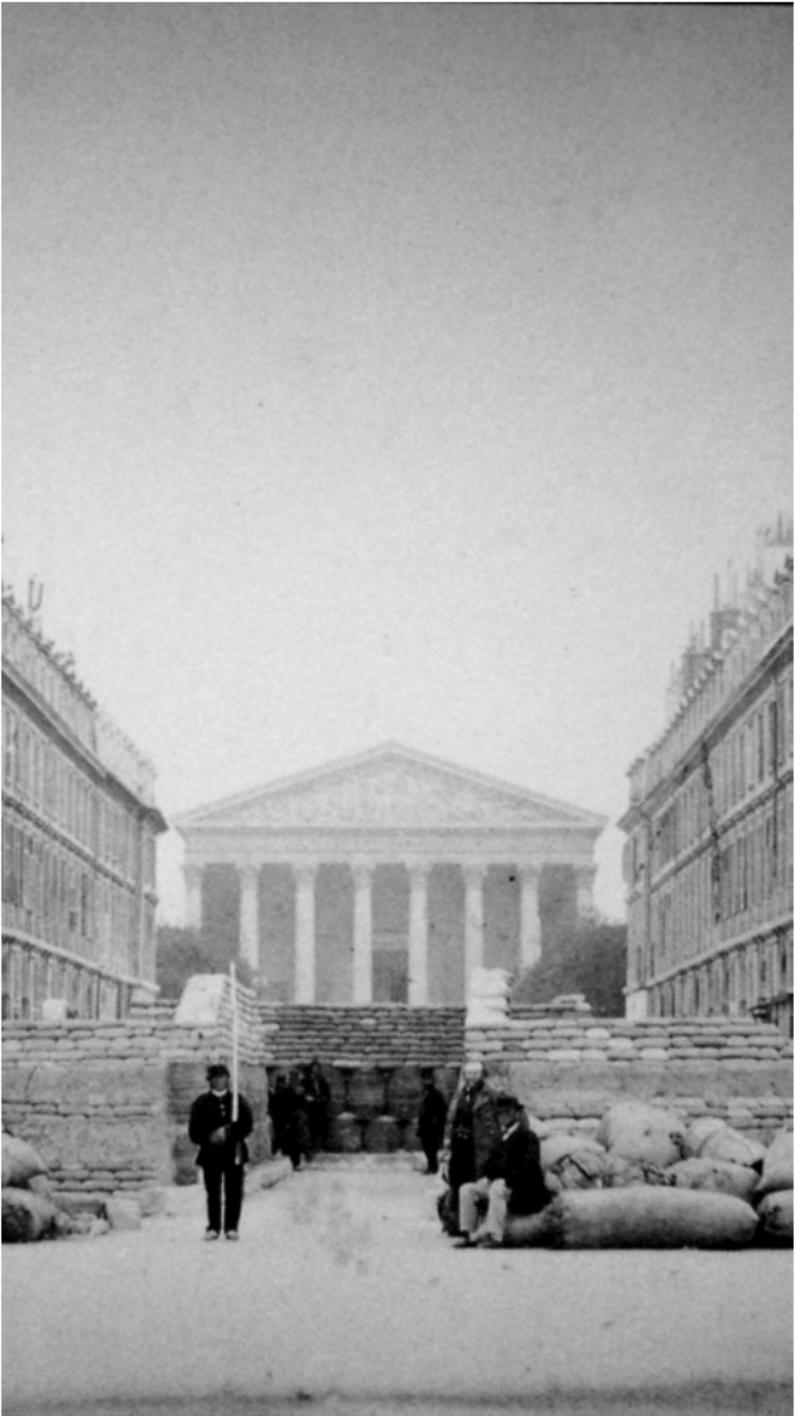
The following paragraph will show how the urban warfield became a territory submitted to processes of striation and smoothing since the 19th century. The first citation concerns Paris between the First Empire and the end of the Second Empire. This fifty-six year period in French history saw three revolutions emerging from Parisian urban fabric. As both a theoretician and practitioner of urban insurrection, Auguste Blanqui makes the link between the two revolutions of 1830



and 1848, the Paris' Commune in 1871 and urban modification in a conflict situation. He actively took part in two revolutions and was imprisoned during the Commune, making him an icon of the resistance against the Versailles government. In 1866, he wrote a small manual entitled: *Esquisse de la marche à suivre dans une prise d'armes à Paris (Draft of a Strategy for an Armed Uprising in Paris)*, which establishes an extremely precise protocol of modification of the warfield in order to optimize it for the weaker, yet hopefully victorious, side of an asymmetrical urban conflict (my translation):

This labor done, we put the two lateral barricades together by piercing the thick walls that separate the houses situated at the front of the defense. The same operation is executed simultaneously in the houses on the two sides of the barricaded street up to its end, then backwards, on the right and left, along the parallel street, on the defense's front and back. Openings have to be created on the ground floor and top floor in order to obtain two ways; this work is done in the same way in four directions. All the blocks of houses of the barricaded streets should be pierced in their perimeter, in such way that fighters be able to enter or exit by the back street, out of sight and out of reach of the enemy.

The interior of the blocks generally consists of courtyards and gardens. One could open access between these spaces, as they are usually separated by weak walls. It should be compulsory on the bridges, whose importance and specific situations expose them to the most serious attacks.



It would be useful to organize companies of non-fighters such as workers, masons, carpenters, etc., in order to jointly complete work with the infantry. When, on the frontline of defense, a house is more particularly being threatened, we demolish the ground floor staircase and we make an opening in the various rooms' floor of the second floor in order to shoot potential soldiers who would invade the ground floor to place bombs. Boiling water can also play an important role. If the attack encompassed a large area of the front line, we cut the staircases and pierces the floors in all the exposed houses." (Translated from Auguste Blanqui, "Esquisse de la marche a suivre dans une prise d'armes a Paris," in *Maintenant il faut des Armes*, Paris: La Fabrique, 2006, 280).

The urban modifications for which Blanqui advocates apply processes of striating and smoothing the space. In fact, the construction of barricades with the paving stones — he established very precise calculations of the amount of paving stones needed — adds another layer of striation to the city, and thus subverts its normal functionality. On the other hand, piercing holes through the walls associated with the destruction of staircases denies the physicality of architecture and thus smooth the urban space. Through these processes, the city is assimilated as a single malleable matter that can be acted upon and reconfigured according to the needs of the insurgent army.

The ability of the insurgents to act on this matter, and manipulate the warfield in favor of their strategies has a lot to do with their victories in 1830 and 1848. On the other hand, the Paris Commune's ultimate defeat against the *Versillais* was



very likely influenced by the State's modification of the urban warfield during the last two decades by Napoleon III and his baron engineer Haussmann.

The second example of French State strategies of counter-insurrection occurred in 1954-1960 in Algier's Casbah, where the first operations of the FLN were organized.¹ Gillo Pontecorvo's 1966 pseudo-documentary film entitled *The Battle of Algiers* depicts remarkably well the conflict between French paratroopers and Algerian anti-colonialists within the labyrinthine Casbah. The chronology is important. At first, the warfield is used by Algerians who apply what will later be Deleuze and Guattari's definition of speed: the absolute character of a body whose irreducible parts (atoms) occupy or fill a smooth space like a vortex, with the possibility of swarming out at any moment. Whoever is carrying out a mission for the FLN strikes intensely, then immediately disappears in the urban maze of the Casbah.

However, soon after this first series of operations, the French paratroopers manage little by little to capture the War Machine's principle by following the strategies of Colonel Marcel Bigeard, officer in charge of the counter insurrection. Acting directly on the Casbah's materiality and infiltrating the organization of the FLN, they succeeded in absolutely suppressing any resistant force in Algiers in 1960. Nevertheless, the resistance had lasted long enough to successively provoke a national mobilization leading to Algerian independence in 1962.

A final example of urban striation and smoothing in a conflict situation was studied by Eyal Weizman in a 2006 article entitled "Lethal Theory," analyzing the strategy of the Israeli general Aviv Kochavi in the 2002 siege of Nablus Palestinian

1 FLN: Front de Libération Nationale (Algerian insurrection army)



refugee camp in the West Bank. Kochavi developed a theory he called “inverted geometry” that avoids the camp’s streets in order to move through the walls of the dense urban fabric and surprise potential Palestinian fighters. This technique reduced the spectacular damages in the camp to deep scars within homes, invisible from outside and insignificant to the international community.

Rather than submit to the authority of conventional spatial boundaries and logic, movement became constitutive of space. The three-dimensional progression through walls, ceilings, and floors across the urban balk reinterpreted, short-circuited, and recomposed both architectural and urban syntax. (Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land*, New York: Verso, 2007).

The State that succeeded the capture of the War Machine is a state who established war as its main contingency, its population being entirely composed of potential soldiers — military service being compulsory for almost every Israeli citizen. The elaboration of the oppression of Palestinians led the Israeli army to associate a striation of the space by its walls, colonial settlements and roads and to adopt a nomadic behavior, swarming out from its border, infesting Palestinian land and folding itself back in its own territory. This coexistence of State and War Machine may be related to the status of the Jewish People involved in what Deleuze calls a common *becoming* due to their persecution through the ages. When Israel became a State however, it established a normalizing benchmark that internalizes some of its subjects and oppresses the others.

ILLUSTRATIONS ///

- Page 37: American Farmers Visit Britain. Lend-lease Equipment in Action, United Kingdom (1943). Ministry of Information Photo Division Photographer. Public domain
- Page 39: Soldiers from the 94th Engineer Battalion out of Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri (23 September 2009). United States Army By Ashley Strehle, Fort Riley Public Affairs. Public domain.
- Page 41: Barricades rue Saint-Maur in Paris (25 June 1848). Photograph by Thibault. Public domain
- Page 43: Barricade rue Royale during the Paris Commune (1871). Photograph unknown. Public domain
- Page 45: Ali la Pointe's house after having been bombed with him in it by the French paratroopers (October 1957). Photograph by Saber68. Creative Commons
- Page 47: Reproduction of holes in a Havana building during the 1959 Cuban Revolution. Still from the film *Che: Part 1* by Steven Soderbergh (2008).

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Originally published on May 9th 2010

10

A THOUSAND MACHINES BY GERALD RAUNIG

A Thousand Machines is a book by Austrian philosopher Gerald Raunig, published in the excellent *Intervention* series of Semiotext(e), as were The Invisible Committee's *Coming In-surrection* (2008), Jean Baudrillard's *Agony of Power* (2010), and Tiqqun's *Introduction to Civil War* (2010). The title is a reference to *A Thousand Plateaus* and the War Machine of Deleuze and Guattari. It intends to question the notion of machine through a Marxist approach.

The main thesis of this concise and important book is the critique of Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a machine as an assemblage and Marx's reading of a system like capitalism as non-transcendental. Nowadays, it is almost normal for Westerners to be critical of capitalism; however, this criticism is always directed towards those who would impose a transcendental goal to the system. This vision of capitalism has the advantage to virtually exclude the critique from the system and therefore to consider their criticism as sufficient. Of course, such exclusion is an illusion, because capitalism is inherently an immanent system, an assemblage, a machine. As Michel Foucault demonstrated, capitalism does not reproduce the medieval scheme of sovereignty, based principally on a continuous state of war, which was considering human lives as a good consumable by the transcendental power.

Instead, capitalism manages and controls lives in order to maintain an extraction of work production on a continuous basis. In order to explain the difference between immanent assemblage and transcendental machine, Gerald Raunig uses the two examples of machine in Kafka's *Penal Colony* (1919) and the love machine of Alfred Jarry's *Supermale* (1902). In order to fully understand his text, I have to explain what these two machines are about.

In the Penal Colony is a short story by Kafka that introduces an execution machine that kills the condemn person by inscribing the nature of his crime on his torso with blades. The machine's inventor is also the executioner who is so obsessively proud of his invention that he eventually dies by using the machine on himself in order to show it to the narrator. *The Supermale* is a science fiction novel written by Alfred Jarry. The supermale, is a man able to perform a staggering number of intercourses, even during a frenetic race between a team of cyclists and a train. The supermale ends up being killed by the machine with which he makes love.

Raunig insists on the fact that, in these two stories, the human is merely the raw material for the machine, rather than being a part of it. We can envision both stories as our erroneous representation of capitalism. According to Raunig, the machine that describes the reality of this system is the assemblage human+bike, that would explain his fascination for stolen dismembered bicycles. In fact, the book starts with a short elaboration about Brian O'Nolan's novel, *The Third Policeman*, whose plot is based on the repetitive theft of bicycles:

The "transcendental" abstract machine, which remains isolated at the level of the outline, which does not succeed in conjoining with concrete concatenations, is only a special case. Lethal

machines like the legislative-executive machine in Kafka's *Penal Colony* or the love machine in Jarry's *Supermale*, no matter how complex they may be, are "dead" machines because they lack socio-political concatenations: the machine that carves the judgment into the delinquent in the penal colony, pronouncing the judgment go-like directly in the body, establishes an unmediated relationship between bodies and signes, but after the death of the former commander, whose law it had obeyed, it has no link to social machines. Its case is similar to the love machine, which falls in love with the "supermale," then turns around and kills the lover: the machine actually built to propel the "supermale" to enhance love performances takes on lethally high voltage and breaks off every concrete concatenation. The "supermale" dies like the officer in the penal colony in the machine, not as its component, one of its gears, but as its raw material. And yet the union of the mechanized human and humanizing technical machine persists at the stage of a one-dimensional exchange relationship in "transcendental" abstraction. For machines, which like the judgment pronouncing-executing machine in *The Penal Colony* and the loving-killing machine in *Supermale* cannot extend and expand in a montage, the logical end is self-dismontage, self-destruction. (Gerald Raunig, *A Thousand Machines*, Cambridge: The MIT Press 2010, 107).

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Originally published on April 1st 2011

11

FOUCAULT AND THE SOCIETY OF CONTROL

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 2: FOUCAULT*]

Foucault's structuralist descriptions of discipline are supposedly well-known by architects. The architectural paradigm of the Panopticon is quoted everywhere and became indissoluble from Foucault's work in architectural theory, despite the richness of the rest of his work. However, the panopticon, as thought by Jeremy Bentham, is interpreted by Foucault as the paradigm of a society of discipline and does not apply anymore to the current organizational scheme of the Western world.

In the text cited in the title of this chapter, Gilles Deleuze, Foucault's friend and admirer, summarizes the current paradigm in Foucauldian terms and calls it the "society of control". Deleuze's short essay, more developed in his book dedicated to Foucault, insists on the shift from a disciplinary society to a society of control. Deleuze uses Franz Kafka's novel *The Trial* as a perfect example of this change of paradigm. Kafka introduces the choice offered to his main character, K., as one between an "apparent acquittal" between two incarcerations, symbol of the discipline, and "limitless postponements" of the sentence, proper to the society of control:

In the disciplinary societies one was always starting again (from school to the barracks, from the barracks to the factory), while in the societies of control one is never finished with anything — the corporation, the educational system, the armed services being metastable states coexisting in one and the same modulation, like a universal system of deformation.

Deleuze gives another example to illustrate how control exercises its power on the bodies:

Felix Guattari has imagined a city where one would be able to leave one's apartment, one's street, one's neighborhood, thanks to one's (dividual) electronic card that raises a given barrier; but the card could just as easily be rejected on a given day or between certain hours; what counts is not the barrier but the computer that tracks each person's position — licit or illicit — and effects a universal modulation.

This very simple example carries some tremendous human implications when the example is applied literally — in the case of the dozens of Israeli checkpoints inside the West Bank, for example. This is also the case when applied figuratively, in Western societies with which we are more familiar, where the concept of freedom cannot be understood outside of a policed capitalist system. By his extremely precise descriptions of this system's mechanisms, Foucault acts violently against it. These mechanisms are actually nothing else but decoy and camouflage apparatuses.

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Originally published on October 12th 2011

12

CONTROL & BECOMING: A CONVERSATION BETWEEN NEGRI AND DELEUZE

Sometimes interviewer reaches the 'level' of the interviewed — one could think of the hours of interviews with Alfred Hitchcock by Francois Truffaut for example. In 1990, Antonio Negri published an interview with his friend Deleuze about the notions of control and becoming.

This topic is obviously always appropriate, but the revolutions in Tunisia, Egypt and hopefully the forthcoming ones in Libya and Iran, make Deleuze's words even more striking. When many Westerners wonder if those revolutions are to be considered a good thing, as "nobody knows where they are going", one can follow Deleuze and affirm that what is really important is the revolutionary *becoming* of people. Applied to these recent situations, what needs to be celebrated above all are the seventeen days spent by the people of Egypt on the Tahrir Square, forming a temporary communist society, celebrated by Alain Badiou.

As Deleuze concludes the beautiful conversation, "our ability to resist control, or our submission to it, has to be assessed at the level of our every move."

CONVERSATION WITH ANTONIO NEGRI (excerpt) ///
Futur Anterieur 1 (Spring 1990), translated by Martin Joughin

NEGRI: In *Foucault* [1986] and in *The Fold* [1988], processes of subjectification seem to be studied more closely than in some of your other works. The subject's the boundary of a continuous movement between an inside and outside. What are the political consequences of this conception of the subject? If the subject can't be reduced to an externalized citizenship, can it invest citizenship with force and life? Can it make possible a new militant pragmatism, at once a *pietas* toward the world and a very radical construction. What politics can carry into history the splendor of events and subjectivity. How can we conceive a community that has real force but no base, that isn't a totality but is, as in Spinoza, absolute?

DELEUZE: It definitely makes sense to look at the various ways individuals and groups constitute themselves as subjects through processes of subjectification: what counts in such processes is the extent to which, as they take shape, they elude both established forms of knowledge and the dominant forms of power. Even if they, in turn, engender new forms of power or become assimilated into new forms of knowledge. For a while, though, they have a real, rebellious spontaneity. This has nothing to do with going back to "the subject," that is, to something invested with duties, power, and knowledge. One might equally well speak of new kinds of event, rather than processes of subjectification: events that can't be explained by the situations that give rise to them, or into which they lead. They appear for a moment, and it's that moment that matters, it's the chance we must seize. Or we can simply talk about the brain: the brain's precisely this boundary of a continuous two-way movement between an Inside and Outside, this membrane between them. New cerebral pathways, new ways of thinking, aren't explicable

in terms of microsurgery; it's for science, rather, to try and discover what might have happened in the brain for one to start thinking this way or that. I think subjectification, events, and brains are more or less the same thing. 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 their surface or volume. It's what you call *pietas*. 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.

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Originally published on February 22nd 2011

13

“I LEAVE IT TO YOU TO FIND YOUR OWN INSTRUMENT OF COMBAT”: DELEUZE QUOTES PROUST

In a conversation with Michel Foucault in 1972 (*L'Arc* No. 49), Deleuze uses a quote from Marcel Proust to illustrate his interpretation of how intellectuals should consider their theoretical work:

A theory is exactly like a box of tools. It has nothing to do with the signifier. It must be useful. It must function. And not for itself. If no one uses it, beginning with the theoretician himself (who then ceases to be a theoretician), then the theory is worthless or the moment is inappropriate. We don't revise a theory, but construct new ones; we have no choice but to make others. It is strange that it was Proust, an author thought to be a pure intellectual, who said it so clearly: “treat my book as a pair of glasses directed to the outside; if they don't suit you, find another pair; I leave it to you to find your own instrument, which is a necessary investment for the combat.”

A theory does not totalize; it is an instrument for

multiplication and it also multiplies itself. It is in the nature of power to totalize and it is your position; and one I fully agree with, that theory is by nature opposed to power. As soon as a theory is enmeshed in a particular point, we realize that it will never possess the slightest practical importance unless it can erupt in a totally different area. This is why the notion of reform is so stupid and hypocritical. Either reforms are designed by people who claim to be representative, who make a profession of speaking for others, and they lead to a division of power, to a distribution of this new power which is consequently increased by a double repression; or they arise from the complaints and demands of those concerned. This latter instance is no longer a reform but revolutionary action that questions (expressing the full force of its partiality) the totality of power and the hierarchy that maintains it. This is surely evident in prisons: the smallest and most insignificant of the prisoners' demands can puncture Pleven's [French Prime Minister in the 1950's] pseudo-reform. If the protests of children were heard in kindergarten, if their questions were attended to, it would be enough to explode the entire educational system. There is no denying that our social system is totally without tolerance; this accounts for its extreme fragility in all its aspects and also its need for a global form of repression. In my opinion, you [Foucault] were the first — in your books and in the practical sphere — to teach us something absolutely fundamental: the indignity of speaking for others. We ridiculed representation and said it was finished, but we failed to draw the consequences of this "theoretical"

conversion — to appreciate the theoretical fact that only those directly concerned can speak in a practical way on their own behalf.

The quote from Proust that started this passage — provided that Deleuze did not make it up in a strategic production of knowledge — is fundamental in the creation of any form of theory, and even beyond, in the creation of any ethics. I understand the notion of ethics here in a Spinozist way: the individual or collective continuous production of a coherent narrative that interprets each act as either good or bad — I insist on the term “bad” in opposition to “evil” — in relation to this system. In other words, the notion of truth or good can only exist in relation to a subjective system of interpretation.

It would be a mistake, however, to confuse this statement with the post-modern usual affirmation according to which everything is relative and therefore equal. Such a discourse of truth severely injured the importance of the political debate in the Western World. A system of interpretation gains as much value as it acquires coherence, and the potential antagonism created between those systems requires them to be understood in a logic of combat.

If I were to use an example that is important to me, I would say that the system of interpretations that is being developed by an Orthodox Jewish settler in the West Bank appears to me coherent. In his or her interpretation of the world, God, which is the most important entity in his/her life, gave to his or her people a piece of land that (s)he now consider as his or hers. Nothing is for him or her more important than this act of God: not the human justice, nor the respect of other human lives. However, there are a lot of us who integrated in our system of interpretations that these notions of human justice (a justice that has been elaborated by humans) and

respect of the people — both individually and as a nation — are the fundamental bases on which to build our interpretation of the world. These two systems are so contradictory — yet both coherent in themselves — that they cannot establish the bases of any form of understanding between them. They therefore have to collide and throw as much energy into this combat as the constituted ethics requires them to do.

Another example, to go back to Deleuze yet stay within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, would be to evoke his concept elaborated with Guattari of the War Machine. In fact, the War Machine, as thought by them, is a strategic formation against the State Apparatus. Clearly, in their understanding of combat — both Deleuze and Foucault were engaged in that sense — the Palestinian people has to constitute such a formation to fight against the State-organized oppression that they suffer. Nevertheless, this notion of War Machine, along with other concepts elaborated in *A Thousand Plateaus* have been used by the Israeli Army's Operational Theory Research Institute, as points out Eyal Weizman in his instructive essay *Lethal Theory* (see Chapter 9). Based on this text, I had the occasion to reveal to my former professor, Catherine Ingraham, that her book, *Architecture and the Burdens of Linearity* (Yale University Press, 1998), was also taught in this military theory institute. She was shocked that her writings could be used for such martial purposes.

These unwanted effects of one's theoretical work are highly problematic. They are ambiguous, as they are more likely to occur through a philosophy whose system has been deliberately left open to uses and interpretation. It is certainly the case for Deleuze's philosophy, but it is also true for Foucault, who referred to the notion of toolbox evoked by Deleuze in the previous excerpt. In the following passage in the French newspaper *Le Monde* (1975), Foucault writes:

All my books are little tool-boxes. If people want to pen them, to use this sentence or that idea as a screwdriver or spanner to short-circuit, discredit systems of power, including eventually those from which my books emerged...so much the better.

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14

“A SUNFLOWER SEED LOST IN A WALL IS CAPABLE OF SHATTERING THAT WALL”

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 1: SPINOZA*]

The very useful tumblr *Concrete Rules and Abstract Machines* recently chose an excerpt of Deleuze’s lecture on Spinoza at Université de Vincennes in 1981. This short text questions the notion of body and outline as interpreted by the Stoics that can be considered as a base for Spinoza’s question: what can a body do? The sentence that both illustrates this question and characterizes Deleuze’s powerful and poetic style is: “A sunflower seed lost in a wall is capable of shattering that wall.” One can wonder here, if the millions of sunflower, Ai Wei Wei brought to the Tate Modern would be able to shatter the Great Wall of China. It looks like it this not the case so far, but it is still too early to say...

The other example Deleuze gives to distinguish between body and power (*puissance*) is the forest. Of course the tree itself is a body but the forest is a power, power to make the trees continue, up to the moment at which it can no longer do so.

DELEUZE ABOUT THE SUNFLOWER ///
Sur Spinoza. 17.02.1981. Cours Vincennes

Does everything have an outline? Bateson, who is a genius,

has written a short text called “[why] does everything have an outline?” Take the expression “outside the subject,” that is to say “beyond the subject.” Does that mean that the subject has an outline? Perhaps. Otherwise what does “outside the limits” mean? At first sight it has a spatial air. But is it the same space? Do “outside the limits” and “outside the outline” belong to the same space? Does the conversation or my course today have an outline? My answer is yes. One can touch it. Let’s return to the stoics. Their favorite example is: how far does the action of a seed go? A sunflower seed lost in a wall is capable of shattering that wall. A thing with such a small an outline. How does the sunflower seed go, does that mean how far does its surface go? No, the surface is where the seed ends. In their theory of the utterance (*énoncé*), they will say that it states exactly what the seed is not. That is to say where the seed is no longer, but that tells us nothing about what the seed is. They will say of Plato that, with his theory of ideas, he tells us very well what things are not, but he tells us nothing about what things are. The Stoics cry out triumphantly: things are bodies.

Bodies and not ideas. Things are bodies, that means that things are actions. The limit of something is the limit of its action and not the outline of its figure. An even simpler example: you are walking in a dense forest, you’re afraid. At last you succeed and little by little the forest thins out, you are pleased. You reach a spot and you say, “whew, here’s the edge.” The edge of the forest is a limit. Does this mean that the forest is defined by its outline? It’s a limit of what? Is it a limit to the form of the forest? It’s a limit to the action of the forest, that is to say that the forest that had so much power arrives at the limit of its power, it can no longer lie over the terrain, it thins out.

The thing that shows that this is not an outline is the fact that

we can't even specify the precise moment at which there is no more forest. There was a tendency, and this time the limit is not separable, a kind of tension towards the limit. It's a dynamic limit that is opposed to an outline limit. The thing has no other limit than the limit of its power [puissance] or its action. The thing is thus power and not form. The forest is not defined by a form, it is defined by a power: power to make the trees continue up to the moment at which it can no longer do so. The only question that I have to ask of the forest is: what is your power? That is to say, how far will you go?

That is what the Stoics discover and what enables them to say: everything is a body. When they say that everything is a body, they don't mean that everything is a sensible thing, because they do not emerge from the Platonic point of view. If they were to define the sensible thing by form and outline, that would hold no interest. When they say that everything is a body, for example a circle does not extend in space in the same fashion if it is made of wood as it does if it is made of marble. Further, "everything is a body" will signify that a red circle and a blue circle do not extend in space in the same fashion. Thus, there is a tension.

When they say that all things are bodies, they mean that all things are defined by *tonos*, the contracted effort that defines the thing. The kind of contraction, the embryonic force that is in the thing, if you don't find it, you don't know [connaissez] the thing. That is what Spinoza takes up again in the formulation "what can a body do?"

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Originally published on July 15th 2011

15

DELEUZE'S WAVE: ABOUT SPINOZA

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 1: SPINOZA*]

The following short excerpt comes from one of Gilles Deleuze's lectures about Spinoza in Vincennes (the Parisian autonomous University during the 1970's). This constitutes a good illustration of the various modes of knowledge evoked in the previous chapters.

DELEUZE ON THE SPINOZIST WAVE ///

Gilles Deleuze. *Sur Spinoza*. 17.03.1981. Cours Vincennes.

Nobody can deny that to be able to swim is a conquest of existence, it is fundamental you understand: I conquer an element; it is not so obvious to conquer an element. I can swim, I can fly. Wonderful. What does that mean? It is very simple: not to be able to swim consists in being vulnerable to the confrontation with the wave. Then, you have the infinite set of water molecules that compose the wave; it composes a wave and I say: it is a wave because its most basic bodies that I call "molecules", actually they are not the most simple, one should go even further than water molecules. Water molecules already belong to a body, the aquatic body, the ocean body, etc. What is the first type of knowledge? It is: come on, I dare, I go, I am in the first type of knowledge: I dare, I wade in, so to speak. What does that mean to wade? To wade, that is very simple. To wade, the word indicates it

pretty well, one clearly sees that it is some extrinsic relationship: sometimes the wave slaps me and sometimes it takes me away; there are some shock effects. They are shock effects, meaning, I don't know anything of the relationships that compose themselves or decompose themselves, I receive the extrinsic parts' effects.

The parts that belong to me are being shaken, they gister a shock effect coming from parts that belong to the wave. Therefore sometimes I laugh, sometimes I weep, depending on whether the wave makes me laugh or knocks me out, I am within the passion affects: ouch Mummy, the wave beat me up! Ok "Ouch Mummy the wave beat me up," cry that we shall not cease to sound until we don't come out of the first type of knowledge since we shall not cease to say: ouch the table hurt me; it is the same to say: the other person hurt me; not at all, since the table is inanimate, Spinoza is so much smarter than everything that one could have said afterwards, not at all because the table is inanimate the one should say: the table hurt me, it is as stupid as saying: Peter hurt me as to say: The stone hurt me or the wave hurt me. It is the same level, it is the first type. On the contrary, I can swim; it does not necessarily mean that I have a mathematics, physics, or scientific knowledge of the wave's movement, it means that I have a skill, a surprising skill, I have a sort of rhythm sense. What does that mean, the rhythm, it means that my characteristic relationships, I know how to compose them directly with the wave's relationships, it does not happen anymore between the wave and myself, meaning it does not happen anymore between the extensive parts, the wave's wet parts and my body's parts; it happens between the relationships. Relationships that compose the wave, relationships that compose my body, and my skill when I can swim, to present my body under some relationships that compose themselves directly with the wave's relationships. I dive at

the right time, I come out from under the water at the right time. I avoid the coming wave, or on the contrary I use it, etc... All this art of the relationships' composition...

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16

POWER (*POTENTIA*) VS. POWER (*POTESTAS*) OR THE STORY OF A JOYFUL TYPHOON

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 1: SPINOZA*]

Let's continue to explore Spinozist 'conceptology' and focus on a distinction difficult to make in English where the word power includes — and therefore erases the distinction between — two meanings whose difference is fundamental for Spinoza. I will differentiate between two Latin terms, *potentia* and *potestas* (in French, *puissance* and *pouvoir*). *Savage Anomaly*, written by Antonio Negri in 1981 when he was in prison, examines this complex question. The original subtitle of this book is *saggio su potere e potenza in Baruch Spinoza* (essay on *potestas* and *potential* in Baruch Spinoza). Unfortunately, Michael Hardt, Negri's friend and translator of the English version did not find a way to translate this directly and added a different subtitle, *The Power of Spinoza's Metaphysics and Politics*.

I first want to explain the difference between *potestas* and *potentia* in a simple way by defining the former as a relationship to another body and the latter as a capacity or an intensity, to use a Deleuzian terminology. *Potestas* needs a referent to dominate or to be dominated by it. On the contrary, *potentia* is a relationship to the whole world (Spinoza might say God but since his god is immanent, this is the same thing) in the

composition of a form of “harmony.” In the *Abécédaire* (“J for Joy”), Deleuze helps us understand this distinction while explaining the concept of joy and sadness (my translation):

There is no bad power (puissance), instead we should say that what is bad is the lowest degree of power (puissance). And the lowest degree of power (puissance), is power (pouvoir). I mean, what is malice? Malice consists in preventing someone from doing what he can, malice consists in preventing someone from doing, from effecting his power (puissance). Therefore, there is no bad power (puissance), there are malicious powers (pouvoirs). Perhaps all power (pouvoir) is malicious by nature. Maybe not, maybe it is too easy to say so [...] Power (pouvoir) is always an obstacle to the effecting of powers (puissances). I would say, all power (pouvoir) is sad. Yes, even if those who “have the power” (pouvoir) are very joyful to “have it”, it is a sad joy; there are sad joys. On the contrary, joy is the effecting of a power (puissance). Once again, I don’t know any power (puissance) that is malicious. The typhoon is a power (puissance), it enjoys itself in its very soul but...it does not enjoy because it destroys houses, it enjoys because it exists. To enjoy is to enjoy being what we are, I mean, to be “where we are”. Of course, it does not mean to be happy with ourselves, not at all. Joy is the pleasure of the conquest (conquête), as Nietzsche would say. But conquest in that sense does not mean to enslave people, of course. Conquest is, for example, for a painter to conquer color. Yes, that — yes, that is a conquest, yeah, here, this is joy.

In other words, and to go back to the notion of joy as we know it in a familiar sense, the moment of true joy that we probably all experienced one day (like Deleuze's typhoon) occurs when everything around us and in us seems to connect in a harmonious manner: what we see, what we hear, what we smell, how we feel, etc. Whoever experienced this feeling would have trouble imagining that such pure happiness could occur when expressing a domination towards another individual. Using the play on words that Deleuze almost suggests to us, the sad joy he evokes might be observed more particularly in Sade where pleasure is achieved through the absolute domination of one body over another. However, that pleasure in its "orgasmic" and violent characteristics does not seem to resonate within Spinoza's concept of joy. The French word *jouissance* would probably be more appropriate, but here, again, the English language lacks a word to express it.

Let us go back to the *Savage Anomaly* and how A. Negri associates the philosophy of the *Ethics* (1677) with the more pragmatic (in the sense of Machiavelli) *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670) and *Political Treatise* (1675). Negri's thesis is that the two latter texts should not be interpreted the same way as Thomas Hobbes' *Leviathan* (1651) and Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Social Contract* (1762), as it has been repeatedly done. While these two books presupposes a human nature (fundamentally bad in Hobbes, fundamentally good in Rousseau) and dramatizes a sort of mythical original event for which individuals would have ceded some of their rights to compose a society, Spinoza does not "dramatize" anything (and thus probably does not historicize anything either); he simply examines the relationships of the multitude with its government. For him, The State constitutes the multitude's effectuation of its *potentia*. Whether the government is an embodiment of The State or not is almost irrelevant. Of course, if

it is not an embodiment of The State, the multitude may overthrow the government to replace it by another in an attempt to get closer to the expression of its collective produced desire.

Let us not forget, however, that the formulation of the multitude's desire often constitutes an imperfect understanding (if not, sometimes, a complete misunderstanding) of its *potentia* since the latter is related to the whole world and cannot be fully articulated and expressed. Spinoza, who was horrified by the assassination of the De Witt Brothers by a crowd in 1672, knew too well that the expression of the multitude's desire has sometimes more to do with *potestas* than with *potentia*. A legitimate political act would therefore constitute an act that would formulate its desire as close as possible to the essence of its *potentia*. Understanding the relation to the world is therefore a crucial point for our attempt to act politically, to be joyful.

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17

THE WORLD OF AFFECTS OR WHY ADAM GOT POISONED BY THE APPLE

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 1: SPINOZA*]

This additional chapter dedicated to the exploration of Spinoza's conceptology will be, once again, influenced by Deleuze's interpretation of Spinoza. Deleuze spent the first part of his career creating his own philosophy through interpreting others (Hume, Nietzsche, Bergson). These interpretations are intensely personal. There are other ways of approaching the philosophy of Spinoza, but I am not as familiar with them.

We have not yet explored the concept of substance, which is for Spinoza the only and necessarily perfect thing that exists and that can be considered as a whole under the name 'God'. Expressed in a very simple way (maybe too simple), and borrowing Leibniz's concept of monad, we see the world as a gigantic assemblage of infinitely small pieces of matter (calling them atoms would be erroneous but useful to make it understandable) that are all involved in a more or less fast movement. These small elements of matter compose bodies that are perpetually striving to persevere in being (*Ethics*, part 3, prop. 6). This property is called *conatus*. These bodies are continuously interacting with each other and thus systematically affect each other. What it means in a very simple way is that when you cut a piece of butter with a knife, the knife af-

fects the butter since you can see that the latter is being cut; however, the knife as well is affected by the butter and has to 'resist' the butter's characteristics that attempt to make it persevere in its being.

Spinoza distinguishes several degrees of knowledge (modes of perception) depending on how we, as bodies, get affected by other bodies (see my essay *Architectures of Joy* for more on that). Deleuze uses the example of the wave to make himself understood in his description of these three degrees. Somebody who is said not to be able to swim is someone who does not experience the wave in another way than a very passive one. The water encounters her/his body as an obstacle to its flow and it results in violence between the two bodies (wave/human). The second degree of knowledge is expressed by someone who is said to be able to swim. (S)he positions her/himself as a body in 'accordance' with the flow of the wave and therefore composes harmonious relations with water. While this second degree is strictly empirical (one has to experience the wave, adjust, experience again, adjust again, etc.), the third one is rational in the most powerful sense. It consists in an understanding tending (but probably never reaching) towards perfection of the totality of relations operating in matter. In other words (again, simplifying involves a certain degree of inaccuracy but it allows a first level of understanding), this degree of knowledge can be seen as a sort of visual (or tactile) layer superimposed on one's vision which would bring such a 'resolution' than one would be able to perceive the infinitely small parts of matter and the various vectors of forces applied to it. This mode of perception is therefore only a horizon and cannot really be fully acquired but, if we keep using the example of the wave, we can probably say that the best surfers are probably close to this degree of knowledge of the sea.

As fallible bodies, we cannot compose harmonious relations with every body we encounter. Such truth is, for Spinoza, the essence of the Genesis' mythical mystery. Despite the period in which he lived, his philosophy makes it impossible for us to think that he was creationist (however, calling him an evolutionist would be even more blatant anachronism; he rarely thinks in terms of history). In his famous epistolary exchange with Bleyenberg, he nonetheless 'plays the game', interpreting the Biblical myth to unfold his conceptual work. Spinoza accuses the three biblical religions of having told this story through a judgmental approach: God forbids Adam to eat the fruit, he eats it, he is punished. Spinoza approaches the same narrative through a different optic. God 'tells' (of course, the personification of God does not correspond to anything in Spinoza's philosophy) Adam that the apple is poisonous (in other words, Adam has the intuition or the instinct that the apple is bad for him), he eats it anyway and becomes sick. The fruit was poisoned, i.e. it could not compose harmonious relations with Adam's body/stomach. The result of this encounter is that Adam is sick, or should we say, to use Spinozist terminology, he lost a bit of his power (*potentia*), he experiences a sad affect. Each of these encounters between bodies, results either in a joyful affect that constructs a sort of third body for a moment, composed of the two original ones in the state of symbiosis, or a sad affect that decomposes the relations of both bodies (not necessarily in a symmetrical manner, however).

Spinoza's letters to Bleyenberg are known as the letters about evil. Yet, the notion of evil, and therefore the notion of moral is foreign to Spinoza's philosophy. There is no good/evil that would be dictated from a transcendental law that would assign each event or behavior to one of these two categories; there can be only good and bad (we can say joyful and sad) within the context of each body's ethics. The latter

is not a voluntarily self-constructed set of rules, what we usually mean when we say 'ethics' (let's recall that there is no freedom as such for Spinoza). Rather, there is the experience of each affect as potentially and effectively harmonious and disharmonious with our own material assemblage, i.e. our body, i.e. us.

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18

THE SPINOZIST “SCREAM”: WHAT CAN A BODY DO?

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 1: SPINOZA*]

The “scream” evoked in the title refers to the concept of philosophical scream that Deleuze invents to define a phrase written or pronounced by a philosopher that contains the essence of his life’s work. The scream has to be understood in two senses (at least, that is the way I interpret it): the absolute, almost physical, necessity for a philosopher to “scream” this phrase, and the trouble caused within the normative way of thinking by the same phrase. In the case of Spinoza, according to Deleuze, this scream is expressed in *Ethics*, part 3, prop. 2:

However, no one has hitherto laid down the limits to the powers of the body, that is, no one has as yet been taught by experience what the body can accomplish solely by the laws of nature, in so far as she is regarded as extension. No one hitherto has gained such an accurate knowledge of the bodily mechanism, that he can explain all its functions; nor need I call attention to the fact that many actions are observed in the lower animals, which far transcend human sagacity, and that somnambulists do many things in their sleep, which they would not venture to

do when awake: these instances are enough to show, that the body can by the sole laws of its nature do many things which the mind wonders at.

Again, no one knows how or by what means the mind moves the body, nor how many various degrees of motion it can impart to the body, nor how quickly it can move it.

According to Deleuze, the approach of the body (and therefore of individuals) to what it can do rather than to what it is, is the main difference between an ethical philosophy and a moralist one. One has to understand that Spinoza does not consider an individual as the scheme where a soul would be hosted by a body. Each body is an assemblage of substance, and chemistry that makes us think should be considered as a very similar process to the one that makes us run, dance or...walk on a tight rope. Just like we need to forget the idea of the soul being hosted within the body vessel, we need to stop thinking of the body as a set of organs contained within an epidermic enclosure that prevents them from “escaping”. We are an assemblage of substance, of matter that the *bios* (life) is holding together for a while. This matter, just like any other in the world, is subjected to movements of speed and slowness. The way we compose these internal movements with the ones that surround us precisely defines our relation to the world. A cross-reading of Deleuze’s lectures allows a better understanding of this way of thinking: he is a Spinozist even when he is not talking about Spinoza! In his seminar about *Cinema: The Movement Image* in 1981, he talks about the movement of matter in the philosophy of Henri Bergson. (my translation):

What is moving ? Matter is moving. What does

that mean, to move, then? It means to pass from one form to another. Form does not get to transform, it is matter that goes from one form to another. That is a continuous idea in Plato's work: it is not the small that becomes big, it is not the cold that becomes hot. But when water gets hotter, a fluid matter, water, goes from one form to another, from the cold form to the hot form; it is not the cold that becomes hot.

Forms themselves are immobile or they have movements in thoughts, but the finite movement consists in a matter that passes from one form to another. A horse gallops, you have two forms: [...] the horse's form at the maximum of its muscular contraction and the one at the maximum of its muscular development. You will then say that gallop is the operation for which the "horse-matter" (*matière cheval*), the horse's body in its mobility does not cease to go from form A to form B and from form B to form A.

What Spinoza means by expressing our ignorance about what a body can do is, of course, not an absolute. We know some of the things that a body can do based on the second degree of knowledge that we all experience on a daily basis (we would not be able to move at all otherwise). We might even have a small glimpse at what the third degree of knowledge might be (see the previous chapter for an explanation of the degrees of knowledge); however, we can never achieve a perfect understanding of the world according to this same third degree of knowledge and will therefore never fully know what a body can do. Our ability to gain control and decisiveness over the movement of the matter assemblage (again, that concerns what we simply call "the intellect" just

as well) that we are, constitutes the only way to acquire a broader knowledge about the capacities of the body and thus, about increasing our power (*potentia*) and therefore our joy.

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19

“COMMENT DISPOSER MES TRIBUS? LE DÉLIRE EST GÉOGRAPHICO-POLITIQUE”

The French word *délire*, turned into a concept by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972), carries a meaning that its English equivalent, *delirium*, does not: it is both a noun and a verb. I will therefore use the French verb *délirer* instead of its imperfect English translation: ‘to go into delirium.’ Deleuze summarizes the argument of *Anti-Oedipus* as the fundamental distinction between the unconscious interpreted as a representative form (Sigmund Freud’s vision) and the unconscious interpreted as a production of desire. It is the same distinction as between a theater and a factory.

This changes everything, since the realm of representation involves a phenomenology that activates itself through symbols and a form of cultural semiotics, whereas the notion of production involves universal operations of material manipulation and transformation. This is why Freudian psychoanalysis tends to focus — or at least to start from — the familial realms, such as the Oedipus complex, and why an anti-Oedipus argument starts from the universal. The second part of *Anti-Oedipus* calls the Freudian totalitarian obsession with the family, “familialism,” and evokes “the imperialism of Oedipus”:

Oedipus restrained is the figure of the daddy-mommy-me triangle, the familial constellation in person. But when psychoanalysis makes of Oedipus its dogma, it is not unaware of the existence of relations said to be pre-Oedipal in the child, exo-Oedipal in the psychotic, para-Oedipal in others.

The pre-exo-para-Oedipal dimensions are precisely what leads to a universal consideration of the unconscious, and therefore of desire and delirium. "We don't *déli*re about Daddy and Mommy," says Deleuze in the *Abécédaire* ("D for Desire"). Rather, "we *déli*re about the whole world, one *déli*re about history, geography, tribes, deserts, peoples, races, climates, that's what we *déli*re about. [...] Where are my tribes, how should I arrange my tribes, surviving in the desert, etc.? Delirium is geographical-political." In other words, the desire that delirium embodies constitutes our relationship to the world in its entirety. It does not mean that the realm of the Oedipal family extended to the world; that is not what the geographical dimension of the delirium means: delirium is not based on a symbolization of our past experience of the world. Rather, it is a present synesthetic experience of the world in its entirety; that means, including our own body. We should not wonder what the signification of our dreams is, but rather, which forces of the world are we embedded into when we dream.

Deleuze often talks about the great creators (authors, artists, filmmakers, philosophers) as people who have tried more or less successfully to transcribe through a medium the great thing of life of which they had a glimpse. There is something almost religious in this notion of 'great thing,' and we should perhaps understand it this way, as strange as it may sound. Perhaps what is called God is nothing else than a retrospec-

tive attempt to anthropomorphize the origin of this powerful thing they have perceived. The phenomenon of trance, recurrent in various religions, is not so far from delirium. Etymologically, trance means “a fear of coming evil” or “a passage from life to death;” but perhaps the trance is nothing else than an intense manifestation of life through which a more articulated experience of the world is accomplished.

The political dimension of delirium is therefore not embedded within a strict anthropocentric realm, but rather it intervenes in a more holistic condition. The fact that the world is populated by individualized bodies — some presenting signs of vitality, some others not — necessarily involves the collective and individual ethical relationships that link them together. We call this relationship, *politics*. The philosophical “scream” of Deleuze: “How to arrange my tribes?” should be understood both at the individual and collective level. If I allow myself a play on words, *Attributs* (attributes) *Tribus* (tribes), are the parts of bodies respectively individual and, what Gilbert Simondon would call, transindividual, i.e. a collective body that is more than simply the sum of its parts. “How to arrange my tribes?” is therefore the quintessential geographical-political delirium since the spatialization of these two types of bodies cannot possibly be neutral.

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Originally published on May 23rd 2013

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THE HYPOCHONDRIAC BODY

For Deleuze, someone who is hypochondriac is someone who keeps asking “Why do I have?”: “Why do I have a spleen, why do I have a liver, why do I have organs?” (*Abécédaire*, “J for Joy”). In his seminar about Cinema in 1985 at the Université de Vincennes, Deleuze evokes the microscopic death of thousands of cells that occurs simultaneously, and that the hypochondriac body could theoretically feel. The state of hypochondria would therefore be an acute perception of one’s body micro-deterioration. Of course, there are limits to the conscious perception; however, just like Deleuze explains the concept of micro-perception in Leibniz’s philosophy (see next section) through the description of the macro-perception of the wave as the totality of micro-perceptions of the quasi-infinity of water droplets, he seems to attribute the feeling of hypochondria to a macro-perception including the totality of micro-perceptions caused by the simultaneous death of all these cells.

Being a little bit of a hypochondriac myself — the luxury of the healthy man — I have the intuition that we should go further than this analysis that Deleuze — who was far from being healthy himself — gives us. We experience our body on an absolutely continuous basis and yet, we are used not to conscientiously feel it. I can feel my legs crossing each other — such a gesture also provokes a conflict of perception if you

pay attention to it — I can feel my nose scratching a little, I can feel the pressure of my fingers against my keyboard but ultimately, I don't really feel my body and the trillions of microscopic operations that allow to maintain vitality. When I do feel something more, the 'event' that it manifests makes me think that something *in me* is dysfunctional. In these moments, I am wrong twice. Firstly, there is no *inside* of the body. The skin is not a wall protecting a fortress; it is fully part of an assemblage of matter that forms a body. Talking of an event *inside the body* is therefore one more way to dissociate our self from our body when, in fact, these two things are only one. Secondly, and this is partially why hypochondriacs are often mocked for the illusionary status of their pain, the feeling that one experiences is not the symptom of a dysfunction but rather the acute perception of the body actually functioning.

Deleuze is right when he affirms that this feeling is a macro-perception of a totality of micro-perceptions including the thousands of simultaneous deaths of cells, but he should add to them the thousands of simultaneous births as well as the totality of biological — we might want to say, the chemical — operations that allow the effectuation of “the totality of functions that resist death” (Xavier Bichat's definition of life in 1800). As Hiroko Nakatani points out in her guest writer essay for *The Funambulist*, in a year, approximately 98% of the matter that composes the body is renewed.¹ This does not mean that 2% always remain and they would be the receptacle of the soul: the whole body is renewing its matter and yet succeeds more or less successfully to maintain its vital integrity until the forces of disintegration, that we call *death*, end up being stronger than the ones that are resisting them. Knowing this fact about a continuous material displacement it becomes more understandable why the hypochondriac body occasionally feels something.

¹ See “Dissolving Mind and Body” by Hiroko Nakatani (December 2011) on thefunambulist.net

The hypochondriac is an individual who has a better perception of his or her body than other healthy individuals. Since the matter that forms the body is, by definition, spatially situated, the hypochondriac can be said to have a better knowledge of his or her physical environment. Allow me to give an autobiographical example: I was recently biking in Brooklyn, and the wind was carrying an important amount of pollen towards my body. It did not take much time for it to penetrate my mouth and deposit itself within my throat, thus giving me a sort of cartography of my esophagus through the sum of contacts between these quasi-microscopic particles and the surface of my corporal topology. Of course, the cartography I am writing about was partially a retrospective construction of the mind, which is probably a manifestation of hypochondria; yet this reconstruction was possible only thanks to the material operation that mixed together a small part of the environment with the parts of my body. There was therefore, at that moment, a more acute “understanding” of the materiality that composes my body, as well as the materiality that composed the environment and also the relationship between them two.

One might cleverly point out that the systematic coughing that I was not mentioning so far, and that followed this story, is not the best illustration of the good function of the body. It actually may be, as coughing constitutes a tentative for the body to reconstitute the equilibrium that maintains vitality and that we call health. As George Canguilhem points out in *The Normal and the Pathological*, disease is not the entropic force that deteriorates the body, but rather the mechanism of defense that the body undertakes to resist to it:

Disease is not simply disequilibrium or discordance; it is, and perhaps most important, an effort on the part of nature to effect a new equilibrium in a man. Disease is a generalized reaction

designed to bring about a cure; the organism develops a disease in order to get well. (George Canguilhem, *The Normal and the Pathological*, D. Reidel Publishing, 1978).

Fever, for example, is the means for a body to develop temperature conditions inappropriate for microbe survival. Of course, disease decreases the body's physical abilities and therefore is not a desirable state; yet, by considering it for what it really is, we acquire a deeper knowledge of the forces of which our body is a part. It also helps us to get closer to a response to the Spinozist scream (see Chapter 18): what can a body do?

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A SHORT POLITICAL READING OF LEIBNIZ'S SMALL SENSATIONS

It must be the case that I have some perception of the movement of each wave on the shore if I am to be able to apperceive that which results from the movements of all the waves put together, namely the mighty roar which we hear by the sea. (Gottfried Leibniz, *Correspondence with Arnauld*, 1686)

The world exists only in its representatives as long as they are included in each monad. It is a lapping of waves, a rumor, a fog, or a mass of dancing particles of dust. It is a state of death or catalepsy, of sleep, drowsiness, or of numbness. It is as if the depths of every monad were made from an infinity of tiny folds (inflections) endlessly furling and unfurling in every direction. (Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, London: Continuum, 1993)

In his *Monadology*, along with few other writings, 17th-century philosopher Gottfried Leibniz evokes the existence of “unconscious perceptions” or, as he also calls them, “small perceptions.” In order to explain what they are, he uses the

example of the sound of the wave. Although we hear that sound, we do not hear precisely distinguish each drop colliding into one another. If those micro-collisions were not providing a sound however, we would not hear the sound of the wave globally. This example of the wave is useful as it links Deleuze's analysis of Leibniz with this thoughts on Spinoza, mentioned before.

Leibniz also uses the example of a crowd screaming or chanting in order to explain the notion of small perceptions. From here, a political interpretation of this philosophical concept can be made: we have the power to embody a small perception of change within society. One might say that this is only a more poetic way to say what every advertisement for a cause says: "It starts with you." Somehow, we always think of means to change things through the narrow filter of number. In this matter, we are influenced by the way modern representative democracies are organized around the strict notion of majority, criticized early on by Alexis de Tocqueville in *Democracy in America*, in 1835. This political paradigm favors this notion of majority rather than political intensity.

The reading of Leibniz's philosophy, and more specifically of small perceptions, is not as much a question of majority as of composition or arrangement. "All consciousness is a matter of threshold," writes Deleuze in the book dedicated to his interpretation of Leibniz's work, *The Fold* (1988). This threshold of consciousness, i.e. the emergence of something at the macroscopic level, is reached only when a multitude of microscopic processes are involved.

Using Deleuze's example in *The Fold*, of the dreamer who wakes up in the middle of the night, we can illustrate the fact that the majority is not fundamental to reach this threshold: "all the little bends and tiny creases engage relations

that produce an attitude, a habitus, and a great sinuous fold.” This attitude/fold is what wakes up the dreamer, even though the rest of the bed might be smooth.

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THE INFINITE WORLDS FOLDED IN THE DRESSES OF YIQING YIN

The proper characteristic of a work of art is to enter into a universal relationship with the world. What it means is that this work exists as itself, independently, or rather beyond the intentions of its author. As far as Yiqing Yin's dresses are concerned, I would not be diminishing them to say that they are beautiful, in the deep sense of the word. Nevertheless, the vertigo I feel when I see them deserves to be questioned. What is this turmoil? My answer to this question is located in the thousands of folds of Yiqing Yin's dresses.

Each of these folds seems to correspond to a small perception of the wearer's body. The body is dressed, yet it seems somehow stripped and offering an epidermic relationship to the world surrounding it. The latter, in its softness and its violence, would then imprint itself in the negative space of each of those sensitive folds, acting on the body in its whole intensity. Through these folds, the body invented by Yiqing Yin is a body whose epidermic surface — and through it, its sensitive perceptions — get multiplied by a thousand. The body is a fragile and delicate receptacle of the microscopic world. But the body is not only receiving; it also reacts to the world. Here again, the almost infinite multiplication of the epidermic surface allows the body to irradiate its emotions and its desires expressed at a molecular level.

The skin being the interface between the body and the world, it is difficult to determine whether it is the body that is thus unfolded from the inside or if it is the world that folds itself infinitely at the contact of the skin. Perhaps the skin does not belong to any of them and would thus constitute a world whose thickness materializes by folding. The vertigo I feel when I look at Yiqing Yin's dresses would then consist in understanding that, despite their finitude as objects, the thin world that they create is infinite.

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THE TWO ARCHITECTURES OF THE INFINITE POSSIBLE WORLDS: LEIBNIZ'S PYRAMID AND BORGES'S GARDEN OF FORKING PATHS

[also in *The Funambulist Pamphlets Volume 10: LITERATURE*]

In his class at the Université de Vincennes in 1983 and 1984, Deleuze approaches cinema by what he calls *la puissance du faux* (power of the false). This notion intermingles the imaginary and reality without confusing them, in order to create the false, and by extension, fiction. The notion of truth is therefore fundamental for his class and in the December 6th 1983 session, he exposes two visions of the world of truths of existence — in opposition to truths of essence — affiliated with each other. The first one comes from Leibniz who imagined an infinite pyramid composed by the infinity of possible worlds, in which each variation of circumstances brings each world to be what it is (see the first excerpt below). In order to end up with a truth of existence, Leibniz has to bring in the notion of morality — and even of theology. For that, he states that at the top of the pyramid stands the world that God has chosen as the unmistakably the best one.

The second vision affiliated with Leibniz's narrative occurs two centuries and half later, in 1941, in the short story "El

Jardin de Senderos que se Bifurcan” (“The Garden of Forking Paths”) by Jorge Luis Borges. In this story, Borges introduces a book in which all the possible worlds are contained, simultaneous and equally real (see the second excerpt below).

To these two visions brought up by Deleuze, I would like to add one proposed by Philip K. Dick for the 1977 Metz’s Science-Fiction Festival in a lecture entitled *If You Find This World Bad, You Should See Some of the Others*. In fact, this vision has less to do with an allegorical architecture and more with an allegorical fashion design, since he suggests that each world is a coat owned by God who decides “in the morning” which one to wear. He had illustrated this theory in the past with his novel *The Man in the High Castle* (1962). Through it, Dick introduced a parallel world — one might say a *uchronia* — that saw the Axis Powers (Germany, Japan and Italy) win the second world war three decades before the novel’s plot begins.

The following excerpts are not extracted from Deleuze’s class about the *Power of the False* (1983) but from the 1980 class about Leibniz, which proposed a shorter but similar comparison:

SEMINAR ABOUT LEIBNIZ (excerpt) ///

By Gilles Deleuze (found on webdeleuze.com)

I just exposed the first difference between truths of essence and truths of existence. In truths of essence, the analysis is finite, in truths of existence, the analysis is infinite. That is not the only one, for there is a second difference: according to Leibniz, a truth of essence is such that its contradiction is impossible, that is, it is impossible for 2 and 2 not to make 4. Why? For the simple reason that I can prove the identity

of 4 and of $2+2$ through a series of finite procedures. Thus $2+2=5$ can be proven to be contradictory and impossible. Adam non sinner, Adam who might not have sinned, I therefore seek for the contradictory of sinner. It's possible. The proof is that, following the great criterion of classical logic — and from this perspective Leibniz remains within classical logic — I can think nothing when I say $2+2=5$, I cannot think the impossible, no more than I think whatever it might be according to this logic when I say squared circle. But I can very well think of an Adam who might not have sinned. Truths of existence are called contingent truths.

Caesar could have not crossed the Rubicon. Leibniz's answer is admirable: certainly, Adam could have not sinned, Caesar could have not crossed the Rubicon. Only here it is: this was not compossible with the existing world. An Adam non sinner enveloped another world. This world was possible in itself, a world in which the first man might not have sinned is a logically possible world, only it is not compossible with our world. That is, God chose a world such that Adam sinned. Adam non sinner implied another world, this world was possible, but it was not compossible with ours.

Why did God choose this world? Leibniz goes on to explain it. Understand that at this level, the notion of compossibility becomes very strange: what is going to make me say that two things are compossible and that two other things are impossible? Adam non sinner belongs to another world than ours, but suddenly Caesar might not have crossed the Rubicon either, that would have been another possible world. What is this very unusual relation of compossibility? Understand that perhaps this is the same question as what is infinite analysis, but it does not have the same outline. So we can draw a dream out of it, we can have this dream on several levels. You dream, and there is a kind of wizard who

makes you enter a palace; this palace... it's the dream of Apollodorus told by Leibniz. Apollodorus is going to see a goddess, and this goddess leads him into the palace, and this palace is composed of several palaces. Leibniz loved that, boxes containing boxes. He explained, in a text that we will examine, he explained that in the water, there are many fish and that in the fish, there is water, and in the water of these fish, there are fish of fish. It's infinite analysis. The image of the labyrinth hounds him. He never stops talking about the labyrinth of continuity. This palace is in the form of a pyramid. Then, I look closer and, in the highest section of my pyramid, closest to the point, I see a character who is doing something. Right underneath, I see the same character who is doing something else in another location. Again underneath the same character is there in another situation, as if all sorts of theatrical productions were playing simultaneously, completely different, in each of the palaces, with characters that have common segments. It's a huge book by Leibniz called *Theodicy*, specifically divine justice.

You understand, what he means is that at each level is a possible world. God chose to bring into existence the extreme world closest to the point of the pyramid. How was he guided in making that choice? We shall see, we must not hurry since this will be a tough problem, what the criteria are for God's choice. But once we've said that he chose a particular world, this world implicated Adam the sinner; in another world, obviously all that is simultaneous, these are variants, one can conceive of something else, and each time, it's a world. Each of them is possible. They are impossible with one another, only one can pass into existence. And all of them attempt with all their strength to pass into existence. The vision that Leibniz proposes of the creation of the world by God becomes very stimulating. There are all these worlds that are in God's understanding, and each of which on its

own presses forward pretending to pass from the possible into the existent. They have a weight of reality, as a function of their essences. As a function of the essences they contain, they tend to pass into existence. And this is not possible for they are not compossible with each other: existence is like a dam. A single combination will pass through. Which one? You already sense Leibniz's splendid response: it will be the best one!

And not the best one by virtue of a moral theory, but by virtue of a theory of games. And it's not by chance that Leibniz is one of the founders of statistics and of the calculus of games. And all that will get more complicated...

ABOUT BORGES (excerpt) ///

By Gilles Deleuze (found on webdeleuze.com)

In *Ficciones*, there is a short story, "The Garden of Forking Paths." As I summarize the story, keep in mind the famous dream of the Theodicy. "The Garden of Forking Paths," what is it? It's the infinite book, the world of compossibilities. The idea of the Chinese philosopher being involved with the labyrinth is an idea of Leibniz's contemporaries, appearing in mid-17th century. There is a famous text by Malebranche that is a discussion with the Chinese philosopher, with some very odd things in it. Leibniz is fascinated by the Orient, and he often cites Confucius. Borges made a kind of copy that conformed to Leibniz's thought with an essential difference: for Leibniz, all the different worlds that might encompass an Adam sinning in a particular way, an Adam sinning in some other way, or an Adam not sinning at all, he excludes all this infinity of worlds from each other, they are impossible with each other, such that he conserves a very classical principle of disjunction: it's either this world or some other one. Whereas Borges places all these impossible series

in the same world, allowing a multiplication of effects. Leibniz would never have allowed impossibles to belong to a single world. Why? I only state our two difficulties: the first is, what is an infinite analysis? And second, what is this relationship of impossibility? The labyrinth of infinite analysis and the labyrinth of compossibility.

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LECTURE BY GILLES DELEUZE ABOUT THE ACT OF CREATION (MAY 1987)

On May 17, 1987, Deleuze gave a lecture at the Paris-based cinema school, FEMIS (Fondation européenne pour les métiers de l'image et du son) that remained famous. Talking to the students, he elaborates about “having an idea in cinema” and what is an Act of Creation. A significant part of this lecture has been translated into English by Eleanor Kaufman and published in *Deleuze & Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture* (University of Minnesota Press, 1998.) This translation’s ambition was to recreate a coherent piece of discourse from the beginning to the end, however, some interesting fragments have been forgotten, notably the moment when Deleuze talks about the cinema of Akira Kurosawa and Robert Bresson.

Deleuze uses Kurosawa’s example to describe how one discipline can resonate with another and how an idea in literature can be translated into an idea in cinema, even if the means of expression of this idea are extremely different. He compares Kurosawa’s films with the written work of Shakespeare and Dostoevsky.

In Dostoevsky’s work, especially in *The Idiot* (1868), the characters find themselves in an absolute urgency established by

the narrative when suddenly, they linger on a question that appears more important to them (my translation):

... in *The Seven Samurai* [1954], you understand, they are trapped in a very urgent situation, they accepted to defend the village and from the beginning to the end, they wonder about a more profound question. There is a more profound question through all that. And it will be said, at the end, by the Samurai's chief, when they go away: "What is a Samurai?" What is a Samurai, not in general, but what is a Samurai at that time, i.e. somebody who is not good for anything anymore. Warlords do not need them anymore, and peasants will very soon be able to defend themselves. And during the entire movie, despite the urgency of the situation, the Samurais are haunted by this question.

"This is an idea in cinema," Deleuze says or, at least, a cinematographic (successful) translation of an idea in literature. He does not speak about *Rashomon* (1950), but this other film by Kurosawa also creates a powerful idea in cinema, originally set in literature. Adapted from two short stories "Rashomon" (1914) and "In a Grove" (1922) by Ryunosuke Akutagawa, this film is a deep introspection into the nature of cinema itself; it scrambles the rules and recognizes cinema as a technical (tactical) construction, a few years before the New Wave proposed similar interpretations in France.

Another filmmaker whose work Deleuze describes in this lecture is Robert Bresson. The cinematographic invention that Deleuze particularly distinguishes consists in framing space and bodies in Bresson's movies (my translation):

There are rarely entire spaces in Bresson's films. His spaces can be said to be disconnected. One is a corner for example, a cell's corner and then we will see another corner or a piece of the wall, etc. Everything happens as if the Bressonian space, by some means, introduces itself as a series of little pieces whose connection is not predetermined.

[...]

These small pieces of visual space, whose connection is not given, by which means do you want them to be connected? By the hand. And it is not theory, it is not philosophy, it does not deduce itself like that but I say: Bresson's type of spaces and the cinematographic valorization of the hand in the image are obviously related. I mean that the junction of little pieces of Bressonian spaces, because of the very facts that they are disconnected pieces of space, can be only linked manually.

Deleuze does not mention it, probably because it is obvious but the quintessential example of this interpretation is Bresson's film *The Pickpocket* (1959) that introduces a young man who spends a whole part of the movie training his hands in order to be able to steal wallets and watches. Bresson's insistence in filming close shots of these moving hands gives this film a unique identity.

The last part of the lecture is based on the affirmation that each act of creation is an act of resistance. He paraphrases André Malraux, who states that "Art is only thing that resists death," and brings a political reading of this thesis (translation by Eleanor Kaufman):

The act of resistance has two sides. It is human, and it is also the act of art. Only the act of resistance resists death, whether the art is in the form of work of art, or in the form of human struggle.

This lecture is important for everyone who considers the act of creation as a visceral necessity in opposition to the feeling that art is a sort of “one’s own business.” The act of creation is engaging one in a universal matter.

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ABOUT

THE FUNAMBULIST: a blog written and edited by Léopold Lambert. It finds its name in the consideration for architecture's representative medium, the line, and its philosophical and political power when it materializes and subjectivizes bodies. If the white page represents a given milieu — a desert, for example — and one (an architect, for example) comes to trace a line on it, (s)he will virtually split this same milieu into two distinct impermeable parts through its embodiment, the wall. The Funambulist, also known as a tightrope walker, is the character who, somehow, subverts this power by walking on the line.

CENTER FOR TRANSFORMATIVE MEDIA, Parsons The New School for Design: a transdisciplinary media research initiative bridging design and the social sciences, and dedicated to the exploration of the transformative potential of emerging technologies upon the foundational practices of everyday life across a range of settings.

PUNCTUM BOOKS: spontaneous acts of scholarly combustion is an open-access and print-on-demand independent publisher dedicated to radically creative modes of intellectual inquiry and writing across a whimsical para-humanities assemblage. punctum books seeks to curate the open spaces of writing or writing-as-opening, the crucial tiny portals on whose capacious thresholds all writing properly and improperly takes place. Pricking, puncturing, perforating = publishing in the mode of an unconditional hospitality and friendship, making space for what Eve Sedgwick called “queer little gods” – the “ontologically intermediate and teratological figures” of y/our thought. We seek to pierce and disturb the wednesdayish, business-as-usual protocols of both the generic university studium and its individual cells or holding tanks. We also take in strays.



THE FUNAMBULIST PAMPHLETS VOLUME 3: DELEUZE

It is tempting to use a literal transcription of his concepts into these disciplines, because his discourse is often spatialized and materialized. Nevertheless, such literality is doomed to remain a false claim of legitimacy for one's work acquired through evoking the name of Deleuze. Conversely, an effort to translate of his ideas into the creative process rather than simply use his name allows us to develop a becoming Deleuzian.

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