FÉLIX GUATTARI

MOLECULAR REVOLUTION

Psychiatry and Politics

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Introduction

At present, Félix Guattari is undoubtedly best known in the English-speaking world from his first work with Gilles Deleuze (1972), translated as *Capitalism and Schizophrenia: The Anti-Oedipus.*

With this collection of translated essays, derived from two books, *Psychanalyse et transversalité* (Maspero, 1972) and *La Révolution moléculaire* (Éditions Recherches, Séries 'Encre', 1977), readers will now have an opportunity to become acquainted with Guattari's earliest non-conjoint writings. The essays from the first book range over the years 1955 to 1970. *La Révolution moléculaire*, although published in 1977, was 'condensed and augmented' in a version of 1980 (Éditions 10/18). In 1979 Guattari published a more systematic, theoretical work, *L'Inconscient machinique* (Éditions Recherches). With Deleuze he has also written two shorter books: *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (1975) and *Rhizomes* (1976), both with Éditions Minuit, works of transition but both influential, before the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *Mille Plateaux*, not yet translated.

The essays translated in this volume include principally articles that would be considered political (in a wide sense of this term) rather than philosophical, but in the tradition of Guattari and Deleuze there can be no compartmentalization of disciplines: philosophy, politics, structuralist linguistics, psychoanalysis (or rather its undoing), micro-sociology – all frontiers are violated but violated on principle.

This practice simply pushes in a more radical direction what is in fact an established tradition in French intellectual life in this century: that one should straddle in a sufficiently 'magisterial' manner at least two disciplines. Thus Georges Canguilhem combines philosophical work with the analysis of the categories of medical thought and the history of biological concepts; Jean Toussaint Desanti, who started off in philosophy, became a professional mathematician in order to pursue his sort of philosophy more effectively. The polymathy of Foucault and René Thom is already familiar to English-language readers. Apart from 'schizo-analysis', Deleuze has written 'as a philosopher' a book on Kant, two on Spinoza and two on Nietzsche, amongst others. One might add that when this straddling of disciplines is well done (as

in the cases mentioned here) the results can be impressive; when less well done, disastrous.

Félix Guattari was by origin a psychoanalyst in the Lacan school but was politically engaged from very early on. This engagement became increasingly articulated through and after the events of May 1968, in which he played a major behind-the-scenes role. But also through the 1960s he worked at La Borde psychiatric clinic south of Paris where he elaborated his idea of 'institutional analysis' as a methodological critique of 'institutional psychotherapy' which had been the ideology of the clinic since its inauguration, in which Guattari participated, in 1953. Since its formation in 1975 he has been centrally active in the International Network Alternative to Psychiatry. He has had some criticism levelled at him by some circles in the 'alternative' movement because of his association with La Borde, where electroshock (ECT) and insulin coma are still practised. He is not a doctor and has never given these treatments to anyone, but more importantly his 'institutional analysis' has the specific aim of 'depassing' politically the practice of institutional psychotherapy. His concept of transversality is worked out as a critique of institutional 'transference' (the psychoanalytic concept). What he means by transversality in the institutional context Guattari explains in the chapter of that name in this book. The word, however, also connotes an intellectual mobility across discipline boundaries and above all the establishment of a continuum through theory, practice and militant action.

Our author has also met with criticism from some circles of the organized left in terms of *gauchiste* 'spontaneism'. In fact there are few people who have thought out so consistently, critically and self-critically the problem of spontaneous action, arriving at the conclusion that it is a 'dangerous myth' that we have to transcend in a multiplicity of new practices that he specifies. I can also testify to his generosity and to the very physical risks that he has run in his defence of dissident Italian leftists accused, without proofs being brought, of links with terrorism. Today, after the left ascension to power in France on 10 May 1981, Félix Guattari is involved with publicly important questions, such as the Free Radio system (for which he has waged a long struggle in Europe) as an indicator of a new style in mass communication that constitutes a rational challenge to rational administrators, who at last seem to be genuinely concerned with problems of democracy at the base of society.

Guattari's position is not, as some people have seemed to think, 'anti-theoretical' but represents a new type of theoretical activity that would avoid the simplifying reduction to containing structures such as the dyadic and triadic situations of psychoanalysis (transference situation, Oedipal complex) or of C. S. Peirce's relational logic (to which he often refers). The particular nature of the rigour that Guattari is developing can be seen in

L'Inconscient machinique, in his most recent still unpublished writings and in the chapter on 'Capitalist Systems, Structures and Processes' (as yet unpublished in French) in this book. He tells me that his view of theory is that it has an essentially creative function, like art. The aim of theory is to produce new, more heuristic theoretical objects and he quotes the invention of polyphony in music. In the left France of 1982 everyone wants to invent new theoretical objects. Guattari has succeeded in inventing some – in fact quite a number of them.

In this writing, individuals, groups and 'the society' are not denied, but the desiring machines operate in the *spaces between* these 'entities'. Guattari's writing itself issues from this sort of interspace and is directed back again into these 'spaces between', which are the spaces where things are *agencées*. Then, by a curious but comprehensible logic, the writing itself becomes *agencement*. The reader will have to work out the meaning of this term from the text itself and the Glossary,[1] but I shall simply note here that one of the ways that Guattari uses *agencement* is close to the way that Erving Goffman describes the everyday life organization of experience, in *Frame Analysis* for example. But if one searches for analogies between Guattari's position and positions in 'Anglo-Saxon' social thought, one is hard-pressed to find equivalences to the concept of rule in, say, ethno-methodology or in P. Winch's Wittgenstein-orientated rule-following approach. The closest one can get is in the conception of a 'plane of consistency' that Guattari develops.

The question for Guattari, and the rest of us, is how to undo the erstwhile emancipatory rhetoric of much of the series of social revolutionary affirmations of the 1960s and early 1970s. How to re-think what thought might be. We may have widely different responses to this question, but one thing is sure: from now on, in no conceivable way can Félix Guattari's extensive and intense response be left out of account.

The selection of articles in this book deliberately omits a number of pieces, all of them interesting but having many local references directed at a French public. The English-language reader may find some difficulty with the author's terminology, though these earlier writings by no means present the problem of Guattari's later and conjoint work. One might object to some of the language and remark that there is a perfectly good philosophical and scientific language that has by no means been exhausted through 2,500 years of history, but we should not jump to the conclusion that Guattari is guilty of stylistic perversity. As with Deleuze his totally explicit aim is to destructure a consciousness and a rationality over-sure of itself and thus too easy prey to subtle, and not so subtle, dogmatisms.

The boundaries between the forms of human and non-human matter that

1. Reference should be made to the very useful and lucid account of *agencement* given in *Dialogues: Gilles Deleuze, Claire Parnet*, Flammarion, 1977, pp. 84–91.

we encounter in the world are never that clear-cut. If we choose to follow Félix Guattari in his nomadism through regions of ambiguity it is because we glimpse from very early on an eminently rewarding clarity that emerges through this highly original writing.

DAVID COOPER

Sepulchre for an Oedipus Complex[1]

In the form of a dedication to Lucien Sebag and Pierre Clastres

Death, my friend, you know. But what death? The death we talk about, the comfort of sleep at the last, or the dead end of finality that people don't talk about so much?

When I was six or seven there was a long period when I woke up every night with the same nightmare – a Lady in black. She was coming towards my bed. I was terrified of her, and my terror woke me up. I was afraid to go back to sleep. Then, one evening, my brother lent me his air-gun; he said I must simply shoot her if she came back. She never came again. But what really surprised me, I remember clearly, is that I did not in fact load the (real) gun.

This led off in two directions at once. In the direction of the garden – that is of the signified – it was my aunt Emilia, my father's sister, with her black name and her black clothes, a truly horrible woman; and in the direction of the courtyard – that is of the signifier – it was the wardrobe with the mirror on it facing my bed, in my parents' bedroom. But of course! The words themselves explained it: *l'armoire, la Dame en noir, la Dame de moire, l'arme noire, l'armoise, les armes du moi, la Mouise.*[2] In the thirties, my father had gone bankrupt, and, with the assistance of this aunt, Emilia, he had set out to raise angora rabbits: between the crash and the slump, we ended up eating the rabbits. Papa was on the verge of suicide, but of course there were the children to consider . . .

Death and the mirror. I who was there and who need not have been there. I am all there. I am all not there. I am all or nothing.

Then there was the dog. It had bitten me or knocked me over on the gravel outside the big house at Maigremont, my Aunt Germaine's (sister of my maternal grandmother). It was just in front of a large, gloomy ground-floor room, where there was a billiard table and one of those things for trying clothes on, jackets or dresses, I forget, a headless body, a body that felt nothing if you stuck a knife into it, on a wooden stand, with a wooden ball on top of it. Later on I linked it up with 'corpse', 'body', which I found in an

1. Published in the issue of *Change* entitled 'Déraison, désir'.

2. The wardrobe, the Lady in black, the Lady in moiré, the black weapon, wormwood, the weapons of the self, the Depression.

English vocabulary with a blue cover, a real sky-blue. Still later I made the connection with Deleuze's organless Body.

Real teeth, not just the humped gums of the unweaned.

Myself, lying soundless, something I must have picked up without noticing from vague memories of Normandy. Death in the garden here. The dog's teeth. A dog on the balcony, waiting to leap over the edge. A dog in the dark. *Nom du chien*, in the name of the father. A dog uttering, trying to tell me something. Dogs with a *cogito*. And then that slimy dog coming down the steps at the end of *Los olvidados*. Animals, animated words, totems of death.

A dove, in another garden (my paternal uncle's). It swells up like a frog. It is an eagle. My father's *gun*. A huge, terrifying eagle. I fire, over and over again. It is like a *dummy*. It's no good. Charlie Chaplin gets nowhere trying to hit the giant. (It wedges his head in a gas lamp.) After thinking about this dream for days on end I finally realized that the dove and the eagle were two bits of my old address (rue de l'Aigle, la Garenne Colombe) – simply nostalgia. The child clinging to home territory even while part of him is trying to get away. Who would I be if I didn't come from my parents' house? The dead bird flies away. I am me. A death instinct unleashed for good. And this time the (*imaginary*) gun *was* loaded.

There were no more ambivalent dogs, no more dog-turds on the gravel. It is all or nothing. It is the eagle or the dove – not both in the same place. And then, whatever happens, it is nothing, nothing. A perverse Manicheism. Childhood home broken open, like the egg on my (maternal) cousin's plate in the big basement kitchen at Maigremont. Childhood home set apart, like the oil-cloth-covered table in the corner of another kitchen.

I spent six months with Uncle Charles of the garden with the birds. They were waiting for him to die – he had lung cancer. When I left, they thought he had only a few days to live. I never went back to my father's family home again.

A great empty space against the wall where my piano always stood: idea of a vacuole. Outside – the street, a crossroads, that thing like an island overhanging the pavement opposite the exit of the Friendly Society hall. Further along, a big piano shop. Lucien Sebag was there, leaning against the wall. It was either before or after his suicide. I don't know. But he had already gone over the Oedipal wall. And he certainly stayed there – but then, he had far more reason than I did! I didn't want to know. Inside, there was my mother on the ground floor. My father was upstairs, perhaps – or perhaps he had already gone – no one knew where. Just like my paternal grandfather. I never knew him, but he shouldn't have done it.

Mama behind a cashier's window. A country post-office. They are closing. I get there just in time. Or too late. She closes her account books. I beseech. Sh! She indicates with her head a door on her right that opens onto darkness.

Silence. Panic. HE mustn't hear. It should be shut; it's all over. He? Who? Why, my father surely, lying on his death bed. He is waiting for her to join him. There's a problem with the electric connection – the *lamp* is going to go out; it's all over. In the nick of time I manage to reconnect the thing.

I'm nine; it is a few months before the outbreak of war. I am in Normandy, at my (maternal) grandmother's. We are listening to the 'traitor of Stuttgart', Jean Hérold Paquis. My grandfather (grandmother has remarried), a vast and kindly old man, is sitting on the toilet. The door is open so that he can hear the radio. My cutting-out box is by his feet – little paper dolls I make clothes for. Grandpa's head hangs right down, onto his knees, and his arms flop beside him. Is he touching my toys? I want to shout out to him. Silence. I turn my head, slowly – an eternity – towards the *light* on the radio. A terrible crash. He's fallen onto the floor. Grandmother screams. It's a stroke. Turn off the radio. Call the neighbours. I'm alone in the dark. Crying, crying.

'Want to have one last look at him?' There's a newspaper over his head, to keep off the flies. There's a newspaper over the jam Grandmother's just made – to keep off the flies.

A dead body on top of the cupboard where the pots of jam are kept.

I gave them a poem to put in his coffin. 'What rhymes with *bonheur?*' He had answered, 'Instead of *feuille morte*, you can just put *les feuilles se meurent*'. 'But you can't say that, Grandpa.' 'You can if I say so!' I would have to ask someone else. I loved him a lot, but he might not know something like that. He'd been a worker. An amazing man. A striker. They'd gone on strike at Monceau-les-Mines. There'd been fighting. Some people were killed.

*

Contemplating suicide. A phobic object. Dying to exorcise death. Corpse, Body, Flesh convulsed to put an end to finitude. Death in the hollow of your hand, a finger on the trigger – to trigger off a lot more chaos, for all the others, too. Putting the lid down. Pulling the chain. Willing impotence.

One bullet into the mouth, another into the heart. Just a year before his brother he blew his brains out. A shotgun. Point blank. I couldn't understand it. I fought it without understanding. His way of saying fuck everything. I felt only rage. As if he'd shot me.

Naïve policemen on bicycles. Blond hair. Outside the metro at two a.m. Come and see me again when you can pay me, little boy, when you've established yourself in some way. This wasn't really her scene. Maybe she had nothing to do with that kind of scene.

Aimed at the black, killed the white. Frankly now, do you really think I'm going to be all right? I'm amazed by your naïve optimism. I do feel a lot better, it's true. But that's just what worries me, because whatever happens, it's too late. I'm too old. I can't start again at the beginning. The hope you try to give me only makes me feel anxiety. Are you really taking in what I'm

saying? Or is it your professional duty to pretend not to believe me? You know – I've finally worked out how to do it. Just thinking of it makes me happy. But I'll have to wait a while, it can only be done in the spring. It'll be lovely, you'll see. Falling asleep on the beach when the tide is coming in – just taking a few tablets first – just too many, so as to let oneself be carried out without a fight.

I feel secretly close to all the other people who don't want death to be something that comes from outside themselves. Practising mourning for themselves like a pianist practising his scales. Death to ward off something worse? A death with which we come to feel completely at home? But there's another death of which one can say nothing, which has no points of reference, which alienates everything. Two rationales of suicide: the paranoid-familial of Werther, and the schizo-incest of Kleist. On the one hand, death is human and meaningful: Mama, you understand, I couldn't go on, Yes son, I understand, Yes General, I understand, everyone understands, death is quick, death is pathetic. On the other, death is proud, there is a contemplative drifting (if that is what it is) towards infinity, dissolution through inadvertence.

The significant image, to be convincing, to stage the death scene, dries its tears – the play-acting is over! It snatches at the figure of death, the death that is a desire turned upside down. At first it may have been just a game, a dizzy spin – come on, scare me! But it gets caught up in the moving chain, and is broken and shattered. The imagined death then opens onto a completely de-territorialized desire. With every break another rebel death. Are you going to get rid of your Oedipus for good? Since I'm in it up to the neck, let me present myself for the holocaust. Deciding the undecidable. Join 'society's suicides'. Stop going along with the system at the very moment when it has become intolerable *politically*. Death – to cut off the last possible line of retreat. *And* to spit in society's eye, with all its con-tricks about life as a preparation for death, and its social services to make life tolerable on the seamy side, its Eros–Thanatos cocktails. There is the last reflection on the frosted pictures of expectation, the agonizing wrench, and at last death – the diamond of unnamable desire.

1 Institutional Psychotherapy

Transversality[1]

Institutional therapeutics is a delicate infant. Its development needs close watching, and it tends to keep very bad company. In fact, the threat to its life comes not from any congenital debility, but from the factions of all kinds that are lying in wait to rob it of its specific object. Psychologists, psycho-sociologists, even psychoanalysts, are ready to take over bits of it that they claim to be their province, while voracious governments look for their chance to 'incorporate' it in their official texts. How many of the hopeful offspring of avant-garde psychiatry have been thus kidnapped early in life since the end of the last war – ergo-therapy, social therapy, community psychiatry and so on.

Let me begin by saying that institutional therapeutics *has* got an object, and that it must be defended against everyone who wants to make it deviate from it; it must not let itself become divorced from the reality of the social problematic. This demands both a new awareness at the widest possible social level – for instance the national approach to mental health in France – and a definite theoretical stance in relation to existing therapeutics at the most technical levels. In a sense it may be said that the absence of any common approach in the present-day psychiatric movement reflects the segregation that persists in various forms between the world of the mad and the rest of society. Psychiatrists who run mental institutions suffer from a disjunction between their concern for those in their care and more general social problems that shows itself in various ways: a systematic failure to understand what is going on outside the hospital walls, a tendency to psychologize social problems, certain blind spots about work and aims *inside* the institution and so on. Yet the problem of the effect of the social signifier on the individual faces us at every moment and at every level, and in the context of institutional therapeutics one cannot help coming up against it all the time. The social relationship is not something apart from individual and family problems; on the contrary: we are forced to recognize it in every case of psycho-pathology, and in my view it is even more important when one is dealing with those psychotic syndromes that present the most 'de-socialized' appearance.

1. A report presented to the first International Psycho-Drama Congress, held in Paris in September 1964. Published in the *Revue de psychothérapie institutionelle*, no. 1.

Freud, whose work mainly developed around the problem of the neuroses, was well aware of this problem, as we can see, for instance, from the following:

> If we dwell on these situations of danger for a moment, we can say that in fact a particular determinant of anxiety (that is, situation of danger) is allotted to every age of development as being appropriate to it. The danger of psychical helplessness fits the stage of the ego's early immaturity; the danger of loss of an object (or loss of love) fits the lack of self-sufficiency in the first years of childhood; the danger of being castrated fits the phallic phase; and finally fear of the super-ego, which assumes a special position, fits the period of latency. In the course of development the old determinants of anxiety should be dropped, since the situations of danger corresponding to them have lost their importance owing to the strengthening of the ego. But this only occurs most incompletely. Many people are unable to surmount the fear of loss of love; they never become sufficiently independent of other people's love and in this respect carry on their behaviour as infants. Fear of the super-ego should normally never cease, since, in the form of moral anxiety, it is indispensable in social relations, and only in the rarest cases can an individual become independent of human society. A few of the old situations of danger, too, succeed in surviving into later periods by making contemporary modifications in their determinants of anxiety.[2]

What is the obstacle that the 'old determinants of anxiety' come up against and that prevent their altogether disappearing? Whence this persistence, this survival of neurotic anxieties once the situations that produced them are past, and in the absence of any 'situation of danger'? A few pages earlier, Freud reaffirms that anxiety precedes repression: the anxiety is caused by an external danger, it is *real*; but that external danger is actually evoked and determined by the instinctual internal danger: 'It is true that the boy felt anxiety in the face of a demand by his libido – in this instance anxiety at being in love with his mother.'[3] Thus it is the internal danger that lays the ground for the external. In terms of reality, the renunciation of the beloved object correlates with the acceptance of the loss of the member, but the 'castration complex' itself cannot be got rid of by such a renunciation. For in effect it implies the introduction of an additional term in the situational triangulation of the Oedipus complex, so that there can be no end to the threat of castration which will continually reactivate what Freud calls the 'unconscious need for punishment'.[4] Castration and punishment, whose position had remained precarious because of the 'principle of ambivalence' governing the choice of the various part objects, are thus irreversibly caught up in the working of the social signifiers. Henceforth, the authority of this *social reality* will base its survival on the establishment of an irrational morality in which punishment

2. *New Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis*, trans. James Strachey, Pelican edition, 1973, pp. 120–21.

3. ibid., p. 118.

4. ibid., p. 141.

will be justified simply by a law of blind repetition, since it cannot be explained by any ethical legality. It is not therefore any use trying to recognize this persistence of anxiety beyond actual 'situations of danger' through some impossible dialogue between the ego ideal and the super-ego; what it in fact means is that those 'situations of danger' belong to the specific 'signifying logic' of this particular social framework, which will have to be analysed with the same maieutic rigour as is brought to bear in the psychoanalysis of the individual.

The persistence is really a repetition, the expression of a death instinct. By seeing it merely as a continuity, we miss the question implied in it. It seems natural to prolong the resolution of the Oedipus complex into a 'successful' integration into society. But surely it would be more to the point to see that the way anxiety persists must be linked with the dependence of the individual on the collectivity described by Freud. The fact is that, barring some total change in the social order, the castration complex can never be satisfactorily resolved, since contemporary society persists in giving it an unconscious function of social regulation. There becomes a more and more pronounced incompatibility between the function of the father, as the basis of a possible solution for the individual of the problems of identification inherent in the structure of the conjugal family, and the demands of industrial societies, in which an integrating model of the father/king/god pattern tends to lose any effectiveness outside the sphere of mystification. This is especially evident in phases of social regression, as for instance when fascist, dictatorial regimes or regimes of personal, presidential power give rise to imaginary phenomena of collective pseudo-phallicization that end in a ridiculous totemization by popular vote of a leader: the leader actually remains essentially without any real control over the signifying machine of the economic system, which still continues to reinforce the power and autonomy of its functioning. The Kennedys and Khrushchevs who tried to evade this law were 'sacrificed' – though by different rituals – the one on the altar of the oil companies, the others on that of the barons of heavy industry.

The real subjectivity in modern States, the real powers of decision – whatever the old-fashioned dreams of the bearers of 'national legitimacy' – cannot be identified with any individual or with the existence of any small group of enlightened leaders. It is still unconscious and blind, and there is no hope that any modern Oedipus will guide its steps. The solution certainly does not lie in summoning up or trying to rehabilitate ancestral forms, precisely because the Freudian experience has taught us to see the problem of, on the one hand, the persistence of anxiety beyond changes in the situation that produced it, and on the other, the limits that can be assigned to this process. This is where institutional therapeutics comes in: its object is to try to change the data accepted by the super-ego into a new kind of acceptance of

'initiative', rendering pointless the blind social demand for a particular kind of castrating procedure to the exclusion of anything else.

What I am now proposing is only a temporary measure. There are a certain number of formulations that I have found useful to mark different stages in an institutional experiment. I think it sensible to set out a kind of grid of correspondence between the meandering of meanings and ideas among psychotics, especially schizophrenics, and the mechanisms of growing discordance being set up at all levels of industrial society in its neo-capitalist and bureaucratic socialist phase whereby the individual tends to have to identify with an ideal of consuming-machines-consuming-producing-machines. The silence of the catatonic is perhaps a pioneering interpretation of that ideal. If the group is going to structure itself in terms of a rejection of the spoken word, what response is there apart from silence? How can an area of that society be altered so as to make even a small dent in the process of reducing the spoken word to a written system? We must, I think, distinguish between groups of two kinds. One must be extremely wary of formal descriptions of groups that define them apart from what they are aiming to do. The groups we are dealing with in institutional therapeutics are involved in a definite activity, and are totally different from those usually involved in what is known as research into group dynamics. They are attached to an institution, and in some sense or other they have a perspective, a viewpoint on the world, a job to do.

This first distinction, though it may prove difficult to sustain as we go further, can be summarized as being one between independent groups and dependent groups. The subject group, or group with a 'vocation', endeavours to control its own behaviour and elucidate its object, and in this case can produce its own tools of elucidation. Schotte[5] could say of this type of group that it hears and is heard, and that it can therefore work out its own system of hierarchizing structures and so become open to a world beyond its own immediate interests. The dependent group is not capable of getting things into this sort of perspective; the way it hierarchizes structures is subject to its adaptation to other groups. One can say of the subject group that it makes a statement – whereas of the dependent group only that 'its cause is heard', but no one knows where or by whom, or when.

This distinction is not absolute; it is simply a first attempt to index the kind of group we are dealing with. In fact it operates like two poles of reference, since every group, but especially every subject group, tends to oscillate between two positions: that of a subjectivity whose work is to speak, and a subjectivity which is lost to view in the otherness of society. This reference provides us with a safeguard against falling into the formalism of role-analysis; it also leads us to consider the problem of the part played by the

5. J. Schotte, 'Le Transfert dit fondamental de Freud pour poser le problème: psychanalyse et institution', *Revue de psychothérapie institutionelle*, no. 1.

individual in the group as a being with the power of speech, and thus to re-examine the usual mechanism of psycho-sociological and structuralist descriptions. It is also, undoubtedly, a way of getting back to the theories of bureaucracy, self-management, 'training groups' and so on, which regularly fail in their object because of their scientistic refusal to involve meaning and content.

I think it convenient further to distinguish, in groups, between the 'manifest content' – that is, what is said and done, the attitudes of the different members, the schisms, the appearance of leaders, of aspiring leaders, scapegoats and so on – and the 'latent content', which can be discovered only by interpreting the various escapes of meaning in the order of phenomena. We may define this latent content as 'group desire': it must be articulated with the group's specific form of love and death instincts.

Freud said that in serious neuroses there was a dislocation of the fundamental instincts; the problem facing the analyst was to reintegrate them in such a way as to dispel, say, the symptoms of sado-masochism. To undertake such an operation, the very structure of institutions whose only existence as a body is imaginary requires the setting-up of institutional means for the purpose – though it must not be forgotten that these cannot claim to be more than symbolic mediations tending by their very nature to be broken down into some kind of meaning. It is not the same as what happens in the psychoanalytic transference. The phenomena of imaginary possession are not grasped and articulated on the basis of an analyst's interpretation. The group phantasy is essentially symbolic, whatever imagery may be drawn along by it. Its inertia is regulated only by an endless return to the same insoluble problems. Experience of institutional therapeutics makes it clear that individual phantasizing never respects the particular nature of this symbolic plane of group phantasy. On the contrary, it tries to absorb it, and to overlay it with particular imaginings that are 'naturally' to be found in the various roles that could be structured by using the signifiers circulated by the collective. This 'imaginary incarnation' of some of the signifying articulations of the group – on the pretext of organization, efficiency, prestige, or, equally, of incapacity, non-qualification, etc. – crystallizes the structure as a whole, hinders its possibilities for change, determines its features and its 'mass', and restricts to the utmost its possibilities for dialogue with anything that might tend to bring its 'rules of the game' into question: in short, it produces all the conditions for degenerating into what we have called a dependent group.

The unconscious desire of a group, for instance the 'pilot' group in a traditional hospital, as expression of a death instinct, will probably not be such as can be stated in words, and will produce a whole range of symptoms. Though those symptoms may in a sense be 'articulated like a language' and describable in a structural context, to the extent that they tend to disguise the

institution as subject they will never succeed in expressing themselves otherwise than in incoherent terms from which one will still be left to decipher the object (totem and taboo) erected at the very point at which the emergence of real speech in the group becomes an impossibility. The bringing to light of this point, at which desire is reduced to showing only the tip of a (false) nose, cannot give access to desire itself since that will remain, as such, unconscious as the neurotic intends, refusing completely to let itself be demolished by exhaustive explanations. But clearing a space, keeping room for a first plane of reference for this group desire to be identified, will immediately place the whole statement of the problem beyond chance relationships, will throw an entirely new light on 'problems of organization', and to that extent obscure attempts at formal and apparently rational description. In other words, it is the trial run for any attempt at group analysis.

In such an attempt, a fundamental distinction will emerge from the very beginning between curing the alienation of the group and analysing it. The function of a group analysis is not the same as that of setting up a community with a more or less psycho-sociological orientation, or group-engineering. Let me repeat: group analysis is both more and less than role-adaptation, transmitting information and so on. The key questions have been asked before likes and dislikes have hardened, before sub-groups have formed, at the level from which the group's potential creativity springs – though generally all creativity is strangled at birth by its complete rejection of nonsense, the group preferring to spend its time mouthing clichés about its 'terms of reference', and thus closing off the possibility of ever saying anything real, that is, anything that could have any connection with other strands of human discourse, historical, scientific, aesthetic or whatever.

Take the case of a political group 'condemned by history': what sort of desire could it live by other than one forever turning in upon itself? It will have incessantly to be producing mechanisms of defence, of denial, of repression, group phantasies, myths, dogmas and so on. Analysis of these can only lead to discovering that they express the nature of the group's death wish in its relation to the buried and emasculated historic instincts of enslaved masses, classes or nationalities. It seems to me that this last aspect of the 'highest level' of analysis cannot be separated from the other psychoanalytic problems of the group, or indeed of individuals.

In the traditional psychiatric hospital, for example, there is a dominant group consisting of the director, the financial administrator, the doctors and their wives, etc., who form a solid structure that blocks any expression of the desire of the groups of human beings of which the institution is composed. What happens to that desire? One looks first at the symptoms to be seen at the level of various sub-groups, which carry the classic social blemishes, being set in their ways, disturbance, all forms of divisiveness, but also at other signs –

alcoholism among one lot of nurses perhaps, or the generally unintelligent behaviour of another (for it is quite true, as Lacan points out, that stupidity is another way of expressing violent emotion). It is surely a kind of respect for the mystery embodied in neuroses and psychoses that makes those attendants in our modern graveyard degrade themselves and thus pay negative homage to the message of those whom the entire organization of our society is geared to disregarding. Not everyone can afford, like some psychiatrists, to take refuge in the higher reaches of aestheticism and thus indicate that, as far as they are concerned, it is not life's major questions that they are dealing with in their hospital work.

Group analysis will not make it its aim to elucidate a static truth underlying this symptomatology, but rather to create the conditions favourable to a particular mode of *interpretation*, identical, following Schotte's view, to a transference. Transference and interpretation represent a symbolic mode of intervention, but we must remember that they are not something done by an individual or group that adopts the role of 'analyst' for the purpose. The interpretation may well be given by the idiot of the ward if he is able to make his voice heard at the right time, the time when a particular signifier becomes active at the level of the structure as a whole, for instance in organizing a game of hop-scotch. One has to meet interpretation half-way. One must therefore rid oneself of all preconceptions – psychological, sociological, pedagogical or even therapeutic. In as much as the psychiatrist or nurse wields a certain amount of power, he or she must be considered responsible for destroying the possibilities of expression of the institution's unconscious subjectivity. A fixed transference, a rigid mechanism, like the relationship of nurses and patients with the doctor, an obligatory, predetermined, 'territorialized' transference onto a particular role or stereotype, is worse than a resistance to analysis: it is a way of interiorizing bourgeois repression by the repetitive, archaic and artificial re-emergence of the phenomena of caste, with all the spellbinding and reactionary group phantasies they bring in their train.

As a temporary support set up to preserve, at least for a time, the object of our practice, I propose to replace the ambiguous idea of the institutional transference with a new concept: *transversality* in the group. The idea of transversality is opposed to:

(a) verticality, as described in the organogramme of a pyramidal structure (leaders, assistants, etc.);

(b) horizontality, as it exists in the disturbed wards of a hospital, or, even more, in the senile wards; in other words a state of affairs in which things and people fit in as best they can with the situation in which they find themselves.

Think of a field with a fence around it in which there are horses with adjustable blinkers: the adjustment of their blinkers is the 'coefficient of transversality'. If they are so adjusted as to make the horses totally blind, then

presumably a certain traumatic form of encounter will take place. Gradually, as the flaps are opened, one can envisage them moving about more easily. Let us try to imagine how people relate to one another in terms of affectivity. According to Schopenhauer's famous parable of the porcupines, no one can stand being too close to his fellow-men:

> One freezing winter day, a herd of porcupines huddled together to protect themselves against the cold by their combined warmth. But their spines pricked each other so painfully that they soon drew apart again. Since the cold continued, however, they had to draw together once more, and once more they found the pricking painful. This alternate moving together and apart went on until they discovered just the right distance to preserve them from both evils.[6]

In a hospital, the 'coefficient of transversality' is the degree of blindness of each of the people present. However, I would suggest that the official adjusting of all the blinkers, and the overt communication that results from it, depends almost automatically on what happens at the level of the medical superintendent, the nursing superintendent, the financial administrator and so on. Hence all movement is from the summit to the base. There may, of course, be some 'pressure from the base', but it never usually manages to make any change in the overall structure of blindness. Any modification must be in terms of a structural redefinition of each person's role, and a reorientation of the whole institution. So long as people remain fixated on themselves, they never see anything *but* themselves.

Transversality is a dimension that tries to overcome both the impasse of pure verticality and that of mere horizontality: it tends to be achieved when there is maximum communication among different levels and, above all, in different meanings. It is this that an independent group is working towards. My hypothesis is this: it is possible to change the various coefficients of unconscious transversality at the various levels of an institution. For example, the overt communication that takes place within the circle consisting of the medical superintendent and the house-doctors may remain on an extremely formal level, and it may appear that its coefficient of transversality is very low. On the other hand the latent and repressed coefficient existing at department level may be found to be much higher: the nurses have more genuine relationships among themselves, in virtue of which the patients can make transferences that have a therapeutic effect. Now – and remember this is still hypothetical – the multiple coefficients of transversality, though of differing intensity, remain homogeneous. In fact, the level of transversality existing in the group that has the real power unconsciously determines how the extensive possibilities of other levels of transversality are regulated. Suppose – though it would be unusual – there were a strong coefficient of

6. *Parerga und Paralipomena*, Part II, 'Gleichnisse und Parabeln'.

transversality among the house-doctors: since they generally have no real power in the running of the institution, that strong coefficient would remain latent, and would be felt only in a very small area. If I may be permitted to apply an analogy from thermo-dynamics to a sphere in which matters are determined by social lines of force, I would say that the excessive institutional entropy of this state of transversality results in the absorption of any inclination to lessen it. But do not forget that the fact that we are convinced that one or several groups hold the key to regulating the latent transversality of the institution as a whole does not mean that we can identify the group or groups concerned. They are not necessarily the same as the official authorities of the establishment who control only its official expression. It is essential to distinguish the real power from the manifest power. The real relationship of forces has to be analysed. Everyone knows that the law of the State is not made by the ministries; similarly, in a psychiatric hospital, *de facto* power may elude the official representatives of the law and be shared among various sub-groups – the ward, the specialist department, even the hospital social club or the staff association. It seems eminently desirable that the doctors and nurses who are supposed to be responsible for caring for the patients should secure collective control over the management of those things beyond rules and regulations that determine the atmosphere, the relationships, everything that really makes the institution tick. But you cannot achieve this merely by declaring a reform; the best intentions in the world are no guarantee of actually getting to this dimension of transversality.

If the declared intention of the doctors and nurses is to have an effect beyond merely that of a disclaimer, their entire selves as desiring beings must be involved and brought into question by the signifying structure they face. This could lead to a decisive re-examination of a whole series of supposedly established truths: why does the State withhold grants? Why does Social Security persistently refuse to recognize group therapy? Though essentially liberal, surely medicine is reactionary when it comes to matters of classification and hierarchy – as indeed are our trade-union federations, though they are in theory more to the left. In an institution, the effective, that is unconscious, source of power, the holder of the real power, is neither permanent nor obvious. It has to be flushed out, so to say, by an analytic search that at times involves huge detours by way of the crucial problems of our time.

If the analysis of an institution consists in endeavouring to make it aware that it should gain control of what is being said, any possibility of creative intervention will depend on its initiators being able to exist at the point where 'it should have been able to speak' so as to be imprinted by the signifier of the group – in other words to accept a form of castration. This wound, this barrier, this obliteration of their powers of imagination leads back, of course,

to an analysis of the objects discovered by Freudianism to underlie any possible assumption of the symbolic order by the subject: breast, faeces, penis and so on, all of which are – at least in phantasy – detachable; but it also leads back to an analysis of the role of all the transitional objects[7] related to the washing machine, the television, in short all that makes life worth living today. Furthermore, the sum of all these part objects, starting with the picture of the body as the basis for self-identification, is itself thrown daily onto the market as fodder, alongside the hidden Stock Exchange that deals with shares in pseudo-eroticism, aestheticism, sport and all the rest. Industrial society thus secures unconscious control of our fate by its need – satisfying from the point of view of the death instinct – to disjoint every consumer/producer in such a way that ultimately humanity would find itself becoming a great fragmented body held together only as the supreme God of the Economy shall decree. It is, then, pointless to force a social symptom to fit into 'the order of things', for that is in the last resort its only basis; it would be like taking an obsessional who washes his hands a hundred times a day and shutting him up in a room without a sink – he would displace his symptomatology onto panic and unbearable attacks of anxiety.

Only if there is a certain degree of transversality will it be possible – though only for a time, since all this is subject to continual re-thinking – to set going an analytic process giving individuals a real hope of using the group as a mirror. When that happens, the individual will manifest both the group and himself. If the group he joins acts as a signifying chain, he will be revealed to himself as he is beyond his imaginary and neurotic dilemmas. If, on the other hand, he happens to join a group that is profoundly alienated, caught up in its own distorted imagery, the neurotic will have his narcissism reinforced beyond his wildest hopes, while the psychotic can continue silently devoting himself to his sublime universal passions. The alternative to an intervention of the group-analytic kind is the possibility that an individual would join the group as both listener and speaker, and thus gain access to the group's inwardness and interpret it.

If a certain degree of transversality becomes solidly established in an institution, a new kind of dialogue can begin in the group: the delusions and all the other unconscious manifestations which have hitherto kept the patient in a kind of solitary confinement can achieve a collective mode of expression. The modification of the super-ego that I spoke of earlier occurs at the moment when a particular model of language is ready to emerge where social structures have been hitherto functioning only as a ritual. To consider the possibility of therapists intervening in such a process is to pose the problem of an analytic control which would, in turn, presuppose to some extent a radical

7. I use this term in a more general sense than it is given by Winnicott.

transformation in the present psychoanalytic movement – which has certainly not up to now been much interested in re-centring its activity on real patients where they actually are, that is, for the most part, in the sphere of hospital and community psychiatry.

The social status of medical superintendent is the basis of a phantasy alienation, setting him up as a distant personage. How could such a person be persuaded even to accept, let alone be eager, to have his every move questioned, without retreating in panic? The doctor who abandons his phantasy status in order to place his role on a symbolic plane is, on the other hand, well placed to effect the necessary splitting-up of the medical function into a number of different responsibilities involving various kinds of groups and individuals. The object of that function moves away from 'totemization' and is transferred to different kinds of institutions, extensions and delegations of power. The very fact that the doctor could adopt such a splitting-up would thus represent the first phase of setting up a structure of transversality. His role, now 'articulated like a language', would be involved with the sum of the group's phantasies and signifiers. Rather than each individual acting out the comedy of life for his own and other people's benefit in line with the reification of the group, transversality appears inevitably to demand the imprinting of each role. Once firmly established by a group wielding a significant share of legal *and* real power, this principle of questioning and re-defining roles is very likely, if applied in an analytic context, to have repercussions at every other level as well. Such a modification of ego ideals also modifies the introjects of the super-ego, and makes it possible to set in motion a type of castration complex related to different social demands from those patients previously experienced in their familial, professional and other relationships. To accept being 'put on trial', being verbally laid bare by others, a certain type of reciprocal challenge, and humour, the abolition of hierarchical privilege and so on – all this will tend to create a new group law whose 'initiating' effects will bring to light, or at least into the half-light, a number of signs that actualize transcendental aspects of madness hitherto repressed. Phantasies of death, or of bodily destruction, so important in psychoses, can be re-experienced in the warm atmosphere of a group, even though one might have thought their fate was essentially to remain in the control of a neo-society whose mission was to exorcise them.

This said, however, one must not lose sight of the fact that, even when paved with the best intentions, the therapeutic endeavour is still constantly in danger of foundering in the besotting mythology of 'togetherness'. But experience shows that the best safeguard against that danger is to bring to the surface the group's instinctual demands. These force everyone, whether patient or doctor, to consider the problem of their being and destiny. The group then becomes ambiguous. At one level, it is reassuring and protective,

screening all access to transcendence, generating obsessional defences and a mode of alienation one cannot help finding comforting, lending eternity at interest. But at the other, there appears behind this artificial reassurance the most detailed picture of human finitude, in which every undertaking of mine is taken from me in the name of a demand more implacable than my own death – that of being caught up in the existence of that other, who alone guarantees what reaches me via human speech. Unlike what happens in individual analysis, there is no longer any imaginary reference to the master/slave relationship, and it therefore seems to me to represent a possible way of overcoming the castration complex.

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Transversality in the group is a dimension opposite and complementary to the structures that generate pyramidal hierarchization and sterile ways of transmitting messages.

Transversality is the unconscious source of action in the group, going beyond the objective laws on which it is based, carrying the group's desire.

This dimension can only be seen clearly in certain groups which, intentionally or otherwise, try to accept the meaning of their praxis, and establish themselves as subject groups – thus putting themselves in the position of having to bring about their own death.

By contrast, dependent groups are determined passively from outside, and with the help of mechanisms of self-preservation, magically protect themselves from a non-sense experienced as external. In so doing, they are rejecting all possibility of the dialectical enrichment that arises from the group's otherness.

A group analysis, setting out to reorganize the structures of transversality, seems a possibility – providing it avoids both the trap of those psychologizing descriptions of its own internal relationships which result in losing the phantasmic dimensions peculiar to the group, and that of compartmentalization which purposely keeps it on the level of a dependent group.

The effect of the group's signifier on the subject is felt, on the part of the latter, at the level of a 'threshold' of castration, for at each phase of its symbolic history, the group has its own demand to make on the individual subjects, involving a relative abandonment of their instinctual urgings to 'be part of a group'.

There may or may not be a compatibility between this desire, this group Eros, and the practical possibilities for each person of supporting such a trial – a trial that may be experienced in different ways, from a sense of rejection or even of mutilation, to creative acceptance that could lead to a permanent change in the personality.

This imprinting by the group is not a one-way affair: it gives some rights, some authority to the individuals affected. But, on the other hand, it can

produce alterations in the group's level of tolerance towards individual divergences, and result in crises over mystified issues that will endanger the group's future.

The role of group analyst is to reveal the existence of such situations and to lead the group as a whole to be less ready to evade the lessons they teach.

It is my hypothesis that there is nothing inevitable about the bureaucratic self-mutilation of a subject group, or its unconscious resort to mechanisms that militate against its potential transversality. They depend, from the first moment, on an acceptance of the risk – which accompanies the emergence of any phenomenon of real meaning – of having to confront irrationality, death, and the otherness of the other.

The Group and the Person[1]

A fragmented balance-sheet

To follow so many other speakers on the theme of society, the responsibility of individuals, militants, groups and so on, creates a certain inhibition. It is a minefield, with questioners hidden in fortified dug-outs waiting to attack you: what right has he to speak? what business is it of his? what is he getting at? And professional academics are there too, to recall you to modesty, and systematically to restrict any approach to these problems that is remotely ambitious.

Not even ambitious, necessarily, but related to responsibility. For example, we may study this or that text of Marx or Freud, we may study it in depth, seeing it in the context of the general trends of the period; but very few people will agree to pursue that study into its bearing on the present day, on its implications for, say, the development of imperialism and the Third World, or a particular current school of thought.

In different places and different circumstances I have put forward different ideas. For instance I have spoken of the 'introjects of the super-ego', of the capacity of dependent groups to allow the individual super-ego a free rein. I have tried to suggest procedures for institutional analysis, seeking more or less successfully to introduce flexibility. Today I want to go further, but once again there is this inhibition. The best way to tackle it is, I think, to try to express my ideas just as they come into my head.

The first question is: what can it possibly do for 'them'? Do I really need to say any more, and to expose myself yet again? The people and groups I have known and argued with go about their business with little concern for institutional analysis: history takes its course, and all groups tend to follow their routine until their path is diverted in some way or other by an obstacle, whether from within or without.

No, that is not precisely true: the militant groups with whom I am still in touch, institutional therapy groups and the groups in the FGERI,[2] have not

1. First given as a talk to a working group at La Borde in 1966, and put into writing in April 1968.

2. Fédération des Groupes d'Étude et de Recherche Institutionelle (Federation of Institutional Study and Research Groups), producing the review *Recherches*, published in Paris.

been without interest in the subject; it is just that they take it for what it, on the whole, is – ideas picked up here and there from Marx, Freud, Lacan, Trotskyist criticism and so on. Some indeed think that quite enough is already going on, and that the time spent absorbing those ideas could well be used for thinking about something else.

It seems to me, on the contrary, that if our theories are not properly worked out, we are in danger of floundering about, wasting our efforts at collective thinking, and letting ourselves be carried away by psycho-sociologically inspired trends of thought or be caught up by the demands of the super-egos of hard-line militant groups.

Take one hard-liner, Louis Althusser:

> The proletarian revolution also needs militants who are scholars (historical materialism) and philosophers (dialectical materialism) to help to defend and develop its theory . . . The fusion of Marxist theory with the workers' movement is the greatest event in the whole of human history (its first effect being the socialist revolutions). Philosophy represents the class struggle in theory. The key function of the practice of philosophy can be summed up in a word: tracing a line of demarcation between true and false ideas. As Lenin said, 'The entire class struggle may at times be contained in the battle for one word rather than another. Some words fight among themselves, others are the cause of equivocation, over which decisive, but undecided, battles are fought . . .'[3]

Amateurs keep out! I still want to say things as they come to mind without being on guard all the time, but I have been warned. Without realizing it, the class struggle lies in wait at every corner – especially since intellectuals lack what Althusser calls 'class instinct'. It seems that the class struggle can come down to a collision between classes of words – the words of 'the class' against the words of the bourgeoisie. Does it really matter so much what one says? One Trotskyist group did me the honour of devoting over half of a sixteen-page pamphlet to a vehement denunciation of my tedious theories of group subjectivity. I almost collapsed under the weight of their accusations: petit-bourgeois, impenitent idealist, irresponsible element! 'Your false theories could mislead good militants.'[4] They compared me to Henri de Man, a Nazi collaborator sentenced in his absence to forced labour when the war was over. It makes you think . . .

To return to the point. My inhibitions, as you can see, can be expressed only by being dressed up in external statements, and now that I am using quotations as weapons of debate, I will offer some more in the hope of salvation:

3. 'La Philosophie comme arme de la révolution', *La Pensée*, no. 138, April 1968.

4. *Cahiers de la Vérité*, 'Sciences humaines et lutte de classes' series, no. 1, 1965 (General Editor: Pierre Lambert): 'Indeed the theories of M. Guattari and his friends are themselves an alienation . . .' (p. 16).

Where a powerful impetus has been given to group formation neuroses may diminish and at all events temporarily disappear [says Freud]. Justifiable attempts have also been made to turn this antagonism between neuroses and group formation to therapeutic account. Even those who do not regret the disappearance of religious illusions from the civilized world of today will admit that so long as they were in force they offered those who were bound by them the most powerful protection against the danger of neurosis. Nor is it hard to discern that all the ties that bind people to mystico-religious or philosophico-religious sects and communities are expressions of crooked cures of all kinds of neuroses. All of this is correlated with the contrast between directly sexual impulsions and those which are inhibited in their aim.[5]

As you see, Freud did not dissociate the problem of neurosis from what is expressed in the term 'collective grouping'. For him there is a continuity between the states of being in love, hypnosis and group formation. Freud might well authorize me to say whatever I liked from a free association of these themes. But the hard-liners once again seize the microphone: 'That's all very well when you're talking of neurosis or even institutional therapy, but you have no right to say whatever you please in the highly responsible field of the class struggle . . .'

The point upon which I feel most uncertain, and militant groups are most intransigent, is that of the group's subjectivity. '. . . production also is not only a particular production. Rather, it is always a certain social body, a *social subject*, which is active in a greater or sparser totality of branches of production.'[6] Oh yes, I am well aware that when Marx talks like that of a social subject he does not mean it in the way I use it, involving a correlate of phantasizing, and a whole aspect of social creativity which I have sought to sum up as 'transversality'. All the same, I am glad to find in Marx – and no longer the 'young Marx' – this re-emergence of subjectivity.

Well now, this quotations game has repercussions on a register of the unconscious level. I have only to read them out, and the spectre of guilt recedes, the statue of the Commander the victim of intemperance, all is well – I can now say whatever I like on my own account. I am not going to try to produce a theory basing the intrinsic interlinking of historical processes on the demands of the unconscious. To me that is too obvious to need demonstrating. The whole fabric of my inmost existence is made up of the events of contemporary history – at least in so far as they have affected me in various ways. My phantasies have been moulded by the '1936 complex', by that wonderful book of Trotsky's, *My Life*, by all the extraordinary rhetoric of the Liberation, especially those of the youth hostelling movement, anarchist

5. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego* (1921), ed. J. Strachey, in Vol. xviii of the Complete Works, Hogarth Press, 1955, pp. 67–143.

6. Karl Marx, *Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy* (1857), published as the Introduction in *Grundrisse* (Pelican Marx Library, 1973).

groups, the UJRF,[7] Trotskyist groups and the Yugoslav brigades, and, more recently, by the saga of the 'Communist menace' – the Twentieth Congress of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union, the Algerian war, the War in Vietnam, the left wing of the UNEF,[8] and so on and so on.

Yet I also like that kind of inwardness I see in Descartes, seeking to find strength from within himself, and the ultra-inward writing of people like Proust and Gide; I like Jarry, Kafka, Joyce, Beckett, Blanchot and Artaud – just as in music I like Fauré, Debussy and Ravel. Clearly, then, I am a divided man: a petty bourgeois who has flirted with certain elements of the workers' movement, but has kept alive his subscription to the ideology of the ruling class. If Althusser had been there, I should have had to make my choice, and I might well have found myself in the serried ranks of those indispensable agents of any social revolution – the theory-mongers. But this brings us back to square one – the same problem has to be faced all over again. For whom do I speak? Am I really only one of those pathetic agents of the academic ideology, the bourgeois ideology, who try to build a bridge between the classes and so contribute to integrating the working class into the bourgeois order?

Another figure to whom I owe a lot is Sartre. It is not exactly easy to admit it. I like Sartre not so much for the consistency of his theoretical contribution, but the opposite – for the way he goes off at tangents, for all his mistakes and the good faith in which he makes them, from *Les Communistes* or *La Nausée* to his endeavours to integrate Marxist dialectic into the mainstream of philosophy, which has certainly failed. I like Sartre precisely because of his failure; he seems to me to have set himself against the contradictory demands that were tormenting him and to have remained obsessed with them; he appears to have resolved no problem, apart from never having been seduced by the elegance of structuralism, or the dogmatism of some of Mao Tse-tung's more distinguished adherents. Sartre's confusions, his naïveties, his passion, all add to his value in my eyes. Which brings me back to the slippery slope: humanism, preserving our values and all that.

Of course, that is only as long as the individual unconscious and history do not meet, and the topology of the Moebius strip as delineated by Lacan is not a means of getting from one to the other. As far as I am concerned, posing the question is something of a device, for I am convinced – as experience of psychoses and serious neuroses makes absolutely clear – that, beyond the Ego, the subject is to be found scattered in fragments all over the world of history: a patient with delusions will start talking foreign languages, will

7. UJRF: Union des Jeunesses Républicaines de France (the youth movement of the French Communist Party).

8. UNEF: Union Nationale des Étudiants de France.

hallucinate history, and wars and class conflicts will become the means of his/her own self-expression.

All this may be true of madness, you may say, but history, the history of social groups, has nothing to do with such madness. Here again, I show my fundamental irresponsibility. If only I could content myself with itemizing the various areas of phantasy in which I can find security! But then I would remain condemned to going back and forth in a dead end, and would have to admit that I have merely yielded to the external constraints that were part and parcel of each of the situations that made me. Underlying my different options – being-for-history, being-for-a-particular-group, being-for-literature – is there not some search for an unthinking answer to what I can only call being-for-existence, being-for-suffering?

The child, the neurotic, every one of us, starts by being denied any true possession of self, for the individual can only speak in the context of the discourse of the Other. To continue with the quotation from Freud I gave earlier on,

> If he is left to himself, a neurotic is obliged to replace by his own symptom formations the great group formations from which he is excluded. He creates his own world of imagination for himself, his own religion, his own system of delusions, and thus recapitulates the institutions of humanity in a distorted way which is clear evidence of the dominating part played by the directly sexual impulsions.[9]

The established discourse of the groups of young people that I belonged to, the established discourse of the workers' organizations I encountered in the fifties, the philosophical discourse of the bourgeois university, literary discourse, and all the other discourses, each had its own consistency and its own axioms, and each demanded that I adapt myself to it in order to try and make it my own. At the same time, these successive attempts at mastering discourses actually formed me by fragmenting me – since that fragmentation itself was, on the plane of the imaginary, simply the first beginning of a more profound reuniting. After reading a novel, I would find a whole new world opening up before me in, say, a youth hostel, quite another in political action and so on. My behaviour was thus affected by a kind of polymorphism with more or less perverse implications. Different social bodies of reference were expecting me to make a decision on one level or another, and to become established in some identifiable role – but identifiable by whom? An intellectual? A militant? A professional revolutionary? Perhaps, but in the distance I began to hear something saying, 'You are going to be a psychoanalyst.'

Note, however, that these different orders must not be seen on the same level. A certain type of group initiation has its own special imprint: real

9. Freud, *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, p. 142.

militant activity in a reified social context creates a radical break with the sense of passivity that comes with participation in the usual institutions. It may be that I shall later on come to see that I was myself contributing a certain activism, an illusion of effectiveness, a headlong rush forward. Yet I believe that no one who had the experience of being a militant in one of those youth organizations or mass movements, in the Communist Party or some splinter group, will ever again be just the same as everyone else. Whether there was real effectiveness hardly matters; certain kinds of action and concentration represent a break with the habitual social processes, and in particular with the modes of communication and expression of feeling inherited from the family.

I have tried to schematize this break, this difference, by distinguishing between the subject group and the object group. This involves to some extent reopening the question of the distinction between intellectuals and manual workers, a slight chance of taking up the desire of a group, however concealed it may be, a chance of escaping from the immutable determinism whose models come from the structure of the nuclear family, the organization of labour in industrial societies (in terms of wages and of hierarchy), the army, the church and the university.

A small group of militants is something apart from society; the subversion it plans is not usually directed to something in the immediate future, except in such exceptional cases as that of Fidel Castro or the Latin American guerrillas. Its horizon is the boundary of history itself: anything is possible, even if in reality the universe remains opaque. Something of the same sort exists in institutional pedagogy and institutional psychotherapy. Even in impossible, dead-end situations, one tries to tinker with the institutional machinery, to produce an effect on some part of it; the institutions acquire a kind of plasticity, at least in the way they are represented in the sphere of intention.

Castro, at the head of hundreds of thousands of Cubans, unhesitatingly went to war against what he called 'organigrammism', or planning from the centre. This is something that is a problem throughout all the so-called socialist societies. A certain concept of the institution, which I should call non-subjective, implies that the system and its modifications exist to serve an external end, as part of a teleological system. There is a programme to fulfil, and a number of possible options, but it is always a question of responding to specific demands to produce – production here being taken in the widest sense (it can refer to entertainment or education as well as to consumer goods). The production of the institution remains a sub-whole within production as a whole. It is a residue, suggesting what Lacan calls the *objet petit 'a'*. What are the laws governing the formation of institutions? Is there not a general problem of the production of institutions?

One could say that revolutions produce institutions; the creative rumblings that unleashed the French revolution were luxuriant in this respect. But beware of spelling revolution with a capital R. Things happened by way of successive modifications, and any master plan remained entirely abstract and never put into effect: this is evident in, for instance, the successive constitutions drafted by the French revolution. Only with the history of the workers' movement since Marx have we seen a conscious plan setting out to produce non-utopian institutional models for reorganizing the structure of the State – with a view to its future withering away – for starting up a revolutionary power, for setting up political and trade-union bodies aiming (at least in theory) to fulfil the demands of the class struggle. It is noteworthy that organizational problems have often more truly engendered splinter groups, major battles, even schisms, than have ideological divergences; and with Leninism, the problem of organization became the primordial one. Debates about the party line, the signified and the signification were very often no more than a front to conceal what was at issue at the level of the organizational signifier, which at times went down to the tiniest detail. Who should control this or that authority? How should the unions be related to the party? What was to be the role of the soviets?

There is of course a general problem about the subjective processes of 'breakthrough groups' throughout history, but for the moment I want simply to focus the idea of the subject group on the birth of revolutionary groups.[10] These groups make a special point of linking, or trying to link, their organization options very closely with their revolutionary programme. Historically, we can point to one great creative event that was stifled by the hegemony of Stalinism in the USSR and in the Communist International. Even today, most revolutionary tendencies still see organizational problems in the framework within which they were formulated fifty years ago by Lenin. Imperialism, on the other hand, seems to have been capable of producing relative institutional solutions enabling it to escape from even the most catastrophic ordeals. After the crisis of 1929 it produced the New Deal; after the Second World War it was able to organize 'reconstruction' and re-mould international relations. These were, of course, only partial measures, effected by trial and error, since the dominant imperialism had formulated no consistent policy or aims. But in the terms of production, they have enabled imperialism to remain considerably in advance of the so-called socialist States in its capacity for institutional creativity. But in the socialist States none of the major projects of reform since 1956 has yet seen the light of day. In this respect it is the difference that is crucial. At the time of the first Five Year Plan, Russia was introducing capitalist production plans into its factories.

10. It would be particularly interesting to apply this idea to popular religious heresies.

Even today, in both the technological and the industrial fields, the organization of production and even the internal structure of companies are still largely dependent on the models set up by capitalism. We are also seeing the importation into Russia and Czechoslovakia of the capitalist pattern of mass consumption of cars. It looks as though the planned structure of the socialist States is not capable of permitting the emergence of any form of original social creativity in response to the demands of different social groups. Very different was the situation after the 1917 revolution, before the Stalinist terror took over. Though the soviets rapidly degenerated at the mass level, there were some intensively creative years in a number of specific areas – cinema, architecture, education, sexuality, etc. Even Freudianism made considerable progress. The 1917 revolution is still charged with a powerful group Eros, and it will long continue to exercise that power: the vast forces of social creativity unleashed by it illuminated the field of research in all spheres.

We may well be witnessing the dawn of a new revolutionary development that will follow on from that sombre period, but we are still too close to the daily events of history to see it clearly. The extraordinary way that bureaucratization took place in the Bolshevik Party and the soviet State under Stalin seems to me comparable to neurotic processes that become more violent as the instincts underlying them are more powerful. The Stalin dictatorship could never have taken so excessive a form had it not needed to repress the fastest-flowing current of social expression the world has ever known. It must also be recognized that the voluntarism of the Leninist organization and its systematic mistrust of the spontaneity of the masses undoubtedly led it to miss seeing the revolutionary possibilities represented by the soviets. In fact there never was any real theory of soviet organization in Leninism: 'All power to the soviets' was only a transitional slogan, and the soviets were soon centralized to suit the Bolsheviks' determination to maintain absolute control of all power in view of the rise of counter-revolutionary attack from both within and without. The only institutions that remained important were the State power, the Party and the army. The systems of organizational decentralization established by the Bolshevik Party during the years of underground struggle disappeared in favour of centralism. The International was militarized willy-nilly, and the various organizations in sympathy with Bolshevism were made to accept the absurd 'Twenty-One Points'. Enormous revolutionary forces all over the world thus found themselves arbitrarily cut off from their proper social context, and some Communist bodies never really recovered. (The Communist movement was unable, above all, to become established and organized in vast areas of what we today call the Third World – presumably to indicate that it is 'a world apart'.)

The same pattern of organization (Party – Central Committee – Politburo – secretariat – secretary-general; and mass organizations, links between

Party and people, etc.) is just as disastrous in the international Communist movement as a whole. The same sort of militant superstructures, established in a revolutionary context, are supposed to supply to the organizational needs of a highly industrialized socialist State. This absurdity is productive of the worst bureaucratic perversions. How can the same handful of men propose to direct everything at once – State bodies, organizations of young people, of workers and of peasants, cultural activity, the army, etc., etc. – with none of the intermediate authorities having the least autonomy in working out its own line of action? Whether or not it gives rise to contradictions with this tendency or that, or to confrontations that cannot be resolved simply by arbitration from above.

Never has the internationalist ideal fallen so low! The reaction of the pro-Chinese movements has been to preach a return to Stalinist orthodoxy, as revised and corrected by Mao Tse-tung, but in fact it is hard to see how they will resolve these fundamental problems. At the end of the last century, a militant was someone formed by the struggle, who could break with the dominant ideology and could tolerate the absurdity of daily life, the humiliations of repression, and even death itself, because there was no doubt in his mind that every blow to capitalism was a step on the way to a socialist society. The only context in which we find such revolutionaries today is that of guerrilla warfare, of which Che Guevara has left us such an extraordinary account in his *Testamento político*.

The political or syndical style of the Communist organizations of today tends to be totally humourless. The bureaucrat experiences politics and syndicalism in the short term; he is often felt to be an outsider at work, even though his comrades recognize the merits of what he is doing, and rely on him – at his request – as one would rely on a public service. There are exceptions, a great many indeed, who are genuine militants of the people in those organizations, but the party machine mistrusts them, keeping them on a tight rein, and ends up by destroying them or trying to expel them.

It is always the mass of the people who have created new forms of struggle: it was they who 'invented' soviets, they who set up *ad hoc* strike committees, they who first thought of occupations in 1936. The Party and the unions have systematically retreated from the creativity of the people; indeed, since the Stalin period, they have not merely retreated but have positively opposed innovation of any kind. One has only to recall the part played by the communists in France at the Liberation, when they used force as well as persuasion to reintegrate into the framework of the State all the new forms of struggle and organization that had emerged. This resulted in works committees without power, and a Social Security that is merely a form of delayed wages to be manipulated by management and the State so as to control the working class and so on.

It may be said that the working class must simply effect a 'restitution' of these subjective procedures, that they must become a disciplined army of militants and so on. Yet surely what they are seeking is something different – they want to produce a visible aim for their activities and struggles. To return to the notions I put forward provisionally, I would say that the revolutionary organization has become separated from the signifier of the working class's discourse, and become instead closed in upon itself and antagonistic to any expression of subjectivity on the part of the various sub-wholes and groups, the subject groups spoken of by Marx. Group subjectivity can then express itself *only* by way of phantasy-making, which channels it off into the sphere of the imaginary. To be a worker, to be a young person, automatically means sharing a particular kind of (most inadequate) group phantasy. To be a militant worker, a militant revolutionary, means escaping from that imaginary world and becoming connected to the real texture of an organization, part of the prolongation of an open formalization of the historical process. In effect, the same text for analysis of society and its class contradictions extends into both the text of a theoretical/political system and the texture of the organization. There is thus a double articulation at three levels: that of the spontaneous, creative processes of the masses; that of their organizational expression; and that of the theoretical formulation of their historical and strategic aims.

Not having grasped this double articulation, the workers' movement unknowingly falls into a bourgeois individualist ideology. In reality, a group is not just the sum of a number of individuals: the group does not move immediately from 'I' to 'you', from the leader to the rank and file, from the party to the masses. A subject group is not embodied in a delegated individual who can claim to speak on its behalf: it is primarily an intention to act, based on a provisional totalization and producing something true in the development of its action. Unlike Althusser, the subject group is not a theoretician producing concepts; it produces signifiers, not signification; it produces the institution and institutionalization, not a party or a line; it modifies the general direction of history, but does not claim to write it; it interprets the situation, and with its truth illuminates all the formulations coexisting simultaneously in the workers' movement. Today, the truth of the NLF in Vietnam and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam illuminates the whole range of possibilities for struggle against imperialism that now exist, and reveals the real meaning of the period of peaceful coexistence that followed the Yalta and Potsdam agreements. Today, too, the struggle of revolutionary organizations in Latin America brings into question all the formulations of the workers' movement and all the sociological theories recognized by the bourgeois mind. Yet one cannot say that Che Guevara, Ho Chi-minh, or the leaders of the NLF are producers of philosophical concepts: it is revolution-

ary action that becomes speech and interpretation, independent of any formal study and examination of the totality of what is said and done. This does not mean that one has no right to say anything – on the contrary, one can say what one wants all the more freely precisely because what one says is less important than what is being done. *Saying* is not always *doing*!

This brings us to a more general problem: does 'saying' mean anything more than the production of its own sense? Surely, what the whole analysis of *Capital* makes clear is precisely that behind every process of production, circulation and consumption there is an order of symbolic production that constitutes the very fabric of every *relationship* of production, circulation and consumption, and of all the structural orders. It is impossible to separate the production of any consumer commodity from the institution that supports that production. The same can be said of teaching, training, research, etc. The State machine and the machine of repression produce *anti-production*, that is to say signifiers that exist to block and prevent the emergence of any subjective process on the part of the group. I believe we should think of repression, or the existence of the State, or bureaucratization, not as passive or inert, but as dynamic. Just as Freud could talk of the dynamic processes underlying psychic repression, so it must be understood that, like the odyssey of things returning to their 'rightful place', bureaucracies, churches, universities and other such bodies develop an entire ideology and set of phantasies of repression in order to counter the processes of social creation in every sphere.

The incapacity of the workers' movement to analyse such institutions' conditions of production, and their function of anti-production, dooms it to remain passive in the face of capitalist initiatives in that sphere. Consider, for instance, the university and the army. It may appear that all that is happening in a university is the transmission of messages, of bourgeois knowledge; but we know that in reality a lot else is also happening, including a whole operation of moulding people to fit the key functions of bourgeois society and its regulatory images. In the army, at least the traditional army, not a great deal of what happens is put into words. But the State would hardly spend so much, year after year, on teaching young men just to march up and down; that is only a pretext: the real purpose is to train people, and make them relate to one another, with a view to the clearly stated objective of discipline. Their training is not merely an apprenticeship in military techniques, but the establishment of a mechanism of subordination in their imaginations. Similar examples can be found in so-called primitive societies: to be a full member of the tribe, one has to fulfil certain conditions; one must successfully undergo certain ceremonies of initiation – that is, of social integration by means perhaps of mingling one's blood with a primordial totemic image, and by developing a sense of belonging to the group. And, in fact, underlying the rational account one may give of such group phenomena,

phantasy mechanisms of this nature are still at work in capitalist societies.

The workers' movement seems to be peculiarly unfitted to recognize those mechanisms; it relates subjective processes to individual phenomena, and fails to recognize the series of phantasies which actually make up the real fabric of the whole organization and solidity of the masses. To achieve any understanding of social groups, one must get rid of one kind of rationalist–positivist vision of the individual (and of history). One must be capable of grasping the unities underlying historical phenomena, the modes of symbolic communication proper to groups (where there is often no mode of spoken contract), the systems that enable individuals not to lose themselves in interpersonal relationships, and so on. To me it is all reminiscent of a flock of migrating birds: it has its own structure, the shape it makes in the air, its function, its direction – and all determined without benefit of a single central committee meeting, or elaboration of a correct line. Generally speaking, our understanding of group phenomena is very inadequate. Primitive societies are collectively far better ethnologists than the scholars sent out to study them. The gang of young men that forms spontaneously in a section of town does not recruit members or charge a subscription; it is a matter of recognition and internal organization. Organizing such a collective depends not only on the words that are said, but on the formation of images underlying the constitution of any group, and these seem to me something fundamental – the support upon which all their other aims and objects rest. I do not think one can fully grasp the acts, attitudes or inner life of any group without grasping the thematics and functions of its 'acting out' of phantasies. Hitherto the workers' movement has functioned only by way of an idealist approach to these problems. There is, for instance, no description of the special characteristics of the working class that established the Paris Commune, no description of its creative imagination. Bourgeois historians offer such meaningless comments as that 'the Hungarian workers were courageous', and then pass on to a formal, self-enclosed analysis of the various elements of social groups as though they had no bearing on the problems of the class struggle or organizational strategy, and without reference to the fact that the laws governing the group's formations of images are different in kind from contractual laws – like those relative to setting up a limited company, for instance, or the French Association Law of 1901. You cannot relate the sum of a group's phantasy phenomena to any system of deductions working only with motivations made fully explicit at the rational level. There are some moments in history when repressed motives emerge, a whole phantasy order, that can be translated, among other things, into phenomena of collective identification with a leader – for instance Nazism. The individual 'I' asks *where* the image is, the identifying image that makes us all members of 'Big Boy's' gang rather than 'Jojo's'; Jojo is that dark fellow with the motor-bike,

whereas it may be someone – anyone – else who has the characteristics demanded by the phantasy world of this particular group. Similarly, the great leaders of history were people who served as something on which to hang society's phantasies. When Jojo, or Hitler, tells people to 'be Jojos' or 'be Hitlers', they are not speaking so much as circulating a particular kind of image to be used in the group: 'Through that particular Jojo we shall find ourselves.' But who actually says this? The whole point is that no one *says* it, because if one were to say it to oneself, it would become something different. At the level of the group's phantasy structure, we no longer find language operating in this way, setting up an 'I' and an other through words and a system of significations. There is, to start with, a kind of solidification, a setting into a mass; *this is us*, and other people are different, and usually not worth bothering with – there is no communication possible. There is a territorialization of phantasy, an imagining of the group as a body, that absorbs subjectivity into itself. From this there flow all the phenomena of misunderstanding, racism, regionalism, nationalism and other archaisms that have utterly defeated the understanding of social theorists.

André Malraux once said on television that the nineteenth century was the century of internationalism, whereas the twentieth is the century of nationalism. He might have added without exaggeration that it is also the century of regionalism and particularism. In some big cities in America, going from one street into the next is like changing tribes. Yet there is an ever-increasing universality of scientific signifiers; production becomes more worldwide every day; every advance in scholarship is taken up by researchers everywhere; it is conceivable that there might one day be a single super-information-machine that could be used for hundreds of thousands of different researchers. In the scientific field, everything today is shared; the same is true of literature, art and so on. However, this does not mean that we are not witnessing a general drawing inwards in the field, not of the real, but the imaginary, and the imaginary at its most regressive. In fact, the two phenomena are complementary: it is just when there is most universality that we feel the need to return as far as possible to national and regional distinctness. The more capitalism follows its tendency to 'de-code' and 'de-territorialize', the more does it seek to awaken or re-awaken artificial territorialities and residual encodings, thus moving to counteract its own tendency.

How can we understand these group functions of the imaginary, and all their variations? How can we get away from that persistent couple: machinic universality and archaic particularity? My distinction between the two types of group is not an absolute one. I say that the subject group is articulated like a language and links itself to the sum of historical discourse, whereas the dependent group is structured according to a spatial mode, and has a

specifically imaginary mode of representation, that it is the medium of the group phantasies; in reality, however, we are dealing not so much with two sorts of group, but two functions, and the two may even coincide. A passive group can suddenly throw up a mode of subjectivity that develops a whole system of tensions, a whole internal dynamic. On the other hand, any subject group will have phases when it gets bogged down at the level of the imaginary: then, if it is to avoid becoming the prisoner of its own phantasies, its active principle must be recovered by way of a system of analytic interpretation. One might perhaps say that the dependent group permanently represents a potential sub-whole of the subject group,[11] and, as a counterpoint to the formulations of Lacan, one might add that only a partial, detached institutional object can provide it with a basis.

Take two other examples:

First, the psychiatric hospital. This is a structure totally dependent on the various social systems that support it – the State, Social Security and so on. Group phantasies are built up around finance, mental illness, the psychiatrist, the nurse, etc. In any particular department, however, a separate objective may be established that leads to a profound reordering of that phantasizing. That objective might be a therapeutic club. We may say that that club is the institutional objective (Lacan's *objet petit 'a'*, at the institutional level) that makes it possible to start up an analytic process. Clearly the analytical structure, the *analyser*, is not the therapeutic club itself, but something dependent upon that institutional objective, which I have defined elsewhere as an institutional vacuole. It might, for example, be a group of nurses, psychiatrists or patients that forms that analytical, hollow structure where unconscious phenomena can be deciphered, and which for a time brings a subject group into being within the massive structure of the psychiatric hospital.

Second, the Communist Party. Like its mass organizations (trade unions, youth organizations, women's organizations, etc.) the Party can be wholly manipulated by all the structures of a bourgeois State, and can work as a factor for integration. In a sense one can even say that the development of a modern, capitalist State needs such organizations of workers by workers in order to regulate the relations of production. The crushing of workers' organizations in Spain after 1936 caused a considerable delay to the progress of Spanish capitalism, whereas the various ways of integrating the working class promoted in those countries that had popular fronts in 1936, or national fronts in 1945, enabled the State and the various social organizations introduced by the bourgeoisie to readjust, and to produce new structures and new relations of production favouring the development of the capitalist

11. This would be a way out of Russell's paradox, a way of avoiding reifying it as a totalizing whole.

economy as a whole (salary differentials, wages, bargaining over conditions, etc.). Thus one can see how, in a sense, the subordinate institutional object that the Party or the CGT (the Communist Trade Union Federation) represents as far as the working class are concerned helps to keep the capitalist structure in good repair.

On the other hand – and to explain this calls for a topological example of some complexity – that same passive institutional object, indirectly controlled by the bourgeoisie, may give rise within itself to the development of new processes of subjectivation. This is undoubtedly the case on the smallest scale, in the Party cell and the union chapel. The fact that the working class, once its revolutionary instincts have been aroused, persists in studying and getting to know itself through this development within a dependent group creates tensions and contradictions which, though not immediately visible to outsiders (not quoted in the press or the official statements of the leaders), still produce a whole range of fragmented but real subjectivation.

A group phantasy is not the same as an individual phantasy, or any sum of individual phantasies, or the phantasy of a particular group.[12] Every individual phantasy leads back to the individual in his desiring solitude. But it can happen that a particular phantasy, originating within an individual or a particular group, becomes a kind of collective currency,[13] put into circulation and providing a basis for group phantasizing. Similarly, as Freud pointed out, we pass from the order of neurotic structure to the stage of group *formation*. The group may, for instance, organize its phantasies around a leader, a successful figure, a doctor, or some such. That chosen individual plays the role of a kind of signifying mirror, upon which the collective phantasy-making is refracted. It may appear that a particular bureaucratic or maladjusted personality is working against the interests of the group, when in fact both his personality and his action are interpreted only in terms of the group. This dialectic cannot be confined to the plane of the imaginary. Indeed, the split between the *totalitarian* ideal of the group and its various *partial* phantasy processes produces cleavages that may put the group in a position to escape from its corporized and spatializing phantasy representation. If the process that seems, at the level of the individual authority, to be over-determined and hedged in by the Oedipus complex is transposed to the level of group phantasizing, it actually introduces the possibility of a revolutionary re-ordering. In effect, identification with the prevailing images of the group is by no means always static, for the badge of membership often has links with narcissistic and death instincts that it is hard to define. Do

12. This is the difference between my idea of group phantasy and Bion's idea of the phantasy of *the* group.

13. And, conversely, is not the individual phantasy the individuated small change of collective phantasy production?

individual phantasies take shape and change in the group, or is it the other way round? One could equally say that they are not fundamentally part of anything outside the group, and that it is a sheer accident that they have fallen back on that particular 'body' – an alienating and laughable fiction, the justification of an individual driven into solitude and anxiety precisely because society misunderstands and represses the real body and its desire. In either case, this embodying of the individual phantasy upon the group, or this latching on of the individual to the group phantasy, transfers onto the group the damaging effect of those partial objects – *objet petit 'a'* – described by Lacan as the oral or anal object, the voice, the look and so on, governed by the totality of the phallic function, and constituting a threshold of existential reality that the subject cannot cross. However, group phantasizing has no 'safety rail' to compare with those that protect the libidinal instinctual system, and has to depend on temporary and unstable homeostatic equilibria. Words cannot really serve to mediate its desire; they operate on behalf of the law. Groups opt for the sign and the insignia rather than for the signifier. The order of the spoken word tips over into slogans. If, as Lacan says, the representation of the subject results from one signifier relating to another, then group subjectivity is recognizable rather in a splitting, a *Spaltung*, the detachment of a sub-whole that supposedly represents the legitimacy and 'totality' of the group.

In other words, this remains a fundamentally precarious process. The tendency is to return to phenomena of imaginary explosion or phallicization rather than to coherent discourse. From this point of view, apart from distinguishing between individual and group phantasy, one can also distinguish different orders of group phantasy: on the one hand, the basic phantasies that depend on the subordinate character of the group and, on the other, the transitional phantasies connected with the internal process of subjectivation corresponding to various reorganizations within the group. We are led to distinguish two possible types of object: established institutions, and transitional objects.[14] With the first, the institution never sets out to face the *problem* of the institutional object, though it is obsessed by it; just as the church has its God and has no wish to change him, so a dominant class has power and does not consider whether it might not be better to give that power to anyone else! With the second, on the other hand, a revolutionary movement is a good example of something that keeps asking whether it is right, whether it should be totally transforming itself, correcting its aim and so on. Of course all the institutional objects in a fixed society continue to evolve regardless, but their evolution is not recognized. One myth is replaced by another, one religion by

14. The notion of an *institutional object* is complementary to the 'part object' of Freudian theory and the 'transitional object' as originally defined by D. W. Winnicott (cf. *La Psychanalyse*, 5, Presses Universitaires de France, 1959).

another, which may result in a ruthless war and end in deadlock. When a monetary or economic system collapses, bad money drives out good, the gold standard is replaced by base metal, and the economy is convulsed. Similarly when a marriage fails; it was based on a contract of a kind not fundamentally different from a banking contract, and there is no scope for development. The contract can be changed by divorce, but that is only a legal procedure and does not fundamentally solve anything. Indeed the chain is snapped at its weakest link: the children are split in two without any thought of consequences in the sphere of the imaginary. When a revolutionary party changes theories, however, there is no logical reason why it should lead to a tragedy, or a religious war: the regimen of the word still tries to readjust the old formulations to bring them into harmony with the new.

To foster analysis and intervention in group phantasy (including family groups) would imply a consideration of precisely these phenomena of the imaginary. Take another example: generations of miners have worked in a particular mine, and it has become a kind of religion to them; one day, the technocrats suddenly realize that the coal they produce is no longer profitable. This of course takes no account of the effect on the miners: those of a certain age are told that they are to retire early, while others are offered re-training schemes. Similar things happen in Africa, Latin America and Asia, where peoples who have had the same social organization for thousands of years are steamrollered out of existence by the intrusion of a capitalist system interested only in the most efficient ways of producing cotton or rubber. These are extreme examples, but they are the logical extension of a multitude of situations – those of children, of women, of the mad, of homosexuals, of blacks. In disregarding or failing to recognize such problems of group phantasy, we create disasters whose ultimate consequences may be immeasurable.

Analysing the institutional object means channelling the action of the imagination between one structure and another; it is not unlike what happens to an animal in the moulting season. To move from one representation of oneself to another, though it may involve crises, at least retains continuity. When an animal loses its coat it remains itself, but in the social order, removing the coat shatters the world of the imaginary and annihilates generations. When the group is split up, when it does not know the scope of its phantasies and has no control of them, it develops a kind of schizophrenic action within itself: the phantasy mechanisms of identification, and of the self, operate all the more freely and independently as the function of the word as a collective utterance is replaced by a structural formation of non-subjective utterances. While the group discourses in a vacuum about its aims and purposes, identifications have the same kind of free rein as they would have in a schizophrenic whose speech is disconnected from bodily representation,

and whose phantasy world, freed from reality, can operate on its own to a point of hallucination and delusion. A group will end up by hallucinating with its phantasies in just the same way. If it is to interpret them, it will have to resort to irrational acts, wild gestures, suicidal behaviour, play-acting of all kinds, until those phantasies can find some means of becoming present to themselves and manifesting themselves in the order of representation.

I said earlier that the unconscious is in direct contact with history. But only on certain conditions. The fundamental problem in institutional analysis can be expressed like this: is it absurd to think that social groups can overcome the contradiction between a process of *production* that reinforces the mechanisms of group alienation, and a process of *bringing to light* the conscious subject that knows and the unconscious subject, this latter being a process that gradually dispels more and more of the phantasies that cause people to turn to God, to science or to any other supposed source of knowledge? In other words, can the group at once pursue its economic and social objectives while allowing individuals to maintain their own access to desire and some understanding of their own destiny? Or, better still: can the group face the problem of its own death? Can a group with a historic mission envisage the end of that mission – can the State envisage the withering away of the State? Can revolutionary parties envisage the end of their so-called mission to lead the masses?

This leads me to stress the distinction between group phantasy as it relates to dependent groups, and the transitional phantasy of independent subject groups. There is a kind of phantasizing that appears in static societies in the form of myths, and in bureaucratized societies in the form of roles, which produces the most wonderful narratives: 'When I'm twenty-five I'll be an officer; then a colonel and later on a general; I'll get a medal when I retire; then I'll die . . .' But group phantasizing is something more than this, because it includes an additional reference point that is not centred on a particular object, or on the individual's particular place in the social scale: 'I've been in the French army for a long time; the French army has always existed, it is eternal, so if I keep my place in the hierarchy, I too shall have something of the eternal. This makes life easier when I'm frightened of dying, or when my wife calls me a fool. After all, I *am* a regimental sergeant major!' The institutional object underlying the phantasy of military rank ('I'm not nobody') serves to unfurl a range of references of a homosexual nature that provides society with a blind and relatively homogeneous body of people who shrink from any self-questioning about life and death, and who are ready to enforce any repression, to torture, to bombard civilian populations with napalm and so on. The continuation in time of the institution at the level of phantasy is thus a kind of implicit support for the denial of the reality of death at the individual level. The capitalist controlling several trusts also draws support from this 'sense of eternity'. In his position at the top of the hierarchy,

he fulfils a kind of priestly function for those below, ritualizing eternity and conjuring away death. He is the servant of God/Capital. Faced with pain and afraid of desire, the individual clings to his job, his role in the family and the other functions that provide alienating phantasy supports. In the dependent group, phantasy masks the central truths of existence, but none the less, via the dialectic of signifiers, part objects, and the way these intersect with the sequences of history, it keeps in being the possibility of an emergence of the truth.

Would a group whose phantasy functions were working well produce the transitional phantasies of a subject group? At La Borde, for instance, when a group feels that it is getting somewhere, that it is achieving something, the most thankless tasks take on a quite different meaning, even such tedious jobs as taking up paving stones or working on an assembly-line. At such a moment, people's positions in relation to one another, their individual characteristics, their peculiar style, their way of speaking and so on, all take on a new meaning; you feel that you know people better and take more interest in them. In a psychiatric ward where an analytic process aiming to produce such an effect is successfully established – though it never survives for long – everything inhibiting or threatening in the differentiation of roles can be done away with: everyone becomes 'one of us' though that includes the whole particularist folk-memory that that phrase implies. Absurd though such folklorism may seem, it does not prevent the 'sense of belonging' from being effective. It is a fact that if a boy is to learn to read or to stop wetting his trousers, he must be recognized as being 'at home', being 'one of us'. If he crosses that threshold and becomes re-territorialized, his problems are no longer posed in terms of phantasy; he becomes himself again in the group, and manages to rid himself of the question that had haunted him: 'When shall I get to be *there*, to be part of *that*, to be "one of them"?' As long as he fails in that, his compulsive pursuit of that goal prevents his doing anything else at all.

This getting to the limits of the imagination seems to me to be the fundamental problem of setting up any management body that is not to be technocratic, any mass participation body for whatever purpose that is not to be unhealthily rationalist. It is not a matter of an independent category: if these phantasizing formations are not explored analytically, they operate as death-dealing impulses. From the point when I set out to enjoy my membership of the Bowls Club, I can say that I am dead, in the sense of the death inherent in the eternity of Bowls Clubs. On the other hand, if a group lets me short-circuit its action with a problematic that is open to revolution, even if that group assures me that revolution will certainly not save my life, or provide any solution to certain sorts of problem, but that its role is, in a sense, precisely to prevent my being in too much of a hurry to run away from that

problematic, then, most assuredly, the transitional phantasy formations of that group will enable me to make progress.

The demand for revolution is not essentially or exclusively at the level of consumer goods; it is directed equally to taking account of desire. Revolutionary theory, to the extent that it keeps its demands solely at the level of increasing people's means of consumption, indirectly reinforces an attitude of passivity on the part of the working class. A communist society must be designed not with reference to consumption, but to the desire and the goals of mankind. The philosophic rationalism that dominates all the expressions of the workers' movement like a super-ego fosters the resurgence of the old myths of paradise in another world, and the promise of a narcissistic fusion with the absolute. Communist parties are by way of having scientific 'knowledge' of how to create a form of organization that would satisfy the basic needs of all individuals. What a false claim! There can be social planning in terms of organizing production – though there still remain a lot of unanswered questions – but it cannot claim to be able to give *a priori* answers in terms of the desire objectives of individuals and subject groups.

All of which is just to say yet again that the ways to truth are, and will continue to be, an individual matter. I realize that what I am saying here can be interpreted as an appeal to 'respect human values' and other nonsense of that kind. Such interpretations are convenient, because they spare one the necessity of seeking further for an answer to the problem. I can hear some people saying, 'There's a man who hasn't got over his experience of the Communist Party and of the groupuscules[15] he's been in. But all he had to do was stop going!' Braving ridicule, however, I persist in declaring that what is at issue is quite different. It is, first of all, at the core of the revolutionary struggles themselves – not the war of words, but the real struggle being waged by guerrillas and others. Either we fall into post-Stalinist thinking and come to grief, or we find another way and survive.

There are a lot of other things too – far more serious than wondering whether one can work out some compromise between the bureaucrat of the Department and desire. Either the revolutionary workers' movement and the masses will recover their speech via *collective agents of utterance* that will guarantee that they are not caught up again in anti-production relations (as far as a work of analysis can be a guarantee), or matters will go from bad to worse. It is obvious that the bourgeoisie of present-day neo-capitalism are not a neo-bourgeoisie and are not going to become one: they are undoubtedly the stupidest that history has ever produced. They will not find an effective way out. They will keep trying to cobble things together, but always too late and

15. 'Groupuscules' designate the ensemble of little groups found on the left of the French Communist Party in the period leading up to 1968, a pejorative connotation of the Party establishment but later assumed by the groups themselves.

irrelevantly, as with all their great projects to help what their experts coyly describe as the 'developing countries'.

It is quite simple, then. Unless there is some drastic change, things are undoubtedly going to go very badly indeed, and in proportion as the cracks are a thousand times deeper than those that riddled the structure before 1939, we shall have to undergo fascisms a thousand times more frightful.

Anti-Psychiatry and Anti-Psychoanalysis[1]

JEAN-JACQUES BROCHIER: How did you personally get involved in what we may call 'the anti-psychiatry business'?

FÉLIX GUATTARI: Well, first of all, Basaglia and Jervis came to La Borde in '65 or '66, and had some articles published in the review *Recherches*. Then there arose not so much a difference of ideas as a difference of style. They were not remotely interested in our experiments to reform institutional psychotherapy. The situation in Italy was already quite different, and their ideas were far more revolutionary. Then there was the English strain, with Laing and Cooper, who were also published in *Recherches*. They came to study days organized by Maud Mannoni and *Recherches* on the theme of 'alienated childhood'. Their break-away from ordinary institutions had very little in common either with ours at La Borde, or with Maud Mannoni or with Lacan. Later on, these differences of style came to reveal more profound divergences. I myself have also changed a great deal since that period.

J.-J. B.: Just what is anti-psychiatry?

F.G.: Primarily a literary phenomenon, taken up by the mass media. It developed from those two centres in England and Italy, but its appearance revealed the fact that there was considerable public interest in such problems, in the context of the 'new culture' that was coming into existence. But it must be admitted that, up to now, all that has been written, or said, or done in France has involved only a few nurses who were unhappy with the existing situation and a few dozen psychiatrists: the real interest in anti-psychiatry has been among the general public.

Today, one of the 'inventors' of anti-psychiatry, Laing, is no longer connected with it; he says he has never used the term. Basaglia believes it is a mystification that must be exposed. Meanwhile, in France, it has become something of a literary and cinematic genre. People earn a lot of money publishing little books with titles like 'Never Again Will I Be a Psychiatrist', 'Never Again Will I Be a Nurse', 'Never Again Will I Be Mad'. Groupuscules have formed in its wake, like Poulidor.

1. Some views elicited by Jean-Jacques Brochier and published in *Le Magazine Littéraire*, a special number entitled 'Le Mouvement des idées de Mai 1968', May 1976.

But what has really been important is the way anti-psychiatry has marked a beginning of awareness, not only in the general public, but even among professional 'mental health workers'. In my view, the discovery of the link between psychiatric repression and other forms of repression has been enormously significant, and we are far from having felt all its repercussions yet.

However, that awareness has been partly vitiated by certain schools of psychoanalysis who found it a good excuse to knock psychiatry – leaving it to be understood that we, with our little couches, cure people without laying a hand on them, without ever hurting anybody.

J.-J.B.: Anti-psychiatry can be connected with May '68, in the sense that May '68 was essentially an attack on institutions. Mental hospitals, like prisons, were institutions for keeping people locked up – institutions which, though usually in the middle of a town, people literally did not see.

F.G.: Doubts about prisons and mental hospitals were still very uncertain in 1968. I remember at the time having very lively discussions with friends like Alain Geismar or Serge July; we tried to see the militants being repressed then as on the same level as everyone else who was suffering – the poor, criminals in gaol, the Katangais,[2] psychiatric patients. Yet even the former 22 March spontaneists who were joining up with the Maoists were saying, 'Political prisoners, yes, and common law prisoners, of course – but not drug addicts! Drug addicts must be denounced, they're dangerous, they can be manipulated by the police,' and so on. When we tried to talk about so-called political questions in the same breath as the problems of madness, we were thought to be eccentric if not positively dangerous. Nowadays that surprises no one. But it was some time after '68 that we reached this point, with the setting up of the GIP[3] and other activities of that kind. During the events of '68 there *was* a lot of upheaval in psychiatric circles – but the universities and the employers soon dealt with that: they set up that movement of what they called 'colleges of psychiatry'. The GIA,[4] 'Garde-Fou', 'Les Cahiers pour la Folie', and the rest all came on the scene much later, more or less in the wake of what Foucault and Deleuze were doing in relation to prisons. Memory can play funny tricks! May '68 may well have liberated all sorts of revolutionary attitudes, but people's minds were still full of the bad old ideas, and it took some time to open them up on problems like madness, homosexuality, drug addiction, delinquency, prostitution, women's liberation and so on.

2. The 'Katangais' was the nickname given to the gangs of toughs who went into the Sorbonne during the student occupation and beat up the students and vandalized the buildings. The name comes from the Katangan rebels of the Congolese war.

3. Group for Information about Prisons.

4. Group for Information about Mental Hospitals.

J.-J.B.: What do you feel about institutional psychiatry today?

F.G.: Wonderful! It's beginning to collapse. At all levels. Physically, to start with: almost half of our psychiatric hospitals are working at less than half of their full capacity. Some hospitals that cost millions to build are almost empty (Mureaux for instance), which is partly why the cost per day of public hospitalization for the mentally ill has risen so astronomically. It is also collapsing in people's minds – no one believes in it any more! The policy of community mental care (breaking down the psychiatric institution into small units, each catering for an area with an average population of 60,000) has at best achieved nothing, and at worst resulted in an intolerable population surveillance. This is specially true of child psychiatry.

J.-J.B.: But why are the hospitals empty?

F.G.: It's a complex phenomenon, with a number of causes. I can tell you what they are – in no special order of importance. First, lack of confidence – the result, among other things, of the mass media's coverage of anti-psychiatry. Then, perhaps partly as a result of the community policy, a lot is now done outside hospital. But I also think that the massive use of tranquillizers has played a significant role. They are plugged not only by psychiatrists, but by general practitioners and even the more or less specialized journals; before an infant has time to give its first cry, it is given a sedative to make it shut up and go to sleep. Hence the diminution, even in some cases the disappearance, of some of the symptoms of social breakdown that used to land people up at the psychiatrist's or in the hospital. Since about 1955, chemo-therapy has been used to put an end to what was called hyperactivity in psychiatric hospitals. It kept out of hospital numbers of people to whom a 'chemical straitjacket' could now be applied at home. But no one realized at first what the effects of all this would be. It was important to go on building psychiatric hospitals, especially since it helped the recovery of the building industry. Some *départements*, it was boasted, now really had adequate hospital places (though what this really meant was financing the 'industrialization' of the building industry). But lo and behold, drugs had deflected a large part of their regular clientele away from the hospitals, and some psychiatrists were determined that the hospitals should be emptied. This led to some quite serious problems, in poor areas, for instance, where the hospital was the major source of employment.

J.-J.B.: The hospitals are emptying, and psychiatry no longer believes in itself. But if the hospitals were built to contain and protect and lock away the insane, and psychiatry was designed to care for them, what is their position now?

F.G.: The future solution, still far in the future for France, is already happening in the USA. The moment someone feels peculiar, or breaks a

window, or takes drugs, he is declared to be schizophrenic. He is stuffed with tranquillizers, or methadone, one thing is as good as another. (One wonders whether it might not have been better to preserve the myriad complexities of the old nosology!) The psychiatric hospitals have been closed in a number of States, but that does not prevent psychiatric repression's being exercised in other ways. People can then become involved in systems of psychiatric control without any reference to psychiatric classifications (tramps, down-and-outs, the old and so on). On the other hand, a great many neurotics, and even those who would have been described as 'mad' under the old psychiatric classifications, no longer go through the hospitals at all, but undergo psychoanalysis, or are visited at home by doctors and given tranquillizers, etc. Though the 'raving lunatic' has become a thing of the past, psychoanalytic madness can be found almost everywhere. Some psychoanalysts make the ludicrous claim that they can diagnose schizophrenia in a three-year-old child! Almost everyone nowadays trashes the psychiatric hospital – which is good, but it is not enough. What is at issue is an overall problem, not just the hospital, but psychiatric care in the community, and the various forms of psychoanalysis: you can't make a slip of the tongue nowadays without finding some total stranger interpreting it to you mercilessly. Worst of all, someone like Ménie Grégoire is part of the new psychiatric armoury.

J.-J.B.: What you're saying, then, is that the psychiatric institution has vanished only to reappear in a more subtle way?

F.G.: Yes, miniaturized. And what also strikes me is that all the great repressive organizations like schools or the army, which used to consist of a single institutional whole, are now tending to become fragmented and scattered all over the place. I think this is Illich's mistake: very soon everyone will become his own mini-instrument of repression, his own school, his own army. The super-ego will invade everything.

In the great repressive entities there were still real relationships of force, and therefore possibilities of struggle. In the small ones, every individual is bound hand and foot by systems of relationships, influences and feelings that there is no getting to grips with, and which in any case imply other forms of 'liberation'. As I see it, the policy of community psychiatry and psychoanalysis (and the two are now closely related) corresponds to the most sophisticated technocratic forms of population surveillance and control. Power still seeking itself, but power that will eventually find itself. And though the community policy is still a failure in terms of power – apart from the field of child psychiatry – it could quite easily make a fresh start. What could be more perfect than a repression which needs no policemen at street corners, but works permanently and unobtrusively via one's work, one's

neighbours, everywhere? The same goes for psychoanalysis: it is gradually getting to be everywhere – at school, at home, on television.

J.-J.B.: But it's taken some knocks – especially from Deleuze and yourself, in your *Anti-Oedipus*.

F.G.: Don't you believe it! The psychoanalysts have remained quite impervious. Naturally enough: you try asking butchers to stop selling meat for ideological reasons – or to become vegetarians! Besides, from the consumer's point of view psychoanalysis works. It works very well indeed, and people keep coming back for more. It makes sense to pay a lot for anything so effective – rather like a drug. And it raises one a fraction in the social scale, which has a certain attraction, too. *Anti-Oedipus* was barely noticed. What is quite funny is that, when the book came out, the Psychoanalytical Society recommended people just to ignore it, and the whole thing would blow over. Which is precisely what happened! No, the most tangible effect of *Anti-Oedipus* was that it short-circuited the connection between psychoanalysis and the left.

J.-J.B.: What strikes me is that the two chief victims of the critique of institutions in the past few years have been our two great bearded fathers, Marx and Freud. A lot of people have attacked Marx. But you and Gilles Deleuze have made a special assault on Freud – because the institution of psychoanalysis, in whatever form, *is* Freud.

F.G.: Yes, it is Freud – but in France it is also Lacan. Psychoanalysis came to France very late, when men like Lagache or Boutonnier arrived at the university. Before the war psychoanalysis barely existed in France. But it has caught up since then. It had tremendous resistance to overcome, but was finally accepted everywhere, in Sainte-Anne, in all the faculties; even general publishers are pouring it out. In other countries, on the other hand, the Freudian movement has been dead for ten years. In the USA they still talk about Jung, but it's only part of their folklore, like psychedelic massage or Zen Buddhism. One might think the same thing will happen in France. I doubt it. In France the Freudian establishment has had a great new lease of life with Lacanism. Lacanism isn't just a re-reading of Freud; it's something far more despotic, both as a theory and an institution, and far more rigid in its semiotic subjection of those who accept it. In fact, it could easily lead to a resurgence of psychoanalysis all over the world, starting with the United States. Not only has Lacan come out of his ghetto, but I think it is quite on the cards that he or his successors may one day manage to set up a real Psychoanalytical International.

I think in future, Lacanism will come to be seen as distinct from Freudianism. Freudianism was defensive in its attitude to medicine, to psychiatry,

to the academic world. Lacanism, on the contrary, is offensive; it is a combatant theory. In this connection, it is important to see to what extent it has influenced Althusserism, and the effect it has had on structuralism as a whole, especially because of its concept of the signifier. Structuralism would certainly never have existed, in the form in which we know it, without Lacanism. The power and the almost religious authority of structuralism would not have been possible but for the Lacanians' introduction of a mathematico-linguistic concept of the unconscious that tends essentially to divide desire from reality. To believe that desire can only be based (symbolically) on its own impotence, its own castration, implies a complete set of political and micro-political assumptions.

J.-J.B.: So, according to you, a new institution has been set up – Lacanism?

F.G.: Yes. A testing-ground, an advance technology, the prototype of new forms of power. It is wonderful to succeed in totally subjecting another person, to hold him bound hand and foot, financially, emotionally, without even having the trouble of making any attempt at suggestion, interpretation or apparent domination. The psychoanalyst of today doesn't say a word to his patient. Such a system of channelling the libido has been achieved that silence is all that is needed. One is reminded of those ideal forms of teaching in which the master no longer had to say anything, but merely to move his head (the Latin *nutus*, 'a nod', was enough – and he then became a *numen*, a divinity who nodded to indicate approbation).

J.-J.B.: In *Anti-Oedipus*, you didn't talk of Lacan so much, but of Freud – and in dusting off his statue you left very little of it standing.

F.G.: That was not deliberate; we advanced by stages and gradual re-touching, but of course, as the re-touching proceeded, the inevitable happened. But our objections to Freud in *Anti-Oedipus* were very much bound up with our objections to Lacanism.

J.-J.B.: But what you object to in *Anti-Oedipus* is not this new form of power you see in Lacanism, but Oedipus itself, the very foundation of Freudianism. And when the foundations crumble, we all know what happens.

You would say that we are witnessing an inverse evolution: the psychiatric institution is weakening, while the psychoanalytic institution is gaining strength in a new form of power.

F.G.: The difference is that psychiatry does not work, whereas psychoanalysis works wonderfully. So wonderfully that it might even succeed in resurrecting some sectors of psychiatry one of these days!

Mary Barnes, or Oedipus in Anti-Psychiatry[1]

In 1965, a community of some twenty people was formed around Ronald Laing. They established themselves in Kingsley Hall, an old building in a London suburb that had, to quote Joseph Berke, 'a long and honourable history as a centre for social experiment and radical political activity'. For five years the pioneers of anti-psychiatry and patients making 'a career' as schizophrenics were to explore together the world of madness. Not the madness of the mental hospital, but the madness each of us has within us, a madness which was to be liberated in order to remove inhibitions and symptoms of all kinds. At Kingsley Hall they abolished, or tried to abolish, all division of roles among patients, psychiatrists, nurses and so on. No one had any official right to give or receive orders or to lay down any rules. Kingsley Hall was to become an enclave of freedom from the prevailing normality, a base for the counter-culture movement.[2]

The aim of the anti-psychiatrists is to get beyond the experiments in community psychiatry; in their view these were so many more reformist projects, and did not really question the repressive institutions and traditional framework of psychiatry. Maxwell Jones and David Cooper,[3] who were two of the principal instigators of these endeavours, were to take an active part in the life of Kingsley Hall. Anti-psychiatry could thus have its own *tabula rasa*, so to say, its organless body, in which every part of the house – cellar, roof, kitchen, staircase, quiet room – and every episode in the collective life would function as a cog in a great machine, drawing each person beyond his immediate self and his own little problems, either towards helping everyone else, or towards a descent into himself by a (sometimes dizzying) process of regression.

This enclave of freedom, Kingsley Hall, was besieged on all sides, the old world oozing in at every crack: the neighbours protested about the noise at night, local kids threw stones at the windows, the relatives were ready at the

1. *Le Nouvel Observateur*, 28 May 1973.

2. Cf. *Counter-Culture: The Creation of an Alternative Society*, ed. J. Berke, Peter Owen and Fire Books, 1970.

3. David Cooper, *Psychiatry and Antipsychiatry*, Tavistock, 1967.

slightest pretext to cart off any over-excited inmate to the mental hospital.[4]

But the worst threat to Kingsley Hall actually came from within; though free from identifiable constraints, people still went on silently interiorizing social repressions; and, furthermore, no one could escape the simplistic reduction of all things to the same old triangle (father, mother and child) that confmes all situations that exceed what are considered the bounds of normality within the mould of Oedipal psychoanalysis.

Should there be some minimal discipline at Kingsley Hall, or not? Internecine power struggles poisoned the atmosphere. Aaron Esterson, leader of the 'hard-line' tendency (he was seen with a biography of Stalin under his arm, whereas Laing tended to quote from Lenin!), was eventually forced out, yet even then it was still difficult for the enterprise to discover the right system of self-regulation. Then, to make matters worse, the press, television and the intellectual trendies wanted to join in – Kingsley Hall became the object of noisy publicity. One of the inmates, Mary Barnes, became a kind of star of madness, which made her the focus of implacable jealousies.

Her experiences at Kingsley Hall have been described in a book by Mary Barnes and her psychiatrist, Joseph Berke.[5] It is an astonishingly candid confession; it is also both an admirable attempt to free 'mad desire' and a work of neo-behaviourist dogmatism,[6] both a brilliant voyage of discovery and a work of unrepentant familialism in line with the old puritan tradition. Mary Barnes – the madwoman – shows in a few chapters of autobiography what no anti-psychiatrist has ever shown: the hidden face of English-speaking anti-psychiatry.

Mary Barnes is a former nurse who was labelled a schizophrenic – though she might equally have been classed as a hysteric. She took quite literally Laing's recommendation of a 'journey' into madness. Her 'regression into infancy' was rather in the style of a kamikaze pilot, her years of 'going down' leading her on occasion to the verge of death from starvation. The whole place was in an uproar – should she be sent to hospital or not? There was a violent crisis in the community. But it is important to note that even when she was in a phase of upswing matters were still not easy; she would only relate to a few people, in whom she massively invested her familialism and mysticism –

4. This, however, was nothing compared to the situation in Italy, where far less 'provocative' experiments were stopped, or, still less, Germany, where really ferocious repression is still being used against the members of the SPK (*Sozialistisches Patientenkollectiv*) in Heidelberg (see p. 67, note 3).

5. *Mary Barnes: Two Accounts of a Journey Through Madness*, MacGibbon & Kee, 1971.

6. Behaviourism is a theory from the beginning of this century that reduced psychology to the study of behaviour, defined as the interaction between external stimuli and the responses of the subject. The neo-behaviourism of today tends to reduce all human problems to problems of communication and information, ignoring the socio-political problems of power at every level.

mainly Ronnie (Laing), whom she worshipped as a god, and Joe (Berke), who became at once her father, her mother and her spiritual lover.

She thus set up her own little Oedipal ground which caused great repercussions in all the paranoiac tendencies of the household. Her pleasure centred in the painful awareness that never ceased to torment her of all the harm she was doing around her. She attacked Laing's set-up, even though it was so important to her. The more guilty she felt the more she punished herself and the worse her state became, causing panic reactions in the group. She had reconstituted the vicious circle of familialism – but this time there were over twenty people involved, which naturally multiplied the devastation.

She became a baby again, and had to be fed from a bottle. She wandered naked, covered in shit; she pissed in other people's beds; she broke things up; or she wouldn't eat and wanted to let herself die. She tyrannized Joe Berke: she stopped him from going out, and she persecuted his wife until, one day, he could stand it no longer, and punched her with his fist. One is inevitably reminded of the well-known methods of the psychiatric hospital! Joe Berke asked himself how it could happen that a group of people whose object was to de-mystify the social relations of disturbed families could reach the point of behaving like just such a family.

Fortunately, Mary Barnes was an exceptional case – not everyone at Kingsley Hall behaved like her! But she undoubtedly posed the real problems. How can we be so sure that understanding, love and all the other Christian virtues, combined with a technique of mystical regression, can of themselves exorcise the devils of Oedipal madness?

Laing is certainly one of the people most deeply committed to the enterprise of demolishing psychiatry. He has broken down the walls of the hospital, but one gets the impression that he remains the prisoner of other walls still standing within himself; he has not yet managed to free himself of the worst constraint, the most dangerous of all double binds,[7] that of what Robert Castel has called 'psychoanalysm' – with its obsession with significant interpretation, its 'false-bottomed' representations and shallow depths.

Laing believed that the neurotic alienation could be defeated by centring the analysis on the family, and its internal 'knots'. In his view, everything starts from the family, yet he wants to get away from it. He would like us to become one with the cosmos, break out of the humdrum of everyday life. But his method of reasoning cannot detach the subject from the familial grasp: though he sees it only as the starting point, it catches up with him again at every turn. He tries to resolve the difficulty by taking refuge in an eastern-style meditation, but that cannot long withstand the intrusion of capitalist

7. A double bind is a twofold, contradictory constraint occurring in the communications between a patient and his family which confuses him totally.

subjectivity whose methods are nothing if not subtle. He does not take Oedipus seriously enough: without a frontal attack on this vital tool of capitalist repression, one can make no decisive change in the economy of desire, or, therefore, the status of madness.

Mary Barnes's book is constantly concerned with fluxes – the flux of shit, of urine, of milk, of paint – but, significantly, it barely mentions the flux of money. We never discover quite how the set-up operates from this point of view. Who controls the money, who decides what to buy, who gets paid? The community seems to live on air: Mary's brother Peter, who is undoubtedly caught up in a far deeper schizo process than she is, cannot at first cope with the bohemian life style of Kingsley Hall. It is too noisy, too messy, and anyhow he wants to remain fit for work.

But his sister torments him – he *must* come and live with her at Kingsley Hall. Hers is the unremitting proselytism of regression – you'll see, you'll make *your* journey, *you*'ll be able to paint, you'll get to the end of your madness. But Peter's madness is disturbing in a different way. He feels no enthusiasm for rushing into this sort of adventure. This may well reflect the difference between a real schizophrenic journey and a familialist regression along petty bourgeois lines. The schizo is not so much attracted to 'human warmth'. His concerns are elsewhere, among the more de-territorialized fluxes – the flux of miracle-working cosmic signs, but also of monetary signs. The schizo understands the value of money – even if he uses it in curious ways – just as he understands every other reality. He does not play at being a baby. Money is to him a means of reference like any other, and he needs as many reference systems as he can get, precisely in order to preserve his aloofness. For him, exchange is a means of avoiding interchange. In short, Peter told them to bugger off with their interfering encroaching community – he wanted no such threat to his particular relationship to desire.

Mary's familialist neurosis is something very different: she was continually setting up little familial territorialities, in a kind of vampire greed for 'human warmth'. She attached herself to the other's image: for instance, she had previously asked Anna Freud to take her into analysis, but in her mind what that meant was that she and her brother would move in with Anna Freud and become her children. She set out to do the same thing with Ronnie and Joe.

Familialism means magically denying the social reality, avoiding all connection with real fluxes. All that remains possible is dreaming, and the enclosed hell of the conjugo-familial system, or even, in moments of intense crisis, a little urine-soaked corner to retreat to, alone. This was Mary Barnes's mode of operation at Kingsley Hall, as an apostle of Laingian therapy, a revolutionary of madness, a professional.

Her confessions teach us more than we would learn from reading a dozen

textbooks of anti-psychiatry. In them we can see how the after-effects of 'psychoanalysm' dog the methods of Laing and his friends.

From the early Freud of *Studies on Hysteria* to the most up-to-date structural analysts, all psychoanalytical method always consists in narrowing every situation down by means of three sifting processes:

Interpretation: a thing must always mean something other than itself. The truth is never to be found in the direct experience of forces and relationships, but only by juggling with clues and significances;

Familialism: those signifying clues can essentially be boiled down to familial representations. To discover what they are calls for a regression, in which the subject is led to 'rediscover' his childhood. Which means in practice an 'impotentized' representation of childhood, a childhood as memory and as myth, childhood as a refuge, as negating the intense experiences of the present, and therefore with no possible relation to what the subject's childhood was really like in positive terms;

Transference: as the interpretative reduction and the familialist regression proceed, desire is re-established in a drastically reduced space, a miserable little area of identification (the analyst's couch, his watching eye, his – supposedly – attentive ear). Since the rules of the game demand that whatever is presented must be reduced to terms of interpretation and father- and mother-images, all that remains is to reduce the signifying apparatus itself so that it only functions in relation to a single term: the silence of the analyst, against which all questions come up against a blank wall. The psychoanalytical transference, like a kind of churn for creaming off the reality of desire, leaves the patient dangling in a vertigo of nothingness, a narcissistic passion which, though less dangerous than Russian roulette, leads if successful to the same sort of irreversible fixation on unimportant details which ends by withdrawing him from all other social investments.

We have been aware for a long time that these three sifting processes work badly with the mad: their interpretations and images are too different from the prevailing social coordinates. But at Kingsley Hall, instead of rejecting this method, they tried to improve the processes in order to make them more effective. The silent interpretation of the analytic tête-à-tête was replaced by a collective – and noisy – interpretation, a kind of delirium of togetherness. Certainly the method was effective in a new way: no longer merely a kind of mirror-game between the words of the patient and the silence of the analyst, it introduced objects, movements and a certain balance of power. When Joe Berke joined in Mary Barnes's great regression game, he growled, played at being a crocodile, bit her, squeezed her, rolled her about in her bed – all of which an ordinary psychoanalyst would be unlikely to do.

A breakthrough, apparently – they were on the point of arriving at an entirely new praxis, a new semiotic, breaking away from the sacred principles

of significance and interpretation. But no. Each time, the psychoanalyst pulled himself together again, and brought back the old familialist points of reference. And he became the prisoner of his own game: when Joe Berke had to leave the house Mary did all she could to stop him. Not merely was the analysis interminable – the session became so as well! He had to display real anger in order to get away from his patient just for a few hours, to attend a meeting on the Vietnam war.

In the end, nothing escaped the interpretative infection. Paradoxically, it was Mary who was the first to break out of the circle – by her painting. In fact, within months she had become a well-known painter.[8] Yet, even then, interpretation still held sway: Mary felt guilty over attending drawing classes, because her mother's cherished hobby was painting, and she would be resentful if she learnt that her daughter painted better than she did. Nor was the paternal side neglected: 'Now, with all these paintings you have the penis, the power of the family. Your father feels very threatened.'

With touching application, Mary set out to absorb all the psychoanalytical claptrap. She stood out like a sore thumb in the community atmosphere of Kingsley Hall: she would not talk to just anyone. She refused other people because she wanted to be sure that whoever was caring for her was fully in accord with Ronnie's ideas. 'When I got the idea of a breast, a safe breast, Joe's breast, somewhere I could suck, yet not be stolen from myself, there was no holding me . . . Joe, putting his finger in my mouth, was to me saying, "Look, I can come into you but I'm not controlling you, possessing, stealing you."'

In the end, the psychoanalyst himself was overwhelmed by the interpretative machine he had helped to set going. He admits it: Mary 'interpreted everything that was done for her (or for anyone else for that matter) as therapy . . . If the coal was not delivered when ordered, that was therapy. And so on, to the most absurd conclusions.' But this did not stop Joe Berke from continuing to struggle with his own interpretations, whose sole object was to fit his relationship with Mary into the Oedipal triangle: '. . . By 1966 . . . , I had a pretty good idea of what and who I was for her when we were together. "Mother" took the lead when she was Mary the baby. "Father" and "brother Peter" vied for second place. In order to protect my own sense of reality, and to help Mary break through her web of illusion, I always took the trouble to point out when I thought Mary was using me as someone else.' But he never found it possible to unravel the web completely. Mary had got the whole household caught up in it.

8. Her exhibitions, in Great Britain and abroad, brought her a considerable celebrity. One could say quite a lot about this kind of recovery via *Art Brut*, which involves launching a mad artist upon the public like a stage star, for the benefit of those who mount the exhibitions. The essence of mad art is that it falls outside ordinary concepts of the author and his or her work.

If we look at the technique of regression into babyhood, and at the transference, we see that, as developed in a community, their tendency to create 'de-realization' was greatly multiplied. In the traditional analytical encounter, the one-to-one relationship, the artificial and limited nature of the way the session is organized establishes a kind of barrier to hold back the excesses of the imagination. At Kingsley Hall, it was a real death that confronted Mary Barnes at the end of each of her 'journeys', and the whole household became caught up in equally real grief and suffering. So much so that Aaron Esterson was driven back to the old methods of authority and suggestion: Mary was literally starving herself to death, and he firmly forbade her to continue her fast.

Some years beforehand, a Catholic priest had equally firmly forbidden her to masturbate, telling her, so she said, that it was an even graver sin than to sleep with a boyfriend. This, too, was completely successful. But, surely, this return to authority and suggestion is the inevitable accompaniment of such a technique of total regression. Suddenly, she is turned away from the very edge of death by a 'policeman-father' materializing from the shadows. The Imaginary, especially that of the psychoanalyst, is no sort of defence against social repression: on the contrary, it unconsciously invites it.

One of the most valuable lessons from this book is perhaps that it shows how illusory it is to seek to rediscover sheer, unmixed desire by setting off to find knots buried in the unconscious or hidden clues of interpretation. There is no magical effect whereby the transference can disentangle the real micro-political conflicts that imprison people, no mystery, no other world behind this one. There is nothing to discover in the unconscious: the unconscious has still to be constructed. If the Oedipus in the transference fails to resolve the familial Oedipus, it is because it remains profoundly attached to the familialized individual.

Alone on the couch or in a group, in a planned regression, the 'normal-neurotic' (you and I) or the psychiatrist's neurotic (who is 'mad') continues over and over again to demand the Oedipus. Psychoanalysts, whose entire training and practice have filled them to the eyeballs with the reductionist drug of interpretation, can do no other than reinforce this flattening-out of desire: transference is a technique for displacing the investments of desire. Far from moderating the rush towards death, it seems actually to accelerate it, gathering together the 'individuated' Oedipal energies as in a cyclotron, in what Joe Berke calls 'the vicious spiral of punishment–anger–guilt–punishment'. It can only lead to castration, renunciation and sublimation – a shoddy kind of asceticism. The objects of collective guilt succeed one another, accentuating the self-destructive, punitive impulses by coupling them with a real repression composed of anger, jealousy and fear.

Guilt becomes a specific form of the libido – a capitalist Eros – when it

enters into conjunction with the de-territorialized fluxes of capitalism. It then finds a new way out, a novel solution, of the limitations imposed by the family, the mental hospital, psychoanalysis. I shouldn't have done it, what I did was wrong, and the more wrong I feel it to be, the more I want to do it, because it makes me exist in the intensity zone of guilt. However, that zone, instead of being embodied, linked to the body of the subject, his ego, his family, takes possession of the institution: fundamentally, the real boss at Kingsley Hall was Mary Barnes. And she knew it. Everything revolved around her. But whereas she was only playing at Oedipus, the others were tied hand and foot in a collective Oedipalism.

One day Joe Berke describes finding her covered in shit and sobbing: 'You have to hand it to Mary. She is extraordinarily capable of conjuring up everyone's favourite nightmare and embodying it for them.' At Kingsley Hall, then, the transference was no longer contained by the analyst – it was getting away in all directions and becoming a threat even to the psychoanalyst himself. At that moment the ties of analysis were almost broken for good, and the desiring intensities, the 'partial objects', almost followed their own lines of force and ceased to be dogged by systems of interpretation as correctly codified by the social grids of the 'dominant reality'.

Why did Berke make such a desperate attempt to reunite the scattered multiplicity of Mary's 'experiment' with dissolving her ego and attempt to let her neurosis break through? Why this return to the poles of the family, to the unity of the person, preventing Mary from opening out to a whole social field outside herself which might have proved so rewarding? 'The initial process of her coming together was akin to my trying to put together a jigsaw puzzle without having all the pieces. Of those pieces which were about, many had had their tabs cut off and their slots barricaded. So it was nigh on impossible to tell what went where. The puzzle, of course, was Mary's emotional life. The pieces were her thoughts, her actions, her associations, her dreams, etc.'

How can it be proved that the solution for Mary Barnes really lay in the direction of an infantile regression? Or that the origin of her problems rose from disturbances or blockages in the communications systems of her family when she was a child? Why not take a look at what was going on elsewhere? In fact, it can be seen that all the doors opening to the world outside were firmly shut against her when she tried to go through them; consequently, what she found outside was almost certainly a familialism even more repressive than that of her childhood experience. Perhaps the unfortunate Mr and Mrs Barnes were only unconsciously reflecting the violent storm of repression that was going on outside. Mary had not become 'fixated' at her childhood – she

had never found the way out! Her desire for a real way out was too powerful, too demanding to yield to any external compromises.

The first trouble started at school. 'School was very dangerous.' She sat paralysed, terrified on her chair; she fought with her teacher. 'Most things at school worried me . . .' She only pretended to read, to sing, to draw – yet her desire was to be a writer, a journalist, a painter, a doctor. One day it was explained to her that all this was a way of wishing she could be a man. 'I felt ashamed that I wanted to be a doctor. I know this shame was bound up' – and here the interpretationism gets going – 'with the enormous guilt I had in connection with my desire to be a boy. Everything masculine in myself must be hidden, buried in secret.'

Priests and policemen of every kind were used to make her feel guilty about everything and nothing, and especially about masturbating. When she became resigned to being a nurse rather than a doctor and joined the army, it was yet another dead end. At one moment she wanted to go to Russia, because she had heard that there, 'women with babies and no husbands were quite accepted'. When she determined to enter the convent, there were doubts as to her religious faith: 'What brought you into the Church?' No doubt the priests were right – her wish for sanctity was suspect. Finally she ended up in the mental hospital, and even there she was prepared to do something, to dedicate herself to others. One day she brought a bunch of flowers to a sister in the Nurses' Home, and heard herself saying, 'You should not be here!' There seemed no end to the social traumas, the beating she received. Having become a nurse, she was told she could not study for a higher qualification.

From the first, what interested Mary Barnes was not the family – it was society. But everything brought her back to the family; sad to say, even her life at Kingsley Hall! Since the familialist interpretation was the game they liked playing there, and since she loved them so much, she was ready to play it with them. And how well she played it! The real analyst at Kingsley Hall was herself; she got the fullest mileage out of all the neurotic possibilities of the project, all the underlying paranoia of her Kingsley Hall father and mother. Indeed, Mary, the missionary, may well have contributed to helping the anti-psychiatrists to recognize the reactionary implications of their psychoanalytic postulates.

Money in the Analytic Exchange[1]

Money functions as a misleading equivalent, in the sense that the value that it represents or crystallizes depends on the position one occupies in the production system. To those wielding power in a system based on the extraction of a surplus-value money means something quite different from what it means to those selling their labour. It crystallizes both a way of organizing exploitation and a system for disguising the class struggle. It determines not only people's structural positions within production, but also the nature of the productions encoded in the system.

The content of the capitalist encoding has changed as and when there has been a reduction of profit levels in a whole series of sectors of production. The State has been forced to take over from private capitalism, in the system of national insurance and pensions, for instance, in taking over directly the control of public services, or in fields where the preservation of a minimum of social order requires such institutions as social security, a health service, etc. It is precisely those productions that are not strictly part of the bi-polar relation of exploitation that become in a sense devalued. It goes without saying, for example, that the work that goes into producing raw materials or manufactured goods in an under-developed country is different from the equivalent work in a rich area. The same goes for the work in key sectors of capitalist production as compared with work in slower sectors (like coal mining) or, worse still, work viewed as totally worthless (the jobs that give mental patients or prisoners something to do).

We have therefore to estimate what money represents in the analytic exchange – or, rather, pseudo-exchange, for there is no real exchange of services between analyst and analysand. There are two sorts of work involved: the analytical work of the patient, and the psychoanalyst's work of listening and sifting. It is actually quite wrong for there to be any flow of money from one to the other. In a different social system which viewed these two sorts of work in the same way as any other form of production, the analyst and the analysand should both be paid, just as the social division of labour dictates that not only should factory work be paid, but work in offices and

1. Intervention at the Congress of the Paris Freudian School held in Aix-en-Provence, May 1971. Published in *Lettres de l'école freudienne*, 9.

research laboratories as well. One can hardly imagine unskilled workers having to pay the designers who plan what they produce! But of course this is all part of the system of extracting the surplus-value. When the psychoanalyst is paid, he is in fact *reproducing* a certain process of crushing the patient to adapt him onto the personological poles of capitalist society. How could it be otherwise when a psychoanalyst sees patients whose position in the family structure prevents their having any personal role in the flux of money – what Alain Cotta describes as the rotation of 'family capital'[2] – or directly taking part in the cycle of capitalist production (wives, for instance, who go into analysis which their husbands pay for, or children)? Unless there is some system of funding out of taxes and contributions, or an allowance paid by some third body, their analytical production – which should in fact be classed as a work of education (in the widest sense) of the collective labour force – is exploited production. In the analytical relationship, the structures of social alienation within the family are transposed and reproduced: the family is used as staging post. In as much as the psychoanalyst finds himself having to be paid in this way, he is implicitly sanctioning a way of using the structures of the family as an instrument to crush desire production and press it into the service of a social order governed by profit.

On the specifically analytic level, it seems to me vital to recognize that the child who draws or makes a plasticine model for an analyst, and the wife who enters analysis to 'solve the family's problems', are taking part in social production. At the unconscious level, therefore, the capitalist extraction of surplus-value is reproduced, and in a sense, expanded, in the analytic relationship. The claim of analysis to represent a means of getting at the truth should oblige it, first and foremost, to denounce itself, for by the fact of being paid for, it starts off a renewal of social violence.

At the very least, if they carry on as they are, analysts should be made to stop justifying their money relationship with their patients on the grounds of some supposed 'symbolic order'. Or else they should accept the logic of their position and state clearly that, for them, order itself is the rightful basis of all systems of segregation. In most cases, of course, they are unwilling to go so far. Like any other capitalist, they believe that earning money is part of the normal order of things: 'One has to earn a living!' And, from an analytic point of view, this may ultimately be the least dangerous, because the least mystifying, attitude.

2. Alain Cotta, *Théorie générale du capital, de la croissance et des fluctuations*, Dunod, 1966.

Psychoanalysis and the Struggles of Desire[1]

The problem facing the workers' revolutionary movement is that there is a dislocation between the apparent relations of power at the level of the class struggle and the real desire investment of the mass of the people.

Capitalism exploits the labour capacity of the working class and manipulates the relations of production to its own advantage, but it also insinuates itself into the desire system of those it exploits. The revolutionary struggle cannot therefore be restricted simply to the level of the *apparent* state of power relations. It must extend to every level of the desiring economy that is contaminated by capitalism (the individual, the couple, the family, the school, the militant group, madness, prisons, homosexuality or whatever).

The objects and methods of the struggle will vary from one level to another. Such aims as 'Freedom, Peace and Plenty' demand political organizations that can intervene in the power struggle, that combine forces and constitute blocs. In the nature of things these organizations must be representative, coordinating the struggle and providing it with a strategy and tactics. On the other hand, the struggle against what we may call 'microscopic fascism' – the fascism implanted within desiring machines – cannot be carried on via delegates or representatives, by identifiable and unchanging blocs. The face of the enemy is changing all the time: it can be a friend, a colleague, a superior, even oneself. There is never a time when you can be sure you are not going to fall for a politics supporting bureaucracy or privilege, into a paranoiac view of the world, an unconscious collusion with the establishment, an internalization of social repression.

These two struggles need not be mutually exclusive:

– The class struggle, the revolutionary struggle for liberation, involves the existence of war machines capable of standing up to the forces of oppression, which means operating with a degree of centralism, with at least a minimum of coordination;

– The struggle in relation to desire requires collective agencies to produce a continually ongoing analysis, and the subversion of *every form of power*, at every level.

1. Talk given at the first Psychoanalysis and Politics Conference, held in Milan on 7–9 May 1973 and published by Feltrinelli and by Éditions 10/18.

It is surely absurd to hope to overthrow the power of the bourgeoisie by replacing it with a structure that reconstitutes the *form* of that power. The class struggle in Russia, China and elsewhere has demonstrated that, even after the power of the bourgeoisie has been broken, the form of that power can be reproduced in the State, in the family, even in the ranks of the revolution. How can we prevent centralizing and bureaucratic authority from taking charge of the coordination that is necessarily involved in organizing a revolutionary war? The struggle as a whole must include stages and intermediaries. At the 'microscopic' level, what must happen, first of all, is a kind of direct changeover to communism, the abolition of bourgeois power in the sense that that power is embodied in the bureaucrat, the leader or the militant dedicated revolutionary.

Bureaucratic centralism has been introduced permanently into the workers' movement in imitation of the centralist model of Capital. Capital supervises and over-encodes production by controlling the flow of money and wielding coercive power over production relations and in State monopoly capitalism. There is a similar problem with bureaucratic socialism. But real production does not need this kind of direction in the least – in fact is better without. The major productive machines in industrial societies could manage very well without such centralism. Clearly, a different concept of how production is related both to distribution and consumption, and to training and research, would shatter the hierarchical and despotic powers that prevail within present-day production relations, and give free play to the workers' capacity for innovation. Evidently, then, the basis of centralism is not economic but political. In the workers' movement, too, centralism leads to the same sort of sterility. It must be accepted that far more effective and broader struggles could be coordinated away from bureaucratic headquarters, but only if the desiring economy of the workers can be freed from the contamination of the bourgeois subjectivity that makes them the unconscious accomplices of the capitalist technocracy and the bureaucracy of the workers' movement.

Here we must be careful not to fall into the simplistic trap of saying *either* 'democratic' centralism, *or* anarchism and spontaneism.

Alternative marginal movements and communities have absolutely nothing to gain by falling into the myth of a return to the pre-technological age, of 'back to nature'; on the contrary, they have to cope with real society, real sexual and family relationships, with what is happening now. On the other hand, one must recognize that the official workers' movement has up to now refused to consider how far it may be contaminated by bourgeois power, to consider its own internal corruption. Nor is there at present any scientific discipline that can help it to do so. Neither sociology, nor psycho-sociology, nor psychology – still less psychoanalysis – has extended Marxism into this

area. Freudianism, in the guise of a science, sets up as its unquestioned norms the very things that produce bourgeois subjectivation – the myth of a necessary castration of desire, in terms of the Oedipal triangle, a signifying interpretation which tends to isolate the analysis from the realities of its social setting.

I alluded to the possibility of abolishing the technocratic centralism of capitalist production, which would be based on a different understanding of the relationship between production, distribution and consumption on the one hand and production, research and education on the other. This would obviously tend to make a total change in attitudes to work, and especially the split between work recognized as socially useful (recognized as socially useful by capitalism, that is, by the ruling class) and the 'useless' work of desire. All of production, whether of commercial value or use value, whether of individuals or collective bodies, is under the control of a form of social organization that enforces a certain pattern of social division of labour. The disappearance of capitalist centralism would therefore bring with it a fundamental re-casting of production techniques. Even in a society with highly developed industry and highly developed public information services etc., one can conceive of different production relations that would not be antagonistic to the productions of desire, of art, of dreams. In other words, the question is whether or not it is possible to stop seeing use value and exchange value as mutually opposed. The alternative of rejecting all complex forms of production and demanding a return to nature merely reproduces the split between the different forms of production – desiring production and production of recognized social utility.

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Relations among individuals, groups and classes are bound up with the way individuals are manipulated by the capitalist system. Individuals as such are manufactured by that system to satisfy the demands of its mode of production. The idea that there were originally, as the basis of society, individuals, groups of individuals in the form of families and so on was thought up for the needs of the capitalist system. In the human sciences, everything that has been built up around the individual and the primacy of the individual serves only to extend the dichotomy between the individual and his social context. The difficulty one comes up against, the moment one tries to grapple with any social reality – be it language, madness or anything connected with any real process of desiring production – is that one is never dealing with individuals. In as much as linguistics, for instance, has been satisfied to define its field in terms of communication among individuals, it has totally missed the coercive and integrative functions of language. Linguistics only starts to free itself from bourgeois ideology when it studies the problems arising from connotation, context, the implicit and all the transactions of language that fall outside this

abstract relation between individuals. No group, no class is made up of individuals; it is the imprint of capitalist production relations on the social dimension of desire that produces the stream of undifferentiated individuals necessary in order to inveigle a work force.

Did the events of May 1968 in France introduce a potential change into the revolutionary movement, specifically on this point of the desiring economy? Had such a change taken place, it would have had considerable political and social consequences! One can only say that, since the relative decline of Stalinism, since the departure of a significant proportion of young workers and students from the traditional revolutionary models, we have witnessed not a major break but little breakthroughs of desire, little breaches in the despotic system that prevails in political organizations.

The depredations of May '68 in France were repaired within a few weeks. Perhaps no more than two. Nevertheless, it had the most profound consequences, and they are still being felt at all sorts of levels. Even though its results are no longer visible on a national scale, it is still going on by a kind of infiltration in many different situations. A new vision has been born, a new approach to problems of revolution. Before '68, for instance, it would have been unthinkable to suggest that there could be any political purpose in campaigning in favour of common criminals in prison; it would have been unthinkable for homosexuals to demonstrate in the streets in defence of their particular orientation of desire. The women's liberation movement, the fight against repression in psychiatry, these and other movements have acquired completely new meaning and methods. Thus it is true that problems are now seen differently, but, equally, there has been no real break. This is undoubtedly because there is no large-scale machine for revolutionary war. We have to recognize that certain dominant images are still perpetrating their destructive effects even within revolutionary groups themselves. A critique of bureaucratism in the trade unions has been begun; the principle of the 'delegation of power' to the vanguard, and the system of a 'drive belt' connecting the people to the party, these things have been brought into question. But revolutionaries are still the victims of a great many of the prejudices of bourgeois morality, and of repressive attitudes towards desire. This may perhaps explain the fact that in May '68 there was no such attack on psychoanalysis as there was on psychiatry. Psychoanalysis preserved some authority in so far as a number of the dogmas of psychoanalysis were taken on board by the movement.

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The real breakthrough will only happen once there is a new approach to such problems as the bureaucratism of organizations, the repressive attitude of revolutionary men towards their wives and children and their failure to understand the significance of fatigue, neurosis and delusion (it is quite usual

for someone who 'breaks down' to be dismissed as 'finished', as of no more use to the organization if not a positive danger to it) – once such problems are, not perhaps at the very centre of their political concerns, but at least treated with the same seriousness as organizational problems, or the stand that must be made against bourgeois power, or management, or the police. The battle is one that must be fought within our own ranks, against our own internal police. It is not just a secondary front, as certain Maoists have contended, a supporting action, a marginal operation. As long as there remains a dichotomy between the battle on the class front and the battle on the front of desire, all forms of co-option will still be possible. Significantly, after May '68, most revolutionary movements failed to grasp the importance of the weak link that had become apparent during the student struggle. Quite suddenly, students and young workers 'forgot' the respect that was due to the superior knowledge and power of teachers, foremen, managers, etc. They broke away from the old submission to the values of the past and introduced an entirely new approach. But the whole thing was labelled spontaneism, in other words a transitional manifestation that must be left behind for a 'superior' phase, marked by the setting-up of centralist organizations. Desire surged up among the people; it was noted, but expected to quieten and accept discipline. No one realized that this new form of revolt would in future be inseparable from all further economic and political struggles.

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When I talk of Marxism and Freudianism, I have in mind a particular way in which the texts of Marx and Freud are treated. From one point of view, Freudianism must be defined as reactionary in all its social stances, all its analyses of relations between the individual and the family, while even Marxism remains generally inadequate in its treatment of the problems related to desire. This does not mean, however, that there is no more to be said about the texts of Freud and Marx.

The question is just what use to make of them. As with every theory, there are two ways in which they could be used. The text can be used as a means of identifying and illuminating real social connections, the links between one struggle and the next; or the theory can be used in such a way as to tailor reality to fit the text.

People are often very dogmatic when they try to explain the relationship between Marxism and Freudianism. I believe that the only way out of this blind alley lies in talking as honestly as possible about the reality of the conflicts – but they must be effective conflicts.

As long as we preserve a clear dividing-line between private life and public life, we shall get nowhere. To clarify political commitments and class commitments, without merely burying oneself in a mass of words, requires discussion at the level of one's day-to-day activity, be it the activity of a

full-time revolutionary or a doctor, activity in one's family, one's marriage or any other situation.

It is perhaps conceivable, if circumstances were different, that we could start talking seriously of the relation between a politics of desire and a politics of revolution, but only if we were prepared to be totally honest, and if need be, tread on some people's toes.

A number of people have intervened during these discussions to stress the view that the principal dilemma facing us in our particular field is that between a (reformist) politics of 'alternative psychiatry' and a psychiatric politics that is revolutionary from the word *go*. This would mean that there were two camps: on the one side would be Jervis[2] and on the other such experiences as the SPK.[3]

But the problem is not really so simple. The conflict that faces us in trying to contemplate a politics of desire cannot be restricted to a single front; it is

2. G. Jervis is an Italian psychiatrist, author of a critical handbook on psychiatry.

3. A socialist patients' collective in Heidelberg. The SPK was made up of therapeutic groups comprising some forty patients at the Polyclinic of Heidelberg University. These patients, and their doctor, Dr Huber, carried out a theoretical and practical critique of the institution, and disclosed the ideological function of psychiatry as an instrument of oppression. Their work soon attracted increasing opposition from the psychiatric clinic – its director described the group as 'a collective of hatred and aggression'.

As repression intensified, so did resistance. It became impossible to get rid of the SPK by official and legal means. In a secret session, the University Senate decided to call in the police. They found a pretext in July 1971, when there was an exchange of gunfire in the suburbs of Heidelberg. This was blamed on the SPK, which could then be put down in the most brutal way. Three hundred cops with sub-machine guns forced their way into the SPK premises, helicopters flew over the city, the *Bundesgrenzschutz* (special brigades) were mobilized, searches were made with no warrant, Dr Huber's children taken as hostages, patients and doctors were arrested, and the accused were drugged to make them appear cooperative. The SPK thereupon decided to disband.

Dr Huber and his wife spent some years in prison, in an almost total isolation which even a judge described as inhuman. By treating them first as insane and then as terrorists (because of their response to police provocation they were compared with the Baader-Meinhof group), they could be brought before a special tribunal operating on Nazi principles.

The defence was paralysed. One of the lawyers, Eberhardt Becker, was accused of complicity, and charged. Another, Jorg Lang, was imprisoned. All the lawyers who supported them were harassed and removed by one means or another. Lawyers were appointed who only saw the documents in the case a fortnight before it opened, whereas the press had had them from the first. The accused rejected their services.

On 7 November 1972, the day the trial opened in Karlsruhe, the three accused were brought in on stretchers (two between the three of them), tied hand and foot. The Hubers, who had not seen one another for fifteen months, were bullied and violently separated, and finally expelled from the court, along with Hausner, the third defendant. Half of those present were plain-clothes policemen. Part of the rest were also expelled after one young man read out a statement of international solidarity with the accused. He, even before he had got outside the court building, was arrested, abused, beaten up and left without medical attention for hours. A medical certificate later issued by Karlsruhe hospital described severe damage, some to the skull.

not just a matter of capitalism versus the working class. I believe that a mass of new fronts will have to be opened as the working class and the organizations of the workers' movement become contaminated by the subjectivity of the ruling class. It needs more than 'going out to the workers' and quoting from the right authors to rid oneself of bourgeois influence in the sphere of desire. In this sense, one cannot (as Jervis has) identify the stated interests of the workers with their desire. The interests of the American working class, for instance, may be objectively fascist in tendency from the point of view of the politics of desire. The unions' fight to defend the workers' interests, legitimate though it be, can also be totally repressive in relation to the desire of a whole series of other social groups, ethnic and sexual minorities, and so on. I believe, for example, that we must not delude ourselves as to the possibility of a political alliance between the psychoanalytic vanguard who claim to have got rid of psychiatric repression, and the working-class organizations that exist today. The models of repression are as unpleasant among psychoanalysts as among political militants. To go among the working class is not to leave the psychiatric hospital but merely to enter a different sort of psychiatric hospital. I spent over ten years working in the French Communist Party, and that too was a kind of psychiatric hospital. I do not think one can go merely by slogans and speeches and written texts if one is to judge whether or not a position is truly revolutionary from the point of view of desire.

The theoretical writings of the SPK, for instance, make exceptionally dogmatic reading, yet their politics were genuinely revolutionary. What they did shows the way to what might be truly neighbourhood politics, an emergent politics of a mass kind. However, the SPK was in no sense a party formed on the basis of a programme of how to conduct the struggle. Only during the struggle did the investment of successive desires serve to clarify the aims and methods of the conflict. The SPK's politics might just as easily have been those of an alternative psychiatry – not in the sense of any reformist compromise, but as an alternative based on the realities of power.

At present, in a very poor district of New York, the South Bronx, black and Puerto Rican groups are running a drug addiction unit in Lincoln Hospital. Thus a popular movement has taken over the fight against drug-dependence. This is also a form of alternative politics, since this movement has replaced the drug programme of the Governor of New York State. Doctors no longer come into the unit, but remain outside and are called upon only for professional advice. The unit has its own police force, and the fact that the government does not close it or ban it, and indeed actually goes so far as to subsidize it, is because the activists who organize it are supported by the blacks and Puerto Ricans, and all the local gangs. In this case, then, an alternative politics is a possibility because it is based on real revolutionary conflict. But, equally, it could be an illusion to seek to politicize psychiatry if

the political action undertaken in the effort remains tied to traditional repressive attitudes to madness and desire.

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Could psychoanalysis become a force for progress, could it develop into a 'people's psychoanalysis'? It bears the stamp of the psychoanalyst's training as a privileged caste as much as it ever did. The essence of psychoanalysis is still that it is a taught discipline, initiation into the psychoanalytic caste. Even if a psychoanalyst wants to behave like 'ordinary people', he is still a member of that caste; even if he is not preaching his concept of the proper relation between desire and society, he is still re-enacting the same repressive politics in his practice. The problem, therefore, is not that his ideas are more or less wrong, but that his whole way of working reproduces the essence of bourgeois subjectivity. A man who sits on his chair listening to what you say, but systematically distances himself from what it is all about, does not even have to try to impose his ideas on you: he is creating a relationship of power which leads you to concentrate your desiring energy outside the social territory. Nor is this something peculiar to psychoanalysts – it is only more marked here than in the other professions of social control. We find it in the teacher on his rostrum, the overseer behind his glass partition, the army officer, the cop, the psychologist with his batteries of tests, the psychiatrist in his bin, etc., etc. All of them individually may well be very nice people. They may well do everything they can to help those they deal with, yet for all their good will each is contributing in his own way to condemning individuals to loneliness and extinguishing their desire. Of course every attempt is made to cushion the repression: with modern teaching methods, for instance, they try to ensure that no child feels at sea in a huge class, no child is terrorized by the teacher. The psychoanalyst, too, tries to make his technique gentler – and ultimately more insidious. He de-guts and neutralizes everything his patients tell him, thus administering a kind of subjectivity drug. And who is to blame him for that? If we are not going to condemn the drugs used by junkies, why should we condemn the sort people go to psychoanalysts for? That is not the point. Everyone does his own thing as well as he can, and each in his own way plays a supporting role as policeman – as father in the family, as male chauvinist in the couple, as child-tyrant and so on. Nothing is gained by issuing condemnations, by anathematizing the behaviour of this person or that. What matters is to prevent the workers' movement from being contaminated by the ideology and modes of subjectivation of bourgeois authority.

The fact that a few people are trying to introduce 'psychoanalysis for the people' is not in itself very serious. What is serious, on the other hand, is that those who direct the workers' movement, parties, trade unions, small left groupuscules, are carrying on in their own way just like teachers, or psychoanalysts – ultimately, just like policemen. Fighting for better pay and

conditions is not the be-all and end-all. The working class are the prime victims of capitalist techniques to manipulate desire. There is indeed a problem of suffering among the working class, but that problem cannot be resolved by the use of drugs, of whatever kind (sport, TV, the love-lives of the famous, the Party mystique, or whatever). The only possibility of a remedy is for the organization of the workers' movement itself to take control of the whole problem of how to liberate desire – and to do so without any help from psychoanalysts, without itself becoming a psychoanalyst, and without resorting to any of the psychoanalyst's repressive and alienating techniques.

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The most common feature (whereby we can recognize the 'Oedipus method') is a certain technique of reductive representation. *Every* situation can be fitted into a system of representation that is expressed in an apparently triangular mode. I say 'apparently', because such a system operates far more along a binary mode, and indeed constantly tends to become reduced to a single term, or to vanish altogether in what I would call a 'black-hole' effect.

In the beginning, a whole series of ambiguous, ambivalent notions made it possible for Freudianism to operate quite unlike a method closed in upon itself. But its central discoveries, all that gave utterance to desire and caused such scandal at the time, have since then been lost. This is not the place to trace the history of that closing-in – which is in fact the history of psychoanalysis itself, not excluding its most recent structuralist developments.

I will take one example: its attitude to the processes of the unconscious. It recognized at first that these were not dialectical, that they no more involved negation than they did the negation of negation. The unconscious is wholly positive, a machine of fluxes and intensities not determined or controlled by the systems of representation projected onto it by psychoanalysis. But by the intermediary of the transference, psychoanalysis has introduced into it negativeness and lack. The intensities of dreams, for instance, are treated as a kind of raw material. By the technique of association and interpretation, their manifest expression is re-written in terms of fundamental structure. Caught between the two modes of structuring – that of the manifest content and that of the latent content – desire finds its lines of escape cut off from all possible connection with reality. Ultimately the psychoanalyst's interpretation of dreams consists in fitting them into the social coordinates of the Oedipus complex. To take another example, perhaps even clearer: a child is threatening his little brother, shouting, 'Baptiste, I'm going to cut off your head.' Who is 'I'? Who is the speaker? What evidence leads us to say it is the real child? And the same with Baptiste. If we take the use of the Christian name as referring to a real child, then we make the child using it responsible: we make

him the potential murderer of his brother. But was it really his brother as such, that particular member of his family, that he meant? Clearly, the intensities of desire must be linked to normally accepted systems of representation, but encounters like this can lead in two directions, can express two sorts of politics. The first will use them as so many sign machines for expressing intensities of every kind. The small child says, 'I'm going to cut off my brother's head.' And he at once switches to a totally different plan – he might perhaps decide to go off to the moon with him. We then discover that his hatred for his brother is coextensive with his love for him.

But this is not really a 'discovery' at all. The hatred was not 'masking' the love. It is just that a new connection has produced a new possibility. The hatred when differently 'driven' has produced love. The unconscious holds nothing that can be denied, nothing of which one can say later that it caused the person to feel ambivalent. It has not changed its mind, but merely passed on to something else. It is thus nonsense to say that the child is polymorphously perverse, etc. Pulling the head off one's doll, wanting to stroke one's mother's tummy – these are not things that can properly be related to the 'whole objects' of accepted logic. They do not involve the child's responsibility as such. The repressive analytic attitude, founded upon 'normalized' representations, will systematically take him at his word, and reify what he has said: 'He wanted to kill his brother, he desires his mother, he means what he says, he is incestuous.' All the agents of the story – the child, the brother and the mother – will then become fixed in the domain of representation. If you say to a child: 'You've broken the head off your doll – and you know quite well that it cost us a lot to buy it for you!', then you are forcing her into the system of economic values, so that gradually all her objects will be seen in relation to the categories of the prevailing reality, the prevailing order. All of reality then becomes imprisoned in the schema of dualist values – good/evil, expensive/inexpensive, rich/poor, useful/useless and so on.

The unconscious, however, despite its rejection of negativity and of all the dualist systems related to it, despite its ignorance of love or hatred, or what is commanded or what forbidden, is led to make its own kind of investigation of this crazy world of accepted values. It deals with the problems as best it can. It sneaks around them. It sets up the leading characters on the domestic scene, the representatives of the law, like so many grimacing puppets. But it is primarily in the direction of this world of social representations that we must obviously look for the intrinsic perversion of that system. Psychoanalysis has not managed to escape this perversion of the normal world. From the very first, it sought to control desire. The unconscious always appeared to it something bestial and dangerous. None of the successive formulations of Freud has ever abandoned this position. Libidinal energy must be converted to the Manichean system of accepted values, it must produce normal

representations. There could be no question of *enjoying* shitting in your bed without an accompanying feeling of guilt.

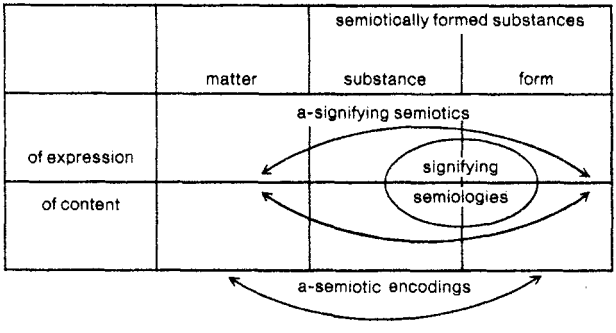
From intensities that might mean many things, we have thus come to invest punitive social values with the promotion of the castration complex. In point of fact, the closing-in of psychoanalysis upon the Oedipal triangle represents a kind of attempt to escape from that drive to abolish desire that leads it almost in spite of itself towards this binary, Manichean perversion. The Oedipus schema was constructed as a barrier to narcissism, to destructive identifications. It seemed to represent a necessary fate of the instincts. But the death instinct comes into being only at the point when one leaves the sphere of desiring intensities for that of representation. The Oedipal triangle is an attempt – always more or less unsuccessful – to stop the descent into the death instinct. It never really works as a triangle because death, symbolic abolition, libidinal collapse, threatens all three sides of it. In the theatre of the psychoanalytic Grand Guignol, there is always an unhappy ending. Between father and child is the risk of reciprocal extermination (the Oedipal murder fantasy is paralleled by the fantasy that a child is being beaten). Between father and mother is the 'primal scene' of intercourse, experienced by the child as murder. Between mother and child is the imminent danger of narcissistic dissolution, return to the womb, etc. – in other words, of suicide.

In short, I should say that, unlike psychoanalysis, schizo-analytic politics would be led to consider that the death instinct is not something that exists in itself, but that it is linked with a certain way of posing the problem of desire in a certain type of society. Desire is unaware of death, of negation, and the tragedies of the familialist Grand Guignol strike it as funny. Since negation is always related to the position of a subject, an object and a reference point, desire, being purely and intensively positive, changes round subjects and objects; it is flux and intensity. In so far as the subject is bound up with a system of representation, the individual libido finds itself dependent on the capitalist machine which forces it to function in terms of a communication based on dualist systems. The social environment is not made up of objects which pre-existed the individual. The person imprisoned in such bi-polar systems as man/woman, child/adult, genital/pre-genital, life/death, etc. has already been subjected to an Oedipalizing reduction of desire to representation. For desire to be expressed in individual terms means that it is already condemned to castration. There exists a totally different notion: the idea of a collective force, a collective direction of libido to parts of the body, groups of individuals, constellations of objects and intensities, machines of every kind – thus bringing desire out of that back-and-forth between the Oedipal triangle and its dissolution in the death instinct, and linking it up with ever-wider possibilities of many different kinds that become ever more open to the social environment.

The Role of the Signifier in the Institution[1]

I am using Hjelmslev's categories here solely in an attempt to identify the position of the signifier in the institution – a position that the classical analytical situation did not reveal. We may remember that the distinction between expression and content is overlaid by a triple division into matter, substance and form. I shall be mainly concerned with the opposition he establishes between matter (the matter both of the expression and of the content) and the formation of semiotic substances.

What I want to show here is that the semiologies of signification operate in the four areas where expression and content are cut across by substance and form, whereas the semiotics we are confronted with in an institutional situation involve two further dimensions of a-semiotically formed matter – that is, meaning as the material of expression, and the continuum of material fluxes as the material of content. Thus the six areas shown in the diagram are all actively involved.



For Hjelmslev, a substance is semiotically formed when its form is projected onto matter or meaning 'as a net that is stretched out projects its shadow onto an unbroken surface' (cf. *Prolegomènes*). As we know, signifying chains set going, at the level of the substance of expression, a limited range of

1. Talk given at the Paris Freudian School held in La Motte, November 1973. Published in *Semiotext*.

signs – discretized and digitalized signs – whose formal composition is conjoined to the formalization of their signified contents. It seems to me that the linguists have been over-hasty in assimilating Hjelmslev's distinction between expression and content with Saussure's distinction between the signifier and what is signified. In point of fact, the separation between a-semiotically formed matter and semiotically formed substances, to the extent that it is established independently of the relationship between expression and content, opens the way to a study of semiotics independent of the signifying semiologies – that is to say, semiotics which are, precisely, *not* based on the bi-polarity of signifier and signified. By being careful not to confuse institutional semiotics with signifying semiotics, we are brought to distinguish one from the other, and to separate both from what I will call non-semiotic encodings.

Let me once again summarize my suggested classification.[2]

(1) *Non-semiotic encodings.* An example of these is the genetic code, or any type of what we call natural encoding, which functions independently of the constitution of any semiotic substance. These forms of code formalize the arena of material intensities without recourse to any autonomous or translatable code of inscription. One must avoid the semiotic mistake of projecting the idea of 'inscription' onto the world of nature. There is no genetic 'handwriting'. The second vertical column of our table is not involved.[3]

(2) *Signifying semiologies.* These are based upon systems of signs, on substances formed semiotically and having a relationship of formalization on the plane both of content and of expression. They are of two kinds – symbolic semiologies and semiologies of signification.

(a) *Symbolic semiologies.* These bring various types of substance into play. In primitive societies, for instance, there are semiotics of gesture, of mime, of posture, of inscriptions on the body, of ritual and so on. The creation of the 'world' of childhood or the 'world' of madness also brings into play several non-centred semiotic circles that can never be fully translated into any universal system of signification. Semiotic substances will therefore preserve a certain autonomous territoriality that corresponds to a specific type of *jouissance*.[4]

2. In succeeding sections we shall be returning many times to this attempt to classify encodings. It was in fact during the writing of these various articles that I gradually worked this classification out, and only since then have I been able to unify the various viewpoints from which I initially approached it.

3. Whether there are in non-semiotic encodings strata that correspond to those of form and content is a question we cannot go into here. Let us say merely that there certainly *are* complex systems of articulation in genetic codes.

4. A joy that grasps one's being (specifically used to bring out the sense of grasping in relation to territoriality).

(b) *Semiologies of signification.* On the other hand, all their substances of expression (of sound, sight and so on) are centred upon a single signifying substance. This is the 'dictatorship of the signifier'. That referential substance can be considered as a written arche-writing, but not in Derrida's sense: it is not a matter of a script that engenders all semiotic organization, but of the appearance – datable in history – of writing machines as a basic tool for the great despotic empires.

Writing machines are essentially linked to the setting-up of State power machines. The moment they are there, all other poly-centred semiotic substances become dependent upon a single specific stratum of the signifier. The totalitarian nature of that dependence is such that, by a tremendous retroactive effort, it seems to make all semiotics originate from the signifier. The effect of the written word in the unconscious is from thenceforth fundamental – not because it relates back to an archetypal written language, but because it manifests the permanence of a despotic significance which, though arising out of particular historical conditions, can none the less continue to develop and extend its effects into other conditions.

(3) *A-signifying semiotics.* These must be distinguished from semiologies of signification; they are, in a word, post-signifying semiotics. An instance of a non-signifying semiotic would be a mathematical sign machine not intended to produce significations; others would be a technico-semiotic complexus, which could be scientific, economic, musical or artistic, or perhaps an analytic revolutionary machine. These a-signifying machines remain based on signifying semiotics, but no longer use them as anything but a tool, an instrument of semiotic de-territorialization, making it possible for the semiotic fluxes to form new connections with the most de-territorialized material fluxes. Such connections operate independently of whether or not they signify anything to anybody. In a sense, Benvéniste is right to say that *all* semiotics depend for their being on a signifying language. But the dependence is not such as to involve any relationship of superiority or subjection. A theory in physics or chemistry needs evoke no mental representation of the atom or of electricity, even though it still has to be expressed in a language of significations and images. It cannot do without props of this kind, but what it is essentially bringing into operation is a certain kind of sign machine that serves to support the abstract machines on which the forces of experimental and theoretical complexes are based. We get to a point where even the distinction between a sign machine and a technico-scientific machine is no longer relevant; the discovery of a new type of chemical chain, or a micro-physical particle is, in some sense, pre-ordained by a semiotic production that will determine not only its spatio-temporal specifications, but also its conditions of existence. Thus, with non-signifying semiotics, it is the reciprocal

relationships of production and generation between the semiotic machine and the material fluxes that are being radically altered.

The signifying machine was based on the system of representation, in other words on a production of semiotic redundancy that created a world of quasi-objects, of images, analogues and schemata in place of real intensities and multiplicities. The signifying effect produced by the conjunction of the two formalisms – of the signifier and the signified – was thus caught in a veritable vicious circle, with the semiotic fluxes and the material fluxes neutralizing each other in the sphere of representation. A world of dominant signification was established out of the signifying re-territorializations that resulted from the, as it were, self-mutilation of the semiotic machines effected by their being centred solely on the signifying machine – that machine of illusion and impotentization. The signifier functioned on an autonomous stratum of its own, ceaselessly referring back to itself, while reality was to be found a long way away from the semiotic fluxes. An individuated subjectivity emerged from the workings of that signifying machine; in Lacan's phrase, 'a signifier represents the subject for another signifier'. It was an ambiguous, divided subjectivity: in its unconscious aspect it took part in a process of semiotic de-territorialization that was at work in the linguistic machines, preparing them to become a-signifying semiotic machines, whereas in its conscious aspect it was based on the re-territorialization of significance and interpretation.

This position of the subject changes radically when a-signifying semiotics come to the forefront. The world of mental representation (which Frege contrasts with concepts and objects) or 'reference' (at the peak of Ogden and Richards's triangle,[5] which is interposed between the symbol and the referent) then no longer functions to centre and over-encode semiotics. Signs are involved in things prior to representation. Signs and things engage one another independently of the subjective control that agents of individual utterance claim to have over them.

A collective agency of utterance is then in a position to deprive the spoken word of its function as imaginary support to the cosmos. It replaces it with a collective voice that combines machinic elements of all kinds – human, semiotic, technological, scientific, etc. The illusion of specific utterance by a human subject vanishes, and can be seen as having been merely a side-effect of the statements produced and manipulated by political and economic systems.

It is generally thought that children, the mad and the primitive are forced to express themselves through the medium of 'second-level' semiotics (gestures, cries and so on) because they have no access to the mastery of a

5. Ch. Ogden and I. A. Richards, *The Meaning of Meaning*, London, 1923.

signifying semiotic. What is seen as the greatest disadvantage of this medium is that such expressions do not allow any univocal translation of the messages they convey into the linguistic code that generates the dominant significations. This relative non-translatability of the various semiotic elements used to be put down either to a deficiency, to fixation at a pre-genital stage, to a rejection of Law, to a cultural incapacity or to some combination of these. In fact, it is our whole perspective of interpretative analysis that should be profoundly re-shaped into a different type of analysis of the unconscious, in which non-signifying semiotic elements would be in the forefront.

One-to-one analysis and institutional analysis, whatever their theoretical arguments, are essentially different, because of the very different range of semiotic methods they employ. Institutional psychotherapy has many more semiotic components, which make it extremely hard to respect the sacrosanct principle of 'the analyst's neutrality': it can 'put matters right', but it can also make them much worse. The institution sometimes succeeds in setting going non-signifying machines that work towards a liberation of desire, in the same way as do literary, artistic, scientific and other machines. Then, too, the problem of the micro-political choices made by the analyst or the analytic group is more acute and sometimes far more 'open' than in one-to-one analysis. In the nature of the case, the classical psychoanalyst is put into a position in which he can almost never – even should he wish to – stand aside from his role as án agent for normalizing libido and behaviour. In an institution, the status of both the subjectivation and the transference is quite different.

The non-signifying and diagrammatic effects, as well as the effects of significance and interpretation, can thus assume far greater proportion than in a one-to-one analysis, and can poison every smallest detail of everyday life. The mania for interpreting everything, the incessant watch kept on the supposed 'slips' of the unconscious, can reach the point of what might be called a 'paradigmatic institutional perversion'. It then becomes evident that the blackmailing of people into analysis, and the anguish which accompanies it, serve to reinforce the mechanisms of identification with, and indeed mimicry of, the gurus of analysis. Thus a new type of psychoanalytic despotism has come into being in recent years in most of the children's institutions where people are 'interested in analysis'.

Our schizo-analysis sets out to be radically different from such supposed 'institutional analyses'. In schizo-analysis, what matters is the reverse of this focusing on the signifier and on analytical 'leaders'. It seeks to foster a semiotic poly-centrism by assisting the formation of relatively autonomous and non-translatable semiotic substances, by giving equal acceptance to all desire whether it makes sense or not, by not seeking to make subjectivation fit in with the dominant significations and social laws. Far from its objective

being to 'cure' people of behaviour that falls outside the usual norms, it finds a place for all the singularities of those who, for one reason or another, are an exception to the general rule. How can such collective forces undo the effects of the analytic rush that has become especially virulent since even commercial radio phone-ins have decided that one of their functions is to spread its blessings? Well, at the very least, they can deal with it by laughing at it, and so bit by bit deflating the pseudo-scientific pretensions of psychoanalysts of all kinds. In this way there will be 'semiotically formed', but also socially organized, beginnings of resistance – resistance not merely to the evils of psychoanalysis, but also to the various techniques of intimidation used to make people in general accept the family-centred models and the hierarchies of the system. Let me make it clear: I wish to condemn psychoanalysis only on behalf of a different kind of analysis, a micro-political analysis which would never – at least never deliberately – let itself be cut off from the real or the social. On behalf, in other words, of a genuine analysis. For my main condemnation of psychoanalysts is that they do not actually make an analysis at all. They entrench themselves in their consulting rooms and behind their transferences, so that the cure can take place in a test-tube free of all outside contamination. They have made analysis an exercise in the sheer contemplation of evolving signifiers, punctuated by interpretations which are generally nothing more than pointless games of seduction.

Let us return for a moment to a problem we discussed earlier: the use of psychotropic drugs. Up to now, apart from their function as a bone of contention, they have been made to serve a despotic signifying semiology, an interpretation of problems in terms of categories closed in upon themselves. This is why the anti-psychiatrists have condemned them along with the whole psycho-pathological semiology. The use of drugs is in fact determined according to medical categories as much as those of social or even police repression. Making a noise and causing a disturbance becomes an abnormality to be dealt with by a drug. But is the fact that drugs are used in this repressive way really reason enough to condemn their use altogether? In some experiments in institutional psychotherapy, an attempt has been made to reorientate psycho-pharmacology towards a certain collective experimentation, in which the administration of drugs no longer depends solely on a doctor/patient relationship, but is decided upon by staff and patients together in a group. Instead of the laboratory's being the reference point, it is now – at least this is the ideal aimed at – a collective mobilization of the group's bodily intensities and subjective effects. This creates the conditions for a kind of 'management' of people's oddities rather than a systematic obliteration of them.

There is no molecular difference between the drug given as a means of police repression, and the drug used to quieten disturbed patients in the

hospital. The difference between certain drugs in the modern pharmacopoeia and the illegal drugs to which people become addicted is often only a matter of their side-effects, which may well be eliminated in the future. One need only recall the role of mescalin in the work of Henri Michaux to see how drugs can be part of a system of intensity semiotically formed along non-signifying lines. But nowadays drugs are mainly used in psychiatry for purposes of repression. As the classic classification of illnesses has fallen into disuse, people have tended more and more to be lumped together. In the United States, for instance, most problems are now put into the omnibus category of schizophrenia – and once the word has been used, tranquillizers will be prescribed in very high dosages. Yet psycho-pharmacology could just as easily be directed to the constitution of a non-signifying semiotic, if it were liberated from medical over-encoding, from the power of the State, the multinational corporations and so on. Then, instead of crushing all that wealth of expression, all that opening-out to reality and the socius, it would help every individual to make the most of their potential.

One objection that has been raised against collective analytic forces seems to me somewhat paradoxical. There is a danger, it is said, that specific individual desires will be crushed, that a new type of despotism will develop. People who say this must be understanding my proposals in terms of their own experience of group analysis, and analysis in institutions. Let me repeat, then, that I am far from proposing to replace individual analysis with group techniques – which certainly could result in toning down individual differences. When I talk of collective forces I do not necessarily mean groups: they can be individuals, but also functions, machines, all sorts of semiotic systems. Only if we get back to the molecular order of desire machines, in other words, something more basic than the group and the individual (towards what Lacan calls the *objet petit 'a'*) shall we succeed in breaking apart the mass-produced monoliths of our institutional structures so as to free those in marginal positions of desire from the neurotic dead-ends in which they are at present. The tendency of the individuation of desire is always towards paranoia and individualism. So the problem is to find collective ways out of the tyranny of systems based on identification and individuation. It is quite true that the effects of groups are all too likely to lead to closed systems, to elitist assumptions – attitudes that are xenophobic, phallocratic or whatever. But such re-territorializations, to the extent that they take effect via creative collectivities, can open whole new perspectives. In fact, there is a vast difference between the neurotic encirclement of a subjectivity engaged in a process of personological individuation, and the idiosyncrasies of groups which are pregnant with possibilities of change of all kinds.

As a final example, take the case of a psychotic child banging its head against a wall day after day. A machine of self-destructive *jouissance* is working

away on its own, entirely out of anyone's control. How could the desire energy of banging-one's-head-against-the-wall be related in any way to collective engagement? It is not a matter of transposing or sublimating this activity, but of getting it to function on a semiotic register that can be connected up to certain other non-signifying systems; not of curbing the desire or changing its objects, but of broadening the field of *jouissance*, opening up new possibilities. Yet it will be difficult to frustrate attempts to use repression and enforce adaptation unless one can make it abundantly clear that *jouissance* centred on the ego always leads to the temptation to give it its extreme expression – in impotence and destruction.

Emergence from destructive narcissism does not mean that a subject has to go through a process of being repressed in reality or being castrated in phantasy: on the contrary, it means achieving greater potency and neutralizing the forces of alienation. It is therefore essentially a matter of gaining power over the real, never just of manipulating the phantasies or the symbols. Fernand Deligny does not repress or interpret: he helps the debilitated with whom he lives to succeed in trying out other objects and relationships, to succeed in building up another world.

Analysis aimed at re-adjustment develops a politics of significance; it tends to reduce the horizon of desire to the control of the other, to the appropriation of bodies and organs; it seeks to return to a pure awareness of the sense of self. Schizo-analysis, on the other hand, rejects the 'will to identity', and all signifying personological specifications, especially those relating to the family. It abandons strategies of power in favour of an organless body that de-individuates desire and is ready to see it expressed by way of non-semiotic cosmic fluxes and non-signifying socio-historic fluxes.

In the traditional analytic approach, whenever one passes from a pre-signifying semiotic to a signifying semiotic, there is a loss of satisfaction, a new scope for guilt feelings, a manifestation of the super-ego. When a child plays with its shit there is a certain 'matter' involved (this is a very important point). When an analytic intervention tries to transform this pleasure, this matter, into a semiotic substance that can be translated and interpreted according to the dominant code, it ends by mutilating or destroying it, attaching it to a 'signifying semiotic counterpart' that replaces the organless body. Programming individuals, conditioning them to the idea that their desires can always be translated into something else, is what normative institutions have always spent their time doing. Far from changing things, psychoanalysis merely brings an improved technology to bear on precisely the same type of project.

It remains to be seen what is the rationale for this psychoanalytic policy of emasculating desire. Why has psychoanalysis presented itself at this point as a kind of substitute religion? Whose problems are they ultimately? Essential-

ly, they relate to those power groups whose interest it is to see that all praxis should become transferable, indefinitely transposable in terms of an economy of decoded fluxes; essentially to capitalism (and in future perhaps to bureaucratic socialism as well?) in that it is based on laws that establish the general equivalence and interchangeability of all semiotic expressions. Of course *jouissance* is still possible in such a system, but only on condition that the libido conforms with the dominant norms. New and peculiar types of perverts develop within it – for instance, the bureaucratic pervert, whose curious pleasures have been so marvellously explored by Kafka. The power of the bureaucracy keeps growing like a cancer in the fabric of industrial societies, to the advantage of the 'elites' that have access to its benefits. But since there is room for few at the top, and getting there is expensive and needs special preparation and education, the rejects of desire are innumerable. Their enjoyment of what capitalism has to offer is reduced to a fling at the betting shop on Sunday morning, and the joys of football on the TV on Sunday afternoon. But there are equally innumerable rejects from the betting shop and the football games, with the result that a whole mass of people end up in psychiatric hospitals, homes for the maladjusted, re-training schemes, prisons and so on.

Towards a Micro-Politics of Desire[1]

Introduction

Structuralist analyses try to mask the basic duality between content and form by attending only to form, setting the content in parentheses, believing it legitimate to separate work relating to content from work relating to form. This is one way of organizing the *méconnaissance* of the political origins of the way content is formalized. What we should be doing is to compare a political genealogy of significative contents with the ways in which the speech acts of transformational and generative grammars are produced. Structuralists seem to find no problem of semantics. The semantic component appears or does not appear at this or that juncture, but they take it as read, as going without saying, and never question it as such.

No one is concerned to discover the particular form of structuring of each type of content; they are by way of believing that the problem of formalizing it only appears once it is caught up in the form/content relationship, and everything to do with determining the origin of that formalism is then transferred to the signifier, the chains of signifiers. Yet it is always a specific political and social order that moulds them. There is nothing automatic about the structuring of contents: the social situation is not a superstructural content mechanically determined by an economic infrastructure, any more than the semantic territory is mechanically determined by a signifying structure, or the various manifestations of a primitive society by the elementary structures of familial relationships.

To try to explain complex socio-historical structures in terms of a mechanism of exchange, or language in terms of a system of logical transformation, or desire in terms of the operation of a signifying system and the phantasies it generates, is to try to avoid questioning the operations of power that control the social sphere at every level. It is not a matter of producing a universal formalism as such, but of the way a system of power comes to use the means of a signifying formalism to unify all the various modes of expression, and centre them around its own 'fundamental' values – respect for property, for persons,

1. From a course given to the students at Reed Hall, Columbia University, New York. Parts of it have been published in *Semiotext*, and in an issue of *Ça* in honour of Christian Metz, May 1975.

for ranks, for sexual, racial and age hierarchies, for the 'right' of the ruling class to seize the means of production from the workers and so on.

In reality, therefore, we are never dealing with an abstract structure, a kind of ideal game of chess, a logical mould shaping all significant contents. All contents, before being structured by language, or 'like a language', are structured at a multitude of micro-political levels. It is precisely this fact which justifies the fact that a micro-political revolutionary action makes it possible to relativize the 'dominant significations' and to neutralize the forms of indication and regulation put forward by the structuralists. Denying the function of power in representation implies a refusal to make a micro-political commitment wherever it may be needed, in other words wherever there is a signification.

What we have to do, then, is to get rid of this great opposition between the content and the form, which results in separating the two and leaving them in some sense independent of one another, and, on the contrary, try to find connecting points, points of micro-political antagonism at every level. Every power formation organizes its own system of verbal packaging for what it has to say. The expression machine, which extends over all these formations, is there only to normalize local formalizations, to centralize and render translatable the unchanging signification recognized by the dominant order, to demonstrate a consensus – what Louis Hjelmslev terms the level of the immediate substance, and defines as a collective apperception.

What goes on between content and form is the stabilizing of the relationships of de-territorialization. The a-signifying sign machine, the system of figures of expression (still using Hjelmslev's terms), comes into existence at the point where all signifying semiologies meet. Its role is similar to the role the State plays in relation to the various factions of the bourgeoisie, that of ordering and hierarchizing the pretensions of the different local groups. The non-signifying expression machine (on the level of the signifier) organizes a system of empty words and interchangeability for all the territorialized systems of words produced by the manifold local agencies of power. (We may instance the power of the family over the production of nice speech, or the power of the school over the production of nice writing, discipline, competition, hierarchy, etc.) Thus, by means of a non-signifying system of expression a moderate regime of de-territorialization becomes stabilized, and captures and regulates relative de-territorializations of formalisms of content.

François Jacob suggests that 'natural' encoding might function in three dimensions. Todorov reckons that symbolic semiologies specifically involve two dimensions. Only linguistic encoding is left functioning on a linear system (and in a way that François Jacob insists must be carefully distinguished from genetic encoding, which is relatively less de-territorialized). If we follow these authors, then, we may believe that the modes of encoding go

through a kind of process of molecularization and differentiation in so far as they relate to linguistic strata, the strata of perceptive representation and linguistic strata. One can even imagine extending this tendency to de-territorialization with the a-signifying semiotics of the sciences, which abandon the one-dimensional quality of language by introducing systems of particle-signs. In point of fact, the difference between the sign and what it signifies (in theoretical physics, for instance) seems to lose some of its relevance. No one today demands positive proof of the existence of a particle – so long as it can be made to function without any contradiction in the totality of theoretical semiotic as a whole. Only when an extrinsic, experimental effect brings the semiotic system into operation does hindsight question the existence of the particle. Until then, the question would be meaningless. It is only upon being excluded by the theoretic-cum-experimental totality that the particle retroactively acquires a kind of charge of negative existence. One has then no longer to give a step-by-step demonstration of the particle's existence; one has given up the – hitherto fundamental – objective of materializing its existence by the physical effect of locating it in space and time. This type of semiotic involves what we call particle-signs, in other words entities that elude the coordinates of time, space and existence. Between the sign and the referent there is now a new type of relationship, no longer direct, but involving a whole theoretic-cum-experimental engagement.

With non-signifying semiotics of this kind, we have left the sphere of semiological powerlessness for that of the potency of machinic engagement. The example I have suggested from theoretical physics could equally be worked out in other domains – social, artistic and so on.

In my view, then, there are two possible politics in relation to signification. Either one accepts it *de jure* as an inevitable effect, and expects therefore to find it at every semiotic level, or one accepts it *de facto*, in the context of a particular political system, and one proposes to counter it with a generalized micro-political struggle that can undermine it from within, in such a way as to enable all the intensive multiplicities to escape from the tyranny of the signifying over-encoding. What this means is unleashing a whole host of expressions and experimentations – those of children, of schizophrenics, of homosexuals, of prisoners, of misfits of every kind – that all work to penetrate and eat into the semiology of the dominant order, to feel out new escape routes and produce new and unheard-of constellations of a signifying particle-signs.

Desire Minorities, Psychoanalysis and Semiotics

Psychoanalysis has long enjoyed an audience far wider than that provided by its own adepts. To the extent that it has tried to define a norm – the boundary between the normal and the pathological in human behaviour – it has strayed

onto political ground. This is because the social forces that the process of capitalist production has to deal with are directly concerned by the definition of any such system of norms, any such model for living, any such model of desiring subjectivity, corresponding to the sort of 'normal' individual required by the system. In earlier ages, religious or philosophical disputes stood in the same relationship to the field of social struggles as psychoanalysis does today. But the policy of psychoanalysis consists above all in claiming to be altogether outside the political field, to be considered as an objective science. It has sought to take its stand on various sciences – biology, physics and, more recently, mathematics and linguistics – but has really succeeded only in aping them. Furthermore, it has never managed to get away from the kind of sectarianism that makes psychoanalytic societies look more like corporations fighting for their own interests than bodies working for the advancement of science. Having failed to find any serious scientific support, psychoanalysis has retreated into a flurry of 'literary' activity which has done little to enlighten anyone as to what it actually does.

Freudianism, at the same time as discovering the scope of our unconscious investments of desire, sets about dispelling their 'evil spells'. From the start, psychoanalysis tried to make sure that its categories were in agreement with the normative models of the period. It thus contributed to setting up a further barrier to desire; it arrived in the nick of time, just as cracks were appearing in a lot of repressive organizations – the family, the school, psychiatry and so on. But what it did was to set up a more internal barrier which restrained the subjective economy of desire more closely, taking hold of it in the cradle, and trying never to let go. There are no limits to the ambition of psychoanalytic control; if it had its way, nothing would escape it, since it is concerned simultaneously with madness, dreams, deviations of every kind, art, history, the primitive world, and even the most minor motions of everyday life, the tiniest error or slip. All non-sense must thus yield to its explanatory net, must fit into the compass of its comprehension. Take homosexuality, for instance: psychoanalysis classes it as a perversion, defining it as a fixation at an infantile stage – a stage defined in turn as pre-genital and 'polymorphously perverse'. So, by the use of a supposedly objective description, it implicitly sanctions a norm, a correct genitality, a legitimate form of desire which automatically disallows the desire of children, homosexuals, the mad, even, when it comes down to it, of women, or of young people who have not yet fully accepted the marriage/family orthodoxy.

To the extent that a revolutionary struggle manages to break away from the dominant models, and especially from that model of models, capital (which consists in reducing the multiplicities of desire to a single undifferentiated flux – of workers, consumers, etc.); to the extent that it manages to break away from a Manicheist, black-and-white simplification of the class struggle and to

accept the plurality of desiring commitments as possible links between people in revolt and the revolution; to that extent it will be led to take account of minorities of all kinds, without any prejudices about 'normality', and to seek their support. For there to be such a change, we should have first to identify and neutralize the models assumed by psychoanalysis, with its legitimation of the repression of desire to fit in with the dogma of Oedipus and of assumed castration. A great many people today agree that no revolutionary struggle is really possible any longer that does not *also* commit itself to the liberation of desire. But we are still unable seriously to contemplate opening up new fronts of desire, because we are still trapped by the classic psychoanalytic dilemma:

as far as desire is concerned, its power is dangerous, destructive, incapable of anything constructive;

as far as our ego and our society are concerned, there is the world of reality with which one must somehow or other come to terms, to which one must submit, even though later claiming that one did so because that was the only way of obtaining mastery of it.

Yet surely the real madness is to be found, first and foremost, at the core of the capitalist order as such! Surely reason is to be found, first and foremost, at the core of the maddest desire! Desire is not necessarily disruptive and anarchic. Desire, once freed from the control of authority, can be seen as more real and more realistic, a better organizer and more skilful engineer, than the raving rationalism of the planners and administrators of the present system. Science, innovation, creation – these things proliferate from desire, not from the pseudo-rationalism of the technocrats.

Psychoanalysis is no science: it is a politico-religious movement and should be treated in the same way as all the other movements that have proposed models of behaviour for particular times and contexts. Its conception of desire is 'ahead of its time' in appearance only; it is ahead only in perfecting the repressive support required by the logic of the system, and overhauling a technique of interpreting and re-directing desire and of internalizing repression. The object of psychoanalysis is, in brief, what I would call *collective paranoia* – in other words, bringing into operation everything that militates against any liberation of schizo desire in the social situation. Before studying the particular, extreme position of psychoanalysis across the spectrum of the various degrees of that collective paranoia, let us first consider this function in itself and the role it plays in the social sphere in general. Only after that shall we try to identify the specific mechanisms on which psychoanalysis rests, and whose functioning has in some sense been intensified. Our aim will be to define the nature of a coefficient of collective paranoia, the complementary and inverse coefficient I posited some ten years ago as a 'coefficient of transversality'.

I shall endeavour here to get rid of the notion of two opposing *realities*, one

objective, the other subjective, and replace it with that of two possible *politics*: a politics of interpretation that keeps going over and over the past in the realm of the unconscious phantasy, and a politics of experimentation that takes hold of the existing intensities of desire and forms itself into a desiring mechanism in touch with historical social reality. Interpretation or experimentation, 'scientific' psychoanalysis or the politics of desire? To get to the roots of these alternatives, we shall have to get back to the origins of psychoanalysis and politics as they normally appear, and try to see how each of them relates to language. We make our interpretations with words, whereas we do our experimenting with signs, machinic functions, and engagements of things and people. At first sight, it would seem that the two must remain quite separate. How can the introduction of politics contribute to clarifying matters? One would have said that feelings, action, theory and machinism mark off different orders of things that should not be confused; yet it seems to me to be vital to prevent their crystallizing into completely separate strata.

From this we shall have to go back still further, within the framework of linguistics, and consider the possibility of a semiotic that could explain both the functioning of the word as signifier and that of scientific signs, technical/scientific mechanisms and social forces. We should then find ourselves facing a fundamental political dilemma within one and the same semiotic whole, a whole capable of opening out into non-signifying semiotics and allowing for the transition of the objective sciences into signifying and subjectivizing languages. Students of semiotics are already divided into those who relate semiotics to the sciences of language, and those who consider language merely one among other instances of the functioning of a general semiotic. It seems to me that the result of this debate is that, in the first case, desire gets bogged down in the Imaginary by becoming invested in a system of significant flights which I shall call paradigmatic perversion, whereas, in the second, it participates in a-signifying semiotic engagements involving signs as well as things, individuals as well as groups, organs as well as forces or machines. The politics of the signifier lead to a sign machine marking out the territorialized fluxes – by means of a limited collection of discrete, 'digitalized' signs – and retaining only fluxes of information that can be decoded. The role of that sign machine is to produce, in Hjelmslev's term, 'semiotically formed substances', that is to say strata of expression which form a connection between the two domains formalized at the level of expression and that of content; for linguistic analysts, this operation produces an effect of signification. The totality of intensive reality is then 'processed' by the formalizing duo, signifier/signified; the totality of fluxes is held in the 'snapshot' of signification which places an object facing a subject; the movement of desire is sterilized by a relationship of representation; the image becomes the memory

of a reality made impotent, and its immobilization establishes the world of dominant significations and received ideas.

This operation of controlling all the intensive multiplicities constitutes the first act of political violence. The relation between the signifier and the signified (which Peirce sees as conventional, Saussure as arbitrary) is at root merely the expression of authority by means of signs. The expression of the context, of what is implied and presupposed, in other words of all that relates more or less closely to the interaction of authority and of desire, is dismissed by specialists in the human sciences as being outside the terms of their study, 'off the subject', rather as a judge might call to order a witness who will not stick to the question being asked, or a group of policemen will forcibly remove bystanders who are watching them ill-treating someone. The establishment of meanings, of what is to be understood, has to remain the business of authority.

Tools of expression are provided for those who use them in the same way as spades and picks are handed out to prisoners. The pens and exercise books given to schoolchildren are tools of production, and teaching is programmed to produce only a certain type of acceptable significations. There can be no escape. The first commandment of the law, of which no one must plead ignorance, is based above all on the need for everyone to realize the importance of the dominant significations. All the intensities of desire must be subject to the rule of the formalizing duo, expression and content, as elaborated in the context of prevailing production relations. Apart from madness and other escapes from the meaninglessness of the system, that is.

The Signs Pervade even Physical Fluxes

It is not easy to extricate oneself from the politics of signification and interpretation. In the human sciences, a certain fashion of aping 'scientific rigour', which draws attention away from the political issues at stake, inevitably leads to a concealed dependence on those metaphysical paralogisms, always the same, that bear on reality – the soul and signification.

Take, for instance, the research into communication now going on in the United States: what is it but an objectivist trap, a false alternative to psychoanalytic subjectivism? The researchers working at the Mental Research Institute of Palo Alto, with Gregory Bateson, examine only the 'behaviour' they believe can be considered as a 'term of communication'.[2] Transposing the subdivision suggested by Carnap and Morris into syntactics, semantics and pragmatics, they end by separating, in the name of semantics, one dimension of communication, while still maintaining a certain

2. P. Watzlawick, J. H. Beavin, D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication*, W. W. Norton, New York, 1967.

external relation to it. According to them, behaviour is merely a 'pragmatic of communication'; it is wholly devoted to the transmission of information, to the circulating of symbols between utterer and receiver, and to their feedback. The 'semantic' presupposition of this system of intercommunications rests upon the idea that the 'sender and receiver' of the symbols transmitted has 'agreed beforehand on their significance'. His behaviour is thus reduced to a flux of information, or at least to dependence on that flux. But what of desire in all this exchanging of information? Is a manifestation of desire a jamming of the transmission, a noise, or sheer delight at a clear reception of the message? All that these researchers seem interested in is the way information is organized syntactically and the pragmatic strategy of behaviour. When it comes to the meaning, they stop: it seems to be something that they think goes without saying. It could hardly relate to anything but philosophy. Syntax depends on the noble science of mathematical logic. Pragmatics, however, belongs purely and simply to psychology.

Can one at least say that this division into three is a release from the despotism of the signifier? No, for behaviourist communication is still dependent on the mystery of signification. They can only keep it at a distance, and in fact it will always continue to influence every stage of behaviour. More powerfully than ever, in fact, for its being relegated to the status of the implicit means that it will trigger off an even more demanding formalism. They remain the prisoners of a supposedly immediate apperception of signification, of a signifying semiological *cogito*. It is only in appearance, then, that this neo-behaviourist school has avoided being bogged down in the psychoanalytical system of signification. Indeed, one may wonder whether there has not been a kind of division of labour among those who have set out to analyse behaviour on the basis of information theory and those who have decided to analyse its significant content on the basis of the Oedipalist interpretation.

For the former, 'behaviour' is reduced to one of two 'binary digits', while for the latter it is triangulated! One may similarly find oneself wondering at the analogous proceedings undertaken by structuralist anthropologists when they insist on understanding primitive societies solely in terms of their family relationships, which they then reduce to a logic of exchange, or at the goings-on of literary sects that are religiously dedicated to so-called readings of a 'text' by itself.

Whatever is taken as the gauge, whether it be the signifier, the libido or the matrimonial unit of exchange, the method is the same: what is constant is the idea that one must discover a univocal reference point, a transcendant invariable, not itself significative, whereby to explain the sum of the significative arrangements. One sets out in search of a mechanism – not a machine, which is a very different thing! – that would fix the fluxes, determine the

intersections, identify certain fixed points, stabilize the structures and provide a reassuring feeling of having at last got hold of something quasi-eternal in the human sciences, while at the same time absolving the researcher from all political responsibility. This certainly seems to be the sense in which one could understand one feature that is common to the different disciplines that use this method, in which we may find the key to the motivation behind such – at first sight surprising – mergers as that of psychoanalysis and behaviourism in Bateson, that of a linguistic dominated by diachronic phonology and Lacanian psychoanalysis in Laing, that of the epistemological tradition and Marxism in Althusser, and so on.

Our aim is not to blur the differences among the various semiotic machines, but, on the contrary, to see as clearly as possible what is specific to each, nor to make one dependent on another as does a thinker like Benvéniste – who concludes that since every semiology of a non-linguistic system has to make use of language as an interpreter, it 'could only exist through and *in* the semiology of language'.[3] With this in mind, I propose the following classification of the modes of encoding: non-semiotic 'natural' encoding, signifying semiologies, and non-signifying semiotics.

1. Non-semiotic 'natural' chains of encoding

These do not involve a specific semiotic stratum. As with genetic coding, for example, they are formed out of the same type of material as the encoded biological fluxes. There is no differentiation or independence as between the biological stratum – the encoded object – and the informational one. It is simply that certain of the elements of the fluxes of energy and the biological fluxes are so specialized as to be able to do the work of transmitting and producing the code. Since the stuff of the expression is not actually a stratum – a specific semiotic substance – no direct translation from one system of encoding to another is possible. The biologist who makes a model of the RNA and DNA chains is transposing these structures into a system of signs, thus producing an entirely new basis of expression. It is a very different matter when a signifying semiotic transfers a message, for instance a visual message by way of Hertzian waves, to be reconstituted on the television screen: in this case there is a continuing transmission of the encoded forms from one substance to another; that it can be translated is due to the independence of the strata of expression; it is because it has been possible to 'extract' the form of distinct substances that it could be transposed.

3. *Semiotica*, 1969, 1. 2, Mouton. He also talks of 'semiotic moulding' by language, the pre-eminence of the signifying system, etc.

2. Semiologies of signification

These are constituted from specific strata of expression. They may be subdivided into two categories – those that depend upon a multiplicity of strata, and those with only two:

(a) Symbolic semiologies: The expression of primitive societies, of the mad, of children, etc. brings into play a multiplicity of strata – expression by gesture, by ritual, by words, by what they make, sexual expression and so on – but none of these is fully autonomous; they overlap, one blending into another, without any one over-encoding the others in any continuing way.

(b) Signifying semiologies: With modern languages, all this multiplicity of expression, all these strata – speech, mime, singing, etc. – become dependent on a signifying arche-writing. The semiotic machine now works only by way of two strata: that on which contents are formalized, and that on which expression is formalized. In point of fact, these are not really two strata at all, but only one: the stratum of signifying formalization which, from a restricted stock of figures of expression, establishes a bi-univocal correspondence between a particular organization of the dominant reality and a formalization of representation. Indeed, significative representations – the concepts of Saussure – only *seem* to be structured on an autonomous stratum of content, they only *seem* to 'inhabit' a soul, populate a heaven with ideas or organize themselves into the cult-objects of everyday life. The signifying semiotic sustains the illusion that a level of 'the signified' exists in order to delay, or interfere with, or even prevent, a direct conjunction between sign machines and real machines. Once we come to question the two fundamental levels of the signifying semiotic, we are equally forced to question the validity of the double linguistic articulation. The fact is that what is supposed to guarantee the constitution of autonomous meaningful sounds is the establishment of their paradigmatic relationships with specified, formalized and structured contents on an autonomous level; but if that level, far from corresponding to the logical organization imagined by structural or generative semantics, is merely an aggregate of balances of forces, compromises and approximations of all kinds, then the whole structural legitimacy of the signifier/signified relationship is compromised.

The signifying semiotics of double articulation involve signs characterized by three functions: denotation, representation and signification. Denoting establishes a relationship between the sign and the thing designated. It is the referential function, and implies or presupposes the reality of the thing denoted. Denoting is in fact a key element in the constitution of the dominant reality. With representation, the totality of the productive connective syntheses become cut up into a denoted (or indexed) reality and a world of images,

of representative, figurative or relational images. The sum of those images constitutes what we are accustomed to call our mental world. Signification results from relating the signifying basis of that representation to that representation itself. Thus the sign never refers directly to the reality, but is always forced to go by way of the world of representation. The linking together of signs around a syntagmatic axis, the function of significance, is, according to Benvéniste, inseparable from the function of interpreting, which orders the signs on a paradigmatic axis, relates them to the world of things signified, and permanently distances them from all the intensities of reality. The play of significations, their proliferation, their being out of gear with representations, because of the autonomy and arbitrariness of the way the stock of signifiers operates, has contradictory consequences: it opens possibilities for creativity, but it also produces a subject cut off from all direct access to reality, a subject imprisoned in a signifying ghetto (effects explored by Maurice Blanchot in the realm of literature). It is true that the formalization of significant expression develops in accordance with a certain formalization of signified contents; but it would be a mistake to think that the two formalizations are generated in the same way. The formalization of expression depends on a particular linguistic machine, a restricted gamut of discrete, disconnected signs. The formalization of the content depends on the power balance in society, on a mass of interactions, of machines and of structures which could not possibly be reduced to one homogeneous plane of meaning. The illusion of the double articulation consists in flattening out this multiplicity of intensities on the signifying machine by using the fiction of a level of representation.

Intensities have thus been doubly reduced: first to fit the signified contents, and then to fit the signifier, whose despotic ambition is to put everything that could represent it through a process of repetition that always brings it back to itself. This makes everything appear normal, logical, formalized. The utterances of the significant semiotic structures are formulated over a stratum of impotentization, and echo and re-echo endlessly – the echo being the *effect of signification*: the signifier draws together, controls, autonomizes and flattens the signified. As well as being separated from real productions, these utterances are alienated from the understanding the subject is supposed to have of their signification, and from the adherence he is supposed to give them. The intensities can now only be noted, connoted as having to remain outside the semiotic sphere, which means, in the last resort, outside the political sphere.

The formalization of the content thus produces a subjectivity that is essentially detached from the real, empty and transparent, a subjectivity of pure signifying that responds perfectly to Lacan's formula: a signifier represents it for another signifier. This subjectivity has to be accounted for under two heads – the subject of the statement and the subject of the utterance of the

message.[4] By the effect of a kind of meaningless echoing back and forth, the subject of the message has become the echo of the subject of the utterance. Every utterance must cease being polyvocal and, reduced to a bi-univocal mode, be made to fit the subject of the statement. This is the programme of linguistic Oedipalization. (Linguistic analysts may then say that the subject of the utterance is merely what remains of the process of uttering in the process of the statement. I would turn this the other way round: what concerns me is what remains of the process of uttering in the fact of the utterance.)

What I want to recover are the indices, the residual traces, the escapes into transversality, of a collective arrangement of utterance which, under whatever circumstances, constitutes the real productive agency of every semiotic machinism. The programme of linguistic Oedipalization also consists in formalizing the subjectivation of statements according to an abstract encoding of the I-you-he type, which 'provides the speakers with a shared system of personal references'[5] and makes them able to adapt to the exchangeability, the transposability and the universality of a given number of roles that they will be called upon to fill within the framework of an economy of de-coded fluxes.

If we return to primitive modes of expression – for instance the phenomena of echo-naming among the Guayakis described by Pierre Clastres – we find that they do not fall under this kind of despotism of the signifier.[6] I am this, but I am also that. There are no exclusive disjunctive syntheses. I am Jaguar, but that Jaguar also refers to a lot of other things, and speaks from a multiplicity of centres of intensity: to the message 'Jaguar' there correspond several realms of utterance. When one of those intensities is destroyed, as for instance when the animal or man known as Jaguar dies, the message, though cut off from its realm of utterance, preserves all its force.

Its representation goes on existing despite the abolition of its referent. It is not univocally connected to a single signifier. It continues, it roams about, it threatens, precisely because no one knows what to relate it to. The strata of expression are not regulated here by a signifying control that condemns every content to a rigorous formalization, a residual or marginal representation; here, this polyvocal concept of Jaguar becomes the object of a fluid, uncertain, wavering denotation, a denotation unsure of itself, in some cases even with no basis at all, a pure denotation of denotation. The reference point tends to become the denotation's being-in-itself, the expression of the absence of

4. It would be more correct to say the rejection of the utterance.

5. Benvéniste, *Problèmes linguistique générale*, Gallimard, 1966.

6. *Chronique des Indiens Guayakis*, Plon, 1972. This does not by any means involve a return to the myth of the 'noble savage'. The cruelty of primitive societies is quite as real as the terror of despotism, or capitalist cynicism, but it does not act through the signifier.

anything that can be described, an anxiety without an object, a *black hole* in which the semiotic components no longer act or exist. But the black hole produces a black hole, the impasse produces an impasse, and what is alarming here, and must be prevented, is the possibility that an instance of conscience might establish itself, operating in a 'modern' way – in other words, that a signifying semiotic might be in a position to de-territorialize every unique position of desire by imposing upon it universal personological specifications, and above all by making use of *deictics*[7] that in some way couple the utterance to the subject of the statement. This danger is aggravated when the signified without any referent are let loose in nature (by death, dreams, witchcraft, etc.). The stability of the entire territorialized system of denotation is then at risk. The group semiotic system is in danger of being replaced by a system of conscience, of individualized, totally transparent denotation. The collective, territorialized utterance is threatened at its very foundations. The Jaguar! What has he/it become, now that this being is dead? The word circulates in people's heads – a word without a corresponding reality, a word that responds only to itself: a double now exists that lives its own semiotic life, ready at any point to settle upon some alternative reference point, to pounce upon any ambiguous object, to undermine the dominant representations, to expropriate the sources of power and seize control of the desiring machines. The territorialized organization of the utterance, as well as the individuation of the subject of the utterance, thus seem to me to depend fundamentally on the specific relationship in a given society that desiring production has with the more or less de-territorialized fluxes and the means set in motion to avert them.

3. Collective organizations of a-signifying semiotics

The system of signs loses the autonomy of its stratification, but does not thereby return to the natural mode of encoding: it merely stops referring it to the signifier. Henceforth information will be dissociated from signification. To borrow a phrase of Abraham Moles', it becomes a measure of the complexity of machinic systems.[8] There is a more marked opposition between, on the one hand, the redundant forms in which meaning is clearly spelled out and, on the other, an informative expression which tends to elude all understanding (there is nothing to 'understand' in the equations of

7. Or 'clutches' or 'gear-levers', or whatever term expresses this best to whoever is talking.

8. I must make it clear that Moles only envisages that dissociation in relation to the patterns of perception; but, to illustrate it, he is led to contrast the 'structural complexity' of a machine (based on the frequency with which its various component parts are used) with the 'functional complexity' of an organism (based on the frequency with which its various functions occur). *Théorie de l'information et perception esthétique*, Denoël, 1972, p. 87.

theoretical physics). Machinic information eludes structural representation; it consists of 'what adds to a representation', that is to say the improbable, the non-redundant, of a rent in the fabric of the flux of signs and the fluxes of things, and of the production of new conjunctions. The doubles of representation are re-articulated directly onto production, or subsist as archaisms, traces, lost dreams.[9] Once the chains have lost their univocal character, the difference in value between a reifying denotation and the connotations of the Imaginary becomes blurred.

Denotation disappears in the face of the process described by Peirce as 'diagrammatization'. The function of re-territorializing images, indexes and concepts is replaced by the operation of signs as the foundation for abstract machines and the simulation of physical machinic processes. This operation of signs, this work of diagrammatization, has become the necessary condition for the de-territorializing mutations that affect the fluxes of reality; no longer is there representation, but simulation, pre-production, or what one might call 'transduction'. The stratum of signification disappears; no longer are there two levels and a system of double articulation; there is only a constant return to the continuum of machinic intensities based on a pluralism of articulations.

In this case, the points of subjectivation lose their function of apparent localization of the production of significations, and of being the arena of privatized and Oedipalized *jouissance*. They no longer constitute anything but subjective residues, a de-territorialized *jouissance*, alongside the fundamental process of machinic engagement. The imaginary individuation of representation – the figurative of significations – gives way to the figural (in Lyotard's sense)[10]; the fixed, syntactized, semanticized and rhetoricized stratification of messages gives way to a collective engagement of utterance with unnumbered dimensions – a de-territorialized collective engagement in which mankind no longer has pride of place. The individuated subject of the utterance has remained imprisoned in the effects of meaning, that is, in a re-territorialization that has rendered itself impotent in signification. The collective and machinic force of utterance, on the other hand, is produced by a conjunction of power signs with de-territorialized fluxes. The realm of signification, as the correlate of subjective individuation, is abandoned in favour of that of the machinic plane of consistency, which allows of the conjunction of meaning and matter by bringing into play abstract machines that are ever more de-territorialized and more closely in contact with material fluxes of all kinds. Signification proceeded from the movement of conscious-

9. As the Indians say, 'the white men have lost their soul'. In other words, their soul (their system of redundancy) has been de-territorialized, has gone elsewhere, has made a pact with the devil's machinism.

10. *Discours, Figure*, Editions Klincksieck, 1971.

ness returning upon itself, from a turning inwards to representative images, from a rupture with machinic conjunctions. A collective apparatus of utterance may remain meaningless to particular people, and yet draw its meaning (its historical or poetic meaning, for instance) from a direct creative conjunction with the fluxes. On the other hand, the intense content of meaning in a statement presented by individuated utterance may have no machinic meaning at all, may be the occasion for no conjunction of real fluxes, may remain out of the reach of any possible experimentation. In short, the equation 'signified + signifier = signification' arises from the individuation of phantasies and from subjugated groups, whereas the equation 'collective force of utterance = machinic sense/nonsense' arises from group phantasy, and the group as subject.

Without being able to go into it in the necessary depth, we must now return to this idea of a conjunction between semiotic machines and the machines of real flux which characterize non-signifying collectivities. We may start by noting that the semiotic fluxes are just as real as the material ones, and in a sense the material fluxes are just as semiotic as the semiotic machines. This brings us to the idea of a semiotic of intensities, a semiotic of the continuous, and we must distinguish (again, as does Hjelmslev) between the non-semiotically formed *matter-meaning* or 'purport'[11] and semiotically formed *substances*. If one gives them no common basis apart from the dichotomy between representation and production, semiotic machinisms and material machinisms will inevitably relate, the former to an idealist concept of representation, and the latter to a reifying realist concept of production. The same abstract machinism must surely be able to subsume both and enable us to pass from one to the other. That abstract machinism in some sense 'precedes' the actualization of the diagrammatic conjunctions between the systems of signs and the systems of material intensities.

The evidence cannot be denied: in the sciences, the arts, political economy and so on, the sign machines work, at least in part, *directly* on the material fluxes, whatever may be the 'ideological' system of the remaining part that functions in the sphere of representation. Short of appealing to some divine agency – such as Derrida's myth of the 'complicity of origins' established at the level of a signifying arche-writing – there is no means of conceiving the conjunction of words and things other than by resorting to a system of machinic keys that 'cross' the various domains we are considering.

11. The a-semiotically formed semantic or phonic reality is rendered by Hjelmslev's French translators either as *matière* (matter) or as *sens* (sense, meaning). As Oswald Ducrot points out, it is undoubtedly the fact of coming to us via the English word 'purport' that explains this bold semantic oscillation between sense and matter. The mind can wander off in many directions from this beginning, and, as my readers will notice, I have given mine a free range! Cf. *Essais linguistiques de Hjelmslev*, p. 58, and *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du langage*, p. 38.

It seems to me that that conjunction takes place on the basis of the most de-territorialized machinic mutations, precisely those that operate at the level of the most abstract machines. Those abstract machines seem, in some way, to constitute the spearhead of machinic de-territorialization, prior to semiotic formations and material fluxes. Unlike other contents, they are not inscribed in the disorder of the structures of representation; they are not dependent on the spatio-temporal specifications of the social phantasy; they constitute in themselves the locus of whatever consistency is possible in the inquiry into truth; abstract machines crystallize de-territorialization; they are its primal intensity. In the sense in which the idea of consistency is used in the axioms of mathematics, we may speak of machinic consistency; and we can say that, whatever the material or semiotic basis for their present existence, they came into being on a plane of machinic consistency. It is no longer a question of affirming, in formal terms, that a system is non-contradictory, but of expressing the consistency and irreversibility of the de-territorialized machinic mutations taking place upon the machinic phylum. The structures of representation, in as much as they remain cut off from the real agencies of production, oblige the semiotic machines to keep having to 'rectify' their point of view to fit in with the economy of material fluxes; they have to organize themselves with a view to a consistency and an axiomatic or experimental determinability. It is quite a different matter for intensive machines, which have no need to resort to such intermediary systems. They are in direct contact with their own system of encoding and verification. They are themselves their own truth. They articulate their logical consistency simply through their own existence. This is no longer a matter of individual existence, but rather of individuated existent beings, localized in reference to systems of spatio-temporal specifications, and in relation to observation systems. Such a mode of existence implies that a subject and an object be constituted externally to the process of de-territorialization – hence the relationship of relative de-territorialization of time and space. With abstract machinism one starts off from the viewpoint of de-territorialization in action, in other words real processes of re-moulding, mutation, black holes and so on.

Machines are thus individuated only in the sphere of representation; their existence alongside the systems of referential thought is trans-individual and trans-temporal. A machine is no more than a machinic link, arbitrarily rendered discernible on a tree or a rhizome of machinic implication. Any particular machine is always limited on the one hand by what it depasses, and on the other by what condemns it to obsolescence.

With natural encoding territorialized non-semiotic chains were set in operation without producing any loss of signification; for instance, the de-territorialization of the process of genetic reproduction, its 'creativity', its 'innovation', took place without self-awareness, without any significative

reference point, in short, without any instance of conscience. The same economy, the same avoidance of any significant flight, would be found with semiotics of such social communication as that of insects, which develops by way of a highly specialized encoding, with no possibility of being transposed, and without introducing any autonomous level of the signifier. The establishment of a non-signifying semiotic machinism, bound up with the various processes of de-territorialization, technological, scientific, artistic, revolutionary etc., also results in destroying modes of representation that are humanistic, personological, familialist, patriotic and so on. It implies a continual broadening out of desiring production towards the totality of a-signifying semiotics, and their machinic surplus-values. But this does not therefore mean a return to the myth of a 'natural' semiotic. On the contrary, it means getting beyond semiotics centring upon human beings and moving irreversibly towards semiotics involving technological and theoretical systems that are ever more differentiated, more artificial, and further from primitive values. The problem is no longer one of trying to straddle de-territorialized fluxes, but of getting ahead of them. There is an ever greater flux of desires, and a more marked de-territorialization of those fluxes. The capacity of human societies to escape from alienations territorialized in the ego, the person, the family, the race, the exploitation of labour, distinctions of sex and so on depends on a conjunction between the semiotics of consciousness and those of de-territorializing machinisms. Human beings make love with signs and all kinds of 'extra-human' elements – things, animals, images, looks, machines and so on – that the sexual functioning of primates, for instance, had never encoded. With its shift to non-signifying semiotics, the subjectivity of the utterance comes to be invested in an organless body connected to a multiplicity of desiring intensities. That organless body oscillates between an anti-production that tends to become re-territorialized in residual significations, and a semiotic hyper-production that opens itself to fresh machinic connections. The collective apparatus of utterance can thus become the centre of immanence for new desiring connections, the point where, beyond humanity, there is production and *jouissance* by the cosmic fluxes that run through machinisms of every kind. Let me stress again that this in no sense means that what is uttered has to return to the 'pre-signifying' mechanisms of natural encoding, or that it is condemned to be just a single cog in an alienating social machinery. I am certainly not going to join the wailing chorus of humanists who lament the loss of real values, and the essential wickedness of industrial societies, even as they have 'orientalized' their rhythms to suit the style of the 'new culture'.

Semiotics with *n* articulations

Signifying semiotics establish systems of mediation which represent, neutralize and render impotent all the intensive multiplicities, by subjecting them to the form/substance couple. They give shape to the substances of expression and the substances of the content; they impose on intensive realities the regime of the strata of double articulation.[12] That regime should, in my view, be considered as a specific *semiotic option* of the processes of de-territorialization. We are faced with a choice: either a system with *n* articulations in which the various non-signifying semiotics combine their efforts without any one of them over-encoding the others; or a system of double articulation, double formalization, which over-encodes all other systems. If the latter, the semiotics become subject to what one may call the signifying illusion, and all seem to depend on linguistics.[13] Even the semiotic strata described by Hjelmslev still belong to the particular mode of formalization proper to signifying semiotics. I think, however, that the triple division he suggests should be preserved, as long as it can be transposed to some extent:

form, considered independently of substance (which Hjelmslev never envisages). This would relate to what I call here *abstract machines*;

substance, or more precisely the form/substance couple. To the particular case of the semiologies of signification, this would correspond as a mode of actualization, manifestation, possession of the de-territorializing potency of abstract machines when they become subject to the system of stratification of expression and content based on the principle of double articulation;

matter, considered independently of its signifying semiotic formation (this is not envisaged by Hjelmslev, either, for in his way of thinking it would imply leaving the semiotic sphere). It would then stand as a correspondent to what I call the machinic meaning. In the context of a semiotic of the machinic sense, rather than of the signification, of material intensities rather than of the signifier as a category in itself, of collective apparatus of utterance rather than an individuation of the subject based on the primacy of the statement, what would vanish would be the very distinction between content and expression. This may be the way in which we are to understand Hjelmslev's (or his translators'?) intuition in identifying matter and meaning.

In the specific case of double articulation signifying machines, we are in a

12. Cf. Christian Metz's analysis, with reference to Hjelmslev's *Prolegomènes*: 'Let us return to Chapter 13 of the *Prolegomènes*, where it says that form is a pure network of relationships, that matter (here christened "sense") represents the initially amorphous entity in which form is inscribed and "manifested", and that the substance is what appears when one projects form onto matter "as a net that is stretched out projects its shadow onto an unbroken surface" (p.81). This metaphor seems to me a very clear one: the "unbroken surface" is the matter, the "outstretched net" is the form, and the "shadow" of the net is the substance.' (Metz, *Langage et cinéma*, Larousse, 1971.)

13. Cf. Benvéniste, *Semiotica*, 1969, 1. 2, Mouton.

sense subjected to a controlled de-territorialization. The anti-production of signification and subjectivation partially re-territorializes the semiotic process. It is not a question of radical neutralization, however: the semiotics of signification also imply setting on foot a de-territorialization of consciousness which will continue to play a leading role in the most advanced, most artificial, most modern, most scientific machinic conjunctions. In the case of a politics of non-signifying semiotics with *n* number of articulations, one will thus preserve a certain partial use for signifying semiologies. They will then function in *spite* of their re-territorializing effects of signification and subjectivation. They will merely lose their function of over-encoding the systems of semiotic production that used to fall under the despotism of the signifier.

In distinguishing, as I am trying to, two semiotic politics, I want to determine under what conditions certain semiotic areas – in sciences, arts, revolution, sexuality, etc. – could be removed from the control of the dominant representations, could get beyond the system of representation as such – since that system separates desiring production from production for exchange, and alienates it as prevailing production relations demand.

Let us look again at the three types of synthesis we used in order to identify and articulate production and representation:

1. At the level of *connective syntheses*, what is set going by the processes of non-semiotic encoding is the abstract machines – that is, machinic processes independent of dichotomies between 'doing' and 'thinking', between representation and production. The machinic sense must here be understood in vectorial terms: the sense indicates a mode of polyvocal connection among the machinic fluxes. Multiplicities of intensity cannot be lumped together or territorialized along any one system of signification. Each produces its own specifications, and this production of meaning, which does not contain the process itself but develops as it were alongside it, transversally, outside all systems of representation, is none other than what we have designated as the organless body.

2. With *disjunctive syntheses*, the formalism of representation is established in pride of place. Particular signifying substances take over the functioning of abstract machines; they take control, organize and 'discipline' the connective syntheses. Though in their conscious, destructive aspect they are machines of de-territorialization, they are at the same time structures of re-territorialization because of the system of double articulation that produces their effects of signification and subjectivation. With disjunctive syntheses, one moves back and forth between the dead end of iconic impotentization and a de-territorializing diagrammatization capable of being reconnected to the connective synthesis.

3. At this point of departure, the *conjunctive syntheses* define the status of subjectivation. In the case of signifying semiologies, subjectivation is individuated, split up by the signifier, rendered impotent; the subject becomes simply something alongside the signifying substances. All polyvocity of utterance is alienated to a 'transcendentalized' subject of the utterance.

In the case of non-signifying semiotics, there is a collective force of utterance that effects the split inherent in all systems of representation. The *sense* of the abstract machines connects up with the *sense* of the collective apparatuses of utterance, both prior to and beyond the exclusive disjunctive significations of the signifying semiologies with their effect of individuating subjectivity. Thus the collective apparatuses of utterance and projection effect a conjunction between the abstract machines on the one hand, and on the other the machines that are actualized in the fluxes of reality and the fluxes of a-signifying signs. The specific effect of the annihilating deterritorialization of the instance of conscience becomes in some sense isolated from subjectivizing significations. A machine of intensive deterritorialization is a gateway for the flux of signs, and gives them new power by liberating them from representational dead ends and involving them in processes of diagrammatic conjunction. To transpose it into the terminology used by André Martinet, the problem can be stated like this: the monemes structured on the level of the first articulation and the phonemes structured on the level of the second articulation are not in essence different. Both are generated, from out of the same continuum, by a 'dual constraint', by having to respond to two different types of formalization. This gives us two types of production: things signified, which are classified, paradigmatized, rendered impotent; and signifiers, which are policed and syntagmatized. But, outside this dual effect of signification, a new type of a-signifying diagrammatic line of escape has become possible.

A direct semiotic relationship can now be established between the matter of expression and the abstract machines. Henceforth, the traditional distinction between the expression or signifier and the content or what is signified tends to stop being obviously necessary. The expression of a *machinic sense* now takes the place of

(1) the system of signification based on the duality of signifier and signified;

(2) the system of representation based on the duality of substance and form;

(3) the articulation of both these systems as a mode of subjectivation that prevents any direct contact with the reference – that is, the intensive multiplicity of material intensities.

In this respect, it may be held that the system of referential thinking has never been basically anything but one final barrier, one last desperate

attempt to prevent the ever more threatening proliferation of abstract machines from the central machinic stem.[14]

The two dualities – signified/signifier, substance/form – were subjectivating; the expressive duality – matter/abstract machine – implies a collective uttering force. But, let me repeat, that de-subjectivation does not thereby invalidate 'human' semiotics. Even supposing that the despotism of the signifier were to be abolished, signifying languages would still have a crucial role to play as the means of containing the processes of re-territorialization, and to give the machinic spearheads of de-territorialization their full force. That is why in schizo-analysis we should give free rein to Oedipalizing representations and paranoid-fascist representations, in order the better to counter their tendency to block the fluxes, and to start things going again in a kind of machinic forward rush.

The perspective I am suggesting implies a fundamental reversal of perspective. We are abandoning the formal classifications of semiotic components, and instead are primarily considering the kind of working organizations they constitute – in view of specific systems of de-territorializing fluxes. The sign machines take part in the processes of de-territorialization at work within the central machinic phylum. Indeed there is no further need to establish a clear-cut distinction between – say – a diagrammatization of signs and a technological innovation, or a scientific mutation of 'natural' fluxes, or 'artificial' machines. With both 'nature' and signs, we are concerned with the same type of machinism and the same semiotic of material intensities.

Oppositions between nature and culture, signs and things, spirit and matter, theory and technology, etc. appeared to make sense only in the context of a semiology of signification that set out to classify, control, turn into clearly defined and specified objects all the various 'contents' it extracted from the multiplicities of intensity.[15] The effects of de-territorialized fluxes of electrons, fluxes of signs, of experimental combinations, of logic machines and so on combine to give a wide expansion to de-territorializing conjunctions, and set the abstract machines free from the despotism of the strata of signifiers.

14. Metz believes that Chomsky to some extent gets beyond Hjelmslev's opposition between expression and content. The Chomskians refer to a 'logic machine' prior to the text, and capable of generating it, which would overcome the opposition between the form of the content and the form of the expression. This is something that merits more profound consideration. But it seems to me, at first sight, that such a logic machine is still restricted to the semiotics of signification, and would not make it possible to effect the passage to the abstract machines which are to be found prior, not merely to the written word, but to all machinic manifestations of every kind. The same may be said of the system of abstract objects suggested by S. K. Saumjan's 'Generative Applicative Model'.

15. It may be an intuition of this sort that leads Christian Metz to suggest an analysis of the relevant features of the material of expression, or to oppose the category of expression to that of signification. But in my view he is wrong, when studying the cinema, to continue to talk about the matter of the *signifier*, rather than to use Hjelmslev's phrase, the matter of *expression*.

Machinic conjunctions will find their meaning, will be 'guided' in their de-territorializing intensity as much from a flux of electrons as from a flux of equations or axioms. I must stress that this does not mean a return to the 'origins': on the contrary, the establishment of a collective uttering force implies that we continue to pass by way of the narrow 'defiles' of the signifier and the 'schizzes' of individuated subjectivation. But this time, it is as pure means – without any transcendental dimension, without any paralysing effect on the historical processes of de-territorialization.

It may be useful here to give a few examples of abstract machines. These may be logical machines set in motion by the sciences, or formulae of transversality 'unleashed' in the course of history, as for instance in the sphere of war machines or religion machines. But machinism of this kind also proliferates at the microscopic level. Consider what we call at the La Borde clinic the *grid*: in all the various forms and stages of its existence, it involves the emergence of an abstract machine. The problem was to connect the fluxes of time, of labour, of functions, of money and so on, on a rather different mode from the one normally prevailing in other establishments of the same kind – which can be characterized by the existence of a relatively static organogram of function. The work time-table – written down on paper – the circulation of functions inscribed in a semiology of gestures, the modification of hierarchical categories inscribed in a juridical and social semiology, all these are specific manifestations of the same abstract machinism that conveys a certain (local, and not very important) mutation in production relations. And it may have been because this sort of machinism had begun to appear at La Borde that so much fuss was made about our experiments there.[16] Another example of abstract machines is the love rituals that characterize different periods. Courtly love, says René Nelly, introduced a radically new organization of the relationships between men and women in the context of the feudal caste system. The semiotic of romantic love, in its turn, independent of the significations and sentiments it expresses, seems to me to correspond more to setting up a certain kind of relationship to childhood, to making use of the intensities and territorialities of childhood in what I have called 'childhood blocks', as opposed to conscious childhood memories. (That this is a case not merely of significative themes but of setting in motion a non-signifying intensive machine is demonstrated by the decisive part played by such childhood blocks in the music of a composer like Schumann.)

The Power Relationships within the Utterance

The function of language is not solely to serve as a channel of transmission for fluxes of information. Languages are not mere supports to communication

16. Cf. the special number of the review *Recherches* devoted to La Borde, no. 21, April 1976.

among individuals; they are inseparable from the social and political context in which they are used. What could be called arbitrary in the relationship of signification (the relationship between the signifier and the thing signified) is only a particular manifestation of the arbitrariness of power. The dominant language is always the language of the dominant class; the establishment makes use of signifying semiotics, but, essentially, what makes it tick is a non-signifying semiotics. Linguists like Oswald Ducrot are therefore led to 'devalue the facile metaphor that assimilates languages and codes, and so to qualify, or even altogether deny the definition of language as an instrument of communication'.[17] Promising, ordering, advising, giving an assurance, praising, taking seriously or lightly, sneering and so on are as much micro-political as they are linguistic activities. To a greater or lesser extent they are all what Austin calls 'illocutionary actions'. Every statement can thus be related to a particular stratification of utterance, arranged by rank, caste, class. Therefore any questioning of the status of the collective apparatuses of utterance would imply a refusal to tailor the mode of utterance to the statements uttered, and a consideration of the stratifications of utterance as by no means reducible simply to linguistic substances. Beyond the messages explicitly expressed and specifically uttered, the analysis would have to consider the non-signifying semiotic dimensions underlying, illuminating and deconstructing every discourse. Its aim would not be so much to try to express it all in terms of the text and the signifier, but to understand the true power situation of forces, in other words the machinic engagements of desire.

The establishment uses signifying semiotics, but never loses itself completely in them, and it would be a mistake to imagine that it could fall victim to its own signifying methods and ideologies. The ruling classes foster the development of signifying behaviour. Indeed, this constitutes one basis of their power, but it is only a matter of using semiotic instruments of this kind to 'drug' people who are already subjugated in other ways – at the level of their relationships of desire production and of economic production.

There are two methods of approaching an ideological semiotic: one, starting from a position of real power (the power of the State, or of a traditional political movement), tries to determine what dominant significations should be produced as a technique of semiotic impotentization; the other, starting on the contrary from ideology, or even a critique of ideology, tries to come to terms with reality. In the latter case there is a kind of simulation of real intensities, one is lulled by fine statements and grandiose programmes in the familiar style of reformist parties and others who seek to conceal the real bases of political power. The politics of signification consists in developing a whole system of confusing the machinic sense, and in

17. Oswald Ducrot, *Dire et ne pas dire*, Hermann, 1972, p. 24.

producing a multitude of archaisms in the subjective territorialities that reify utterance and split it between the two formalized strata of content and expression.

The result of this is to block the semiotic praxis of the masses – of all the various oppressed desiring minorities – and to prevent their entering into direct contact with material or semiotic fluxes, preventing their becoming connected up to the de-territorializing lines of the different sorts of machinism and so threatening the balance of established power. Referential thought, understanding, interpretation, the transcendentalizing of distinct, concrete objects, and dogmatism all proceed from the same method of subjecting people to the dominant statements and significations. Every statement has to be understood within the pre-established area of exclusive bi-polar values, and every semiotic sequence has to leave the realm of its original machinic formation to enter the systems of official expression of signification and representation.[18]

In my view it would be wrong to accept an opposition between science and ideology, especially in the obsessional mode of the Althusserians, who make that opposition massive, schematic and without any real relation to Marx. We can expect no salvation from any all-embracing science or (totally mythical) scientificity of concepts or theories considered independently of their technico-experimental context and their situation in history. The relationship between science and politics cannot be one of dependence. Of course both proceed from similar kinds of collective economic and social engagements, but their semiotic productions are directed along radically different lines.

Scientific statements (in the context of current scientific production relations) are a kind of natural product of the field of logico-mathematical formalism, whereas political statements (taking politics in the usual sense, not in that of the micro-politics of desire) are systematically reduced to match personological, familial and humanist statements. In the circumstances, it is rather over-generous to allow science – in fact, a certain mythology of science – the exclusive privilege of being the source of truth, the sole centre of all de-territorializations. And it would drag politics even deeper into a dead end to try to reduce it to a sheer ideological exercise if it should refuse to submit to the injunctions of the epistemologists. We must therefore deny that there is any radical epistemological break between a conceptual field of the purely scientific, and an ideology that is purely illusory and mystificatory. The moment the discourse of science becomes a discourse *about* science (and the dividing line is impossible to determine for certain when it comes to the

18. The axioms of referential thought have been analysed by Gilles Deleuze (in *Différence et répétition*) around four themes: *identity* in the concept, *similitude* in the perception, *analogy* in the judgement and *negation* in the position of existence.

voices that actually speak for science, so only the epistemologists can contradict us) it automatically makes itself an ideology, that is to say a semiotic of signification. Conversely, what set out as ideologies can acquire real effectiveness, can be 'scientifically' manipulated and have decisive social, economic and material consequences. In short, I believe it to be quite absurd to try to base revolutionary politics on science. The science cited by scientific Marxists does not exist; it is an imaginary science that operates only in the writings of epistemologists. On the other hand, I do not think it absurd to base a revolutionary politics on semiotic and analytical exercises that have broken with the dominant semiology; in other words, on ways of using the spoken and written word, pictures, gestures, groups and so on, that would direct along very different lines the relationship between the flux of signs and all the de-territorialized fluxes. In point of fact, it is by getting caught up in the net of interpretative semiologies that the masses fail to realize the true springs of their power – that is their real control over industrial, technological, scientific, economic and social semiotics – and become bogged down in the phantasies of the dominant reality, and in the modes of subjectivation and repression of desire imposed upon them by the bourgeoisie.

However much scientific semiotics may be contaminated by the dogmas of religion and philosophy, they remain as a whole based on a machinic politics. In the last resort, what matters is always the engagements of signs and of technico-experimental complexes, whereas final objectives, interpretations and graphic representations always end by taking second place. But here again, there is no automatic protection, no guarantee of scientific practice against interpretative aberrations, and, as we have seen, scientists can often follow such aberrations with nothing short of mystical fervour.

To conclude my remarks about the apparatuses of utterance, a few comments about the semiotics of art. In this sphere, things are less clear-cut; there is a 'take-over by the signifier' of the work, the artist, the inspiration, the talent, the genius. Yet it seems that, over all, one may say that modern art is evolving towards a politics of non-significance: representational and machinic engagements are gaining over representative systems of encoded expression. But if we look more closely at the various sorts of collective engagement, we have to qualify that statement. The stereotyped image we have of, say, a painter, is of an individual more than usually open to social life. We picture him with his friends in the café, for instance. He will probably be a member of a school, and will almost certainly be more politically involved than a composer would. Indeed we tend to see the composer as a solitary character, wrestling in a dizzying single combat with a musical creation that he cannot quite capture. Yet it is noteworthy that, with few exceptions, composers have always tended towards a defence of traditional values, towards religion, even towards social reaction. Indeed in their own way they are extremely commit-

ted people. One cannot therefore cling to one's first impression of the painter as a man in society and the composer as representing transcendence. If we examine the nature of the collective structures to which the two belong, rather than their individual attitudes, the paradox is confirmed.

Musical production originates in extremely large collectivities; it implies a major division of labour, and is supported by a long musical tradition. Every composer writes as an extension of what has gone before, and, though he may introduce exciting new ideas, he has still to depend on a whole technology and a whole professional world for his work to be presented. Composers belong to a kind of caste with its own highly elaborate rituals, a caste whose position in the hierarchy of reactionary powers is not negligible. (Painters, of course, are connected not so much with the powers of the aristocracy as those of finance.) One has here to contrast the abstract machines of music (perhaps the most non-signifying and de-territorializing of all!) with the whole musical caste system – its conservatories, its educational traditions, its rules for correct composition, its stress on the impresario and so on. It becomes clear that the collectivity of musical production is so organized as to hamper and delay the force of de-territorialization inherent in music as such. We may think here of the history of the church's relationship with music, which goes back to the origin of polyphony. For instance, the church always tried to block the machinic expansion of instrumental music, and to allow only singing. It tried to set dogmatic limits to composition, and to impose particular styles and forms. On the other hand, one of what Christian Metz calls the 'outstanding features of the subject-matter of pictorial expression' may well be the fact that the painter, contrary to all appearances, is far more solitary than the composer.[19] He is far less affected by tradition and the schools. Musical forms overwhelm the listener, capturing, directing, controlling. A canvas, on the other hand, remains at a distance from the art-lover – who can pick it up, put it down, glance at it, pass it by altogether. The painter, the work and the spectator remain in a sense fundamentally separate from one another. In the final analysis, the collective forces constituted by the plastic arts are far less 'human' and more machinic than are those of music, which even in their most modern forms are infused with a politics of signifying redundancy. Though painting is manifestly more territorialized than music, the painter himself is far more de-territorialized than the composer.

19. Cf. Alberto Moravia's novel, *La noia*.

Machine and Structure[1]

The distinction I am proposing between machine and structure is based solely on the way we use the words; we may consider that we are merely dealing with a 'written device' of the kind one has to invent for dealing with a mathematical problem, or with an axiom that may have to be reconsidered at a particular stage of development, or again with the kind of machine we shall be talking about here.

I want therefore to make it clear that I am putting into parentheses the fact that, in reality, a machine is inseparable from its structural articulations and, conversely, that each contingent structure is dominated (and this is what I want to demonstrate) by a system of machines, or at the very least by one logic machine. It seems to me vital to start by establishing the distinction in order to make it easier to identify the peculiar positions of subjectivity in relation to events and to history.[2]

We may say of structure that it positions its elements by way of a system of references that relates each one to the others, in such a way that it can itself be related as an element to other structures.

The agent of action, whose definition here does not extend beyond this principle of reciprocal determination, is included in the structure. The structural process of de-totalized totalization encloses the subject, and will

1. Initially intended for the Freudian School in Paris in 1969, and published in *Change*, no. 12 (Seuil), 1971.

2. To adopt the categories suggested by Gilles Deleuze, structure, in the sense in which I am using it here, would relate to the generality characterized by a position of exchange or substitution of particularities, whereas the machine would relate to the order of repetition 'as behaviour and viewpoint relative to a singularity that cannot be changed or replaced' (*Différence et répétition*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1969, p. 7). Of Deleuze's three minimum conditions determining structure in general, I shall retain only the first two:

(1) There must be at least two heterogeneous series, one of which is defined as the signifier and the other as the signified.

(2) Each of these series is made up of terms that exist only through their relationship with one another.

His third condition, 'two heterogeneous series converging upon a paradoxical element that acts so as to differentiate them', relates, on the contrary, exclusively to the order of the machine (*Logique du sens*, Minuit, 1969, p. 63).

not let go as long as it is in a position to recuperate it within another structural determination.

The machine, on the other hand, remains essentially remote from the agent of action. The subject is always somewhere else. Temporalization penetrates the machine on all sides and can be related to it only after the fashion of an event. The emergence of the machine marks a date, a change, different from a structural representation.

The history of technology is dated by the existence at each stage of a particular type of machine; the history of the sciences is now reaching a point, in all its branches, where every scientific theory can be taken as a machine rather than a structure, which relates it to the order of ideology. Every machine is the negation, the destroyer by incorporation (almost to the point of excretion), of the machine it replaces. And it is potentially in a similar relationship to the machine that will take its place.

Yesterday's machine, today's and tomorrow's, are not related in their structural determinations: only by a process of historical analysis, by reference to a signifying chain extrinsic to the machine, by what we might call historical structuralism, can we gain any overall grasp of the effects of continuity, retro-action and interlinking that it is capable of representing.

For the machine, the subject of history is elsewhere, in the structure. In fact, the subject of the structure, considered in its relationship of alienation to a system of de-totalized totalization, should rather be seen in relation to a phenomenon of 'being an ego' – the ego here being in contrast with the subject of the unconscious as it corresponds to the principle stated by Lacan: a signifier represents it for another signifier. The unconscious subject as such will be on the same side as the machine, or better perhaps, *alongside* the machine. There is no break in the machine itself: the breach is on either side of it.

The individual's relation to the machine has been described by sociologists following Friedmann as one of fundamental alienation. This is undoubtedly true if one considers the individual as a structure for totalization of the imaginary. But the dialectic of the master craftsman and the apprentice, the old pictures of the different trades flourishing in different parts of the country, all this has become meaningless in the face of modern mechanized industry that requires its skilled workers to start from scratch again with every new technological advance. But does not this starting from scratch mark precisely that essential breakthrough that characterizes the unconscious subject?

Initiation into a trade and becoming accepted as a skilled worker no longer takes place by way of institutions, or at least not those envisaged in such statements as 'the skill has precedence over the machine'. With industrial capitalism, the spasmodic evolution of machinery keeps cutting across the existing hierarchy of skills.

In this sense, the worker's alienation to the machine excludes him from any kind of structural equilibrium, and puts him in a position where he is as close as possible to a radical system of realignment, we might say of castration, where he loses all tranquillity, all 'self-confirming' security, all the justification of a 'sense of belonging' to a skilled trade. Such professional bodies as still exist, like doctors, pharmacists, or lawyers, are simply survivals from the days of pre-capitalist production relations.

This change is of course intolerable; institutional production therefore sets out to conceal what is happening by setting up systems of equivalents, of imitations. Their ideological basis is to be found not solely in fascist-type, paternalistic slogans about work, the family and patriotism, but also within the various versions of socialism (even including the most apparently liberal ones, like the Cuban), with their oppressive myth of the model worker, and their exaltation of the machine whose cult has much the same function as that of the hero in antiquity.

As compared with the work done by machines, the work of human beings is nothing. This working at 'nothing', in the special sense in which people do it today, which tends more and more to be merely a response to a machine – pressing a red or black button to produce an effect programmed somewhere else – human work, in other words, is only the residue that has not yet been integrated into the work of the machine.

Operations performed by workers, technicians and scientists will be absorbed, incorporated into the workings of tomorrow's machine; to do something over and over no longer offers the security of ritual. It is no longer possible to identify the *repetition* of human actions ('the noble task of the sower') with the repetition of the natural cycle as the foundation of the moral order. Repetition no longer establishes a man as someone who can do that particular job. Human work today is merely a residual sub-whole of the work of the machine. This residual human activity is no more than a partial procedure that accompanies the central procedure produced by the order of the machine. The machine has now come to the heart of desire, and this residual human work represents no more than the point of the machine's imprint on the imaginary world of the individual (cf. Lacan's function of the 'a'[3]).

Every new discovery – in the sphere of scientific research, for example – moves across the structural field of theory like a war machine, upsetting and rearranging everything so as to change it radically. Even the researcher is at the mercy of this process. His discoveries extend far beyond himself, bringing in their train whole new branches of researchers, and totally redesigning the tree of scientific and technological implications. Even when a discovery is called by its author's name, the result, far from 'personalizing' him, tends to

3. See Glossary, *Objet petit 'a'*.

be to turn his proper name into a common noun! The question is whether this effacing of the individual is something that will spread to other forms of production as well.

Though it is true that this unconscious subjectivity, as a split which is overcome in a signifying chain, is being transferred away from individuals and human groups towards the world of machines, it still remains just as un-representable at the specifically machinic level. It is a signifier detached from the unconscious structural chain that will act as *representative* to represent the machine.

The essence of the machine is precisely this function of detaching a signifier as a representative, as a 'differentiator', as a causal break, different in kind from the structurally established order of things. It is this operation that binds the machine both to the desiring subject and to its status as the basis of the various structural orders corresponding to it. The machine, as a repetition of the particular, is a mode – perhaps indeed the only possible mode – of univocal representation of the various forms of subjectivity in the order of generality on the individual or the collective plane.

In trying to see things the other way round, *starting* from the general, one would be deluding oneself with the idea that it is possible to base oneself on some structural space that existed before the breakthrough by the machine. This 'pure', 'basic' signifying chain, a kind of lost Eden of desire, the 'good old days' before mechanization, might then be seen as a meta-language, an absolute reference point that one could always produce in place of any chance event or specific indication.

This would lead to wrongly locating the truth of the break, the truth of the subject, on the level of representation, information, communication, social codes and every other form of structural determination.

The voice, as speech machine, is the basis and determinant of the structural order of language, and not the other way round. The individual, in his bodiliness, accepts the consequences of the interaction of signifying chains of all kinds which cut across and tear him apart. The human being is caught where the machine and the structure meet.

Human groups have no such projection screen available to them. The modes of interpretation and indication open to them are successive and contradictory, approximative and metaphorical, and are based upon different structural orders, for instance on myths or exchanges. Every change produced by the intrusion of a machine phenomenon will thus be accompanied in them with the establishment of what one may call a system of anti-production, the representative mode specific to structure.

I need hardly say that anti-production belongs to the order of the machine: the keynote here is its characteristic of being a subjective change, which is the distinctive trait of every order of production. What we need

therefore is a means of finding our way without moving as though by magic from one plane to another. We must, for instance, relate to the *same* system of production both what goes on in the world of industry, on the shop floor or in the manager's office, and what is happening in scientific research, and indeed in the world of literature and even of dreams.

Anti-production will be, among other things, what has been described under the term 'production relations'. Anti-production will tend to effect a kind of re-tilting of the balance of phantasy, not necessarily in the direction of inertia and conservatism, since it can also lead to generalizing within a given social area a new dominant mode of production, accumulation, circulation and distribution relations, or of any other superstructural manifestation of a new type of economic machine. Its mode of imaginary expression is then that of the transitional phantasy.

Let us then look at the other end of the chain, the level of dream production. We may identify anti-production with working out the manifest content of a dream, in contrast to the latent productions linked with the impulse machine that constitute part objects. The *objet petit* '*a*', described by Lacan as the root of desire, the umbilicus of the dream, also breaks into the structural equilibrium of the individual like some infernal machine. The subject finds it is being rejected by itself. In proportion with the change wrought by *objet-machine petit* '*a*' in the structural field of representation, successive forms of otherness take their places for it, each fashioned to fit a particular stage of the process. Individual phantasizing corresponds to this mode of structural signposting by means of a specific language linked with the ever-repeated urgings of the 'machinations' of desire.

The existence of this *objet-machine petit* '*a*', irreducible, unable to be absorbed into the references of the structure, this 'self for itself' that relates to the elements of the structure only by means of splitting and metonymy, means that the representation of oneself by means of the 'stencils' of language leads to a dead end, to a breaking point, and the need for a renewed 'otherness'. The object of desire de-centres the individual outside himself, on the boundaries of the other; it represents the impossibility of any complete refuge of the self inside oneself, but equally the impossibility of a radical passage to the other. Individual phantasy *represents* this impossible merging of different levels; it is this that makes it different from group phantasizing, for a group has no such 'hitching posts' of desire on its surface, no such reminders of the order of specific truths as the body's erogenous zones, and their capacity for touching and being touched by other people.

Group phantasy superimposes the different levels, changes them round, substitutes one for another. It can only turn round and round upon itself. This circular movement leads it to mark out certain areas as dead ends, as banned, as impassable vacuoles, a whole no-man's land of meaning. Caught up within

the group, one phantasy reflects another like interchangeable currency, but a currency with no recognizable standard, no ground of consistency whereby it can be related, even partially, to anything other than a topology of the most purely general kind. The group – as a structure – phantasizes events by means of a perpetual and non-responsible coming and going between the general and the particular. A leader, a scapegoat, a schism, a threatening phantasy from another group – any of these is equated with the group subjectivity. Each event or crisis can be replaced by another event or crisis, inaugurating a further sequence that bears, in turn, the imprint of equivalence and identity. Today's truth can be related to yesterday's, for it is always possible to re-write history. The experience of psychoanalysis, the starting up of the psychoanalytic machine, makes it clear that it is impossible for the desiring subject to preserve such a system of homology and re-writing: the only function of the transference in this case is to reveal the repetition that is taking place, to operate like a machine – that is in a way that is the precise opposite of a group effect.

The group's instinctual system, because it is unable to be linked up to the desiring machine – *objets petit 'a'* returning to the surface of the phantasy body – is doomed to multiply its phantasy identifications. Each of these is structured in itself, but is still equivocal in its relationship to the others. The fact that they lack the differentiating factor Gilles Deleuze talks of dooms them to a perpetual process of merging into one another. Any change is precluded, and can be seen only *between* structural levels. Essentially, no break is any longer accepted. That the structures have no specific identifying marks means that they become 'translatable' into one another, thus developing a kind of indefinite logical continuum that is peculiarly satisfying to obsessionals. The identification of the similar and the discovery of difference at group level function according to a second-degree phantasy logic. It is, for example, the phantasy representation of the other group that will act as the locating machine. In a sense, it is an excess of logic that leads it to an impasse.

This relationship of the structures sets going a mad machine, madder than the maddest of lunatics, the tangential representation of a sado-masochistic logic in which everything is equivalent to everything else, in which truth is always something apart. Political responsibility is king, and the order of the general is radically cut off from the order of the ethical. The ultimate end of group phantasy is death – ultimate death, destruction in its own right, the radical abolition of any real identifying marks, a state of things in which not merely has the problem of truth disappeared forever but has never existed even as a problem.

This group structure represents the subject for another structure as the basis of a subjectivity that is clogged up, opaque, turned into the ego. Whereas, for the individual, it was the object of unconscious desire that

functioned as a system of change or machine, in a group it is either the sub-wholes that happen to come into being temporarily within the group or another group that will assume that function. This area of structural equivalence will thus have the fundamental function of concealing or abolishing the entry of any particular object represented *either* on the screen of the human subject by unconscious desire, *or* on the more general screen of unconscious signifying chains by the change effected by the closed system of machines. The structural order of the group, of consciousness, of communication, is thus surrounded on all sides by these systems of machines which it will never be able to control, either by grasping the *objets petit 'a'* as the unconscious desire machine, or the phenomena of breaking apart related to other types of machines. The essence of the machine, as a factor for breaking apart, as the a-topical foundation of that order of the general, is that one cannot ultimately distinguish the unconscious subject of desire from the order of the machine itself. On one side or other of all structural determinations, the subject of economics, of history and of science all encounter that same *objet petit 'a'* as the foundation of desire.

An example of a structure functioning as subject for another structure is the fact that the black community in the United States represents an identification imposed by the white order. To the modernist consciousness this is a confused, absurd, meaningless state of things. An unconscious problematic challenges the rejection of a more radical 'otherness' that would be combined with, say, a rejection of economic 'otherness'. The assassination of Kennedy was an event that 'represented' the impossibility of registering the economic and social otherness of the Third World, as witnessed by the failure of the Alliance for Progress, the endeavour to destroy Vietnam and so on. One can only note here the points of intersection and continuity between the economy of desire and that of politics.

At a particular point in history desire becomes focalized in the totality of structures; I suggest that for this we use the general term 'machine': it could be a new weapon, a new production technique, a new set of religious dogmas, or such major new discoveries as the Indies, relativity, or the moon. To cope with this, a structural anti-production develops until it reaches its own saturation point, while the revolutionary breakthrough also develops, in counterpoint to this, another discontinuous area of anti-production that tends to re-absorb the intolerable subjective breach, all of which means that it persists in eluding the antecedent order. We may say of revolution, of the revolutionary period, that this is when the machine represents social subjectivity for the structure – as opposed to the phase of oppression and stagnation, when the superstructures are imposed as impossible representations of machine effects. The common denominator of writings of this kind in history would be the opening up of a pure signifying space where the machine would

represent the subject for another machine. But one can no longer then continue to say of history, as the site of the unconscious, that it is 'structured like a language' except in that there is no possible written form of such a language.

It is, in fact, impossible to systematize the real discourse of history, the circumstance that causes a particular phase or a particular signifier to be represented by a particular event or social group, by the emergence of an individual or a discovery, or whatever. In this sense, we must consider, *a priori*, that the primitive stages of history are where truth is primarily to be sought; history does not advance in a continuous movement: its structural phenomena develop according to their own peculiar sequences, expressing and indicating signifying tensions that remain unconscious up to the point where they break through. That point marks a recognizable break in the three dimensions of exclusion, perseverance and threat. Historical archaisms express a reinforcing rather than a weakening of the structural effect.

That André Malraux could say that the twentieth century is the century of nationalism, in contrast to the nineteenth, which was that of internationalism, was because internationalism, lacking a structural expression that matched the economic and social machineries at work within it, withdrew into nationalism, and then further, into regionalism and the various sorts of particularism that are developing today, even within the supposedly international communist movement.

The problem of revolutionary organization is the problem of setting up an institutional machine whose distinctive features would be a theory and practice that ensured its not having to depend on the various social structures – above all the State structure, which appears to be the keystone of the dominant production relations, even though it no longer corresponds to the means of production. What entraps and deceives us is that it looks today as though nothing can be articulated outside that structure. The revolutionary socialist intention to seize control of political power in the State, which it sees as the instrumental basis of class domination, and the institutional guarantee of private ownership of the means of production, has been caught in just that trap. It has itself become a trap in its turn, for that intention, though meaning so much in terms of social consciousness, no longer corresponds to the reality of economic or social forces. The institutionalization of 'world markets' and the prospect of creating super-States increases the allure of the trap; so does the modern reformist programme of achieving an ever-greater 'popular' control of the economic and social sub-wholes. The subjective consistency of society, as it operates at every level of the economy, society, culture and so on, is invisible today, and the institutions that express it are equivocal in the extreme. This was evident during the revolution of May 1968 in France, when the nearest approximation to a proper organization of the struggle was the

hesitant, late and violently opposed experiment of forming action committees.

The revolutionary programme, as the machine for institutional subversion, should demonstrate proper subjective potential and, at every stage of the struggle, should make sure that it is fortified against any attempt to 'structuralize' that potential.

But no such permanent grasp of machine effects upon the structures could really be achieved on the basis of only one 'theoretical practice'. It presupposes the development of a specific analytical praxis at every level of organization of the struggle.

Such a prospect would in turn make it possible to locate the responsibility of those who are in any way in a position genuinely to utter theoretical discourse at the point at which it imprints the class struggle at the very centre of unconscious desire.

The Plane of Consistency[1]

The term is an approximation. As will become clear from what I am going to say, first, it cannot be just a single plane, and second, we have to make a distinction between mathematical consistency and the machinic consistency we are concerned with here. For the moment, let us note that:

– Mathematical consistency implies a set of axioms that are non-contradictory.[2]

– Machinic consistency avoids such an implication in that it does not resort to a dualist system of *applying* multiplicities to a semiotic whole so much as embracing the totality. It does not therefore have anything to 'fear' from purely logical contradictions.

– Moreover, the basis of axiomatic consistency is the fact that ultimately there is a consistency in machinic propositions.

– The plane of consistency indicates that the machinic phylum is a *continuum*. The unity of any process, the unity of history, resides not in the fact of a shared time encompassing and traversing everything, but in the fact of that continuum of the machinic phylum, which itself results from the conjunction of the totality of de-territorialization processes.

Whenever a multiplicity unfolds, the plane of consistency is brought into operation. The machinic phylum is in time and space. Plane, here, has the sense of the phylum, the continuous. Nothing is small enough to escape the net of machinic propositions and intensities. The strata of *subjectivity* are set against the plane of the agency of collective utterance, the subject against the agent. The plane of machinic consistency provides the answer to Russell's paradox. There really is a totality of all the totalities. But it is not a logical totality; it is a machinic one. The problem of the continuous is resolved at the level of the machinic phylum before being stated in mathematical terms.

1. Notes made in April 1972.

2. Robert Blanché shows that a closer analysis distinguishes between contradiction and consistency, between different notions of consistency, and so on (*L'Axiomatique*, Presses Universitaires de France, 1955, p. 48). This is something that needs exploring.

Mathematics and Physics, Technological Innovation and the Military Machine

– At first these appear to be quite disparate fields which will only coincide in present-day development of the economic and national military complex.

– But in fact, we have to start from the premise that, from the very *first*, they merge into one another, and that what makes the web of history – that is of history up until the scientific revolutions – is the machinic phylum.

The machinic phylum takes off with the military machine, then with the technological innovations linked with the concentration of the means of production in primitive state machines (cities, empires, etc.), and finally with the scientific revolutions. But the machinic power of desire was, always and everywhere, already there. To take an example, the invention of bronze in southern Siberia led to the territorialization of tribes whose form of production was settled and agrarian. The collective desire energy rapidly changed its object and turned those societies into a military proto-machine. Nomadism introduced further benefits, both in material terms and in terms of desire. (In some cases, the extensive stock-breeding of the nomad machine caused settled agriculture to disappear altogether.)[3] In 'a few decades', there had come into being an encoded surplus-value which led to the abandonment of settled homesteads. Wealth 'suddenly stopped being the desire to own a piece of ground'. People had acquired 'a new conception of ownership, with land as something merely to be used, based on *movable goods*, flocks, horses, chariots, personal effects, bows and arrows, what was gained by pillage' and 'an expanded wealth'.

In all this, machinic power was making and unmaking primitive territoriality and nomadism, the primitive state and its divisions. We therefore find the plane of consistency both as the impossible goal of the history of science and the preliminary to the 'start' of history.

It is important to consider the position of the plane of consistency in relation to the semiotic machine, to the independence acquired by the voice as the instrument for opening up the field of the spoken word. Why should the battle-cry, the mating call, leave the sphere of the functional, of caste behaviour, to become open to a transvaluation of encoding? Words have a different use: they carry further – or perhaps they go nowhere. They produce new connections. After all, it is surely in this figurative shift of the oral semiotic machines that the essence of the phenomenon of religion lies?

In any case, it is in the framework of the city machines, with the primitive state as anti-production of the military proto-machine, that we can identify one of the two basic strata of the territorialization of the plane of machinic consistency – the other one in fact being brought into action by the military

3. 'Présence des Scythes', *Critique*, December 1971.

proto-machine. The question of whether the military proto-machine comes before or after the primitive state is secondary. There is, in effect, a link, an encoded surplus-value between the two. Either the primitive state finds itself having to fall back on the military proto-machine in the name of anti-production, or, conversely, it has itself achieved a technological take-off, a system of innovation (in the sphere of written language, the use of metals, differentiating the kind of work to be done by people from that done by animals etc.), and is in turn enriching the military machine and moving it a notch higher in the process of de-territorialization.

The fluxes are tidied away, controlled and over-encoded by means of the writing machine. In this case, despotism is synonymous with forcing everything into a bi-univocal mould, fitting the whole of the goods on the shelves into a new whole of graphic symbols.

The military proto-machine consumed its goods – for instance, when a pharaoh died, his concubines, his servants and even his slaves were killed. In the feudal system, on the other hand, which set out to preserve the labour force of its serfs and the fighting force of its vassals, the primitive state restricted and delayed such consumption. The sign was retained. Semiotic Oedipalism, for the writing machine, consists in an external taking hold of objects and subjects in their completeness. Writing and reckoning are not the same as consuming, though to name a thing may be a way of eating it.

The position of writing is thus one of anti-production. A written text, itself impotent, is nevertheless a sign of power. This is the source of the dichotomy between mathematics and physics. Pythagoras was concerned with the 'essential' numbers that lay beyond 'real' powers. In an article in the *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, 'Physique et mathématiques', Jean Marc Levy-Leblond presents a critique of the two forms in which people have sought to make mathematics 'the language' of physics. Mathematics is viewed either as the language of nature, which man must learn (the attitude of Galileo and Einstein), or as the language of man in which natural phenomena have to be expressed (the attitude of Heisenberg). But there are also all the possible positions between these two, all of which, in one way or another, tend to consolidate the dualism between empiricism and formalism – opposing nature to man, experience to theorizing, concrete to abstract, scientific phenomena to scientific laws and so on.

Levy-Leblond maintains that there are two possible uses for mathematics in the sciences. It may have a relationship of *application* – as with chemistry, biology, the sciences of the Earth and all other spheres in which there is numerical calculation and a manipulation of quantities. Or it may have a relationship of *constitution* or *production*. 'Thus mathematics is interiorized by physics', and their concepts are indissolubly interlinked (derived

speed and the electro-magnetic field, for instance). This sort of relationship is peculiar to physics (which Bachelard failed to realize when he spoke of a 'progressive mathematicization' of all the sciences). Nevertheless, the separation between mathematics and physics remains. They are different in kind.

Unlike mathematics, physics is difficult to express in axioms. One can give several coherent mathematical expressions of the same law or concept in physics (mathematical polymorphism). In physics the principles and laws are more mobile, more transcursive, less hierarchized. Conversely, a single mathematical structure can govern a number of different domains without there being any 'underlying unity' – what Poincaré called 'a hidden harmony in things' (mathematical plurivalence). It is the identity of the object of physics that can only be known approximately, that eludes absolute definition. Thus there is a contradictory two-way movement going on: mathematics is tending to ever greater autonomy, but also tending to greater interdependence with mathematical physics.

In Levy-Leblond's view one must abandon the idea of any hierarchy among the sciences in favour of mathematicizing them: 'it is by the nature of its relationship to mathematics, and by the constitutive role mathematics plays, that any branch of the natural sciences – major or minor – can be seen as belonging to the sphere of physics'. In other words, physics is constituted by two processes of de-territorialization (a semiotic process and a material process). An object in physics becomes consistent only in so far as it can authentically be treated mathematically. It no longer has a relationship of application with the sign, but one of production. The way the particle corresponds with the sign no longer refers to the disjunctive syntheses of a system of representation, but to an experimental connective system and a theoretical conjunctive system, in which the surplus-values of encoding or of sets of axioms are formed.

We thus end up with a physics–mathematics complex that links the de-territorialization of a system of signs with the de-territorialization of a cluster of phenomena in physics. Levy-Leblond would seem, at this second, 'material' level, to be maintaining the primacy of the existence of the real. The traditional split between mathematics and the natural sciences (including physics) sanctioned by experimentation[4] would appear to be, for him, insuperable.

We may note the twofold connection between the de-territorialized phe-

4. The way in which he rejects any subjection of physics to mathematics – that is, to the most de-territorialized stratum – by quoting the example of astro-physics, which became established on the previously mathematicized ground of astronomy, is unconvincing. Mathematical astronomy was never a 'non-experimental' science: it was physics already on the way to being turned into mathematics.

nomenon of the physicist and the mathematics sign machine.[5] Rather than talking about an object, let us say we are dealing with a *moment of inertia on the part of the machinism* at a given point in the contingent process of de-territorialization. In the last resort, mathematics is also an experimental science. It experiments with semiotic phenomena which were in the past still at rest as graphic symbols are still at rest, but might perhaps be so in the future more after the fashion of the figures of speech and syntactical rules of information-theory machines. The object of physics is particles (there are some hypothetical ones, known as tachyons, that are supposed to travel faster than light, going back in time, and not being subject to the usual limitations of causality and information).[6] Every such moment of inertia is connected with a particular situation of the machinism. Just as the machinism of experimentation of theoretical physics has produced the conditions for the expansion of mathematical physics, so the information-theory machinism will probably come to have more and more effect on the development of 'pure' mathematics. We may therefore come to think in terms of both mathematics and physics being in some sense alongside the theoretic-experimental machine. Far from thinking that we can radically axiomatize physics, we shall find ourselves on the contrary having to relativize the axiomatization of mathematics.

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The computer will produce as many possible axiomatizations as you like for every theory – a positive flood of axiomatics.[7] Mathematics is not concerned with pure universal semiotic harmony. It is as much a machine as physics is, except that, from the point of view of technical machinism, it is somewhat further behind. Gödel's theorem marked the condemnation of any claim that axiomatics is omnipotent.[8] Undoubtedly, therefore, there can be less and less possibility of concluding the various attempts at mathematic axiomatization with any super-axiomatics. On the contrary, what I want to show is that all

5. I also have reservations about the split between physics and the other sciences that use numerical order. It is possible that there are other mathematics, other experimentations, other machinisms.

6. Here we come to a little problem in science-fiction: what would a computer working with tachyons be like? Cf. *Recherches*, no. 7, December 1970, p. 675.

7. In my view there is no justification for Ruyer's position in condemning *a priori* the possibility that cybernetics may expand infinitely.

8. '... Gödel's theorem makes clear that whatever theory there may be based on a finite number of axioms to make it possible to construct arithmetic, one can always discover some unprovable proposition in it ...' (Warusfel, *Dictionnaire des Mathématiques*, p. 257). If one appends that paradoxical proposition as a supplementary axiom, then we have a different theory, but one in which there is a further unprovable proposition. It is impossible 'that a finite number of axioms should be enough to establish any universal mathematics in which not merely would the principle of the excluded third (P cannot at the same time be true and false) be true, but in which any proposition might be *either* true *or* false. Some theorems will always remain non-demonstrable because there is no answer to them' (ibid.).

the partial machinisms harmonize on a single plane of consistency – not susceptible to being totalized into one axiomatic, not susceptible to representation, but infinitely de-totalized, de-territorialized, de-axiomatized. And that it is on this plane of consistency that mathematics links up with the other sciences.

Machinic consistency evades the alternative of mathematical consistency defined by Gödel's theorem. First of all, to it a machinic connection may be actual and non-actual: machinic time encodes contradiction, the observer of the contradiction has his own machinic time, the connection is governed by the general relativity of conjunctions. Secondly, nothing escapes it. Machines cannot stand emptiness, lack, negation, an exclusively referential stratum. With machines the question is one of connection or non-connection, without conditions, without any need to render an account to any third party. It is from that that the surplus-value of encoding originates. The situation is like that of the bumble-bee which, by being there, became part of the genetic chain of the orchid. The specific event passes directly into the chain of encoding until another machinic event links up with a different temporalization, a different conjunction.

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It is the principle of the excluded third term that is itself excluded here. Ultimately, the only reference is the plane of consistency, but no limit or lack must be written into it. The plane of consistency is the organless body of all axiomatic systems; it is not the total being of the machinism, but the impossibility of concluding or totalizing machinic expansion.

Behind the opposition between what is as yet hardly axiomatized at all (that is, physics) and what is very much so (that is, mathematics) one can see the outline of the order of what is 'radically non-axiomatizable' – machinic multiplicity. Axiomatics was related to the structure of representation, whereas the flux of axiomatization relates to machinic production. This being so, can one maintain that physics has a special relationship with the order of existing reality?

The object of the mathematics/physics complexus is not physical; it relates neither to the nature of the physical nor to the physical as nature. Machinism links together physics and mathematics, working equally well with symbols and particles. The particle is defined by a chain of symbols; physicists 'invent' particles that have not existed in 'nature'. Nature as existing prior to the machine no longer exists. The machine produces a different nature, and in order to do so it defines and manipulates it with symbols (the diagrammatic process).

Epistemological primacy therefore lies neither with mathematics nor with physics. It may perhaps lie with art. It is arguable that the most de-territorialized level relates to the sign. It is true that the mathematical sign has

sometimes let its hand be forced by the de-territorialization of experimental physics, but, equally, it is the de-territorialization of the sign that governs the entire process, generalizing its effects, and projecting the surplus value of encoding onto the totality of encoded areas. Even in cases where physics appears to be controlling the movement, the machinic points remain on the side of the mathematics machine. And this will be even more the case as physics becomes more involved in information-theory technology and abandons any claim to signify anything at all apart from its own machinic connections.

Yet those particles really do exist – somewhere else, in other galaxies for example. They are not invented or arranged by mathematics and physics as though created by an artist. However, the galaxies are *also* collective production agents, 'setting up' particles, arrangements of matter, of life and so on. It is not a question here of contrasting nature with creation, but of likening it to creative machines. The galaxies are also collective agents if not of utterance, at least of production.

What is perhaps peculiar to what happens on our planet is that production is always accompanied by a transcription: the collective transductive agency of nature is paralleled and surpassed by a collective agency of utterance, within which the de-territorialization of the sign plays a major part. The sign parallels the particle. It goes further than it in its capacities of de-territorialization, and provides it with an added capacity for multiplicity.

The de-territorialization that runs through the whole mathematics/physics complexus involves scientists, but also a lot else besides: all of political society, the flux of investments, armies and so on. De-territorialization is produced as much by the sign as by nature. However, the most important instrument, the machinic spearhead, now sides with the sign. The sign-point of this complexus can be considered from two angles: as a *sign* it is an agent of de-territorialization; as a physical *point*, it is the point of recurrence of the residual physical flux in the role of anti-production.

We are now concerned not with the representative function of the sign, or of its application, but with the productive and anti-productive aspects of the sign-point. The distinction between mathematical representation and the production of physics relates to what we may call a scientific Oedipus situation. With the advent of writing, the sound machine has become secondary. With the coming of information machinisms, and their audio-visual developments, the traditional writing machine may now also be on the way to becoming secondary.

To return to individuated utterance: it is something that cannot be detached from its circumstances of time and place, of sex, of class, etc. However, the moment of inertia when the splitting-off into subjectivity occurs cannot be assigned purely and simply to the order of representation. Just

what is it that enables a sign machine to 'grasp' and control a flux of particles? It is man's specific capacity for de-territorialization that enables him to produce signs for no purpose: not negative signs, not nothing signs, but signs to play about with for fun, for art. Human intervention so transforms things that an oral semiotic machine produces *numen* for no reason, and a writing machine in the hands of mischievous scribes runs to no purpose (for example, the poetry of ancient Egypt).

Art and religion are arrangements for producing signs which will eventually produce power signs, sign-points capable of playing the part of particles in the arena of de-territorialization. The Shamanic invocation, the sign-writing of the geomancer, are in themselves direct symbols of power. They mark the importation into nature of signs of power, of a schiz that, via successive surplus values of encoding, will eventually bring true the wildest dreams: first the dream of the alchemist; first desire, before de-territorializing mathematical signs and the particles of physics. It is the dualist reduction of capitalist Oedipalist science that tends to sterilize science even as it is expanding (splitting up into separate compartments research, production, technology, teaching, art, economics, etc.). It is the conjunction of the military machine and the State with science that determines the importance to be attributed to science and defines the scope of its activity.

We must therefore distinguish between the individuated Oedipalist utterance, directed towards bi-univocity, the complete object, representative application, and the quite different individuated schizo utterance whose force, whose de-territorializing charges, go out to the furthest corners of the universe. The phenomenon of physics does not need to be 'mentalized', but encoded, made machinic. To read, to understand, to interpret – this is to render powerless. The sign must abandon its yearning for oral semiotics and be transformed into a machinic sign-point so as to throw itself unreservedly into the machinic phylum.

The schizo position, which articulates the de-territorialized chains of collective agencies of utterance that constitute the present-day scientific machine, cannot be reduced to the sum of the interventions by individuals. It is something trans-individual. The schizo scientist individually produces de-territorialized signs alongside a collective machine. The cutting edge, so to say, of the machine is here the desire, or perhaps the madness, of the scientist. His desire has become a sign of power by coming into contact with the machinism. The collective agency of utterance that connects things with people does not crush 'human values'. What gives the scientific machine its super-power is the super-humanness that carries desire to the heart of being. Far more powerful than any physicist's cyclotron is the desire that produces de-territorialized signs – super-particles capable of exploding 'natural' particles into a multiplicity, and so in a sense forcing them to be on the defensive.

The de-materialization of nature, its transmutations, its new productions, all depend on the de-territorializing power of desire. The intensity of desire is stronger than the de-territorializing intensities anywhere else in nature. Not desire in itself, the desire of dreams, but the desire inscribed in machinic complexes.

The question then is whether awareness of self, of individuated utterance, is a function of anti-production. To this there are two answers. If what is meant is the Oedipalist *cogito*, the reduction to the level of the individual, the ego, the family, then the answer is Yes. But if the consciousness machine is seen as something that empties out the sign, the space in one's heart, to charge it with a wholly new power so that it can become attached to whatever it wants at once, faster than light, then the answer is No. The tachyon could be an elementary particle of de-territorialization belonging at once to physics and to the arrangements of semiotics. Indeed, perhaps the very thought of de-territorialization constitutes a kind of anti-matter!

The annihilation of intentionality by the phenomenologists does not make use of some substance supposed to be a vast Nothing, but the omnipotence of a complex of de-territorialization is potentially capable of creating a multiplicity out of whatever it touches. Consciousness and awareness of oneself, and of the nearness of a collective utterance machine, produces the most enormous machinic 'charge' of de-territorialization – a kind of anti-energy, of semiotic anti-matter.

The plane of consistency is thus what enables all the various strata of socius, of technology and so on to be cut across, invested, disinvested and transferred. Does this bring us back to the idea that there is an absolute knowledge, a superior rationality, that is the goal of history? No, for there is no question of its being a super-system of reference. The thesis of the plane of consistency as the unattainable goal of history amounts to a rejection of any attempt at totalization, any reduction to a single representative order, or code or set of axioms. It is a positive affirmation that it is possible to escape from hierarchies of reference, and an undermining of representative consistency.

Consistency denies that there is one *being* that would encode the essence of history for its own sake. It affirms the coherence, the consistency of a *process* not expressible in hard and fast propositions or rational theologies. Intensive multiplicities do not refer either to reason or chaos, or to eschatological significations. The machinic phylum runs through all being that is held in the time/space strata of individuated utterance. Being in itself, being as unity, being as the essence of the same, results from the contingency of an utterance made impotent.

Diagrammatic conjunctions are the motive force for de-territorialization. They are the source of the machinic phylum. Only because representation has been flattened out into exclusive dysjunctive syntheses do we find modes

of subjectivation isolated from any production. Time and consciousness are not bound up with an individuated *cogito*. The links in the process of de-territorialization are the events, the meaning, the emergence of machinic mutations. There are as many different times coexisting as there are machines in action. The conscious human being is simply the manifestation of the greatest intensity in the conjunction of the processes of de-territorialization, the high point of de-territorialization, the point at which the sign scours itself out, folds in upon itself to open out into a script that is level with reality.

The finality of history is not to be found in a blind machinism, but in the finality of desire, in fact of the most self-aware desire of all, that of the superman who has won mastery of being-in-itself by sacrificing mastery of his individual consciousness. Solitude, meditation, letting the contemplation of desire have free rein, the loss of individuation in favour of cosmic engagement – all this leads to a paradoxical combination of effects: an individual hyper-subjectivation of desire (as in Samuel Beckett, for example) and a radical abandonment of the individual subject to collectivities, that link man with the machinic phylum.

Capitalism tries to interiorize the unbounded boundaries of the plane of consistency. It arranges organs, self-contained objects, relationships, individual subjectivity. What prevented the organless body of the primitive State from abolishing the plane of consistency into infinite fragments was the setting in motion of the machinic phylum. Whereas the military proto-machine destroyed whole towns, destroying even its own soldiers, the machinic phylum survives.

Intensive Redundancies and Expressive Redundancies[1]

We must distinguish between intensive and expressive redundancies. Intensive redundancies advance by way of intrinsic encoding, without involving specific strata of expression; thus they themselves remain the prisoners of encoding stratification. They include, for example, the intrinsic stratification of the field of nuclear particles, or that of atomic, molecular, chemical or biological organization. None of these forms of encoding, reproduction, maintenance and interaction can be detached from its individual stratum. There is no relationship of expression, concordance, interpretation, reference, etc., among the different strata; they remain unaffected by one another. One can only pass from an energy stratum to, say, a material or biological stratum, by means of a surplus-value of encoding, a kind of proliferation and interlacing of codes, but one with respect for the autonomy and integrity of the various strata. The heaped-up strata form a kind of humus, or what one might call a system of soups. Behind life there is a biological soup, beyond the biological soup a physico-chemical soup and so on. We thus have a semiotic machine which is encoded without changing levels. Abstract machines remain the prisoners of their stratifications.

Only when specific, autonomized semiotic machines are brought into play can there be a direct passage from one stratum to another. There will then be not a surplus-value of encoding, but a trans-encoding. The semiotic machine sets off a procedure of absolute de-territorialization that is capable of crossing all the stratifications. Such a semiotic machine embarks on its autonomization with the biological reproduction machine. In fact, this latter is the first specialization of a reading machine that crushes the intensities, squeezing them as one squeezes the juice out of fruit. The machine of genetic expression implies the detachment of one strand of encoding to act as a reproduction mould. Thus there is established a system of twofold articulation: a de-territorialized strand of encoding, in other words a strand as far as possible detached from the second and third dimensions,[2] a line that is attached to the

1. Notes made in April 1974.

2. The relative positions of the time dimension might perhaps make it possible to pinpoint the difference between genetic codes and linguistic codes; the time when relationships of bi-univocalization come into being is narrower and stricter in the genetic machine, whereas the forms or underlying structures in language introduce a certain lag between the organization of utterances and that of codes.

intensities and diagrammatizes them. Only the fact that such a line can be discerned makes it possible to read and transcribe a complex process diachronically. The process of reproduction, in crystallography for example, does not have recourse to this alignment system of the code. A three-dimensional crystal, or a solution in the process of becoming crystallized, only 'de-codes' the organization of another crystal from outside; it can only model or adapt itself to it. Unlike the RNA and DNA chains, a crystal remains too territorialized to be able to reach the level of the abstract machines that govern the process of physico-chemical de-territorialization. But the genetic chain is just as much the prisoner of the organism stratum.

The same is the case, though to a lesser extent, with the de-territorialization of uttering forces – in primitive societies for instance. They make a start on setting trans-coding systems into operation, but such trans-coding is still only relative and poly-centred. This poly-centredness is the expression of a kind of rejection of the 'gangrene' of de-territorialization, a rejection that can be indicated by the way a machinic system is organized into castes. (For example, traditional societies will try to restrict the expansion of metallurgy perhaps, or of writing, by allowing them only to be used for certain specific purposes.) Only at the end of the process of degeneration of signifying semiologies, with the emergence of a machinic utterance complex, will the lines of diagrammatization and socio-material collective agencies start to operate which will produce the sign machines that can really control the stratifications. The de-territorialization of signs – in mathematical physics, information-theory, etc. – gives the sign a kind of super-linear quality; so much so that one can no longer speak strictly in terms of a sign at all any more. We have left the sphere of a pre-signifying poly-vocal expression involving movements, words, dancing; we have even left that of semiologies over-encoded by the signifier, and the post-signifying sphere of the axiomatized letters and signs of science and art; we are now dealing with a direct expression of abstract machinisms. The difference between sign and particle is blurred; diagrammatization denies the primacy of material fluxes, while on the other hand the real intensities speak for themselves, borrowing the method of machines including only a minimum of semiological inertia. Theories, theorists and economic/experimental complexes form a network of non-signifying expressive substances which can demonstrate their de-territorializations in space and time, without the mediation of any representation.

At this level one can no longer speak of separate scientific areas such as the area of astro-physics or the area of micro-physics. We are faced with a single universe of abstract machines, working both on the galactic and on the atomic scale. (Cf. the theories about the first second of the expansion of the universe.) Thus it is the very idea of scale that succumbs to the principle of relativity,

and if there are extra-terrestrial worlds similar to the human, it is as reasonable to expect to find them in the world of micro-physics as in other galaxies. Not that this makes it any easier to make contact with them!

The existence of semiotic machines, therefore, corresponds to an intermediate phase in the de-territorialization process. 'Before' the sign (this side of it) the abstract machines remain the prisoners of stratification. 'After' the sign (with a-signifying machinic complexes) we leave the semiotic register to pass to the direct inscription of the abstract machines on the plane of consistency. 'Before' the sign there is a redundancy of pure stratified information. 'After' the sign, there is a de-stratified information, a de-stratifying diagrammatization – in other words a principle of transformation that repeats the relative de-territorializations, and opens up the intensive stratifications on the basis of the de-territorializing power of the sign machines. Between the two are the semiologies of significative redundancy, in other words all the systems that work to render impotent the intensive processes of de-territorialization. The stratified encodings – physico-chemical, biological, ecological, etc. – having collapsed one after another, de-territorialization has lost some of its weight. The strata are no longer hermetically separated; fluxes of intensive de-territorialization pass from one to another. Systems of double articulation of form–content redundancies represent an attempt at total shutting-off. But their only result is a relative de-territorialization, a stratification of form that will end by missing its main aim, which was to keep a tight rein on the potential creativity of non-signifying machines (military and technological machines, machines of writing, of monetary signs, scientific signs and so on). After the barriers of 'natural' de-territorialization, the next things to go will be those of 'artificial' semiological de-territorialization. This will mean the failure of all attempts to give things a representative nature, based on the worlds, and worlds beyond the worlds, of the mind as so many fortifications against the accelerating process of de-territorialization.

Information theory has tried to save the bacon of the semiologies of signification by defining significative redundancies as being in inverse proportion to the quantity of information – but this is no more than a rearguard semiological skirmish. In fact, the transfer of information belongs to a diagrammatic process that has no direct relation with the significative redundancies of human 'understanding'. 'Before' the signifier, redundancy and information came together in a process of intrinsic diagrammatization. 'After' it, diagrammatization starts off a process of unlimited trans-encoding. Between the two, however, signifying semiological stratification still has a vital part to play: for in fact the residues of a signifying process accumulate in the same ways as those of any other strata of encoding. Lines of interpretation, with their hierarchy of contents and lines of significance, with their carefully monitored expansion, become a kind of raw material for the

setting-up of non-signifying sign machines. The by-products of the signifier, figures of expression, pre-diagrammatic agencies, are essential elements of the engineering of accelerators of particle-signs whose de-territorializing power will be capable of breaking down the strata of encoding.

The organization of the living world first set up this sort of accelerator. At a certain level, multi-cellular organisms are still colonies or collections of uni-cellular organisms, living partly by a system of intra-encoding, and partly by trans-encoding. But trans-encoding, though limited by having to maintain those intrinsic encodings, is open to various cosmic intensive stratifications, which it expresses and rearranges. In this sense, it may be said to represent the starting-up of a primitive a-signifying semiotic machine. But we shall obviously have to make a radical distinction between this biological machine and the a-signifying machines of collective agencies of utterance. Indeed it is hard to say whether or not this is already in fact a *sign* machine. The signifying sign and the a-signifying sign depend on the operation of two other extremely specific types of machine: first, on this sort of accelerator of de-territorialization that carries it to the absolute in order to nullify it, and then on the 'semiotic processing factories' that convert that absolute de-territorialization into quantum form. It would be ridiculous to suggest that the same system of signs is at work at once in the physico-chemical, the biological, the human and the machinic fields. Only non-signifying particles, moving away from abstract machines, would be capable of such an exploit. The conditions in which they are produced remain extremely specific, depending on the achievement of machinic agencies with nothing universal about them. The signs of semiology and of almost all semiotics constitute strata like any others. Just as there are strata of elementary particles, of physical, chemical and biological elements, and so on, so there are semiotic strata, and strata of a-signifying machinisms that, in varying degrees, bring into play quanta of absolute de-territorialization. Consequently, then, though signs remain localized upon particular strata, abstract machines are, on the contrary, implicated in all strata.

De-territorialization is either categorized (in 'nature' or in the binary semiotic machines into which it is forced by the signifying-consciousness system) or set free by the non-signifying machines of the collective agencies of utterance. Depending on movement from one stratum to another, abstract machines will receive a greater or lesser degree of actualization and force. This degree of liberation corresponds to the degree of intensity of the de-territorialization.[3] It is as though there were, at the 'beginning', a slow,

3. Two types of intensities must be distinguished, differential intensities as between different strata, and the absolute intensity of the complete organless body. Absolute intensity displays at once all the force of de-territorialization as such, and all its powerlessness to break away from the semiological de-territorialization of the signifying-consciousness system.

hierarchized de-territorialization in the intrinsic encodings, and then an accelerated de-territorialization by a kind of up and down process. At each peak of de-territorialization there is the emergence of an abstract machine followed by a fresh stratification. With the movement from one stratum to the next, the coefficient of acceleration of de-territorialization simply increases. The abstract machines speed up the process of intensive de-territorialization until the strata burst apart, thus crossing a threshold, a kind of 'wall of absolute de-territorialization'. If the de-territorialization rebounds from that threshold, we are still in the world of semiological impotentization (the signifying-consciousness system); if it gets across it, we move into the world of a-signifying particle-signs (agencies of collective utterance).

Subjectless Action[1]

One can always replace any pronoun with 'it',[2] which covers all pronominality, be it personal, demonstrative, possessive, interrogative or indefinite, whether it refers to verbs or adjectives. 'It' represents the potential articulation of those linked elements of expression whose contents are the least formalized, and therefore the most susceptible of being rearranged to produce the maximum of occurrences. 'It' does not represent a subject; it diagrammatizes an agency. It does not over-encode utterances, or transcend them as do the various modalities of the subject of the utterance; it prevents their falling under the tyranny of semiological constellations whose only function is to evoke the presence of a transcendent uttering process; it is the a-signifying semiological matrix of utterances – the subject *par excellence* of the utterances – in so far as these succeed in freeing themselves from the sway of the dominant personal and sexual significations and entering into conjunction with machinic agencies of utterance.

One can always understand an I-ego underlying any pronominal function. A supposed utterer external to the language used is then taken to be making its imprint on the discourse, and that imprint is what is called the subject of the utterance. A flux of pure subjectivity transcends the statements made and processes them according to the dominant economic and social norms. This operation begins with a split in the 'it', the pretended discovery that 'it' contains a hidden *cogito*, a thinking I-ego. The elements of expression are taken over by an uttering subject. An empty redundancy, a second-degree redundancy appears alongside all the redundancies of expression. The phonic expression no longer evokes a gestural, postural, ritual, sexual, etc. expression. It has first to turn back upon itself, cut itself off from the collective desiring production, and become arranged on separate, hierarchized semiological strata. The splitting of the I-ego is the point of origin of systems of reciprocal articulation – double articulation – between redundancies of content and redundancies of signifying expression. The material and semiotic

1. Given at the 1974 Milan Conference, 'Psychanalyse et Sémiotique', 10/18.

2. The French is *il*, which means both he and it. The nearest approximation to this in English seems to me to be 'it', but readers will find this section clearer if they bear in mind that 'it' can be used to mean he, or it as a subject, or the indefinite 'it' of 'it is raining', 'it is true'. [*Translator*]

fluxes are made to fit a mental world constituted by being filled with mental representations that have been rendered powerless. Intensities fade away into echoes; machinic connections come apart; utterances no longer refer to anything but themselves and the formalization of the dominant discourse. The sign can no longer be linked directly with what it refers to, but must have recourse to the mediation of the signifying machine. The sign will always have to refer to the semiologies of the power machines, with their particular syntagmatic and paradigmatic coordinates, if it is to produce any effect at all upon reality. To constitute the semiology of the dominant order, the function of individuating subjectivation detaches and articulates two semiotic levels, the spoken word and the written word. While the polyvocality of the 'primitive' language is flattened out by the despotic formalism of a writing machine (a power machine inseparable from the territorial fixation of the nomadic military machine), 'primitive' writing machines as a whole fall under the control of a single official writing machine: the signifying machine of double articulation. The letter castrates the voice by dividing speech up into phonemes, and the voice mutilates the diagrammatic potential of an arche-writing by rearranging words according to meaning. The desiring intensities are thus governed by a world of mental representations organized around a fictive subject – a subject whose power is derived from rendering them powerless.

With this semiology, there is no longer any direct trans-encoding between one semiotic and another, nor therefore any surplus-value of encoding. The so-called semiologies of analogy, for example, become dependent upon the signifying semiologies of double articulation. Similarly with all the pre-signifying semiotics of perception – aesthetic, loving, economic and so on. There is no limit to the power to which the signifying semiologies lay claim; it covers all modes of encoding, even the a-semiotic ('natural') and a-signifying (machinic and artificial); the splitting of utterance comes more and more to infect and over-encode all semiotic elements. The totality of expression is thus emptied by a pure reflexiveness that creates a kind of imaginary Other World out of systems of formalizing now powerless contents directed both to 'natural' material fluxes and artificial machinic fluxes. The establishment of signifying subjectivation results in the 'it' of a personological triangulation, itself the result of repeated re-enactments of that first splitting of the I-ego.

The tools brought into operation by the arrangements of individuated subjectivation will become boomerangs. At one level, that of the individual and the person, they succeeded in nullifying desire in its relationship with material fluxes, with intensive de-territorializations. But they cannot prevent the molecular, sub-human, semiotic escape of a-signifying figures of expression from starting up a new desiring machine at a quite different level, and with a quite different power. The sudden, absolute de-territorialization that

broke desire up into subject and object has failed, despite its absoluteness, to abolish itself in the paroxysm of joy of a machinic consciousness that has truly broken all territorial moorings. (We do, however, find such consciousness without ties in certain extreme effects of schizophrenia, drugs, trances, etc.) Thenceforth these territorial remnants reorganize themselves into a-signifying particles; they will provide the raw material for a-signifying semiotic machines beyond the reach of the impotentizing attacks of the reflexive consciousness. In one sense, the Cartesians were right: the *cogito* does mark a radical escape from the system of coordinates of time, space and substance governing representation. But the *cogito* is still a fiction, for all that, a machine-fiction. The process of making conscious carries desire to such a pitch of excess, of irrecoverable final de-territorialization, of detachment from all reference-points, that it no longer has anything to hang on to, and has to improvise whatever expedients it can to avoid being destroyed in its own nothingness. It is not even a question of a binary opposition between being and nothingness, of all or nothing; consciousness is at once both all *and* nothing. The force of desire, at this blazing point of nothingness, wears itself out upon itself – a kind of black hole of de-territorialization.

From then on there are two possibilities: that of asceticism, of castration, or that of a new economy of de-territorialization with super-powerful sign-machines capable of coming into direct contact with non-semiotic encodings. Such sign-machines in some way take hold of the absolute de-territorialization of the representational consciousness and set it to work for artificial machinic forces – forces manipulating a flux of figures which become, in a new quantic form, the bearers of that absolute de-territorialization.

Rather than adopting Lacan's overdone opposition between *reality* and *the real*, I prefer to borrow Hjelmslev's terminology, and suggest that the alternative is between a *dominant reality* stratified by the various semiological substances of the content and the form, and 'non-semiotically formed' *intensive materials* (though let it be noted that being 'non-semiotically formed' does not imply for Hjelmslev that they are therefore 'scientifically formed').[3]

One can, then, distinguish several types of de-territorialization:

– an *absolute* de-territorialization, either in global form with the instance of consciousness, or in quantic form with non-signifying machines;

– an *intensive* de-territorialization, at the level of material fluxes;

– a *relative* de-territorialization, at the level of signifying semiologies and mixed signifying/a-signifying semiotics, whose aim is to secure control of the effects of de-territorialization by means of semiotic strata depending on the signifying machine.

3. Cf. Louis Hjelmslev, *Essais linguistiques*, Éditions de Minuit, 1971, p. 58.

To the three modalities of encoding, we can thus see three corresponding rhythms of de-territorialization:

– a *slow* de-territorialization, that takes place only by breaking through or getting beyond the strata built up earlier. But with each such break, time, the co-efficient of de-territorialization, speeds up. (One must in fact talk in terms of space/time interaction.) At this level it has become impossible to overcome the accumulation of heterogeneous façades, the stratification of encoding systems, or at least of what, within those systems, resists translation. The various coefficients of de-territorialization create relative fields of de-territorialization which themselves produce an intensive de-territorialization. The 'semiological soup' speeds up, so to say, and blocks off the entire 'ecological/ethological/biological soup', while this latter simultaneously conceals (though it does not destroy) the 'physical/chemical soup' . . . and so on. The relative intensities thus remain subject to a stratified mode of encoding (signals, figures, indexes that do not raise a specific semiotic plane – nervous stress, for instance, or the hormonal message). There is no translating from one stratum to another. There are surplus-values of encoding, without any significance, and all possibilities of diagrammatization are reduced to the minimum;

– an *absolute* de-territorialization, that accompanies the absolute loss of power, with a system of signifying signs;

– a de-territorialization *of heightened power*, with machinic systems of utterance, a kind of accelerator of particle-signs, which, in quantic forms, take possession of absolute de-territorialization in order to de-stratify both the machines of the plane of signifying expression and those of the plane of content-encoding.

One cannot get round the paradox of an absolute de-territorialization being transformed by discrete quanta into semiotic units without abandoning all attempts to explain how the capacity of machines of scientific, economic, artistic and other signs can intervene in the intrinsic encodings of material *agencements*. That there is this absolute de-territorialization in the economy of non-signifying signs is clear from two consequences it produces:

– the direct passage between sign fluxes and material fluxes in the process of diagrammatization (from absolute and quantic de-territorialization to the intensive de-territorialization of fluxes);

– the fact that non-semiotic agencies, on the one hand, and non-signifying agencies, on the other, cannot be broken down in a binary fashion. It is impossible, outside some structuralist illusion, to reduce them to minimal digitalized units. One can, of course, always translate any physical–chemical, biological, behavioural or economic process into the terms of a mathematical logic that can be reduced to systems of binary opposition and to an axiomatic syntax. But this will never provide an explanation of the real functioning, the

diagrammatic agencies that produce those processes, their capacity for de-territorialization, how they fit into the machinic phylum and the abstract mutations they effect on the plane of consistency. A diagrammatic particle-sign carries a quantum of absolute de-territorialization that puts it beyond the intensive de-territorialization processes of the material fluxes to which it is linked. The system of diagrammatic signs parallels real de-territorialization, performing its silent and motionless dance on the plane of consistency away from any machinic manifestation in time, in space or in substances of expression. It is as though the massive arousal of consciousness, in spite of – or because of – its impotence, had exploded its capacity for de-territorialization and collapsed into a black hole which then emitted fluxes of a new kind: a thousand sharp points of particle-sign de-territorialization. From human desire, now made impotent, there has emerged a kind of machinic superpower. The territorialized agencies of utterance and the individuated subjects of utterance will of course continue to burn themselves on this global absolute of de-territorialization and on this still threatening collapse of representation that they try to achieve by means, for example, of gods of some kind. They will try to tame the abstract machinisms, but at the molecular level they cannot prevent the quanta of possibility thus liberated from managing, sooner or later, to enter into direct contact with natural, economic, social and other encodings.

Faced with the danger of this upsurge of the nomad molecular fluxes, the signifying machine has to redouble both its means of defence and its efforts of impotentization. Today's signifying subjectivity can no longer rest content with dealing merely with imaginary ghosts, phantoms, benevolent gods, perfectly adapted to fit the area of representation, as was that of the pre-signifying dispensation of primitive societies. The collective systems of re-enclosing, of re-territorialization, are held back. In a double twisting movement, the individuated subjectivity turns back upon itself in reaction to these molecular semiotic fluxes. Microscopic vision and hearing concentrate all the strata of meaning upon an ideal point of signifying subjectivation. It is no longer enough for subjectivity to annihilate the world globally; it must now take hold of every semiotic element with the forceps of double articulation of the planes of content and of form. It will have to take every utterance, wherever it comes from, and syntactize, morphologize, hierarchize and axiomatize it (cf. Noam Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*). All signs of intensive de-territorialization will be repressed by the system of relative de-territorialization of semiotic redundancies. Once an a-signifying machine has been 'liberated' – as for example the banking system of the Venice, Genoa, Pisa triangle in the Renaissance – it is immediately taken over by a double articulation machine that limits its effects by subjecting them in practice to the particular content system of an oligarchical society. The diagrammatic

the powerless world of representation and a subjectivation that can only, ever, lack reality. By 'lacking' it, I do not mean just not having it, but lacking in an active sense, in the sense that it is continually filled with a lack. The expression/content machine of the money/merchandise relationship of the mixed semiotics of the capitalist economy, for example, will infect all territorialities with its own specific axiomatics. The intensive multiplicities of economic and social production, having no other source of expression, will be obliged to accept these double redundancy systems of form and content, and the full organless body of the intensities will be broken apart by the system of surveillance of significance and subjectivation. The organless body can only survive as best it may by oscillating between emptiness and the fulness of a malignant tumour. The intensities will be surrendered to the organization, the hierarchy, the bi-polarity, the equivalence and the interpretation of the dominant values. The organless body of 'moving' will thus be entirely shifted towards the logico-sexual organization of a particular social order. Whereas the logic of the undetermined verb left all the possibilities of expression of the pre-personal fluxes open to the widest variety of institutional and political frameworks, the logic of the subject will produce a reversibility, an equivalence, a pronominal interpretation compatible with the fluxes of capitalism in terms of a grid of mutually exclusive opposites: inter-subjective *or* intra-subjective, sexual *or* non-sexual, masculine *or* feminine, within the triangle (I-you-he) *or* outside it. From the *material* logic of abstract machines, a logic that coincides with the unleashing of a de-territorialization process, we have moved over to an *axiomatized* logic whose coordinates of signification retain only what helps to preserve the dominant social order.

This repressive axiomatization established by signifying semiologies with the pronominal function is only one example. The same sort of process dictates the entire organization of the language – syntactic, morphematic, semantic, connotative, rhetorical, poetic. All systems of strata, all systems of stratified double articulation (including those of mixed semiotics), contribute to this same work of controlling, or what we may call 'semiologizing', the multiplicities. In every case the aim is the same: the diagrammatic flux of a-subjective statements has to be transformed into a subjective I-ego flux in such a way as to particularize, formalize and substantify every situation, and to stratify each of its ramifications – economic, sexual, aesthetic and so on. A general subjectivity, which establishes a dominant mental reality permanently cut off from all the real intensities, permanently guilty in law, will affect all forms of semiotization, and will always have to be seen as exterior and attributable to personological functions, by way of the system of semiological double articulation. Qualitatively, everyone should in theory be equal before the flux of this subjectivity. But quantitatively, each will receive a share commensurate with the place he or she occupies where the various formations

of power intersect. In law, we are all subjects – not necessarily the subjects *of* the signifier, but at least subject *to* Knowledge, Power, Money. But the shares in this kind of subjectivity are in fact radically different, depending on whether one is a child, a member of a primitive society, a woman, poor, mad and so on. The 'it' arose out of quanta of absolute de-territorialization by way of abstract dances of particle-signs following intensive material processes. In the I-ego economy, on the other hand, power switches towards relative de-territorialization; absolute de-territorialization is made to work towards its own impotence by the operation of systems of redundancies of awareness whose efforts are directed to systems of mutually exclusive, binary oppositions. Whereas the 'it' shaped a machinic force of action semiotically without passing any judgement upon the value of the non-it, the slightest manifestation of an I-ego is over-determined by a whole set of social stratifications, hierarchical positions and power relationships.

Machinic Propositions[1]

The production of utterances by territorialized agents had in itself a certain diagrammatic effectiveness, a certain semiotic grasp of material and social energies. But this was as yet no more than a diagrammatism controlled by the functioning of the territorial group as a whole, intended to compartmentalize it in the same way as any other machinism capable of setting to work on its own account. As utterance becomes individuated, the diagrammatism will become differentiated, specialized; whereas from the language point of view it becomes impoverished and fades, from the point of view of sign machines it can only develop and expand. There are thus three semiotic areas:

(1) that of the sciences, technology and the economy, which is constantly being acted upon by diagrammatic machines that function from mathematical and algorhythmic utterances;

(2) that of the languages of authority, the languages of bureaucracy and religion, whose diagrammatism is entirely directed to controlling the residual semiotizations of desire;

(3) that of spoken languages, where the various strands of de-territorialization and territorialization of the other two areas come together. Thus the work of purging and impoverishing territorialized languages imposed by the fluxes of capitalism tend to result in setting up two quite distinct types of meta-languages of 'judgement' or over-encoding:

– algorhythmic meta-languages that express statements of scientific judgement supported by a rigorously controlled and controlling logic, whose role is to impose and guarantee a certain content of 'universal' truth in the utterances they produce.

– bureaucratic meta-languages that express statements of authority, whose role is equally to impose and guarantee a certain content of 'universality' in the significations and formalizations they produce.

Truth and authority can thus be considered as formations that replace the organless bodies of territorialized semiotics. The despotic syntactization of the semiotics in the sphere of praxis, and the semiotization of the power machines in the sphere of the socius thus combine their effects so as to define,

1. Unpublished.

concentrate and accelerate the diagrammatism of what used to be the territorial machine. These formalization machines that can modify existing structures are concentrated in the hands of a power formation that dominates the 'scribe' caste. But that operation can be carried out only if the process it involves is deemed to be a universal one: hence the role of de-territorialized monotheism, and of the unity of the transcendent power – science, reason, legitimacy or whatever. Truth must be 'universal' if people are to accept and interiorize the particular power formation that controls the sign machines responsible for linking formalizations of expression with the dominant formalizations of content. The idea that statements as such can be the bearers of formalization, of universal information, is the same as the idea that a value of universal exchange can be derived from the circulation of market commodities. The split between 'surface' statements and the fundamentals of logical truth develops out of a method of transcendentalizing the signifier particularly dear to the hearts of scientists; this is in fact part of the basis of their organization as a caste, of what differentiates them from other groups. No longer is it from a despot, or a despotic social formation, that the utterance of truth proceeds: underlying all the writings, all the realities of power, there is a profound truth levelling up the logical fabric of the signifying chains. Political truth is not just something produced by society; the values of desire, 'discoveries' of a completely arbitrary kind, all these are reinforced by Truth existing in itself. The language of science, like that of capitalism, considers itself – as pure discourse – to be the exclusive repository of the forces of diagrammatism it brings into action. Yet really, by definition, diagrammatism *cannot* be concentrated into a single semiotic stratum: it is always trans-semiotic. If a diagrammatic relationship is established between a system of utterance and a material or social machinic system, it is not because of any formal similarities or correspondences. What happens is that the diagrammatism involves the *same* inner machinism within both systems – an abstract machinism of positive de-territorialization.

Denying the existence of propositions that transcend linguistic utterances and machinic forces is only one aspect of a more general denial that there is any universal formal law. Diagrammatism brings into play more or less de-territorialized trans-semiotic forces, systems of signs, of codes, of catalysts and so on, that make it possible in various specific ways to cut across stratifications of every kind. Thus there can be no question of any self-existent Truth. A proposition is true in a particular machinic field; when any material or semiotic machine changes things, it will cease to be true. Truth is what is happening now. It stops when the machinic connections are broken. Consequently, there are as many logics, or as many dimensions of logical truth, as there are types of engagement. In other words, to search for some universal propositional logic underlying all of scientific discourse is to follow a mirage.

Propositions of judgement relate to all the different types of utterance machine. I prefer, therefore, to talk of machinic propositions. Linguistic statements are not to be compared with the values of universal truths, but with specific combinations of machinic propositions (that is, of abstract machines). In recognizing the truth values of the referent, Meinong[2] came to try to escape from a simplistic alternative between existence and non-existence: ideal objects, he said, subsist (*bestehen*) without necessarily existing (*existieren*). He also suggests a third way of being, the *ausserseiend* of the pure object 'beyond being and non-being', and a fourth, an *n*th kind of being that can be attributed to an object by successive negations.[3] But his battle with the 'prejudice in favour of the real' does not lead him on to attack the illusion that there exists some universal being transcending all contingent manifestations. I, on the other hand, prefer to start from the idea that there are as many modes of existence as there are modes of activity and machinic propositions. To ask whether the object of intentionality has a real reference is absurd. What is 'underlying' linguistic utterance, perceptive semiotization, etc., is an abstract machine to which the coordinates of existence (space, time, substance of expression) do not apply. This object, at the heart of the object, is not situated in some kind of heaven of representations: it is both 'in the mind' and in things, but outside all coordinates. As a de-territorializing machine it cuts across the coordinates both of language and of existence. It is neither a mental object nor a material one.

This being so, there is no occasion to consider 'degrees' of existence or 'degrees' of truth. *Everything exists, and everything is true*: the unicorn exists in one particular stratum of machinic propositions and one particular system of discourse quite as much as the horse or the dinosaur exist in others. The organless body of existence, the existence of the pure object beyond being and non-being, is not an undifferentiated universal category. It is the point of all abstract, machinic differentiations without coordinates (the plane of consistency). The intensive multiplicities, 'before' being caught in the movement of coordinates of existence from one stratum to another, constitute an abstract matter of pure differentiation.

The functioning of machines, therefore, cannot be reduced either to logical/mathematical articulations, or to stratified manifestations that we should have to explore with the aid of some phenomenological 'science'. Instead of logic and phenomenology, what is needed here is a science of *machinics* – in other words a system of arranging machinic propositions that cannot be reduced to logical/mathematical statements or the realms of phenomenology.

2. Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), a pioneer in object theory. His most important works are: *Über Annahmen* (1902), *Hume Studien* (1877–92), and *Über Gegenstände höhrer Ordnung* (1899)

3. Léonard Linsky, *Le Problème de la référence*, Seuil, 1974, p. 34.

Machinic propositions have no hierarchy: they do not start from the simple and work up to the complex. There is complexity in their most elementary stages, and their totalities may well function in an elementary way. 'Machinics' is not based on universal principles, nor does it postulate any transcendent law. The object is not to establish a machinic logic, but only to grasp the way phylums and rhizomes function. Since the strata where they appear are inseparable, machinic propositions keep cutting across them, establishing highly differentiated lines of escape (lines of positive de-territorialization). These, in return, will become a foundation for coordinating them in space, time and substance (coordinates of negative de-territorialization). Machinic propositions cannot be 'simplified' or 'reduced' like mathematical formulae or logical statements. But when they are not re-absorbed into a black hole of positive de-territorialization, or formed into a network of lines of escape unrelated to any strata, they accumulate to form residual blocs that provide the raw material for constructing strata. We thus pass from a system of latent quanta, inherent in the lines of escape, to a stratified construction in which the lines are arranged to fit together in a system of multiple articulation. In the first, virtuality, continually fluctuating with the threat of a black-hole-style abolition, ensures the possibilities of openness and rearrangement represented by the line of escape; in the second, the quanta are rearranged in blocks (infinite–limited–discontinuous) in systems of articulation from stratum to stratum. Discontinuity among the strata replaces the intensive quantic regime (finite–contiguous–continuous–unlimited).[4] We have, then, to consider a twofold stratification: a molar, visible stratification, relating to matter, life, sign machines, etc., and a transversal, molecular stratification that captures the energy of de-territorialization, and forces it to spin round on its own axis rather than letting it escape, in effect like a black hole. So, all the processes of de-territorialization – absolute, relative and so on – will have in one way or another to adjust to the state of stratification of machinic propositions, since there is no way of making the fluxes *not* have been stratified as they have been; thus, unlike the abstract machinism, this is a *fait accompli*, a subjection to events for the machinic phylum which we shall later compare with the function of concrete machines. In the last analysis, at the level of machinic agencies in action, the distinction between abstract machine and stratification disappears: it is as though the positive de-territorialization of the abstract machinism and the negative de-territorialization of the stratum-to-stratum articulations neutralize one another without there being any question of a 'dialectical synthesis'.

4. Cf G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure*, Éditions de Minuit, 1975.

Positive de-territorialization; negative de-territorialization

Considered 'independently' of the strata, then, and only at the level of lines of escape and stratum-to-stratum engagements, de-territorialization has a positive and a negative nature.

Positive de-territorialization corresponds to a sheer black-hole effect, to an absence or abolition of coordinates (one can distinguish between a line of escape for the absence of coordinates and a line of abolition for their de-territorialization, but this very distinction shows that one cannot consider positive de-territorialization apart from strata: in effect, the line of abolition implies strata, and the line of escape is always a line evading strata). Unlike this intrinsic de-territorialization, negative de-territorialization is differential, establishing systems of determinants and substances of expression. Out of the mutations of its quantic system, positive de-territorialization constructs *one* abstract machinic reality, a single reality accountable to nobody; whereas negative de-territorialization constitutes *the* concrete, stratified reality based upon its systems of connection, interaction, encoding, reproduction, etc.

But the contrast is still too clear-cut. In point of fact, positive de-territorialization enters in varying degrees into the constitution of the propositions of coordinates and substances. There is a positive de-territorialization of space at the level of astro-physics and particles, while, at our level, time represents a positive process of de-territorialization. It is just that we never have any contact with that time and space in the initial stages except via the machines of expression that deal with intensive material, substantifying it in the business of subjectivizing and stratifying semiotization (concrete machines of symbolic semiotics, signifying machines, the machinism of authority and so on).

A brief résumé of some machinic propositions

A. Fluxes
B. Strata
C. Object-species totality

A. FLUX PROPOSITIONS

Proposition 1 – Positive de-territorialization

This is found in its pure state in the black hole. But it is a basic component of propositions of intensive flux (line of escape and line of abolition). In reality, positive de-territorialization is not 'yet' a proposition – but that does not mean that it is an anti-proposition: it exists as much before as after any propositionality.

Proposition 2 – Positionality machines

These demonstrate the impossibility of black holes as a proposition of existence. Positive de-territorialization cannot exist apart from the machinic propositions that negate it. The first pro-positional agency that connects these two types of de-territorialization is the *extensive flux*. At the level of systems of stratification, machines of positionality will later be specified as propositions of interaction, of crystallization, of catalysis, of moulding, of reproduction, of diagrammatic effect and so on.

Proposition zero – or 1 – Intensive fluxes

This proposition, an anti-dialectic paradox, should be presented before those relating to de-territorializations, even though it can exist only in association with machines of extensive propositionality. The intensive fluxes constitute the channel of negotiation of positive territorialization for the other propositions.

Proposition 3 – Abstract machines

These represent the peculiar mode of quantic organization of the positive de-territorialization of the intensive fluxes. The negative de-territorialization of the positionality propositions (proposition 2) is thus 're-positivized'. Positive de-territorialization is quantified and put into operation in the fluxes and strata according to machinic formulae that cut across and overtake the system of coordinates and substances. (There is, obviously, no necessary link between one proposition and the next, but only a machinic action. Thus what was, at the level of proposition 2, for example, determination by negative positionality, determination by encoding, by the creation of lack, by objectivation, by representation, etc. – all of which appeal to much 'later' propositions of stratification – gives way to the return of sheer positive de-territorialization. There is thus no *Aufhebung*; proposition 1, in connection with the propositions of stratification, functions as an abstract machine of breaking off and innovation without preserving any of the 'gains' of de-territorialization. From the standpoint of positive de-territorialization, there is never any established gain, but only the residuum of machines and strata.)

Abstract machines can equally be defined, much later on (see proposition 17), as resulting from the conjunction of several processes of positive de-territorialization, which implies the possibility and autonomy of certain processes.

Proposition 4 – The nature and speed of de-territorialization

De-territorialization is positive and absolute in the case of black holes, quantic in the case of lines of escape, negative, continuous and differential in the case of relationships among strata, and non-existent in the case of the organless body of the stratifications. The speed of de-territorialization also brings into play propositional components that would only enter the scene 'later' in a dialectical phenomenology – in other words stratifying determinations. For the relationship

$$\frac{\text{negative de-territorialization}}{\text{positive de-territorialization}}$$

will be totally different both in nature and in rhythm according to the strata within which it operates (strata of energy, biological strata, semiotic strata and so on).

There will be a positive speed when an action becomes relatively de-territorialized, and a negative one when it is relatively re-territorialized. In the latter case, it is as though positive energy were spinning round on its own axis, and the organless body of the stratum would then be functioning as a kind of anti-black hole, while the plane of consistency could be defined as the area where positive de-territorializations might happen.

B. STRATA PROPOSITIONS

Proposition 5 – The meeting points of intensity

These constitute the points of return, of oscillation between the propositions of positive and of negative de-territorialization. These 'knots' underlie the strata, or more precisely the negative de-territorializing power of the strata, in as much as they force the positive de-territorializations to become statements of abstract virtuality.[5]

Proposition 6 – Redundancies

This brings us to the second-degree knots of intensity that compose the actual fabric of the strata. We can distinguish three levels of stratification:

(a) The molecular level of the meeting-points of intensity;

(b) The level of molar redundancy: the organization between the meeting-points, which produces an inter-stratum entity turned in upon itself, an anti-black hole (for example, concrete machines, distinctive feature of 'faceness'.)

5. Virtuality here becomes 'secondary' in relation to the strata propositions.

(c) The level of lines of residual de-territorialization, which will serve as coordinates or as a possible connection – either by way of a line of escape, or by way of a line of abolition.

Proposition 7 – Interactions

These represent the reverse of redundancies. From them, the stratifications of the fluxes can be polarized in terms of zones, of a field, an object, a constellation and so on.

In stratified, negative de-territorialization, the opposition between redundancy and interaction represents a reinforcement of the opposition in level A (flux propositions) between positive de-territorialization and negative de-territorialization 'in the pure state'. The propositions of interaction and redundancy will relate to one another differently according to their respective pace of de-territorialization.

The interaction of negative speeds of interaction and negative speeds of redundancy corresponds to a 'cold' stratification (for example, palaeolithic society).

The interaction of negative speeds of interaction and positive speeds of redundancy produces lines of abolition or lines of return (for example, a fascist rhizome: whereas economic and material factors become 'reified', the organless body of the socius is positively de-territorialized, so that the whole thing becomes hollow inside).

The interaction of positive speeds of interaction and negative speeds of redundancy produces lines of escape (for example, capitalistic societies that become re-territorialized and archaic in proportion as they are de-territorialized).

The interaction of positive speeds of interaction and positive speeds of redundancy produces machinic actions which get beyond the opposition between redundancy and interaction (a revolutionary society that will function on the basis of flux and schiz).

As we shall see further on (proposition 17), the abstract machines will also be defined as a rapid system of connecting up fluxes, for the relation between abstract machine and machinic agency operates around the 'effective' taking over of the strata.

C. PROPOSITIONS OF TOTALITY, OF OBJECT AND OF SPECIES

Proposition 8 – Polarizations

These result from the counter-effect of machinic interaction propositions on systems of stratified redundancy We talk of polarization when speeds of

de-territorialization pointing in opposite directions coexist in any given agency. Bi-polarization is one example of this, but there can be an indefinite number of thresholds of speed from which polar zones emerge.

Proposition 9 – Breaking-off

The effect of a redundancy relating to polarized forces.

Proposition 10 – The arenas

These result from the counter-effect of breaking-off propositions relating to polarized strata.

Proposition 11 – Totalities, objects and species

These result from the counter-application of a breaking-off proposition – second-degree breaking-off – to fields which thereby take on a referential position.[6] A system of specific – stratified – coordinates is then set up; the double articulation becomes a defined reality. This brings us back to the point we started from: the analysis of different modes of encoding and semiotization.

Proposition 12 – The effects

These are the reverse of object propositions. We return to the homologies referred to earlier between

(1) positive and negative de-territorialization at the level of the fluxes;

(2) interactions and redundancies at the level of the strata.

But here we have a further factor of inertia, of second-degree stratification. Objects, totalities, species reproduce themselves on their own through processes of moulding, catalysis, crystallization, etc., whereas the intrinsic redundancies of the strata were inseparable from the extrinsic interactions among the strata. With *effects*, a new formalism is stratified, a new principle of stratification is established. The form and organism and so on of this proposition will have a certain kind of retroactive effect on the 'origin' of the strata.

Proposition 13 – Processes

This refers to effects involving a link with an escape line of positive de-territorialization.

6. Concrete machines establishing relationships along the lines of surface/depth, organ/organism, etc.

Proposition 14 – Encodings

These result from the interaction of strata whose speed of de-territorialization is negative and which bring into operation effects of objects and totalities.

Proposition 15 – Encoded reproductions

These are a system of redundancy that results in the production of species functioning on the basis of a negative de-territorialization.

Proposition 16 – Diagrammatic processes

These result from the conjunction of strata propositions with object propositions having de-territorializing speeds of opposite tendencies, dominated by positive escape lines and leading to the production of objects, totalities or species with two characteristics:

(1) they are reproduceable;

(2) they themselves constitute a fresh stratum that is more de-territorialized than the strata and objects of the original organization.

Here we once again find the paradox of the linking of propositions into a rhizome: the diagrammatic reproduction in fact appears to depend on the encoded reproduction, despite being more 'innovative' and 'creative', because the surplus values of encoding remain dependent on the strata. But there have to be stratum and object propositions if the positive de-territorialization of the diagrammatic processes is to introduce its semiotic mutations into the machinic agencies – and vice versa. Nor must we forget that 'diagrammatism' is to be found just as much outside semiotic encodings (in genetic mutations, for example).

Proposition 17 – Abstract machines

These result from the conjunction of positive processes of de-territorialization.

Thus, abstract machines have a twofold origin: a 'natural' origin at the level of propositions of flux (no. 3); and an 'artificial', diagrammatic origin, at the level of propositions of object (no. 16), which 'implies' their being extended over all the systems of stratification.

In reality there is no 'before' or 'after'; like diagrammatism, the abstract machines cut across the systems of coordinates, of strata and of objects from all directions.

Concrete Machines[1]

What is it that is operating in what one sees as the *features* of a face, a landscape, a body? How do we account for the mystery of a particular look, a thing, a street, a memory? What is actually there to see seems to be concealing something else. What sort of line of escape gives us the sense that some extraordinary encounter might occur? What exactly are these potentialities of some other world, operating by different rules, different codes? The entry of memory into perception is undoubtedly vital in this effect of 'mysterization'. Memory combines de-territorialization and re-territorialization. On the one hand it selects specific features of representation, and on the other it reassembles a whole that can be presented as one thing, on which one can take one's stand, so to say, yet which is in fact wholly subjective and, in a sense, will never be able to elude us as reality has. Memory's lines of escape are always false ones, images of escape, escapes to play at being afraid.

Some memories take on special weight, acquiring the function of matrixes, a function of organizing the mode of subjectivation; it is these that we classify as the features of faciality, animality, bodiliness and so on. In fact, memory here is not quite a single whole, because it operates at the level of things themselves; it might be better to talk not of memory but of block: a childhood block, unlike a childhood memory, is still in the present. The features of faciality, animality etc. form constellations or masses which are machines of the kind that actualize the intensities. I want to describe all these various kinds of blocks generally as concrete machines.

The function of these machines, at least those that operate in terms of symbolic semiotics, is to associate two types of redundancy:

(1) Redundancies of representation that underlie the semantism of images and of the syntagmatized paradigms of signifying semiologies.

(2) Diagrammatic redundancies that put the de-territorialized elements of sign machines to work on reality itself. An example of this would be the blueprints – the physical and mathematical specifications – for Concord: what is noted at the semiotic register is the de-territorialized articulations of the various things that go to make up the aircraft – aluminium, electrical

1. Unpublished.

fluxes, semiotic fluxes as expressed materially and so on. But such a blueprint is only of interest in so far as its articulations are sufficiently de-territorialized and can be made to correspond with the de-territorialized articulations of the materials of expression. Diagrammatization consists in this interchange, at the most de-territorialized level, between these two sorts of de-territorialization. If the high points of de-territorialization of the semiotic systems are to be able to combine with those of the material systems in this way, the relevant features of the materials of expression involved – their raw materials, we might say – must be compatible with the nature of the articulatory features of de-territorialization of the material field. The semiotic level of expression must be able to 'support' the type of machinic consistency of the material (or social) system, and not abandon it in any way. To take a simple example: you cannot make a mould for a key out of just anything – you need a particular kind of wax; if you were to try doing it with mashed potato, you could not hold or transfer the diagrammatic outline that makes the key what it is. If you want to reproduce that outline on paper you need a brush that is not too broad, and ink that is neither too thin nor too thick. In other words you must choose materials of expression suited to the features of the machinism you want to transfer. Diagrammatic redundancy thus depends, on the one hand, on the de-territorializing articulations of the various material and semiotic strata that are to be connected together (aluminium, steel, information, equations, etc.) and, on the other, on the capacity of the materials of expression to use, to activate, to organize that system of connection.

What I have called the redundancies of representation do not function on the basis of such diagrammatic conjunctions, nor do they work for any and every machinic agency. For instance, a picture or a portrait organizes no machinic conjunction between the element of de-territorialization of the subject reproduced in it and the material of expression; a portrait always adds something to its model, as well as transforming its materials into the substances of expression. A picture produced by a computer, for example, would be very different: it would correspond to a convention, quite independent of the 'creative' idea of the person who programmed it; in this case anything added would be superfluous, for the ideal of such a diagram is to allow for the least possible inertia on the part of the means of expression, and to transmit a message basically reduced to a binary encoding. In diagrammatism, semantic or signifying residual substances either of the object or of the means of expression are always superfluous. Semanticism or significance will be tolerated only temporarily, and the expectation is always that they will be reduced with the advance of technological and scientific progress.

The concrete machines of actual faces, scenery, etc. bring both types of redundancy into play (redundancy of representation and of diagrammatism).

They relate to mixed semiotics; they activate a negotiation between different semiotic and material registers. At the level of the plane of consistency, that negotiation is made possible (possibilized) by abstract machines; at the level of real forces, it is organized by concrete machines. Just as one may say of consciousness that it represents the impossibility of absolute de-territorialization, so one can now define abstract machines as indicating the impossibility of any quantic, positive de-territorialization.[2] Abstract machines exist not in some transcendent reality, but only at the level of the ever-present possibility that they may appear. They represent the essence of the possible, a possible whose only impossibility is to exist as a substance. Similarly, one cannot think of a substance of de-territorialization, or a dualism between being and becoming.

Faciality as a concrete machine demonstrates the impossibility, in the field of representation, of any *becoming* independent of the formalism of contents. Contents are nothing apart from power formations, apart from the diagrammatic operators that function in particular stratifications. The features that compose a face present a real micro-authority. One might even say that in capitalist systems, based on signifying stratifications and stratifications of subjectivation, no authority could be established without these machines of 'faciality'. A capitalist does not have power in a general sort of way: he controls a specific territory, a specific factory, in a particular country, and in each one he depends on a certain number of those transformers of signification – concrete machines.[3] In each of these situations, the dominant facial features – those of the mother, father, teacher, cop, judge, pop-star, boss, etc. – determine the possible survival of the other, more 'archaic' concrete machines: the being of animals, scenery, etc. which are connected with the deep-seated territorialized forces of action belonging to childhood, the countryside, primitive societies and so on. Establishing these concrete authority machines is the only means whereby a capitalistic system can tolerate, and turn to its own advantage, the lines of escape inherent in the development of productive forces and the de-territorialization of production relations. Its power as icon would be nothing without the diagrammatic potency of those re-territorializing concrete machines.

Concrete machines diagrammatize the strata; they are the point of interaction between abstract machines and the strata of power. The various *becomings* of desire – homosexual becoming, child becoming, growth becoming, etc. –

2. Thus, not totally seriously, one could define consciousness as being the organless body of the abstract machines, as opposed to the plane of consistency which cannot be defined either as the totality of all totalities, or as the organless body of the organless bodies.

3. Revolutionary analysts must be particularly concerned with detecting and neutralizing the re-territorializing effects of the concrete machines that make people attached to hierarchies, male dominance, individual ownership, a clinging to dependence, etc.

are obliged to proceed by way of these non-abstract machines that are hierarchized in such a way as to make some kinds of becoming depend on others, particularly the machines of invisible becoming of Oedipal guilt, and of female becoming in relation to the sexed body. How does this hierarchization of the concrete machines become apparent? Both by the conjunction of machinic propositions at a molecular level, and that of the capture and interlinking of extremely varied lines of escape at a molar level. Concrete machines do not in fact belong specifically to the molar or the molecular order, any more than do abstract machines, precisely because they represent the possibility of articulating the two. A concrete machine does not belong to a particular stratum, but indicates possible politics of inter-stratification. It presents a practical 'either–or': either an action will close in and become stratified, or it will open out onto diagrammatic lines of escape. The concrete machine opens up the possible, either in the form of signifying circles, centred perhaps on the features of faciality, or in the form of post-signifying spirals that let the lines of escape go off at a tangent. In the first case, the concrete machine develops heavy, figurative territorialities, operating on at least two dimensions; in the second, it disperses a de-territorialized line in particle-signs that tend to elude the dimensions of time and space altogether. Consider the practice of transcendental meditation now so fashionable in the United States: we may find it developing into an organless body opening desire out onto an a-signifying outside world, or, equally, closing in upon a signifying activity that alienates individuals in line with the values of authority. In most cases transcendental meditators are doing both things at once. (It is worth noting in passing that the signifying text of a ritual does not necessarily require the existence of a written text like the Buddhist scriptures; it can just as well be a 'spatialized text', like that of the Japanese tea ceremony.) In Hitler's fascism, for instance, at a molar level, there were concrete machines – military, police, aesthetic, etc. – managing the conjunction of a longstanding, indeed an archaic, stratified authority with abstract machines that were still 'feeling their way' along highly de-territorialized paths: thus such modern themes as State capitalism and science came paradoxically to be associated with completely regressive ideas like 'rapacious Jews taking over the world', 'purity of blood' and so on. Similarly, we can see the conjunction between Stalin, the little father of the people, Ivan the Terrible, and the running of a bureaucratic planned State. The concrete machines metabolize the conjunction of semiotic, material and social fluxes independently of the relationships of causality or genealogy that may belong to the various strata redundancies. Things can thus be happening on several different levels at once. One can say of Louis-Ferdinand Céline, for instance, that his writing had nothing to do with fascism and everything to do with it. It had nothing to do with it in that his machine of literary de-territorialization was part of a set of abstract

machines, of a phylum of literary expression quite unconnected with the political and social battles of his own day; and it had everything to do with it in that it was only because of a particular concatenation of identifying characteristics, especially racist ones, that his literary machine existed at all (for instance, the role of the concrete machines of familialism and the workers' movement in his writing). Consequently, it is not a matter of our having to make a distinction between good facial features operating, for instance, as sign-points, and bad ones operating on a more territorialized iconic mode; one can find fascist re-territorializations in both kinds.

Let us make a further distinction: redundancies of representation can be micro-redundancies or macro-redundancies.

In any signifying stratum, the totality of local expressive redundancies relates to the macro-redundancies of the effects of signification. A signifying stratum cannot directly engender lines of escape, unless it is on the way to destruction. In the case of symbolic semiotics or non-signifying semiotics, it is different. There is not the same type of centring or encircling. Pre-signifying symbolic semiotics are territorialized around a multiplicity of centres, forming a kind of semiotic segmentalization in which no one of them is pre-eminent, whereas a-signifying (post-signifying) semiotics escape the systems of territorialization and of binarized linear encoding. Thus, neither subjects the lines of escape to a system of centring that would over-encode them and turn them into outside lines that could be projected onto systems of coordinates. The line of escape is part of the territorialized diagrammatism or the machinic diagrammatism in just the same way as the other elements of the rhizome. For instance, the line of escape of a madman in a primitive society is part of the territorialized collective force of utterance. The line of escape of an unexpected activity on the part of a particle which is out of line with the theoretical/experimental organization is part of the development of science. Thus concrete machines are established directly from the lines of escape without going by way of the particular mediations and over-encodings of the systems of signifying semiotics – especially not the second-degree systems of signification. We can therefore contrast concrete machines that metabolize lines of escape diagrammatically with those that re-territorialize a signifying authority. At every level, then, concrete machines will be the negotiating point between the diagrammatism of the active forces and their falling back into systems of analogy, significance, etc. That negotiation will constitute the concrete politics of de-territorialization: either the formation of de-territorializations is organized under the domination of a quantic, diagrammatic de-territorialization; or else it will end in an empty re-territorialization, in the form of an empty consciousness, a facelessness, that over-encodes all the becomings of desire and is expressed in a transcendent, monotheistic God, perhaps, or the abstract Lady of courtly love, or a system

of general equivalence of money capital. The great, supposedly symbolic, operators of second-degree signification – the Signifier, Capital, the Libido, etc. – never exist in themselves, but operate only in dependence on concrete machines. Thus, it is not enough to say that a certain form of deterritorialized monotheism, of the type codified by St Paul and St Augustine, is to be seen in relation to the influx of capitalism that appeared after the first industrial revolution of the twelfth century. One must also note the production of new significations, of new interpretative coordinates at the level of the accompanying constellations of characteristics, the things that actually made the system go in one direction rather than another: with the Desert Fathers, there was a risk that it would disappear altogether in pursuit of the spiritual; with other heresies, the son was territorialized at the expense of the father; at another time, it had to choose between seeing Mary as mother of God or mother of humanity; at another, the decision had to be made not to venerate images of Christ for their own sake; and so on. It was via all sorts of concrete micro-political 'negotiations' of this kind on the part of the theological machines that there came to be defined the right to life, the possible survival of animal-becoming, child-becoming, female-becoming, body-becoming, all the intensity-becomings (of music, for example) and so on. The macro-redundancies of capitalistic representation can never be validly described in terms of a single dualistic logic – based, for instance, on the symbol of the phallus. The phallus became a general operator of authority only to the extent that it remained dependent on collections of actual realities, 'masses' of events, produced by concrete machines – and the same can be said of all the other part objects of psychoanalysis.

The reason for considering concrete machines is that they should make it far harder for us to try to describe history in terms of significations, above all of significations similar in nature to a particular level of a major power formation. What one has to examine here is the whole genealogical perspective; indeed there is probably no genealogy that can account for madness, illegalism, shutting up children and so on without reference to concrete machines that came into being independent of the relationships of molar forces, concrete machines existing independently of large-scale balances of power, of the diachronic implications of the machinic phylum in the sphere of the economy, of demography, of war machines, etc. Would it be legitimate to believe that one particular poetic madness, one molecular folly, might have originated the diseased strain of courtly love? You may object that this is not a vital problem, or perhaps that the time was ripe for the thing to happen. But surely it is at the level of such individual madness, and at that level only, that we can hope to discover the links, the inter-relationships among the various concrete machines that have metabolized the significations of the period, as much in terms of the literary, the erotic and the aesthetic as of the military, the

technological or the architectural. To describe the machinic rhizomes would make it impossible to split up homogeneous strata at the molar level. Is it reasonable to suggest that at every period, systems of concrete machines infiltrated the perceptive semiotics, sensitivity, memory and so on in such a way as to cause the socius to crystallize human relationships in a particular way? What concrete machine led the collective perception to hold that not merely are all men equal – and women too – but that all stages of human development are equal as well? Whence come the systems of overall equivalence of men, women, children – an equivalence which, incidentally, has merely reinforced the dependence of women on men, of children on adults, of the primitive on the civilized, etc.? What sort of molar machine has enforced the setting-up of libidinal equivalences as between useful work and useless activity, value in desire and value in use, value in exchange and value in desire, and the rest? At the level of macro-redundancies, power would be nothing without the diagrammatic operators that empty the micro-redundancies of their substance and make them work against de-territorializing connections. (To take an example: the way the emotion of love was puerilized in the romantic era, coinciding with a loss of childhood for children themselves, as they were massively swept into schools and factories.) Capitalism's general interchangeability of values is achieved by means of non-abstract machines. Its homogenizing of personological areas has been inseparable from the homogenization it has effected in the infra-personological area, at the level of molecularizing the concrete machines. Indeed it is only this that has prevented its development from collapsing under the weight of the contradictions that should – according to Marx – lead it inexorably to destruction. The power of the bourgeoisie over the working class is not just a generalized relationship between two classes; it operates from the countless molecular points of authority established by those concrete machines, as they 'negotiate' the various modes of de-territorialization and manipulate both molecular multiplicities and mass stratifications.[4]

To sum up: concrete machines coincide with the existence of a twofold articulation of strata:

– in the meta-strata, the lines of escape and the abstract machines of the plane of consistency, they realize the possibility inherent in quantic positive de-territorialization;

– in the inter-strata, they stratify a differential negative de-territorialization.

The abstract machine – or diagrammatic condenser – draws together the code, the quantic positive de-territorialization, and the flux, the differential negative de-territorialization, and thus in a sense must be thought of as

4. Thus concrete machines can be said to be molar in their stratifying aspect and molecular in their diagrammatic de-territorializing aspect.

existing prior to differentiations of fluxes and encodings, and to differentiations among natural, symbolic, signifying and a-signifying codes. My distinction between macro-redundancy and micro-redundancy, in the specific instance of semiotic encodings, in fact covers that of signifying semiotics and symbolic semiotics, but we shall go on to use it in a more general way, applying it to the totality of a-semiotic formed matter; its main interest will then consist in the problem of whether the effect of diagrammatic concrete machines can be transferred outside the particular case of non-signifying semiotics to which we have up to now restricted it.

It goes without saying that the foregoing considerations in no sense imply any primacy of the molecular over the molar economy at the level of concrete machines. Indeed, though it may be necessary for a very powerful molecular machine to exist (a revolutionary movement, say) in order to produce a diagrammatic line of escape within a molar stratification, it may on the other hand be necessary for a vast molar concrete machine to be set up to produce the tiniest diagrammatic effect (such as a poetry machine). Most of the time, in any case, such 'effects' will work in both directions: for example, the whole of La Borde must function as a concrete machine in order that, at a given moment, some peculiarity, a way of taking a cigarette or of handing someone a dish, can relate to the level of conjunctions effected by psychotics' modes of semiotization. Conversely, however, those same psychotics must be able to function as concrete machines to make La Borde the kind of *agencement* that it is. To produce a concrete machine, then, can involve tremendous forces, a kind of semiotic Pierrelatte extracting from territorialized ore the deterritorialized molar substance upon which in turn the production of deterritorialized molecular particles depends. A productive force can thus be considered as much from the viewpoint of what it specifically produces as from that of its macro-scopic organization.

There are always two aspects to the presentation of a face: one turned towards micro-redundancies, open to a rhizomatic deployment of semiotic systems, and the other towards redundancies of representation, which is where connections can always be effected with the hierarchy of power formations – the actual face one sees then becoming equivalent to the public presentation of the face of authority. That public face is a mask, for the true face of power, in a capitalist system, is ashamed, and must keep hiding the hollowness of its principles; it has to clothe, to represent, to produce analogies for the diagrammatism it territorializes in an arbitrarily chosen system of class and caste. This contradiction accounts for the fascination of the figures of the judge, the cop, the teacher and so on, and the mystery of their diagrammatic counterparts – the thief, the prostitute, the delinquent. The key to the mystery of the face presented by capitalism and the individuation of subjectivity is undoubtedly the way it is continually oscillating between the

revelation of an invisible binary-phallic power and the wild explosion of desire in all directions that follows the disruption of the old territorialities. It is not a question of two 'facialities', but of two aspects of a single concrete machine that pushes desire to the extreme of abolishing all 'faciality'. All that is preserved of the face is the barest minimum of redundancy that will keep the system functioning; an artificial face is continually being reassembled by the media. But the system is under threat on all sides from an invisible *becoming*; this in itself represents the final point of fascination, capturing all the energy of desire and making it a desire for annihilation. Why are the machines of 'faciality' essentially bound up with the individuated mode of subjectivation? Why are they not linked to animality, or some mode of creating bodiliness? The diagrammatism of territorialized agencies tends to reconstruct territories, or emblems (like those on tee-shirts, an updated version of tattoos), whereas the production of facial features is an operation that produces de-territorialized signifying formations. The relevant elements of the presented face are there to enable the system to gain semiotic control of individuals, to connect them with a decoded flux of work. The face is never recognized as a multiplicity or a territorialized emblem, but only in that it makes it possible to universalize the significations of power – significations of general human equivalence. The animal totem, the tattooed body, was not a way into a universal language like that of the exchangist economy. With 'faciality', the distinctive features of the face and body are used to serve a specific mode of diagrammatism that de-territorializes whole constellations of desire machines and connects them up with production machines. The face is *par excellence* the substance of expression of the signifier. We may say here that the human profile is like the outline of a key: what matters is not its unique characteristics, but the effectiveness with which it unlocks the code. Capitalist 'faciality' always exists to serve a signifying formula; it is the means whereby the signifier takes control, the way it organizes a certain mode of individuated subjectivation, and the collective madness of a machine that creates consciousness without any content, and of a *becoming* that cannot be perceived. Consequently it is impossible to think that the written word could have any function at the level of the body: before there was a face, there were features of bodiliness, a syntax of bodiliness; after the face, we come to an invisible becoming, a blurring, a sense of shame over the bodily elements which are now merely tolerated as left-overs, since the essence of the laws of Power are based upon the interpretable elements of a script.

Meaning and Power[1]

The structuralists' ideal is to be able to capture any situation, however complex, in a simple formula – a formula that can be expressed in mathematical, axiomatic form, or handled by a computer. The modern computer can handle extremely complex problems, for instance it can 'formulate' a picture. The question is whether that picture is not fundamentally different from the images we perceive in the 'natural' world. The picture produced by the computer has been reduced to the state of a binary message, a formula that can be transmitted in the same way as electricity; it has lost all the depth and warmth, all the possibilities for re-organization, of the original. It seems to me that the reductions of the structuralists produce a similar result. What they give back to us is comparable to a kind of technocratic vision of the world; it has lost the essence of the background from which it came. By 'essence', I mean all that relates to desire. Whatever the complexity of the situation it is looking at and of the way it proposes to formalize it, structuralism assumes that it can be reduced by a system of binary notation, to what is called in semiotics digitalized information, which can be transferred to the keyboard of a typewriter or a computer. The human sciences think to acquire scientific status by following what was the path of the pure sciences. (As for example when mathematics sought to make itself totally axiomatic by making algebra, topology, geometry, etc. all dependent on one and the same fundamental logic, a single basic writing.)

Linguistic analysts, by analysing all the different sounds and signs, have tried to produce a series of symbols capable of encompassing the structure of all languages – but in fact all they end up with are the features shared by language in general. The life of the language – what it means, and how we use it – eludes such formalization. In the realm of psychiatry, too, people have for a long time been proposing the use of scientific descriptions, systematic tables of symptoms and syndromes, but what happens in real life never quite fits in with this sort of classification. There are too many borderline situations: one can never say for certain whether one is dealing with a hysteric with certain paranoid features who behaves not unlike a schizophrenic, though there is an

1. A talk given at the Douglas Hospital, Montreal, first published in the review *Brêches*, Montreal, 1976.

element of the depressive; and so on, *ad infinitum*. It is one thing to analyse a structure; it is a very different matter to put forward a structuralist philosophy, a structuralist interpretation that can account even for the movement of objects, for power relationships, political situations and investments of desire. Obvious, one would say; yet it is precisely this that Freudians do, and frequently Marxists too, when they talk of unconscious structures or economic structures. They would have us believe that they have found the definitive atomic formula, and that henceforth all they need do is to intervene with an interpretation or a word of command based upon that structure, that formula. This would give them considerable power and importance. I think our answer must be that their structures exist not within things, but *alongside* them. The structural approach is one praxis among others, but perhaps not the most fruitful or the most effective.

It is a question of re-defining the problem of meaning and signification – not as something imposed by heaven or the nature of things, but as resulting from the conjunction of semiotic systems in confrontation. Without such a conjunction there can be no meaning. One type of meaning is produced by the semiotics of the body, another by the semiotics of power (of which there are many), yet another by machinic semiotics – which are those that use signs that are neither symbolic, nor of the order of the signifying systems of power. All these different sorts of meaning are continually intertwining without its ever being possible to say that they represent universal significations.

One may say that there are two types of political conceptions relating to desire. On the one hand, formalist reasoning seeks clues from which to gain access to its interpretation, to a hermeneutic; on the other, an apparently mad reasoning starts from the notion that universality is to be found in the direction of singularity, and that singularity can become the authentic basis for a political and micro-political organization that is far more rational than what we have at the moment.

Let us take as our starting point the example of the patient Carlo Sterlin has told us about. Three months before her birth, there was pregnancy vomiting by the mother; at six months, she developed food allergy; at three, widespread eczema; at six, problems at school; at twenty, attacks of anxiety; at thirty, non-specific vaginitis; at forty, she attempted suicide more than once. Different semiotic components would seem to have been at work at each stage of this clinical history. In the case of the mother's vomiting, the disturbance was expressed not by a localized subject, but was passed from one person to another – like the old saying that when the parents drink the children get drunk. I should say that this is a case of a semiotic organization taking over from a symbolic functioning. Such symbolic semiotics do not involve a distinguishable speaker and hearer. Words do not play a major part, since the

message is carried not via linguistic chains, but via bodies, sounds, mimicry, posture and so on.

Food allergy at six months. I cannot define the difference between the semiotic elements involved in this allergy and those involved in the mother's vomiting, but one thing seems clear: in the case of the allergy they become far more important. From birth, noises, sensations of heat and cold, of light, of contact, of one face responding to another, have begun to form the child's world. It remains to be seen why that new world should stay attached to her skin – is it that she is refusing to enter it, or to have anything to do with it?

At six years old, school problems. These obviously relate to the use of language in some way – not just language in general, but the language of the teacher, of adult power. Many people's future fate is sealed in primary school. There is no need to administer an IQ test to predict in advance that some children will never go to university. The school machine makes its implacable selection. We are now in the realm of signifying semiotics, for with school, the child becomes subject to social laws that did not touch upon such things as vomiting and eczema. One could not reasonably punish a child for having eczema – but no one thinks it wrong to punish her for being unable to get her sums right. A series of micro-social powers takes shape – family, school, local authority – eventually the State power. Any therapist who took no interest in the child's everyday life, at home and in outside relationships, and concentrated only on pure structures, pure signifying chains, complexes, supposedly universal phases of development, would be simply refusing to see the essence of what was happening at the level of reality and of the economy of desire.

At twenty, attacks of anxiety. These could be schizophrenic syndromes that manifest themselves only at a certain point in one's life. Some psychoanalysts nowadays claim to have found schizophrenics at the age of three or four. I do not see how anyone can make such a diagnosis before puberty. The semiotic factors in puberty (new impressions, anxiety towards the unknown, social repression and so on) are enormously affected by such syndromes, and analysis should therefore be directed to considering the power formations that correspond to them: the high school, technical school, sports club, leisure arrangements, etc. At this point a whole new facet of society threatens to clamp down upon the desire of the adolescent, cutting her off from the world and leading her to turn in upon herself.

At thirty, non-specific vaginitis. Once again, the level has changed, and it is undoubtedly marital problems that are in the forefront.

At forty, attempted suicide. This involves her in the whole apparatus of medical power, police power, religious power.

This is a very summary survey of the main directions an analysis must take: the uncharted continent of power formations, in other words the unconscious of the socius itself rather than the unconscious buried in the folds of the

individual's brain, or expressed in stereotyped complexes. The analyst cannot be neutral towards those power formations. For instance, he cannot rest content with acting as a specialist discovering the allergies that cause eczema. It is the whole attitude of specialists that needs questioning, the whole politics of interpretation based on prefabricated codings. To analyse specific elements when dealing with an essential micro-political problem (which by definition cuts across a number of quite different areas) is not just a matter of form: it involves, first and foremost, the practice of what I should define as a micro-politics relating both to the object of study or therapy, and to the desire of those who conduct the analysis.

The structuralists' formalism is reductionist in nature when it comes to the relationship it establishes between what it calls profound structures and manifest structures. Particularly so in the case of the linguistic double articulation, which consists on the one hand of a system of signs that have no meaning as such (phonemes, graphemes, symbols), and on the other, of chains of discourse that convey meaning (monemes, etc.). It seems that for them the formal level takes control of the significations, in some way engendering or producing them. But significations do not come from heaven, nor do they arise spontaneously out of a syntactical or semantic womb. They are inseparable from the power formations that generate them in shifting relationships of power. There is nothing universal or automatic about them.

In an attempt to clarify the status of the various encoding systems, whether or not they pass by way of signs in the sense defined by students of semiotics and linguistics, I suggest a series of distinctions whose entire aim is to identify the practical functioning of what I would call *sign machines*. In reality, however, one is always dealing with an interweaving of several such systems, with a mixture of semiotics. I believe first of all that one must be careful not to confuse natural encodings with semiotic encodings.

This first distinction should prevent our accepting the somewhat magical resemblances that structuralists tend to see between language and 'nature', which rest ultimately on the notion that one could gain control over things and society simply by gaining control of the signs they set in motion (like going back to the ancient madness of witches and cabbalists, with their statues and Golems). Of course there is a sphere where signs have a direct effect on things – in the genuine experimental sciences, which use both material technology and a complex manipulation of sign machines.

But what I should like first to do is to refer again to the distinction proposed by Hjelmslev between the material of expression and the substance of expression. It is the conjunction of different materials of expression that has changed the pragmatic bearing of the message. Is eczema formed scientifically or semiologically? Does non-specific reactive vaginitis, at particular stages of its development, have as its major component the signifying semiotics of

the social environment, or the intervention of an a-semiotic encoding that depends on viruses, bacteria, etc.? How much relates to social situations, to relationships of power, language, money, kinship? To suggest that the signifier is everywhere (and that consequently interpretation and transference are effective everywhere) is to miss the fact that each of these encoding components (whether semiotic or not) can gain power over the situations and objects confronting us. On the contrary, I believe that one should not be dogmatic about which mode of access has priority. Such priority can emerge only from analysing each particular situation.

We thus already have our first distinction between sign machines that function by constituting an autonomous semiological substance – a language – and those that function directly as a 'natural' encoding, independent of language. Perhaps it would be more correct here to talk of signals rather than signs. The difference between a signal, a hormonal signal for example, and a linguistic sign lies in the fact that the former produces no signification, engenders no stable system of redundancy that would make it possible for anyone to see it as identical to any representation.

We then come to a second distinction. The signifying system is punctuated by signified representations and by the objects to which it refers; linguists tell us that the relation between signifier and signified is an arbitrary one. Nevertheless, there are types of signs that sustain a relationship of analogy or correspondence between themselves and the representations they signify: these are called icon signs. An example of these is the symbols on road signs, which do not involve the operation of a linguistic machine. Experts in linguistics and semiotics have gradually come to consider that icons, or diagrams, or any other pre-verbal means of expression (gestural, etc.) are dependent upon the signifying language and are only imperfect means of communication. I believe that this is an intellectualist assumption that becomes extremely shaky when applied to children, the mad, the primitive or any of those who express themselves in a semiotic register that I would classify as a symbolic semiology.

Symbolic semiologies include dance, mime, somatization of feelings (having a nervous breakdown, bursting into tears), all means of expression that take an immediate, and immediately comprehensible, form. A crying child, whatever its nationality, is making it clear that it is unhappy without the benefit of a dictionary. It has been suggested that such symbolic semiotics should be seen as depending on linguistic semiotics, on the ground that one can only decipher, understand and translate them by using language. But what does that prove? Just because we use an aeroplane to travel from America to Europe, we do not say that these two continents are dependent on aviation. All sorts of peoples have survived – and some still do – without signifying semiotics, and in particular without a written language. Their

system of expression (in which words are in direct interaction with other forms of expression – ritual, gestural, musical, etc.) has certainly not been any the poorer for that. It is arguable, in fact, that some peoples resisted the coming of a written language (just as they resisted the intrusion of some forms of technology) because they feared that such a signifying system would destroy their traditional way of life and mode of desire. Children and the mentally ill often express the things that matter most to them without reference to signifying semiologies. Experts, technocrats of the mind, representatives of the medical or academic establishments will not listen to such forms of expression. Psychoanalysis has worked out an entire system of interpretation whereby it can relate everything whatever to the same range of universal representations: a pine tree is a phallus, it symbolizes order and so on. By imposing such systems of interchangeability these experts take control of the symbolic semiologies used by children, the mad and others to try to safeguard their economy of desire as best they can. But the signifying semiology of the ruling establishment will not leave them be: it tells them: '*This* is really what you wanted to say. You don't believe me, but that is probably because I am expressing myself badly. I'll go on adjusting my interpretation until I can get you actually to accept the principle that all your symbolic expressions are universally translatable.' For the psychoanalyst, it has now become a crucially important question of power: all expressions of desire must be made to come under the control of the *same* interpretative language. This is his way of making deviant individuals of all kinds submit to the laws of the ruling power, and it is this that the psychoanalyst specializes in.

This brings us to the problem of the relation between signification and power. All stratifications of power produce and impose significations. In certain exceptional circumstances people manage to escape this world of the dominant signification – for instance, a person recovering consciousness after electro-convulsive therapy wonders where he is, but then, in a series of jolts, crosses back over the threshold of significations. He remembers his name, and gradually fits back into place all the different aspects of signification of the world.

People resort to alcohol or drugs in an attempt to cross this threshold of dominant significations in the opposite direction. But what exactly is this threshold, this crossing point of all the various systems of redundancy, encoding and signs of all sorts? What is it that we put on every morning when we get up – identity, sex, profession, nationality and so on? That threshold consists of the re-centring of the various components of symbolic expression (the world of gestures, sounds, bodies), of everything in the economy of desire that is threatening to break out on its own. 'Come on now, pull yourself together. There you are, in this particular marriage, this particular job. You

are responsible for your own actions. There are all sorts of things you can do, starting with fucking up yourself and everything around you . . .' Signification is always an encounter between the formalization of systems of values, of interchangeability and of rules of conduct, by a particular society and an expression machine which in itself has no meaning – which is, let us say, a-signifying – that automatically produces the behaviour, the interpretations, the responses wanted by the system.

The system of double articulation, introduced by Martinet, masks the profound disparity between the formalization operating at the level of content and that operating at the level of form. At the latter (which Martinet calls the level of the second articulation), the sounds, the systems of distinctive oppositions or the a-signifying figures of Hjelmslev, form an extremely effective machine, what I would call a diagrammatic machine, that seizes upon all the creative operations of language and imprisons them in one particular syntax. At what he calls the level of the first articulation, of written words, sentences, semantic and pragmatic interpretations, there takes place the conjunction, the re-centring and the hierarchization of all power formations so as to organize a specific type of equivalences and of significations. The linguistic machine is there to systematize or 'structuralize' those power formations; it is basically a tool for the use of the law, morality, capital, religion, etc. From the first, words and phrases get their meaning only by way of a particular syntax, a rhetoric that is territorialized upon each of these local power formations. But only the use of a more general language that over-encodes all these local languages and dialects makes it possible for a social and economic state machine to seize power at a more totalitarian level. It is to the extent that the two kinds of formalization (that of the linguistic machine as an a-signifying machine, and that of power formations as the producers of signified content) become interlinked via a signifying language that we get a meaningful world – that is to say a realm of signification in harmony with the social, economic and moral coordinates of the ruling power.

Structuralists, especially American structuralists, are not interested in social origins underlying the formalization of significations, and claim that they arise from profound semiotic structures. It is hard to say where they think the meaning comes from – it seems to have landed out of the blue. Let me say again that meaning never comes from language as such, from profound symbolic structures or the mathematics of the unconscious. Meaning is determined by very real social power formations that can be identified by anyone who cares to take the trouble to do so. Suppose I come into the room wearing a long gown: in itself it means nothing, but if I am doing it to show that I am a transvestite it does mean something. If everyone else present is also a transvestite, there is no problem; but if, say, a conference of clergy wearing cassocks is taking place, then it will have quite a different meaning.

In a mental hospital, it could be interpreted differently again: 'He's not too well today – wearing a dress again.' In other words for a man to wear a skirt means one thing if he is a judge or a priest, another if he is a lunatic, yet another if he is a transvestite. Signification is always inseparable from the power position. Suppose you were to bring your shit to someone on a dish: ordinary people would find it meaningless and disgusting, but to a therapist it could be a good sign. It would represent a gift, or an important message which the psychoanalyst would unfortunately tend to adapt to fit his own system of interpretations ('He's trying to explain his transference, I am his mother, he is regressing . . .', etc.).

In modern societies (be they capitalist or bureaucratic socialist), all symbolic semiologies are centred upon the educating of the work force. This is a process that starts in infancy: we set ourselves very early on to do battle with the child's own logic and methods of semiotization. The child is continually being driven from side to side by contradictory power systems, starting with his own power over himself, his gifts, his own feelings, his wish to run, his wish to draw – all of which are in contradiction with his wish to become an adult. On top of all this there are the constraints that burden the power relations of the family and indirectly burden him too. There is a whole maze of contradictory powers through which the child must thread his way in order to develop his own semiotic components of desire, to discipline them, to bend them to the direction decreed by the signifying semiologies of the dominant power – in other words, to castrate them. Sometimes the entire system shatters, and there is confusion, panic, neurosis, the visit to the psychiatrist and all the rest.

The third distinction I have suggested is between signifying and a-signifying semiotics. Following Charles Sanders Peirce, semioticians have concluded that the system of images (icons) and the system of diagrams should be brought together under a single heading, since for them a diagram is no more than a simplified image. But an image represents at once more and less than a diagram: an image reproduces a great many aspects that a diagram does not include in its representation, while a diagram includes – far more precisely and efficiently than an image – the articulations whereby a system operates. In my view, therefore, one must separate the two, placing the image alongside symbolic semiotics, and making diagrammatism a semiotic category on its own, a category of a-signifying semiotics – which is of the utmost importance because it is what we see at work in the world of the sciences, of music, of the economy and elsewhere. A-signifying, or diagrammatic, semiotics produce not redundancies of signification, but machinic redundancies (these are what linguists refer to when they talk of relational significations). To explain what he means by a diagram, Peirce gives the example of a temperature curve, or, at a more complex level, a system of algebraic equations. The signs function in place of the objects they relate to,

independently of any effects of signification that may exist alongside them. This is as though the ideal would be for diagrammatic sign machines to lose all their natural inertia, to give up all the manifold values that can exist in symbolic systems or signifying systems: the sign becomes so refined that there are no longer thirty-six possible interpretations, but a single designation with an extremely precise and rigid syntax. In physics, for instance, one can always create for oneself one's own representation of atoms or particles, but such a representation would not figure in scientific semiotization.

Non-signifying semiotics can bring into play systems of signs that, though they may incidentally have a symbolic or a signifying effect, have no connection with that symbolism or signification as far as their specific functioning is concerned. Symbolic semiotics, like signifying semiotics, derive their effectiveness from their dependence on a particular a-signifying machine. It should be made clear that non-signifying sign machines in every sphere tend to elude the territorialities of the body, of space, of the power of society, and the complexus of significations that they contain. They are in fact the most de-territorialized of all. For example: a child wakes up and complains of feeling ill, whereupon his mother concludes that he does not want to go to school. Then, changing key, she decides to call the doctor – who alone can actually say, 'Your child is not to go to school.' She has shifted first from a symbolic semiology operating at the level of the child's body to a signifying semiology at the level of familial power, and then on to a further level where a power machine steps in with formidable social and technical effectiveness. At each of these shifts, one territoriality has been abandoned for another that offers greater scope for non-signifying sign machines. A diagrammatic machine, the presumed science of the doctor, dissolves the diagrammatic machine of the power of the school, which has already partly overridden the power of the family.

The whole fabric of the capitalist world consists of this kind of flux of de-territorialized signs – money and economic signs, signs of prestige and so on. Significations, social values (those one can interpret, that is) can be seen at the level of power formations, but, essentially, capitalism depends upon non-signifying machines. There is, for instance, no meaning in the ups and downs of the stock market; capitalist power, at the economic level, produces no special discourse of its own, but simply seeks to control the non-signifying semiotic machines, to manipulate the non-signifying cogs of the system. Capitalism gives each of us our particular role – doctor, child, teacher, man, woman, homosexual – and it is up to us to adapt ourselves to the system of signification arranged for each of us. But at the level of real power, it is never this type of role that is at issue; power does not have to be identified with the director or the minister – it operates in relationships of finance and force, and among different pressure groups. A-signifying machines do not recognize

agents, individuals, roles or even clearly defined objects. By this very fact they acquire a kind of omnipotence, moving across the signification systems within which individual agents recognize and become alienated from one another. Capitalism has no visible beginning or end.

There is no moment when we are not encircled by power formations. In our societies people must not gesticulate overmuch; we must each stay in our proper place, sign on the dotted line, recognize the signals we are given – and any failure may land us up in prison or hospital. Rather than looking upon the schizophrenic as someone who is paralysed inside his own body and needs to be looked after, it might be better to try to see (rather than interpret) how he functions in the social situation he has to contend with, and what are the transversal, diagrammatic problems he is facing us with. It is not a matter of aping schizophrenics, playing at catatonics, but of discovering how a mad person, a child, a homosexual, a prostitute, etc. shifts the components of desire about in the social arena while we, the 'normal', take care to let well alone. What does it matter to us whether dramas of a symbolic (pre-significant) order or a post-significant order are being acted out in the body of a lunatic, a child or anyone else? Is it our job to 'adjust' such people so that they fit into the world, to 'treat' deviance? What do we mean when we talk of treating a schizophrenic? One wonders whether it is more a matter of his being there to challenge us than of our being there to look after him. When I talk about 'us', I do not just mean us as individuals (though, in fact, if you have a discussion with a schizophrenic soon after a family quarrel, you find yourself starting to think on quite different lines – a therapeutic experience), but 'us' as the whole social context. The schizophrenic is floundering in a world in which relationships of signs, or productions of signification, far outstrip our individual madnesses and neuroses.

3 Politics and Desire

Causality, Subjectivity and History[1]

1. History and the Signifying Determination

Misconceptions about the subjectivity of history arise from the fact that one tends without noticing it to pose the problem of a subject – whether to affirm or deny that there is one – as the subject that produces utterance of discourse and actions relating to history, rather than envisaging it simply as the subject of utterances as we receive them. That there is a subject of history is not in dispute; it is the subject that is constituted by, and remains the prisoner of, repetitive structures, signifying chains wound back around themselves. The working class, for example, as alienated subjectivity, becomes the class of class words – in other words the class of utterances, producing, in a given area of historic utterance, significations for such terms as 'class', and 'class struggle' – whereas it should bear within it the historic destiny of *abolishing* the division of society into classes. Indeed, in a certain time and place, there is a special way in which the word is spoken, a reinforcement of the stress, so that the word itself takes on a particular class. In the workers' movement the word 'class' used currently as an abbreviation for 'working class' is pronounced quite differently from, say, a class at school.

Every mode of thought thus has its own initiatory code of metonyms, with particular meanings given to 'Party', 'the Old Man', or even '44'.[2] We might take as a starting point something Lacan said in his first Seminar of 1965–6: 'One need only say in passing that, in psychoanalysis, history is a different dimension from that of development, and that it is a mistake to try to identify

1. Sections 1, 2 and 3 all summarize lectures with the discussion that followed each one. The first two were given to the 'Theory Committee' of the FGERI (Federation of Institutional Study and Research Groups). In October 1965, some dozen groups, working along the lines of institutional analysis, federated within the FGERI: they consisted of about three hundred psychiatrists, psychoanalysts, psychologists, nurses, academics, teachers, urban studies people, architects, economists, members of cooperatives, film-makers and so on.

The CERFI (Centre for Institutional Study, Research and Training), a member of the FGERI, publishes the review *Recherches*, and a series of *Cahiers de recherches*; the CERFI also commissions various public and private bodies to produce specialized studies (on plant, cooperation, health, education and so on).

2. The 'Old Man' could apply equally to Lenin, Stalin or Trotsky; 44 rue Le Peletier in Paris is the headquarters of the Communist Party Central Committee.

them. History only takes place against the grain of development – a fact which may be to the advantage of history, as to science, if it wants to escape the ever-present influence of a providential explanation of its movement.'[3] Now, what I call history is what Lacan calls development. The history he talks of is a history that does not even trouble to be dialectical, it is history considered at the level of subjectivity at the point where utterance intervenes. Considered thus, the signifier has no history; it is not in time; it belongs to the order of structure in that at a certain level there is nothing more we can say of it; it is an a-historical raw material of meaninglessness constitutive of historic significations: purely the effect of interference or resonance, an accident of circumstance that can only be seen with hindsight to have been the start of a series.

Must one conclude from this that time can be broken up into as many orders of time as there are orders of manifestation, temporalities specific to each level of production relations, of the economy, of history (in the usual sense) and so on? There would be a thousand temporalities to match a thousand areas of history, science and technology, but they would all be regulated by the still, silent beating of an order of pure significance, a crystalline structure standing apart from history and constituting its foundation – a kind of new infrastructure emerging after the bankruptcy of the outworn one we had built on Marxism. We could call this Operation Althusser: they give you as many temporalities as you like, but it is up to you to work out a synchronization. And you never will. It is a trick that enables Althusserians to be Stalinist in politics, Kantian in philosophy, Lacanian in psychoanalysis and so on. And where is the phallus, the 'padding' between the different levels? It is Althusser himself, accompanied by his fellows, the priests of pure theory, the ultimate guarantors that concepts are scientific.

There is great elegance in thus shattering history into fragments and handing over one to be dealt with by epistemological specialists! But history itself disappears in the process. To me, history – the history made, articulated and remembered by human beings – is a subject. There is a limit beyond which one cannot go in the 'de-realization' of history, for history has a certain residual realism. This impregnable reality is the contingent fact that it is human beings alone that make and recount it, and, whatever may be their rights and wrongs, those human beings are in the real world. What they say may be accepted or rejected, but if you accept it then you must also accept unreservedly the principle of a historical realism that cannot be cut up into slices. Historical materialism certainly does not involve turning time itself into an entity. That is a very different matter. To say that the sum of utterances represents a real historical object does not mean that time is a thing.

3. Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, p. 875.

Man seems to take it upon himself to play about with temporalization and use it as he wishes; but once he has done so, then he no longer has any choice – he has to live with what he has made. The same is true of capital: it is no longer an optional category from which fringe economies, or planned economies, can opt out. Yet one can hardly say that capital is part of the natural order – or, if it is, it certainly has not always been! But now we are in it as in our element, like the air we breathe. The subject and the signifier operate in the same way. In nature there is no signifier or signified unrelated to the subject; the subject is a signifying intervention that produces utterances, beginning with those denying that there is a subject producing the utterance. It looks like becoming a closed circle. This is the structuralist temptation. Considering that the subject refers only to the other (the mirage of intersubjectivity), whereas the signifier refers only to the signifier (the mirage of a linguistics in its infancy) cut off from all reality, one thus posits a subject with no consistency – a purely symbolic operator – and a signifying time which in fact exists only in logic. The subject is there only to beat time for a signifying division that can never be enacted in reality. Reality and history have become subject to an eternal symbolic order from which they are totally isolated and which essentially nullifies them.

Subjectivity and the signifier have become interchangeable; human praxis no longer has any connection with that pure subjectivity; it is secretly returned to a strict order of causal determination, an order craftily re-established in the guise of structure.

Lacan, on the other hand, has always stressed the profound dyssymmetry characterizing the subject in relation to the signifier. Just as you neutralize a Moebius strip by cutting it lengthwise, so the subject cannot be separated from the signifier without becoming reified. The subject depends on its relationship with residuality, upon the *objet petit 'a'*, to secure its status, and therefore can no longer be a pure signifier, and is alienated from the desiring condition by means of part objects that destroy its symmetry by weighing it down with a burden of reality. It is thus prevented from yielding completely to its deadly yearning to be abolished in a pure and ideal structure.

Even the idea of a de-totalization coming from within the structure to breathe life into it is marked by the phantom of totality, totalitarianism. Ultimately, there are two ways of using the signifier. Either one makes it a kind of universal category, like space or time: it is then the cleverness of a new idealism that actually betrays the linguistic discovery of the signifier, which is inseparably linked with the sign in its relation to sense and the social reality. Or else one holds with Lacan that the signifier is the screen through which the effects of the unconscious do not pass, a kind of Wilson cloud chamber[4] in

4. A condensation chamber that makes the movements of ionizing particles visible. [*Translator*]

which what cannot ultimately be symmetrized, or taken over, can still be recognized (slips, omissions, failures, dreams, transference, acting out and so on).

So we come back to the idea that the signifier in history intervenes at the point when history comes to a halt. Ultimately, history has nothing to do with the signifier. It is when history tips over into meaninglessness that we face the problem of the subject, that is of a production and representation of the subjective position, from a 'supplementary' unfolding of the signifying order. Sequence and repetition certainly bring the signifying chains into action, but they are no longer open chains: they are chains of the signified, reified blocs of the signifier. Repetition is death, it is the signifier frozen rigid, no longer signifying, neurosis caught up relentlessly going round and round in the same circle. The signifier emerges as signifier only from the point when the subject comes on the scene, bringing everything into doubt and producing a new utterance, an operation of the signifier as expression of a meaning, a possible split in a given order, a breach, a revolution, a cry for radical reorientation.

It is an error to postulate signifying chains of a linguistic nature apart from a subjective intervention, to actualize the signifier (or capital) as the objective foundation of the mechanisms of the capitalist world in which we live. The revolutionary breakthrough, by breaching history-as-development, is the supreme moment for the signifier. The relationship between traditional history and the signifier operates in repetition: history is at ease in structure, it makes use of the signifier, exploiting it, takes it over, shuts it in. History completely escapes the signifier and the event. It is then that we talk of a signifier existing without the subject. What an unformulatable idea! It is as though one insisted on describing as music a score that for some reason we can never possibly perform – that remains merely signs on paper. If we burn it, are we burning music? A signifier that does not operate, that can be articulated in no real framework of enunciation, cannot be strictly said to exist as a signifier.

This does not prevent the ideologues from manufacturing history as one might manufacture toothpaste. People need this closing-up of the circuit of personal identity, this pretence at standing on firm ground in artificiality, the impersonal and bad faith. One has to attach oneself to something. This is the equivalent, in social terms, of the desiring subject and the part object. The laws of totalization, of the *Gestalt*, then take over – good and bad forms, bipolar values, retroactive and prospective determinations, desire for eternity as a childish negation of time. The subject is thus made to *have* instead of to *be*.[5] It is made to have by the consecutive Other, by spoken and written control of the word; it becomes alienated in supposedly signifying social chains which in fact only gain their power and their deadly fascination from

5. See p. 135, n. 2.

the sheer effect of structure that they present. If the subject is no longer an act of the signifier, then it no longer is at all; it is then dependent upon the signified, in other words upon what happens in terms of other people, of utterances, of what 'they' say. Nothing can be drawn from the signified but the imaginary. It belongs to the *Gestalt*, to the order of reason. Even when one has said to hell with reason, with the signified, with values, a split appears, a secondary development starts up, a phantasy counter-production tends to neutralize its stance. For instance, at the same time as the people were scaling the crumbling steps of the Tsarist edifice, that conglomerate of feudalism, modern industry and the last traces of Asiatic despotism, those same steps were the scene of a movement in the opposite direction: the workers' soviets were dissolving among the vast mass of the peasantry, whose inertia – without the counterweight of a strong bourgeoisie – apparently drew its power to resist from the traditional Slav village communities (*mirs*) that no State power had as yet really penetrated, and the vast mass of the Russian people came to venerate a mummified Lenin and to adore Stalin as a god.

One must choose between revolutionary history as significant breakthrough, and evolutionary history as signified; to keep a foot each side of the fence is the surest way of breaking your neck (cf. Kerensky, the Kadets, the Mensheviks). But the choice is not made once for all; one is continually starting again from scratch. The signified is always the same thing – repetition, death, tedium. Only by being incessantly cut across at the level of the signifier can it be radically remoulded. It is as though one were to change around the letters on a typewriter and so end up with something quite different from what one had intended to type. That is what revolution is – true history. Something has happened. Anyone who came to Russia in 1916 and returned in 1918 would see that the people were not where they had been. That could be seen in the signified. Journalists would write, for instance, that 'one no longer sees anyone at the race courses', or 'the Winter Palace looks quite different'. But that was not the important thing: what had totally changed was the meaning of all the significations. In other words, something had happened to the signifier.

History is not the history of repetition, anti-historic history, the history of kings and queens; it is finding the signifying breakthrough, recognizing the point when the scales were tilted. But that signifying breakthrough is as hard to identify as the underlying meaning of a dream: what precisely was broken? Is it just that a few supposedly signifying chains were taken apart and rearranged in different ways? Since the signifier cannot be localized, and anything done to it involves its whole structure, one may admit that what has changed ought to be apparent from the way people talk – though it may be evident from other things too. Of course people talk differently, and even if they are still saying 'Good morning, mate,' the mate is not the man he was

before the Tsar was killed. He is different because he is no longer bound up in the same relationships of signifying articulation, the same signifying constellations of reference – with the other sex, people of a different age or race, with God, or whatever.

There are periods when everything seems to hang in the balance: the signifying chains of structure lose control, events are written into 'reality itself' according to a short-term, inconsistent, absurd semiotic, until a new plane of reference 'structured like a language' can be established. That was how the signifying systems of the ancient world were shattered, helplessly at the mercy of the passions of a handful of supreme leaders who were ripe for conversion to the new mysteries of eastern religions. Though from a rational point of view the Roman empire may have given the impression of being able to withstand anything, it was actually a society incapable of spontaneously producing the institutional responses needed to repair cracks that became ever more serious as it expanded to integrate, ever more precariously, more and more foreigners. The gainers from this were the Christians; they became the self-appointed champions of a return to nationalism, but the supposed progressivism of their god of love, their universal man with his masochistic passion – as the temporary obverse of a murderous messianism – represented in reality a gigantic step backwards – back beyond the great empires of Egypt, Mesopotamia and China, those vast machines that managed in one way or another to launch the first civilizations – with the invention of writing, of technical innovations, the division of labour among millions and so on. Later things went from bad to worse, to the Greek, the Roman and finally the Christian empires. With each change, the death instinct made permanent gains. Whatever regression there may have been in terms of techniques and institutions, military techniques always held on to, and systematized, whatever improvements they had achieved – iron swords, the use of cavalry and so on. Every new upsurge of civilization preserved bits of the previous edifice in a more or less dilapidated state, but the military machine embarked on a continuous process of innovations, later to give birth to the mechanization and militarizing of labour in capitalist society.

The marauding Greeks took over writing, a certain vision of the city, a memory of empire as a confederation. The Romans, greedy for Greek and Egyptian exoticism, tended rather to behave like American imperialists wherever they went. Then the Christians, like vultures, fell upon the refuse of the empire to try and secure their own hegemony (to the disgust of a man like Julian the Apostate). But they brought with them the poisonous seeds of all the Arianisms and Anglicanisms of the future, for they were incapable of getting the empire away from its claim to universal power, which could only be fought to the bitter end of total destruction.

To pursue this train of thought, let me now take the example of what is

happening today at a critical point in the relationship between the USSR and the USA. As we know – Trotsky pointed it out long ago in *The Revolution Betrayed* – the Russians have always imported their technology from the West; but since Khrushchev's day, they have also taken their economic models from there too. In fact, soviet bureaucratism has never been capable of accepting the developments in subjectivation that the Russian revolution carried within it. Hitherto, it has withstood the launching of any process of institutionalization which – without seriously challenging it – would have been comparable to what made Western capitalism transform itself after the 1929 crisis of State monopoly capitalism. (With, it is true, the invaluable assistance of the social-democrat and communist organizations.)

Obviously it will not be by importing models of desire – as they have been obliged to accept the introduction of jazz and Western fashions – that the Soviet bureaucrats will escape the fundamental impasse they have got themselves into, with their endless Five-Year Plans of which absolutely everyone is sick to death. Not merely are they starting no institutionalizing process by importing prefabricated car factories, but by the same token they are transplanting forms of human relationship quite foreign to socialism, a hierarchization of technological functions proper to a society based on individual profits, a split between research and industry, between intellectual and manual work, an alienating style of mass consumption and so on. These are all things that can be relatively harmless in the context of capitalist corruption – the brothel of the small firm and free enterprise – but, in this massive transplantation, become more dangerous by developing in a bureaucratic context that has no longer got the 'regulating mechanisms', the alarm bells available to capitalists in the form of public opinion and the state of the market. Not only are car factories imported, then, but also social neuroses, and in hyperactive form. So monstrous are these transplantations that one can depend on their ultimately becoming carriers of radically revolutionary signifying breakthroughs, where Trotsky envisaged only a simple 'political revolution' to sweep away the bureaucratic excrescence from a State he considered still fundamentally healthy and persisted in defining as a 'proletarian State'.

The signifying breakthrough, then, is not just something to expect from linguistic effects, and short of being ready to fall into a realism of the signifier and avoiding the problems, it must be admitted that it can equally well be played on a tom-tom or written with the feet (in the sense that people who walk out of a meeting are said to be 'voting with their feet'). The signifier can also carry its breakthrough into registers structured from one substance or another.[6] The Soviet leaders of today still fail to achieve that signifying

6. This implies an idea of the sign closer to Hjelmslev's '*glossématique*' than to syntagmatics; cf. Hjelmslev's *Prolégomènes*.

breakthrough, for they still import their models from the United States in just the same way as the Tsar thought he could build up a modern industry by borrowing the capital and the engineers from France, despite the incapacity of the Russian bourgeoisie.

Ultimately, one escapes from the structuralist impasse by recognizing that an effect of meaning only has repercussions at the level of the signified in so far as potentialities of subjective action are liberated, once there is a breach in the signifier. A phonological system and a certain type of production relations, both closed in upon themselves, contain potentialities of subjectivation. The machinic breakthrough, waiting, masked by the structure, is the subject in aspic, so to say, time at the ready. So long as the structure does not move, the subject does not appear. One day, there will cease to be any difference between, say *b* and *t*. Or, perhaps, between the father/boss and the apprentice (that apprentice who is yet to undertake his *tour de France* and his masterpiece), the distinction giving way to a homogeneous notion of a certain amount of specialized work. To abolish the difference between *b* and *t* means abolishing that between two significations such as *ball* and *tall*. What is abolished is not the difference between the two words in terms of the form of content, but in terms of the form of expression, between the plosive *b*, and the mute *t*. But if *ball* and *tall* could no longer be distinguished in their verbal or written expression, it could certainly have strange consequences in the world of phantasy. And it is primarily at that unconscious level that history is woven and that revolutions arise.[7]

It goes without saying, I hope, that these suggested examples are not to be taken literally. Economic distinctions of the kind that constitute the fundamental axiomatic of a system of production relations, and have therefore little connection with letters and literature, are nevertheless governed by the same signifying laws, repetitions, deadly structural impasses – and, equally, the same necessary breaks, the same potential revolutions.

Hence it is justifiable to think of causality in the order of the class struggle. Though it refuses to recognize the fact, the revolutionary movement is working out its action on the plane of subjectivity and the signifier, setting about causing other signifying breakthroughs, a subjective transmutation when, in a particular system, the bourgeoisie vainly persist in articulating distinctions of every kind (not just of the *ball/tall* variety) even though they no longer operate at the level either of unconscious or of economic production. Thus the terms of the class struggle – the class of class words – may perhaps have their fundamental accent and pronunciation changed, while those who continue to put forward their pronouncements without reference to this new unconscious syntax will be turning away from the subjective revolutionary

7. Cf. the notion of the '*situème*' introduced by Claude Poncin ('Essai d'analyse structurale appliquée à la psychothérapie institutionnelle', thesis presented in Nantes in 1962).

breakthrough that is coming, reifying the logic of history (a logic of non-sense), and falling despite themselves into structuralism.

The subject, as agent of breakthrough, is in eclipse, and what continues is the Ego; in this sense it is as absurd to talk of the subject of history as of the subject of the ego. Think how a child develops: 'Me – I'm this, I'm that.' Then comes a sudden change when the problem of the subject arises. The infantile ego was still involved in a system of identification in which the subject, the hidden agent of the situation, had up to then been simply an imaginary phallus (the child being for its mother the fruit, so to say, of the father), a phallus imprisoned in the womb of what we designate as the mother of what we designate as the child, still for some time indifferent to the symbolism of such designations, being too busy getting all its little partial machines working. Everything could have gone on like that if that memorable mother had not responded in a certain way, one day, to a certain wink from a certain butcher down the road. Then, suddenly, everything must be looked at with new eyes! The inscription of this simple event strikes home and produces the matrix of the eventful, of development, of history on a large scale, and all the small, sordid histories as well.

From then on, the problem of the structural re-moulding of the person of the child was unavoidable – and to raise the question of structure is to evoke the principle of closing-up, of the unleashing and intervention of the death instinct, of the split between the ego and the subject, between reality and pleasure, between praxis and enjoyment, between signifier and signified, between the power of uttering and the impotence of what is uttered. The truth that now comes to light is that the subject and the ego had never really coincided. That fact had never presented any great problem, but it now becomes officially intolerable. It is a dismemberment we can see happening before our very eyes. Under this new regime, everything must change; we must at all costs produce the illusion that the subject and the ego can be stuck together again in the ambiguous status of the individual and the person. A myth of totality – a totalitarian myth.

The schizzy subject will in reality remain in the background, and will be the subject of the unconscious, the hidden key to repressed utterances, the potential breakthrough to signifying chains capable of *anything* – including setting free the pent-up energy in wild animals, lunatics and other captives to ravage the formal gardens of the conscious mind and the social order. This subjectivity need give no account of itself either to law or to history. The subject and death are both outside history – they do not recognizably exist, they are nowhere. When do we die? When we are born? When we are alive? When we die? After we die? When? Once there is a concept of death, then we are always dead – even before we are born, since there can be no thought of existing apart from death. History is the opposite of death. In a sense, both

are equally absurd. Making history – or making a scene – is to stop making death; it means using every possible means to dissolve the illusory power of structures to give consistency to meaningless utterances about history and death.

2. The Leninist Breakthrough[8]

In history, in the sense in which we normally use the term, everything operates in the order of determination, and historical materialism, providing one does not fall into the simplifications of the Stalinists, remains the only viable method. But dialectical determinism misses one dimension that plays in counterpoint, so to say, to the very principle of determination. That is the paradox of, for instance, an institution like the French Communist Party, whose politics is totally determined by the state of the economic and social relations of State monopoly capitalism, is the prisoner of Gaullism, is dependent on the foreign policy of the USSR and so on; none of which, however, should conceal the fact that there is still, in France, a revolutionary path that depends partly on how the crisis within the Party develops. Or, to take another example, in Cuba one might have thought ten years ago that anything might happen – the sudden breakthrough of Castroism had changed everything, and for a time opened up a series of unpredictable events. I do not mean to say that there could be a Castro in France, but only to suggest that in the order of counter-determination, a whole range of subjective interventions and revolutionary upheavals is possible. This is not by any means to imply that there are necessary causes, but only that there are possibilities of interruptions in historical causality.[9]

Look at the Bolsheviks' intervention between February and October 1917, which was to prevent the natural development of things; they blocked what would 'normally' have taken place following a national débâcle on such a scale – some kind of coalition of the left and centre, living in hopes of better days and the recovery of power by traditionalist parties. The Bolsheviks *interpreted* the military, economic, social and political collapse as a victory of the masses – the first victory of the socialist revolution. It was Lenin who had the courage to maintain, at this critical juncture for Russia, the intransigent theory of 'revolutionary defeatism'. Note, too, that Bolshevik policy during this period depended wholly upon Lenin and his sudden awareness that the socialist revolution had become the immediate objective, given that the weakness of the Russian bourgeoisie made them incapable of consolidating their power. The situation Lenin faced was utterly unexpected. Up to then he

8. Summary of a commentary on Isaac Deutscher's life of Trotsky, published in the review *Critique*, June 1971.

9. 'For, *pace* the philosophers, reality is not united with the possible in necessity, but necessity is united with the possible in reality' (Søren Kierkegaard).

had stoutly disagreed with all who had predicted that such a bursting of banks would become inevitable (that is, Trotsky and the school of 'permanent revolution'). It remained for Lenin to convince his own party, and in the end it was by a kind of *coup* against his own Central Committee that he managed to enforce the line of what were called the April Theses: the immediate mobilization of the party and people to seize power.

The consequences of this about-turn, and the breach it produced in the Bolshevik party, were considerable. Some extremely important militants, like Zinoviev and Kamenev, did all they could by whatever means to oppose this new assumption of hegemony by the Party. The despairing energy they brought to battle against what seemed to them nothing but a dangerous temptation even suggests that they may have had some kind of historical foreknowledge of the Stalinist era that would follow this seizure of power, of the degeneration of the communist ideal that would ensue in the eyes of the masses, and the resulting damage to the entire Marxist revolutionary movement.

But neither Lenin nor Trotsky was disposed to let such premonitions stop them. For the first time in fifteen years, they found themselves in agreement again: they must hurl themselves into the breach with their heads down, and by a kind of collective voluntarism, force history to record indelibly this proletarian revolutionary breakthrough – despite the weakness of the Russian proletariat, and without thought of the consequences, or even of the possible boomerang effects. The hour of the first socialist revolution *must* strike. Soon after, the breach was closed and the cutting edge of the Bolshevik action blunted; some people were to claim that the historical causality of the balance of forces had never in fact ceased to operate, that this great signifying breakthrough – the Leninist breakthrough – was just a mirage and that history was still, in the last resort, governed by the same laws as nature, or rather the laws postulated by the positivist imagination.

Nevertheless, that breakthrough is still imprinted on our history, as much by the contribution it has made to our theoretical understanding and its actualization of an effective class struggle (that had hitherto been more or less hypothetical), as by its limitations, its dependence on circumstance, the scars and blemishes we have inherited from it – of which we cannot rid ourselves because of our inability to overcome its effects of repetition. The real question is in what fashion we should best look back at such moments of history, to what point it is necessary to analyse all the circumstances that affected them, and, by the same token, how much weight we should give to day-to-day events in our own revolutionary endeavours.

One might think it preferable to remain at a certain level of generality, for instance to restrict our analysis of the 'recuperation' of Bolshevism to a consideration of the purely historical causality of the prevailing balance of

forces, and to rest content with expounding the classic theory that it was inevitable, given the failure of the German revolution, the betrayal of social democracy in Europe, the weariness of the mass of the people and so on. Or one could consider a more complex approach that would cross the traditional boundaries and try to work out the links connecting the different orders of determination – economic, demographic, sociological, the unconscious, etc. One would then no longer have to choose one plane of significance over another – *either* the human factor *or* the economic, for instance – but could follow in detail the winding trail of the signifier, its crossroads, dead ends, ramifications, repetitions, backward turns. Such a study, in which the work of the historian and the economist would be continually tied in with the production of psychoanalytic biographies, linguistic studies and so forth, would be a kind of crucible from which might emerge a new race of militant analysts who would help Marxism at last to recover from the fatal disease of generality that now paralyses it.

To return to the October revolution, it should be possible to understand in greater depth what were the circumstances and the framework of the Leninist breakthrough, without fear of getting bogged down in what seem at first sight to be unimportant details. What complex network of signifiers put the Bolsheviks in a position to launch those 'ten days that shook the world'? What were the obstacles that caused them to stumble, and stand by helplessly before the hideous regression of Stalinism that was to distort the revolution and to paralyse and undermine dozens of revolutionary movements in succeeding decades?

It is no discredit to them to say, first of all, that the Bolsheviks very soon – indeed from the beginning of the revolution – showed themselves unable to assume command of the masses, because they stuck to their fundamental policy and their ethical principles. In the paroxysms of October 1917, the Party machine (still a small underground organization) had to cope with the results of generalized collapse and imperialist encirclement. An embryo State had to be set up – in which they were caught between the demands of 'War Communism' and the promise of the withering away of the proletarian State in the future – a revolutionary army had hastily to be mobilized, but for technical reasons (or so it seemed at the time) its high command had to include officers of the old Tsarist army, and it had to return almost wholly to traditional military methods. The same Party apparatus had – or so, again, it seemed at the time – a duty to coordinate strategically, and even to plan tactically, revolutionary struggles all over the world. So, without even getting formal agreement from the party of Rosa Luxemburg, and while European social democracy was far from having resolved the crisis it was undergoing, the Bolsheviks improvised a new International out of a lot of small, disparate groups. The Party was everywhere, and felt responsible for everything. The

Bolshevik concept of the relationship between the masses and the vanguard meant that the revolutionary Party – the apparatus, in other words – had to put itself forward in every situation, speak for the people, take command of them and so on.

All this calls for analyses in depth of the various 'areas' – organizational, political, theoretical and ethical – of Bolshevism. One could start from the fact – that seems to me undeniable – that the handful of 'old Bolsheviks', conscious of their mission and, with few exceptions, not intoxicated with success, nevertheless contributed, for reasons of propaganda and party cohesion, to allowing a *collective* phantasy of omnipotence to develop which at times assumed megalomaniac proportions among the newcomers to the Party. The Party became invested with a kind of messianic vocation, being destined by history to be a universal judge of true and false, of good and bad revolutionaries and so on. The mechanistic notions prevailing among the intelligentsia of the period also played their part: for instance there was that deplorable analogy, which still perverts the workers' movement today, of the 'driving belt' as an image of how mass organizations should be mediating between the Party and the masses, to make sure that orders were passed on correctly.

The Leninist Party was no more prepared than any other – especially not at the theoretical level – to respond to and encourage such a wholly new process of institutionalization as the development of the soviets was at first. Later on, whether organizing workers, young people, women or anyone else, they never really got away from the traditional pattern. No lasting institutional innovation could have developed. Once power had been seized, the soviets disappeared.

The end result, even before Lenin died, was to be the elimination and persecution of all opposition (the outlawing of the Left Social Revolutionaries, the anarchists, the workers' opposition, fractions within the Party, etc.). There followed, in the absence of any popular counter-weight, a cancerous growth of political, police, military, economic and every other kind of technocracy. The militarization of the Red Army by Trotsky was to be followed by his plan of militarizing the trade unions and setting up a system of forced labour – all justified by laborious arguments based on quasi-lunatic theories, such as the statement that feudal serf labour had been a 'progressive phenomenon'.[10] It was to be Stalin who actually put all these wondrous theories into practice – and militarized the Party, the State and the Third International into the bargain. As early as 1921, the commune of Kronstadt was universally repudiated and calumniated.[11]

10. Isaac Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, OUP, 1954, p. 501.

11. Cf. the translation of the fourteen issues of *Isvestia* from Kronstadt in *La Commune de Cronstadt*, Bélibaste; also *Ni dieu ni maître*, de Delphes, p. 556.

Thus Trotsky, forced into Leninism by the revolution, yet always in two minds, came to apply with savage rigidity a grotesque Bolshevism, a line that was the precise opposite of the one he had followed as leader of the Petrograd soviet in 1905 and 1917. But in his case, unlike Lenin, when he reversed his line, theory seems to have ceased to have any connection with reality – or at least it only became re-connected to it after the event, the whole function of his literary activity being to create a retroactive compatibility. Trotsky in fact always became the man of impossible situations; he was veritably possessed by 'iron discipline', the mechanics of regulation, a belief in his 'representativeness' verging on self-dramatization – and this despite the fact that he had previously been among the loudest in denouncing the danger of the 'political substitutionism' inherent in Leninist centralism. His exaggerations were undoubtedly a result of his having come late to Leninism; with the Bolshevik 'old guard' spurring him on, he was driven to out-centralize the centralists. But he also had a general tendency to excess in everything. Lenin himself thought it necessary, in his Testament, after praising him unequivocally, to warn of Trotsky's 'too far-reaching self-confidence' and his 'disposition to be far too much attracted by the purely administrative side of affairs'.

Lenin, less of a theorist, certainly less literary and perhaps less directly in touch with the masses than Trotsky, never had any such discrepancy between theory and practice. Changing one's mind or altering one's political line never seem to have presented any real problem to him. His whole being was centred on the objective in view, though he was far from despising diplomacy and compromise; he did not fundamentally believe that questions of the individual mattered – starting with himself. His whole political history illustrates this, but it was perhaps peculiarly significant in relation to what I shall call the moment of the fundamental Leninist breakthrough, in August 1903, at the end of the Second Congress of the All-Russian Social Democratic Labour Party. Yet, at least in appearance, matters did not develop on any clear political or theoretical basis.

The split, according to Trotsky, came out of a clear blue sky.[12] Everything was going normally, with the traditional bickering among the various tendencies: for the fifty-eight delegates (of whom, incidentally, only three were workers) meeting in London after having had to leave Brussels after a police warning, the main aim was to consolidate the constitution of the Party. The trouble arose over the definition of membership, with a disagreement over the meaning of *two words* in one paragraph of the statutes, and the argument then shifted to the number of members of the *Iskra* editorial committee: for reasons of efficiency – which may well have concealed ulterior

12. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, p. 83. See also Denis Authier's recent French translation of the *Report of the Siberian Delegation*, written by Trotsky immediately after the Congress, Spartakus Cahiers Mensuels, no. 31, 1970; and Trotsky's *Our Political Tasks*, Éditions Pierre Bellfond, 1970.

political motives – Lenin wanted it to be reduced to three. It was problems of this sort that shattered the precarious equilibrium that had somehow been maintained hitherto among the groups that constituted the Russian Social Democratic Party. Trouble had certainly been smouldering for some time: there had been ill-tempered polemics over divergences with the 'Economists', who in fact comprised most of the Party's working-class militants; and the obsessive fear of certain of the Party's intellectuals of falling into revisionism led them to exaggerate the risk (which could only be imaginary in the actual context of Tsarist Russia) of a split between work on the shop floor and political action.

Then too there was the deplorable dispute that led to the exclusion of the Bund: the rationalism of the leaders prevented their understanding the desire of the Jewish militants to maintain a minimum of organizational identity – though God knows the condition of Jewish workers in Russia at the time was precarious. On this point, the leadership made Trotsky their spokesman, and the violence of his interventions won him the nickname of 'Lenin's cudgel'. But I cannot here give an adequate account of all the details. Suffice it to say that the chain of events could not be halted: Martov broke with Lenin, then Lenin with Plekhanov, then Plekhanov with Trotsky – all accompanied by intransigent invective and the end of longstanding friendships. Yet it was against this black theatre, with this claustrophobic psychodrama, that a new signifying system came into being, a new axiomatic of the revolutionary movement, on which our thinking is still largely dependent today.

What happened at that Congress was repeated *ad infinitum* elsewhere. Statements were hardened into dogma, and taken completely out of the context in which they had been made. As dominant utterances, their function then became that of seeking to control all divergent utterance. A whole professional Bolshevik style and attitudes, a perverted fondness for creating splits on matters of principle – accompanied with a flexibility of tactics that almost at times verged on duplicity – entered the sphere of militant subjectivity. I am convinced that phoneticists, phonologists and semanticists would be able to trace back to this event the crystallization of certain linguistic characteristics, the ways – always the same – in which stereotyped formulae are still hammered out by revolutionaries today, whatever language they are taken from. A new variant of the universal language of revolution – a 'special language' indeed! – was born out of this theatre of the absurd, giving form to a message divided against itself and solidity to a doctrine of anti-revisionism, anti-centrism, etc.

It also created an area of inertia that was seriously to restrict the openness of revolutionary militants trained in that school, justifying them in an uncritical acceptance of slick-sounding slogans, and causing most of them to belittle the function of desire – first for themselves, in the process of their own,

new-style bureaucratization, and then for the masses, towards whom they were to develop a domineering and contemptuous attitude, that hateful 'love' of the militant who knows everything *a priori* and systematically refuses to listen to anything other than the Party line. The opium of the militant, a sado-masochistic enticement! The desire of the masses certainly includes a will to fight, but also a knowledge that does not necessarily coincide with an over-schematic Party line that takes no account of the unexpectedness of events or exceptional rearrangements of power alignments: a joyless line. Not that the masses are in themselves anarchist, but it is for themselves that they want to fight, at their own pace, to suit their own inclination and as they please, though they will put themselves in the hands of a Party apparatus when they are baffled by conflicting alternatives, or simply lose interest altogether.

From this fundamental breach, then, the Leninist machine was launched on its career; history was still to give it a face and a substance, but its fundamental encoding, so to say, was already determined. Basically, the question we come up against is what other machine – if a machine there must be – could replace it, more effectively, and with less damage to the desire of the masses. Of course I am not saying that it is the breach of 1903 *alone* that has persisted through history, from Leninism to Stalinism to Maoism; things have developed and altered with circumstances. I am simply saying that the fundamental signifiers, the cardinal positions, entered history at that moment. This is simply a working hypothesis that must be examined with care, re-worked, perhaps even ousted altogether. My intention was to give a brief illustration of one possible line of analysis, and I must stress that this reservation is not just a matter of form: I am not going to do to the myths of the present-day revolutionary movement what psychoanalysts, for instance, do to the myths of antiquity – taking them as absolute reference points, and claiming that they are precisely the same as themselves, at every stage and in every area of the phenomenology of the unconscious.

Indeed, what must be made absolutely clear is the fact that, as long as no revolutionary *interpretation* has cast any new light on things, every period remains the prisoner of *historically definable* myths. I began with the 'Bolshevik complex', but I could equally have taken the '1936 complex' as my starting point, with its variants of anti-fascism – united national front, popular front, and even the crumbling and hollow myth of the 'alliance of all the people' that did such harm to the anti-imperialist struggle. This time, if one is to pinpoint a fundamental breakthrough (following on from the earlier one), what happened must be seen in relation to a process that was going on in the heads of the Stalinist bureaucrats when they went through the motions of holding a Seventh Congress of the International in 1935, after Hitler's coming to power and the Reichstag fire. Unable much longer to conceal the bankruptcy of the

line followed since 1929, Dimitrov became the spokesman of the official abandonment of the factional errors of the so-called 'third period' in favour of precisely the opposite policy – a switch that was to carry the entire communist movement into the most appalling opportunism to fit in with the policy of Moscow. Moscow, as we know, was to do another about-turn with the German–Soviet pact, and even ended by negotiating with imperialism the dissolution of what was no longer any more than a make-believe International.

That 'popular-front complex' also left behind another, idealized, aspect, which one could illustrate either by the emaciated outline of the International Brigade volunteer returning from Spain, the bitterness of defeat causing him to leave unasked the question 'Why?' after so great an invisible betrayal; or by the rose-coloured picture of the 'spirit of the Resistance' that was impressed on several generations in the days after the Liberation, still largely bound up with the illusions of pre-war times, with pacifism, with the back-to-the-land mystique, all expressing a systematic *méconnaissance* of the hard reality of the class struggle and imperialist confrontation.

I am not concerned here with the question of whether or not a revolutionary praxis can prevent itself being side-tracked into such collective phantasy formations which in a sense punctuate history, but can also paralyse or positively pervert the masses.[13] This question boils down to deciding what conditions would permit the emergence of independent groups capable of controlling their own phantasizing sufficiently to restrict it to *transitional* phantasies – phantasies whose historical limitation is recognized – and to prevent the group's becoming bogged down in the phantasies of the dominant group and so itself becoming a dependent group. And I would stress, here, that any attempt at analysis, in this sphere, would have to consider not only the utterances of history as they have reached us, but also the way the authors of such utterances are constituted and how they function.

To return to those few dozen delegates at the Second Congress of the Social Democratic Labour Party: they were clearly quite incapable of facing and admitting the truth, perhaps for the very reason that they were totally surrounded by it. Some day it may be possible to talk of the principal delegate, Lenin, without bringing upon oneself a flood of abuse, and to try to explore a phase of his life that was certainly one of the starting points of that radical break that constitutes Leninism: I mean the crisis in his life when, in the spring of 1887, his elder brother Alexander was executed as the chief culprit in an attempt to assassinate Tsar Alexander III. In his biography of Lenin,[14] Louis Fischer shows how official history has misrepresented the

13. Isaac Deutscher, adopting Trotsky's analysis of Nazism, talks of the 'political neurosis of impoverished millions [that] gave National Socialism its force and impetus' (*The Prophet Outcast*, OUP, 1963, p. 133).

14. Louis Fischer, *Lénine*, Christian Bourgois, 1966.

relative positions of the brothers. The Stalinist view is a simple one: on the one hand was the Narodnik terrorist, and on the other the young Marxist who, when his brother died, declared, 'We must do it differently – this is not the right path . . .'

In fact, up to that stage, Volodia – the future Lenin, then only seventeen – had not been following his brother's revolutionary path at all. Indeed, they did not even get on very well. Whereas Volodia was a chess enthusiast and loved to read Turgenev, Alexander was translating Marx into Russian, studying *Capital* and leading a group of militants who belonged both to the revolutionary *Narodnya Volya* (People's Party) and Plekhanov's Marxist group. A far cry from the Stalinist picture! Alexander, by doggedly refusing to beg the Tsar for clemency, became a legendary figure to Russian revolutionaries. It was only after his death that Volodia became interested in his ideas, and at first he was equally sympathetic to the *narodniks*. In fact, though he later became fiercely opposed to them, Lenin was to be abused by legalistic social democrats for the rest of his life for his taste for terrorism and underground organizations.

This very real change was to turn the future of the brilliant student completely upside down, and one must certainly look back to it to understand the fundamental and intractable difference between Lenin's relationship to reality – whatever his politico-theoretical utterances – and that of a man like Trotsky.

Trotsky was worlds away: he too had undergone a shattering change, but it had marked him less obviously, affecting mainly his imaginative capacity. There are good reasons for believing that, throughout his life, the fact of being a Jew led him to seek for a sense of belonging, a legitimation, even at the risk of becoming identified with the dominant image. Even his pseudonym was the name of one of his former gaolers in Odessa prison, written on his forged passport on the spur of the moment when he escaped from Irkutsk in 1902. I should like to hope, without offending the sensitive or reawakening Stalinist racism, that historians will one day give more thought to Isaac Deutscher's question: 'In this hazardous escape did the identification with his gaoler perhaps gratify in the fugitive a subconscious craving for safety?'[15]

This might give us better clues to interpreting such apparently aberrant facts as the motive given by Trotsky immediately after the October revolution for refusing Lenin's proposal that he become president of the first government of soviets – namely that he was a *Jew*. It might also be possible to see further than Deutscher's rather hasty interpretation of another incident: he puts down to simple jealousy Trotsky's refusal to become deputy chairman of the Council of People's Commissars as Lenin kept begging him to – from April

15. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, p. 56.

1922 until he died – in order to provide a counter-weight to Stalin at the head of the party apparatus.[16] Innumerable successive inhibitions led Trotsky, Hamlet-like, to refuse as long as possible to take any real action against Stalin, despite the urgings of Lenin, paralysed on his deathbed. It was only long after Lenin's death that he was to embark on a fierce struggle against the bureaucracy, and by then the situation had become so corrupt that any such attempt could only lead to death.

If it is true that such weighty stakes were potentially at issue in the debates of the 1903 Congress, and that they could be sensed in the way the unconscious chains were developing then, it is easy to see why those taking part suddenly ceased to be rational, dazed by threatening historical truths, and tempted to take refuge in stereotyped modes of defence and prejudices.[17] Apart from Lenin – that is – who seems on the contrary to have emerged from the ordeal stronger, and more determined than ever to get rid of the friendly way of doing things in social democracy. However, immediately after the Congress he wrote to Potresov: 'And now I am asking myself: for what reason should we part to become life-long enemies? I am receiving all the events and impressions of the congress, I am aware that often I acted and behaved in terrible irritation, "madly", and I am willing to admit this guilt to anybody – if one can call guilt something that was naturally caused by the atmosphere, the reactions, the retorts, the struggle, etc.'[18]

However, without questioning the sincerity of this, one may still believe that, at bottom, he had no illusions as to the chances of repairing the damage. As far as he was concerned, one phase was over. Former comrades could, of course, always return to what he considered the majority of the Party, but it would be on the basis of a new, and henceforth unquestioned, centralism. In fact, those militants who had not at first been formally affiliated to the Leninist camp drifted towards the rather vague group that comprised the Mensheviks. A number of them emerged from the ordeal permanently in two minds: Martov, for instance, who had been a front-ranking militant, continued ambivalent through the Zimmerwald Conferences and the revolution, and on up to his death in exile in 1923.

Though it may be said that the fundamental options of Leninism were crystallized from that time forward, the same is not true of the other tendencies. The available alternatives seem always to have been in search of

16. Deutscher, *The Prophet Unarmed*, pp. 35, 66, 87. The Stalinists, always ready to abuse, spoke of his refusal as an insult to Lenin.

17. One might apply here what Lacan says of the subjective drama of the philosopher who has to contain a major crisis in his thinking: that drama 'has its victims, and there is nothing to suggest that their fate is related to the Oedipus myth', except, he says later on, that the whole myth is itself brought into question.

18. Deutscher, *The Prophet Armed*, p. 80n.

people to adopt them, and moving with a certain fluidity from one adherent to another. The militant scenario of 1903 was still far from having developed into that vast man-eating machine that post-revolutionary Russia was to become, in which a show trial, theatre of a very different kind, would inform everyone once and for all what official history would record them as having been – or not been. At this stage, Stalin, who was single-minded if ever a man was, had not yet become the prototype and leader of a sadistic pseudo-Bolshevism. Trotsky was not yet the man whose every statement must be refuted, and who must eventually be murdered – the main effect of lies and calumnies being to neutralize any possibility of the Stalinists' producing their own ideas, dooming them by a paradoxical kind of reaction to repeat word for word, though later, out of context and with distaste, Trotskyist pronouncements on the economy, international politics and so on. Kamenev and Zinoviev were not yet the centrists and ultimate traitors who had from the first merely been biding their time. And, be it also said, Lenin himself was far from being that intransigent figure representing a rigid centralism presented to us by simplistic historians. Truth to say, in 1903 centralism was in the air; it was even fashionable in social democracy – the venerable Plekhanov himself was a centralist, and the young Trotsky used his success as an orator to become even more of a centralist than Lenin.

I mention all this here, summarily enough, merely in order to illustrate my view that a split of the kind that officially divided Russian social democracy in 1912 into two irreconcilable parties (with all that it entailed for the unfolding of the revolution) could have been counter-determined long before, *nachträglich*, by deferred action (to use Freud's term), and in areas quite different from those traditionally focused on by those who plan history. This is especially the case in the detail I have barely touched on of what I call 'militant representation', which is itself simply the manifestation of unconscious signifiers, potential utterances and creative crises relating to substances as yet insignificant, and producing subjective effects simultaneously affecting the whole of the historical sequence under consideration.

It is as though history, to recover its extension in time, can only depend on contingent support, in the form of those breakthroughs more or less unconsciously actualized by agencies of collective utterance, that is to say subject groups – which at the present time are militant revolutionary groups. Such statements will no doubt be deprecated as reducing historical causality to trivia; and in a sense this is quite true. To what extent are the mass of people prepared to sacrifice themselves for things that 'really matter', to shoulder their fundamental historical tasks? Under what conditions would they consider uniting as one man to form a vast war machine like the one that swept all before it in 1917? Surely the first condition (without which the death instinct would take over collectively) should be an assurance that the 'trivia' that are

for them the salt of life, the source of their desire, would not be forgotten in the process? One has only to recall the vast and interminable drinking spree that followed the popular seizure of power in Petrograd – and the shocked horror of the Bolshevik leaders! It was disastrous, certainly, but it could also be said that people have sometimes earned a holiday.

Desire, subjectivity, at this level of collective crystallization, is something that necessarily remains very close to the masses and can only be related extremely indirectly to fundamental historical goals still programmatic and abstract at the time of being formulated. Analysis, as a revolutionary undertaking, contributes to forming a link between two disconnected orders, between what happens and what people say, or rather, what does not happen and is not said openly in the official or unofficial headquarters of the revolution – things which to a large extent, alas, condition the possibilities of popular expression, combined with their fatal capacity for self-repression when it comes to innovation, spontaneity and desire. We might say, briefly, as a reference point, that the object of such analysis would be to identify and interpret the coefficients of transversality relative to the various social spheres under consideration.

3. Integration of the Working Class and Analytical Perspective[19]

After 1936 there began a transformation in French political society, which led to working-class organizations being integrated into the capitalist system.

At first, it was a matter of situations arising out of events, of dramatic crises, but the workers' movement was gradually integrated into the legal order of things, despite the protests – admittedly, increasingly timid – of its spokesmen. The 'spirit of the class struggle' was to weaken still further among communist militants in a context of supposedly peaceful coexistence among differing regimes and, implicitly, classes. In practice (despite the declarations of principle produced at annual congresses) it was understood that movements to improve wages and conditions would shy away from any political opening that might present a serious threat to capitalism. In 1936, and again in 1945, when the balance of forces made it possible to envisage going much further, the communist leaders let themselves be guided by formulae for working-class integration which successfully plastered over the cracks in capitalism, and indeed reinforced it.

Khrushchevism marked a new stage, and the *de facto* social-democratization of the Communist Parties became a rightist ideology. It could not be said in so many words that the Communist Parties had become the good and faithful servants of capitalism, but with a view to the national interest and

19. From a talk given at a Left Opposition training course at Bièvres, Easter 1966.

popular unity (including small capitalists) it was realized that communist ministers would be the best people to administer a capitalism of the 'left', without seeking to make any really fundamental changes. And so it proved, as the national economy, the French army and the Union Française were reconstructed under the Tripartism of the Liberation. The fact that the French Party is now trying – long after the Italian – to adopt a more liberal image, accepting the idea that a pluralism of parties could establish socialism and so on, is, of course, *purely* coincidental! It becomes more liberal in its promises for 'after the revolution', as it becomes less determined to have a revolution.

What we are seeing, then, is a process leading not merely to the decay of all working-class political life, but consequently, if it is still true that the class struggle is its mainspring, of political life in general. When we seem to be having a political debate, in other words a debate that might lead to questioning the established political power, we are in fact merely organizing a pseudo-participation, a 'consultation' of 'consumers', to persuade them to be concerned with such problems as the standard of living, the normalization of economic processes, national and regional standardization, investment, the movement of manpower, consumption, etc. – all of which is in fact manipulated by technocrats and pressure groups.

The bourgeoisie can favour this de-politicization all the more since the most important centres of economic decision do not coincide with existing national structures but with other imperialist and oligarchic bodies altogether, distinct even from such 'maxi-markets' as the EEC. Those international, cosmopolitan intersections of capitalism actively foster de-politicization – in the sense of traditional national politics – because their economic strategy, based on keeping profits high, disregards national barriers: their 'openings' to Eastern Europe and the Third World are calculated in the long term in the hope of absorbing them as well. What we are seeing is a general evolution of all industrial societies towards removing altogether the need for a political society.

Bourgeois political society was indispensable when it came to coping with one stage of the class struggle, but since the working classes are tending to neutralize themselves via their organizations, we are now witnessing the fading-out of any prospect of a revolutionary takeover by the masses. And when modernists fight for a leftist government, it is not merely that they do not fear the possibility of communist participation, but that they actually hope for it: they know quite well that there is no longer any risk of the French Communist Party getting out of control, and that the communists would be far more effective in containing any possible mass movement that might arise than the riot police.

Everyone knows this, and it may seem pointless to mention it when talking

of the validity or otherwise of trying to analyse political groups. However, it seems to me that this must be our starting point: we must understand that the 'treason' of the French Communist Party is no more than a desperate attempt on the part of a traditional body to keep itself going in the context of radically altered production relations. This change should have involved a radical transformation of the methods, the line and the aims of the great old days of the Popular Front. All of which, needless to say, lacks credibility and interests no one, apart from those whose profession is electoral pimping. It is just a lot of surface activity and has no real bearing on politics, but it is guaranteed to be effective with the trade unions, whose leaders are now the real agents of working-class integration.

Under these circumstances, the French Communist Party is peculiarly badly placed to combat the myths of the consumer society, for it has no sort of alternative to offer. By comparison, the leftist groupuscules undoubtedly represent an attempt to keep alive the basic themes of an independent, working-class revolutionary policy. Unfortunately, all we see of them is their failure. We as individuals who have worked our way from the Communist Party to our present groups should at least have discovered the total inadequacy of both theory and praxis everywhere – characterized by the fact that the problems that exercise us have generally been around for at least as long as the forty years the Israelites spent in the wilderness.

When the French Communist Party come to analyse a situation 'objectively', their immediate response is to justify the most banal opportunism, the abandonment of those fundamental concepts of Marxism that would link the struggles now taking place with a true, overall perspective. When the left groupuscules defend a revolutionary programme, they always misunderstand what is actually happening, for their vision is totally distorted by their ideology.

In spite of everything, therefore, the Communist Party and its organizations are still the only ones with some slight grasp on social reality. They represent an apparatus whose mission seems to be to gain control of the latent reformism of the working class. But unlike Lenin, who analysed the nature of that reformism, the Party is busily adjusting itself to it, and even taking the lead at every step, as is evident from its policy for its cadres. Can one reasonably consider that apparatus as an 'analyst' of the working class's unconscious? Can one, correspondingly, consider that the left groupuscules are at present the only ones to embody the working class's historic mission as midwife to the class struggle of a new society in which classes are abolished?

I would suggest, rather, that this split between two modes of social subjectivity – reformist working-class subjectivity, more or less canalized in the French Communist Party, and revolutionary subjectivity, more or less embodied in the left groupuscules – could be the point from which to consider

the question of an analytical undertaking, of putting bodies whose work is analytical in contact with socio-professional and political groups. Experience of the Left Opposition and the FGERI has made us better able to appreciate the difficulties and risks such a project involves. There is especially the risk of absorbing the myths of the modernists more than the Communist Party or the Unified Socialist Party ever could: the entry onto the scene of the famous 'new working class', the peaceful occupation of the 'real centres of decision-making', the promotion of 'inter-disciplinary research' – to which we add, to indicate our originality, 'based, if possible, on mass study'. It all sounds fine, and generally works pretty well. But where does it get us? We could, like a political groupuscule, calculate that at some point we shall decide on a sudden change of direction, on defining clear political bases for the FGERI, and trying to take over all or part of that movement within a revolutionary perspective.

Anything could happen, of course, but as long as we have one foot in reformism, in the wake of the PCF, and the other in a dogmatism barely distinguishable from that of the left groups, it would seem that our successes in the FGERI are unlikely to advance the formation of a revolutionary vanguard or to get the workers' movement out of its present quicksands. For years now we have continued to exist as a group, without any valid reason in terms of the ordinary logic of a classic revolutionary. What the hell are we doing? We argue, we do this and that. We should have given up long ago and, as individuals, each according to our own desires, have joined the various traditional left groups, or gone back to the Communist Party, or vegetated in the PSU, doping our minds with banalities or resigning ourselves to the impossibility of doing anything.

Open possibilities would thus be closed again: 'The whole thing was too complicated – this isn't the time – the workers wouldn't have understood us,' and all that. It may be that there is no way out for us from this maddening contradiction: having somehow or other to sustain this kind of analytic pretension – these analytic operators – that proposes, right among the masses and without ceasing to pose the fundamental political problem, to overcome the disastrous split between the political and the syndical. What this means for us is attempting to establish a bridgehead between an analysis at the level of the masses and a revolutionary praxis for overthrowing capitalism.

From the point of view of the working class, young people and students, the reality is that they are always made to see themselves in reference to production, merchandise, results, diplomas and so on. (In this respect, we know that the kind of critique undertaken by the FGERI is possible and useful.) From another point of view, they can only turn to fossilized organizations that claim to represent them, but in fact merely act *for* them. This is the sociological manifestation of the preservation by inertia of institutional

objects void of all substance, the sheer repetition of a bureaucratic routine and a meaningless web of words.

Just like the managerial system or the State system, these empty institutional objects are also instruments of alienation of the working class, helping to hold it back from its historic mission and its revolutionary reality. These objects will not be made to disappear by any magic wand, any revolutionary programme: they represent the essential cogs and wheels of anti-production relations. People may try to evade them by all manner of means – setting up Trotskyist enclaves, a policy of entrism – but it will make no difference. On the contrary, the repeated failure of such attempts only provides them with further justification: 'However corrupt the Church may be, nothing else works . . .' Stalinist and social democratic organizations are seen, by those subject to them, as a kind of lamentable necessity, and therefore the first thing we have to be convinced of is that the destruction of such edifices and the transformation of leftist groupuscules involves the deployment of new conceptual references, the production of new forms of organization not even hinted at in the regular assortment currently on offer on the Marxist–Leninist market.

It is the revolutionary vanguard's failure to understand the unconscious processes that emerge as socio-economic determinisms that has left the working class defenceless in the face of capitalism's modern mechanisms of alienation. The bureaucratic organizations that claim to represent the working class take root in the very fabric of that social unconscious. As long as that vanguard remains helpless, disorientated, with no understanding of those structures of social neurosis of which bureaucratism is only a symptom, then there is no chance of those structures miraculously disintegrating. Khrushchev-style 'liberalism', far from being a step forward, far from finally weakening the internal bureaucracy, seems actually bound to reinforce it under the benevolent, indeed the playboy image, of the young leaders now being brought to the fore.

Capitalism carries this bureaucratic cancer within it precisely in so far as it is unable to overcome its underlying institutional contradictions. Where once it needed a radical-socialist republic, it now needs to control the means of production, especially the movement of labour. So long as the organizations of the working class are not only entrapped into the politics of participation, but can see no clear way out of the morass, and are making no start on any process of revolutionary institution along the lines of dual power, then there is little to be hoped for from future struggles.

Bolshevism represented a certain potential of intervention against social democratic bureaucratism, but things are different today: the problem now is how we can possibly blow away the participationist fumes that are gradually stupefying the working class. That they are in the main effective at the level of

the imaginary only aggravates the danger. Despite its theoretical inadequacy, Leninism managed to put its finger on the mechanism whereby the working class, left to itself, tends to slide into trade-unionism, in other words into the primacy of demand over desire. The Leninist solution of a political break, of establishing a separate institutional object, a machine of consciousness and action composed wholly of professional revolutionaries, was, as history has shown, the right one in a catastrophic situation like that in Russia in 1917. But it could not give the working class the means to seize power in highly developed capitalist regimes – in regimes, that is, where power was not concentrated into an identifiable oligarchy (the 'two hundred families') but held in the meshes of an infinitely complex network of production relations covering every element of the world economy and even the smallest of our everyday actions.

However, Leninism has left us a line of thought to explore what I have called, for want of a better term, 'group castration', the 'Leninist breakthrough',[20] in other words the effect of the emergence of subject groups on ordinary human relationships. What happens when as solid a machine as Lenin's Party goes into action? None of the usual rules apply. To paraphrase Archimedes, Lenin asked to be given a party, and he would lift Russia. But for us, today, what sort of revolutionary machine could blow up all the citadels of bureaucratism and get the revolution started? We shall not find out by blindly groping about. The theoretical problem of analysis remains as great as ever. We must have the means to demonstrate theoretically, and interpret satisfactorily, the mechanisms whereby wage-earners simply become the tools of the exploiters, the forces that account for the continuity of the French Communist Party, the CGT, etc., so that workers go on trusting them despite the repulsion they inspire. Apart from this, the revolutionary vanguard must itself experience the repetitive mechanisms to which the working class is subjected.

The syndical and integrationist mentality is rooted deeply in people's minds. Questions are expected to be asked as a matter of urgency, even of scandal: the boss, or the minister, is expected to 'accept his responsibilities'. But the legitimacy of his power is never really questioned. How can analytical politics break through all this, and consolidate itself by finding points of support in other areas? 'People must meet and discuss freely, placing themselves as far as possible outside what is going on, no longer playing along with the system . . .' Well, that does not really get us much further. Yet surely this de-centring, this change of style, is precisely what constitutes the essence of the breakaway of politics, its divergence from demand? Of an other politics, a politics of otherness, a revolutionary politics?

20. 'Transversality', after all, is no more than an attempt to analyse democratic centralism!

The work so far done in the FGERI must not be overestimated. In the main, it has affected only sectors little marked by Stalinism, sectors, too, relatively free of capitalist interference (education, urban studies, health and such). I say 'relatively', because things are changing, and because the respective status of the middle and working classes is also changing – not in the direction of a 'new working class', but towards a working class being fitted into a new situation and tending to absorb the whole of the tertiary sector.

Think for instance of psychiatry, a sector in which we have had direct experience of the failure of the trade unions to define any consistent programme of demands on behalf of psychiatric nurses. As we all know, their profession is undergoing profound modifications because of the development both of medical techniques and of institutional innovations. From the warders of the past, nurses are now tending to become highly qualified technicians who may well be called on in future to take over a large part of the role traditionally allotted to the psychiatrist (district policy, home care, etc.). But the unions do not want to know. All that matters to them is to defend established gains. They are not interested in reviewing the system of three eight-hour shifts that paralyses the organization of life in the hospital; instead, they will fight to the last to defend a nonsensical hierarchy rejected by the majority of the staff. Some of the national union leaders were nurses in their youth but are now totally out of touch, and these too the majority reject. One attempt to achieve something – organizing staff associations – has made it clear that at this level the bureaucrats are not likely to get much response, even where they do not resort to the sort of abuse and threats of expulsion from the CGT that one so often hears: 'You are Gaullists, you are acting against the unions, you have no right to go over the heads of the unions . . .' Yet all that the psychiatric staff were asking was the right to meet and discuss their work, forgetting grading and qualifications, and involving district supervisors, administrators, psychiatrists, house doctors, ancillary staff and so on. Within a few weeks, more than fifteen hospitals had such associations, and were beginning to form federations: there were national meetings, inter-hospital visits, exchanges and unprecedentedly open discussion of what really went on in various departments. The CGT federation made considerable efforts to destroy this movement, and they succeeded. But they could not kill the idea.

The analytic effects of such an enterprise cannot be disputed (though one would have to go into considerable detail to demonstrate them exactly), but it had certain in-built limitations because of its isolation, and because it lacked the coordination that would have made it possible (a) to make clear its political and theoretical impact at a certain level and (b) to establish a better balance of forces to defend it. Neutralizing your local bureaucracy is one

thing, but to neutralize the whole bureaucratic system is quite another. One obviously could not get very far on the basis of experiments of this kind, or even of more sustained efforts like the work that has been going on for several years among the comrades in the Hispano group.[21] It would take the complex interaction of a great many such efforts to get us over this barrier that we keep coming up against. But it must be stressed that the analytical study and action groups that we do manage more or less successfully to establish in various sectors may well fill us with illusions, unless there can be more groups of the Hispano type, that is to say groups working in key sectors of production.

I think one should still be a Leninist, at least in the specific sense of believing that we cannot really look to the spontaneity and creativity of the masses to establish analytical groups in any lasting way – though 'Leninist' is perhaps an odd word to use when one remembers that the object at this moment is to foster not a highly centralized party, but some means whereby the masses can gain control of their own lives.

Ultimately, what analysis means here is detecting the traces of contamination from capitalist fall-out in all the crannies where they may lie concealed. Revolutionary politics should be something that redirects people's demands, their 'natural' understanding of things, and does so out of the simplest situations; revolution creates trouble out of events that common sense would say were quite unimportant – out of the problems of the housewife and the kitchen cupboard, of the everyday humiliations meted out by a domineering hierarchy. Only by slow steps – though there are sudden startling leaps – can one work back from such situations to the key signifiers of capitalist power. And that transition is also a transformation, for moving into politics marks a breakthrough: the political concept is not just a straightforward extension of people's ordinary demands.

The analysis of those demands has the effect of an acid that strips away the inessentials to sharpen the cutting edge, so that the social subjectivity becomes open to desire, and at the same time continues to reintroduce the peculiar, the unpredictable, even the nonsensical, into the coherence of political discourse. From this point of view, the analysis is never-ending, which is what makes it different from any self-enclosed programme. Not 'permanent revolution', perhaps, but 'permanent analysis'! The political concept is continually being re-examined by the analytical operation, and continually having to be worked out again from scratch; the work of analysis takes it back again and again to its beginnings, while always withholding total agreement. Nothing is more dangerous than to throw oneself into promoting the idea that the scientific accuracy of a political concept can be ensured by the appropriate philosophical processes. There can be no such thing as

21. *Ouvriers face aux appareils*, Maspero, 1970, pp. 266ff.

absolute certainty in this sphere.[22] Political–theoretical concepts, however apparently well-organized, cannot in themselves guarantee a consistent revolutionary praxis. Morbid rationalism, masquerading as a scientific re-reading of Marx, can lead to the most enormous political mystifications and mistakes. Furthermore, the death instinct inherent in such efforts ensures them a certain success among the many militants who have not yet recovered from the fall of the Stalinist idols and dogmas. It is not preaching opportunism to want to see a theory in its proper context, that is to say in the symbolic order rather than in terms of immediate practical effectiveness. Whether we like it or not, political knowledge will always be on the verge of the analytical vacuoles. On the other hand, that analytical vacuole is, and must be, surrounded on all sides by revolutionary praxis. Analysis, in the social field, is conceivable only in so far as its declarations result from effecting a political utterance and breakthrough.

Only a group committed to revolutionary praxis can function as an analytical vacuole, alongside the processes of society, without any mission of leadership, without any pretension other than that of taking truth along paths from which people generally strive firmly to exclude it. Only an analytic undertaking that takes shape against the background of revolutionary praxis can claim to be genuinely exploring the unconscious – for the good reason that the unconscious is none other than the reality that is to come, the transfinite field of the potentialities contained in signifying chains that are opened, or ready to be opened and articulated, by a real uttering and effecting agent.

This amounts to saying that signifying breakthroughs, even the most 'intimate', even those in our so-called 'private life', can turn out to be decisive points in historical causality. Will the revolution that is coming elaborate its principles from something said by Lautréamont, Kafka or Joyce? Isn't the current thrust of both the imperialist and the so-called socialist regimes being directed towards such institutions and archaisms as those related to the family, for instance, and consumerism? We can see why capitalism wears profit next to its skin like a shirt of Nessus, but how can we accept its also clothing the offspring of the October revolution?

These potentially revolutionary blocks and splits operate simultaneously, at all stages of the phenomenology of the subject and of history. Internationally, the worldwide balance is damaged by irreparable contradictions in that existing social regimes have demonstrated their inability to foster any system of international relations that would enable them to express or handle by diplomacy the signifying breakthroughs, the particular stopping points, of contemporary history. Such points, for instance, as the following: the Long

22. Nor in any other, but that is not our concern here. As Lacan has written: 'Economic science inspired by *Capital* does not necessarily lead to using it as a force for revolution, and history seems to require aids other than a predicative dialectic' (*Écrits*, p. 869).

March that was to lead to the coming to power (against Stalin's advice) of the Stalinists in China; Titoism, the result of the Yugoslav Resistance's coming to power, against the Yalta agreements (also signed by Stalin); the first war of liberation in Vietnam, whose quasi-accidental launching the communist leaders did everything to prevent; the struggle of the FLN in Algeria, which, despite its precarious beginnings, was to lead in the end to the collapse of French colonialism (at least in its traditional form); the stranger-than-fiction escapades of the Cuban revolutionaries, which planted a chronic abscess in the heart of the Pentagon's strategic system. Another accident, or rather perhaps artifice, was the transplanting of an Israeli colony that was finally to constitute a factor for revolutionizing the Arab world (though there was a time when Max Nordau almost[23] got the Zionists to accept the idea that the 'new homeland' of the Jews should be established in Uganda!).

The Stalinist and social-democratic associates of imperialism are less and less able to *represent* oppressed peoples or the exploited masses, or to negotiate on their behalf. Yet still there is no decisive way of stopping the infernal machine of 'substitutionism'. The process whereby the revolutionary masses will recover the direct control of their own fate has barely begun, and until that happens we shall have to go on being prepared for vast bloodbaths, like Vietnam and Indonesia, bearing witness to the desperate impasse of the international revolutionary movement – as the Paris Commune did in an earlier age. Hymning the praises of the heroic people of Vietnam must not make us forget the truth: there was something sacrificial in that holocaust; its appallingness is matched by the criminal policies of the leadership of the international workers' movement, which left the Vietnamese people to struggle alone in our day, as it left those of the Spanish Republic in the past.

One may urge at least that the lesson be drawn, that the truth be faced at whatever cost: the fact is that we have got to start again from square one, that our whole orientation must be different, that we must put behind us an epoch of the strategy and theory of the communist movement that is finished.

4. Vietnam 1967[24]

In Vietnam, American imperialism has tried to prove that it is always able to enforce its law and its methods when and where it might wish. It has

23. 'Almost' is putting it strongly perhaps: Max Nordau was to be murdered by a supporter of Theodore Herzl's.

24. Extracts from a piece that was to have appeared as introduction to an important special number of *Recherches*, on the consequences of American aggression in Vietnam for the countries of South-East Asia as a whole. This voluminous set of documents, compiled by working groups of specialists and militants, failed to appear because of the events of May 1968: the delay in publishing meant that the most important articles were out of date, and its compilers could no longer be brought together.

mobilized its huge economic and human resources to do this. It has been willing to compromise its so-called prestige as a great nation/protective elder brother of the free world. The international *status quo*, precariously maintained since the Second World War, has thus been overthrown. The Vietnamese people have thrown themselves body and soul into the struggle against aggression. Their heroism and skill are unprecedented. They are fighting for survival, national independence, unity and sovereignty, and they are aware that their cause is also that of oppressed classes and subject nations everywhere. French public opinion is not on the whole much concerned. Yet the interests of the Vietnamese people are fundamentally the same as those of workers, of intellectuals, of everyone who is threatened by the possible reinforcement of the various types of repression used in even the most up-to-date capitalist societies. I hardly need remind you that the defence of truth is at the root of every fight for emancipation: the most subtle and effective forms of alienation are those that we take for granted, those we do not even notice unless we stop to think about it, those that are part of the fabric of our everyday life.

Thus a kind of collective 'avoiding action' has led to what I can only call a systematic misunderstanding of the real nature of the tragedy now taking place in Vietnam. Up to a point, perhaps, the more clearsighted among us have not totally failed to see it, but it seems to me that there is a very important problem to be elucidated. The fact is that the savagery of the American aggression against a Third World people should not be seen as simply the stray manifestation of a 'historical accident'. The whole nightmare needs to be interpreted in a worldwide perspective. It inaugurates a new phase of history. In other words, I do not think that it is just as citizens or militants of a particular organization that we have to decide where we stand in relation to what is going on, but also in so far as we have specific research to do in different areas of the human sciences.

The Vietnam war has been accompanied by a reinforcement of the dominant race ideology in the United States, with its puritanism and its myths of destroying the 'bad object' – that is, whatever is different, whatever tries to – or manages to – elude the American Way of Life. The worst acts of barbarism committed daily by the American forces, the puppet troops of Saigon and their allies are methodically repressed from the consciousness of a public opinion manufactured by 'information machines'. It reminds one of fascism. Hitlerism, of course, developed in a quite different historical context, but that should not prevent our reflecting on the moral degeneration now afflicting the most powerful nation in the world – apart from the vocal minorities who are fighting against it, though without yet achieving any solid results. Freud, following Marx, has shown us how to understand the function of this repression and ideological defence.

The psychoanalytic interpretation, by insisting on disregarding the fact that our objects of love or hate, our most intimately related models of identification, are directly bound up with historical processes, automatically excludes vitally important unconscious determinisms from its field of examination. At the level of unconscious activity, truth is a single whole: distinctions between one's private life and the various areas of social life become irrelevant. Consequently, the effectiveness of value systems does not depend on the conscious knowledge one has gained from education, information or culture. That is why violence has been able to win its 'rights' throughout history, to formulate its gospels and even its international jurisprudence. Fascism produced one unprecedented and overwhelming form of this, and American aggression in Vietnam today presents another. We tend not to see quite what an *extraordinary* thing is happening, to reassure ourselves that it will all come right in the end, that common sense will emerge triumphant when the American nation pulls itself together. In point of fact, this sort of thinking seems to proceed from one of those defence mechanisms I referred to that exist to ensure the peaceful slumber of society. Should one ascribe this refusal to give serious consideration to any historical view offering a glimpse of the unknown or the disturbing, this tendency to refer every new event to a phantasy system of historical memory, to what Freud described as the death instinct? The clear consciences of rationalists and progressives are loath to approach this dimension of the problem. The most militant of us are peculiarly liable to an *a priori* optimism where the development of industrial societies is concerned.

A cursory survey of recent history, however, offers innumerable indications of the incapacity of the present style of international relations to find stability. Can there be any stability as long as the countries of the Third World are in such a desperate economic impasse? The recently almost universal myth of 'peaceful coexistence' – remember the spirit of Bandung? – has become meaningless: the only coexistence there is now is the *de facto* coexistence of the dominant industrial powers, who only give thought to the fate of the poor nations in relation to their strategic and economic value, their neo-colonialist allegiance. Capitalist production relations have undergone no decisive change in essentials, and the socialist States have proved themselves unable to enforce any international law other than the law of the jungle. The leading State of world imperialism is devoting its efforts to altering the balance of forces to its own advantage, and setting up an international police force. In this, too, the post-war period is definitely over, symbolically represented as it was by international bodies whose role as arbitrators was supposed to secure peace forever more. Another system of value is in the process of replacing that one, and is still seeking to establish its legitimacy: think of the incredible idea of the 'right of pursuit' that now seems taken for granted, which can justify

any form of aggression. In such changed circumstances, the traditional battle-cries of the anti-imperialist struggle are useless; the analyses and strategies offered by the traditional left remain mirror-images of those of imperialism, in as much as imperialism has taken up a great deal of its opponents' ideological baggage. Both parties appear to be playing the game by the same rules, because both lack the leverage to effect a genuine transformation of production relations on a worldwide scale. In his last message, Che Guevara spoke of the tragic isolation of Vietnam. But surely what is just as tragic is the isolation of the oppressed classes within wealthy societies? We must also look squarely at the secret and paradoxical despair of revolutionaries in the West,[25] and at their sense of powerlessness against the tightening economic vice that obliges the workers to accept their fate without flinching, and even perhaps to enjoy its sickening banality in a banal kind of way. In contrast to that, the heroic isolation of the people of Vietnam, their creativity, the wealth of social relations they have created out of their struggle, and the inventiveness of the bodies established by the FLN, all seem like a sheer hymn of hope.

25. This text was written just before the upheavals of May 1968.

Students, the Mad and 'Delinquents'[1]

The institutional earthquakes of May [1968] in France did not spare the world of psychiatry. They have in fact left some lasting effects: for example, in some sectors the whole hierarchy has been brought into question, 'colleges' of psychiatry have been set up,[2] and the teaching of psychology has been separated from that of neurology. Unfortunately, it would seem that the events were experienced as a serious trauma, rather than being assimilated and integrated into theory and practice.

The school of 'institutional psychotherapy' should have been better placed to understand them, since its main characteristic is precisely a determination never to isolate the study of mental illness from its social and institutional context, and, by the same token, to analyse institutions on the basis of interpreting the real, symbolic and imaginary effects of society upon individuals. We must admit, however, that though members of this school did not stand completely aside from events, they were only marginally involved in them. This I believe to have been the consequence of a certain immaturity in terms of theory, and a fixation upon such archaisms of the medical profession as 'neutrality' and the avoidance of anything political.

Starting from the crisis in the universities, the institutional revolution of May soon presented problems that affected society as a whole: people who had considered such problems only as they touched on their particular hospital or their particular psychiatric district were taken completely unawares.[3] Though the proponents of institutional psychiatry found themselves powerless to act, their approach to problems over the past decade was such as to make them potentially on the wavelength of the extraordinary social phenomena we have witnessed. From 1962 to 1966 a certain number of

1. Paper given at the Third International Congress of Psychodrama, Sociodrama and Institutional Therapy, in Baden, September 1968; published in *Partisans* ('Garde-fous'), no. 46, February–March 1969. For the 'Delinquents' ('Katangais' in the original title), see p. 46, n. 2

2. Regional bodies for questioning official teaching, some of which have brought together nurses, psychiatrists, psychologists and others.

3. By psychiatric district I mean the French system of institutions and projects outside hospitals, arranged by districts, each supposed to respond to the mental health requirements of some 70,000 people (providing day hospitals, dispensaries, homes, special workshops, family placements, home visits, etc.).

them had been working, at the request of the national student organizations, on the mental-health problems peculiar to student life. Over the course of many talks with student representatives, certain more general questions arose about students' situations – the absence of university institutions, the absurdity of teaching methods, plans for setting up university work groups, education clubs, running university centres for psychotherapeutic help and so on.[4]

The school of institutional psychotherapy, which at that time received very little attention from the world of psychiatry, found a considerable response from the student leaders of the period. We came to feel that the student world was suffering from a kind of social segregation not unlike what had long been the experience of the world of psychiatry. We had a sense of having reached the intersection of what one might call 'residual situations' incapable of being integrated by the technocratic State machine.

Unlike traditional psychoanalysts and psychiatrists, our view is that there is a profound interaction between individual psychopathological problems and the social, political and work context. There were, consequently, two ways of looking at the problems we faced in relation to the student movement: either they were marginal phenomena, mere aberrations, or they were symptoms heralding a far larger crisis in society, as some students instinctively felt they were. Other militants later came to the leadership of the student movement who were less concerned with these problems, and the institutional psychotherapy school gradually moved away from their problems. But they are well worth another look now.

At the time, I stressed the role of group phantasies, as possibly indicating the specific entry-point of the different generations into society, and their connections with each other. The phantasy of the *poilus* of the First World War, for instance, created a kind of echo in the Bolsheviks in 1917, the phantasies of the new popular front age of 1936 and the Spanish Civil War Nazism, and similarly later on, with the Liberation, the Cold War and so on. I think we should recognize the phantasy echo of the May barricades from the fact that the generation who put them up were the same generation that forgot French atrocities in Algeria while militantly condemning, with pious unanimity, American aggression in Vietnam.

The social contradictions to which the masses are subject do not strike them as a set of theoretical problems: they are experienced in the order of the imaginary and seen as massively simple alternatives, whereby social death instincts or visions of progress (the 'cities of the future', the 'happy tomorrows') become present by way of group phantasizing.

4. Cf. *Recherches universitaires*, January 1964, devoted to these problems; it contains an article of mine, 'Réflexions sur la thérapeutique institutionnelle et les problèmes d'hygiène mentale en milieu étudiant'.

As soon as the Algerian war was over, it became evident that a great many students were in search of some new focus for militancy, some mobilizing vision that would get them out of the university ghetto, if only in imagination. The leftist tendencies that took over the leadership of the UNEF (the national students' union) from 1963 to 1966 had tried to induce the student movement to take some responsibility for the problems peculiar to students. The problem of student power arose in relation both to university structures and to teaching methods. The students were urged to an awareness of their special situation, their role in society, and their responsibilities as regards production, the class struggle and so on. (Don't forget that the first occupation of the Sorbonne was attempted back in February 1964.)

The government was then setting out systematically to sabotage any move in that direction (refusing all dialogue with the UNEF, whose financial support was withdrawn and given instead to the FNEF[5]). The workers' movement, too, was either manipulating or simply ignoring the student movement (the French Communist Party disbanded its student organization, and the PSU took control of the UNEF national headquarters). The leftists in the UNEF became dispersed, the organization gradually lost its point, and it was left to a few groups of the extreme left to ensure the continuance of a minimum of political activity in this sphere.

This situation resulted in two things: any real plans for transforming university life were abandoned, and the old failure to understand the specific problems of students once again prevailed: political theorizing always dealt with society as a whole and international relations – with the natural concomitants of dogmatic formalism and a sectarian and bureaucratic type of organization. Ultimately, however, this still enabled a few students to be politically educated, to broaden their view of the world and not become bogged down in the *status quo*. Nevertheless, the militants and professors who had tried to develop a new kind of psycho-sociological understanding of the student situation no longer had any influence.

The new conversion to militancy only began with the organization of mass campaigns against American aggression in Vietnam and of solidarity with the anti-imperialist revolutionary movements in Asia, Latin America and Africa. This time, a completely new kind of mobilization developed, involving a continuing militant commitment – especially among the Vietnam committees. But an international problem, in which France was not directly implicated, could never affect more than a tiny vanguard. The campaign against American aggression, in the nature of the case, was only of metaphorical importance; only very distantly did it hint at an answer to the agonizing problems with which the mass of students were wrestling from day to day as

5. FNEF: Fédération Nationale des Étudiants de France, a minority right-wing student group.

they groped their way blindly through the absurd world in which they lived.

The situation in Nanterre at the beginning of 1968 was the result, and the symbol, of this general failure both of government policy and of the student unions. The architecture of the place set the stage – one has only to visit it to feel anxiety oozing from the buildings. The campus is a perfect image of the student world cut off from the rest of society, from the whole world of ordinary work – and the contrast is all the more vivid since the university stands at the very centre of one of the oldest communist municipalities.

It became the scene of a subjective, unique and radical crisis, embodied in a series of actions that were to serve as a model. The young people of May went on from there to get their imaginations working along the lines of what I would call 'transitional phantasies', phantasies that were to find their way back to reality through a plan of activity which – it must be recognized – was to involve far more than chucking paving stones about. What the militants of the 22 March movement did at Nanterre became adopted by 'analysts' as an 'interpretation' of the 'transference' – the 'analysts' being such student activists as Dany Cohn-Bendit, who was advised by the Minister of Education, when questioned about the sexual problems of students, to have a cold bath.

Starting at Nanterre, a signifying chain developed; an ever-mounting escalation led to questioning every element in French society, and indeed there were international repercussions as well. The two forms of dominant power – State power and the power of workers' organizations – felt their very foundations to be in danger, and there was a new understanding of the latent crisis threatening industrial society as a whole. For a time those in power remained helpless as though hypnotized: the surprise had been total. Never again will they be taken unawares, for since then the bourgeoisie has taken the measure of such phenomena, and has been busily producing systems of repression and antibodies of all kinds. In phenomenological terms, what happened was characteristic of revolutionary upsurges: something happens that would have been unimaginable only the day before; imagination is set free and is called upon to take power. Was it a brief madness? How does one explain this coming to light of long-buried ideas? This is the point at which the notion of the transitional phantasy comes into operation. It authorizes a mode of representation for what is essentially non-representable: a radical change, the possibility of a different state of affairs, something absolutely other, a newborn and as yet uncertain revolutionary commitment. The Bolshevik phantasy system repressed all suggestions of 'anarchism': barricades, fraternity, generosity, individual liberation, rejection of all hierarchy and constraint, collective exaltation, permanent poetry, daydreaming. All this had seemed dead and buried, just part of a kind of regression or collective infantilism. 'Poor kids: they were misunderstood and unloved, and they've

tried to compensate with a kind of psychodrama' – nothing to worry about really, just a bit of psychological self-help, probably in the end the surest way of making them better integrated into society. (All of which is not unlike the 'understanding' professed by technocrats like Edgar Faure.)

Psychoanalytic methodology might lead us to look at things differently. Could it be that this return to pre-Bolshevik repression is a sign that the mechanisms of defence produced by society as a whole are no longer adequate to deal with its own deepest drives?

For a long time now, there has been a kind of complicity between social democracy and communist organizations on the one hand, and the State power on the other. It was obvious that the Gaullist government and the employers could never have regained control of the situation had it not been for the help of the trade-union federations; if the railway strike had gone on long enough, or there had been a real, all-out electricity strike, then the forces of repression would have been totally paralysed, and there would have had to be a decisive revolutionary confrontation. All the institutional mechanisms that have kept French society going since, say, 1934 (to take a date representing a major turning point for the French Communist Party) had proved to be inadequate. Militant revolutionaries had only the most imperfect systems of doctrine with which to interpret this crack in the structure. It is true that some left groupuscules had worked out an analysis, but it was only very sketchy, and reached only a minority of militants. This being the case, the shortcomings of the institutional system were essentially felt and expressed in a mode of phantasy, and dealt with accordingly. A vast mass, mainly of young people, but also of workers, teachers and intellectuals, used their own forms of expression – symbolic actions, serious struggles, allusion to themes from the past, holding a kind of festival to demonstrate against the consumer society, with even the occasional sacrificial destruction of cars or other things. The archaic nature of some forms of struggle and organization was due to the fact that all people could turn to for material of signification for the new situations were statements and images from the past.

The development of the forces of production has tended more and more to enforce a specific model for the image that individual producers and consumers have of themselves. In other words, that image has become an essential part of the economic machine itself. Hence the legitimation of one's 'existence' depends less upon institutions like the family, the job, the social group, the church, the nation, and more upon one's place in the economic structure. The vital part played by consumption in regulating production means that a stereotyped image of every type of individual must be established as a 'norm' to work from. But, contrariwise, those same forces of production need more 'human factors'. The worker in today's society is measured not so much in terms of man-hours as by the quality of the work he does and his position in

the structure of the production system. What matters, in short, is the production of the signifier, which is in turn inseparable from the production units of subjectivity, in other words of *institutions*. The contradiction lies in the fact that the forces of production tend on the one hand to reduce individuals to stereotyped models, while on the other demanding the production of ever more complex units of subjectivity (with work organization, job training, technological innovations, re-training schemes, research and all the rest).

In the days when it was the institution that legitimated existence – the corporations, the hierarchy, religion and so on – institutions came before production. Nor were institutions then related to production in the same way as they are today; in general they inherited their structure from pre-capitalist production relations, some even still retaining traces of the feudal era. (It was these latter, I may point out, that were under special attack in May: the professions of architecture, law, medicine and so on.) Those legitimating institutions tended to exist in their own right, as the foundations of the established order; to be part of that order was valuable in itself, for the order was the basis of specific unconscious desires that could be expressed by a vow, or by certain emblems, such as a pulpit or a particular form of dress. The industrial revolution, on the other hand, tends to give the production machine precedence over the institution: the machine has become the mainstay of the institution's action. The industrial revolution has tended to expropriate institutions, taking from them their metaphysical substance. But the development of productive machines and economic structures of reference are not things directly grasped by our conscious minds. The various social classes continue to go about their business in a kind of phantasy state of nature; they are forever in search of a phantasy stability. The consequence is that they become more and more out of phase with the changes taking place in the forces of production. The traditional representation of 'the nation' or 'the working class' depends today solely on the politicians, militants and organizations who, with their quasi-clerical authority, continue to represent the phantasy that corresponds to it. The deputy who professes his 'sincere' dedication to the public interest makes us smile. But so does the militant who tries to prove the legitimacy of what he is doing now by his having been in the Resistance, or by his fidelity to his own particular image of the working class. Absurd though it may be, the 'militant theatre' put on by the managers of the various political shopkeepers none the less represents the inevitable, constricting, official world of representation. Luckily there are still a few residual areas – like the student world and psychiatry – that have resisted the general integration. These two, however, occupy a rather special position in relation to signifying production.

The production of signifiers in the universities is becoming more and more detached from society; this is particularly noticeable in literature and art. The

products of genuine research are not very saleable, because they question the social order. The essence of mass consumption is to turn away from the truth, to avoid actually having to face an active agent, or desire, or eccentricity. In the end, students and academics reach the same position in relation to signifying production as mental patients. Neurosis and madness, as a basis of truth, are subject to permanent suppression. Because Freud discovered the function of symptoms in revealing the truth, he had to defend his work against massive attempts to take it over. The aim was, and still is, to contain madness, to define it in such a way that it poses no threat to the clear conscience of the man in the street. It seems to me that this is a problem that must be faced by all revolutionary militants who are in any way concerned with madness, neurosis, delinquency or indeed with young people, children or creativity: how to grasp the purport of deviant symptoms as a means of interpreting the social arena as a whole. Thus it is not a matter of passively allowing the uniqueness of the intellectual or the mad person to be reduced to the order of generality, but rather of setting out to interpret the modern world from the uniqueness of their subjective positions. Paradoxically, the less response the institutions of contemporary capitalist society give when the suffering of the desiring subject is laid bare, the more artificial vitality they are re-injecting into their own most archaic bases. The national problem, regionalism, racism and the cult of the family are all getting fresh and massive promotion from large-scale propaganda methods, yet this remains precarious since it does not really reach the level of the unconscious. We can see, for instance, that the *de facto* internationalism of the forces of production makes nonsense of the patriotic politics of someone like de Gaulle. Along with the rediscovery of the attractions of the family, the region and the nation, there is also the cult of the individual. Knowing who is actually the agent of *doing* what is done does not necessarily mean stressing the role of the individual: the search for the agent in the social hydra may not lead us to an individual subject at all. In a city, for example, detached single-family houses are not the only alternative to vast, faceless, concrete housing jungles. Instead of seeing people as a mass of disconnected egos, we can recognize signifying connections among unconscious subjects and *group-subjects* capable of effecting a breakthrough in the processes of identification.

In this sense the beginnings of the 22 March movement may be looked upon as the prototype of a group-subject: everything revolved around it without its becoming part of any overall movement or being taken over by any other political group. Those involved set out to interpret the situation, not in terms of some programme laid down at successive congresses, but gradually, as the situation itself unfolded in time. The attitude of the State power and the police really told them what they should then say about it by issuing statements that said the precise opposite. They refused to present their

movement as the embodiment of the situation, but simply as a something upon which the masses could effect a transference of their inhibitions. With their vanguard action to provide a model, they opened a new path, lifted prohibitions, and opened the way to a new understanding and a new logical formulation outside any framework of dogmatism.

This was certainly the first time any political movement had gone so far in integrating psychoanalytic factors. The limitations of that integration were undoubtedly the result of the limitations of psychoanalytic theory itself, or at least of that theory as they understood it. The cult of spontaneity, the naturalism of the movement, probably indicated a massive resurgence of anxiety at facing the unknown; it was certainly this that enabled the Communist Party, left groupuscles and the movement itself to define the whole thing more reassuringly in terms of anarchist conformism. Everything conspired to close the question that had been opened. Yet there can be no doubt that the future of the workers' movement depends on its ability to absorb a certain amount of recognizably Freudian theory. There is no use in denouncing the bureaucratism of traditional organizations if one can do no more than attribute the causes of it to particular mistakes in strategy or tactics, or to particular crises in the history of the workers' movement. There is a whole logic of signification behind the pyramidal organization whereby the mass organization, the grass-roots militants, the Party, the Central Committee, the Political Bureau and the Secretariat are all stuck in a series of fixed gradations that leaves no room for any authentic self-expression by the masses or by individuals. A desire economy of a homosexual nature pervades militant organizations in general, preventing their having any real access to the Other – be that Other a young person, a woman, a different race, a different nation. The pyramidal organization of our political groups is simply an echo of the dominant social organization.

The answer certainly does not lie in psycho-sociological blueprints: group alienation as such is probably not capable of being resolved from within – group psychoanalysis can never 'cure' a group. But the setting-up of action committees does seem to have opened up the possibility of a kind of analytical activity actually among the masses, not an analysis conducted by a self-appointed vanguard standing apart from them, but as something close to, and permanently interacting with, their own self-expression. The student militants who went to Flins were able to join in the struggle of the workers and the local people without being resented as a foreign body. The group's analytical activity was not directed to adjusting individuals to the group, but to ensuring that the group, as an opaque structure, would not become a substitute for the mass movement's study of the problems of signification: it broke off the signifying chain in order to open up other potentialities. The activity of the militant group is not aiming to provide ready-made rational

answers to the questions they think people should be asking, but on the contrary, to deepen the level of their questioning, and to make clear the uniqueness of each phase of the historical process. It is precisely because the movement of 22 March managed to preserve its particular message intact for so long that it could make itself heard in so many different situations and countries. (Events in Czechoslovakia, for instance, were almost certainly precipitated by fears of a similar development there.)

In psychiatry, the dilemma is often presented in terms *either* of making changes inside the hospital *or* of giving priority to community programmes. Perhaps we should be recognizing a symmetry between the one phantasy of a revolution within the bin, and another that would justify 'revolution in one country'. On the other hand, there is a considerable Anglo-Saxon school of social psychiatry, or 'anti-psychiatry', now proposing that we should be trying in some sense to re-absorb psychiatric illness into society at large, thus equating mental alienation with social. We keep coming back to the same place: madness is felt to be something shocking, something whose every manifestation we should disown and suppress. Psychiatrists, and all those involved in psychiatric work, could certainly still do a lot to change, humanize and open their institutions. But it may be that their real responsibility lies elsewhere. The fact of being involved in this particular 'residual' situation puts them in a position to offer a radical critique of the status and methodology of the human sciences, of political economy and of all the institutional reference points that add up to a systematic disregard of the subjective attitudes of all types of all those who escape social control – of 'Katangais' the world over – who are, in this sense, prototypes of the true revolutionary militant as well as of the 'new man' of the future socialist society. Psychiatry and the human sciences seem as though they must, by definition, be outside the political domain; perhaps, one day, a different psychiatry related to a different politics – politics of the type that seemed to be emerging in May – may provide a link between the two.

The Micro-Politics of Fascism[1]

Fascism is a key motif in considering the problem of desire in the social sphere. Surely, then, we should take occasion to talk about it while we are still free to do so.

The notion of a micro-politics of desire does not mean building a bridge between psychoanalysis and Marxism as static and independent theories. That seems to me neither desirable nor possible. I do not believe any system of ideas can function in any meaningful way outside its original context, apart from the collective forces whose modes of expression have produced it. When I talk about 'desire', I am not borrowing the idea from orthodox psychoanalysis or the theories of Lacan. I make no claim to initiate a scientific concept, I am only trying to construct a possible theoretical framework in which to understand the way desire operates in the social sphere. Though it is hardly possible to speak of pleasure or enjoyment in the same breath as revolution – there is no such thing as 'revolutionary pleasure' or 'revolutionary enjoyment' – no one today would be surprised by such terms as 'desire for revolution' or 'revolutionary desire'. This seems to me to be due to the fact that what we normally mean by pleasure and enjoyment is inseparable from a particular form of individuation of super-solitary subjectivity which finds fulfilment of a kind on the analyst's couch. Libido and desire are very different from that.

Desire is not intrinsically bound up with the individuation of libido. A desire machine encounters forms of individuation – in other words of alienation. Desire is not a Platonic ideal, nor is its repression: there is no such thing as desire or repression in itself. The idea of a 'perfect castration' belongs among the worst reactionary mystifications. Desire and repression operate in society as it is, and are affected by its every changing phase; so we are not dealing with general categories that can be applied indiscriminately to every situation.

The distinction I propose between the micro-politics and macro-politics of desire should work to some extent to abolish the supposed universality of the models presented by psychoanalysts and used by them as a defence against all

1. Intervention at the Psychoanalysis and Politics Conference held in Milan, 7–9 May 1973, and published by Feltrinelli and by Éditions 10/18.

social and political contingencies. It is assumed that psychoanalysis relates to what is going on in the small world of the family and the person, while politics concern only the broad social sweep. I want to show that, on the contrary, there are some politics which deal quite as much with the desire of the individual as with the desire apparent in the wider world of society. These can take two forms: either a micro-politics concerned with both individual and social problems, or a macro-politics with the same range of concerns (individual, family, Party, State and so on). The despotism so often prevailing in marital or family relationships grows out of the same type of libidinal engagement as despotism in society. Similarly, it is far from absurd to consider quite a number of large-scale social problems – such as those of bureaucratism or fascism – in the light of the micro-politics of desire. Consequently, the problem is not one of linking up disparate domains that fully exist in their own right and are separate from one another, but of setting up new theoretical and practical machines capable of sweeping away earlier stratifications and creating the conditions necessary for desire to function in a new way. We have not merely to describe pre-existing social entities, but also to intervene actively against all the machines of the dominant power – the power of the bourgeois State, of all forms of bureaucracy, of the school, of the family, the dominance of the male in the couple, and even the repressive power of the super-ego in the individual.

Schematically, we can say that there are three ways of approaching the problems of fascism: the first is sociological, and I will call it the analytic–formalist approach; the second is the neo-Marxist, or synthetic–dualist approach; the third is the analytic–political approach. The first two both preserve the distinction between large and small social entities, whereas the third tries to get beyond this. Analytic–formalist sociological thinking sets out to identify common features and to distinguish species; this it does either by a method of evident analogies – trying to establish small relative differences, such as, for instance, the similarities and specific differences visible in the three types of fascism, Italian, German, Spanish – or by a method of structural homologies – trying to establish absolute differences as for instance between fascism, Stalinism and the Western democracies. In one case, differences are minimized to discover a family likeness; on the other, differences are magnified to distinguish different levels and identify species.

Synthetic–dualist neo-Marxist thinking tries to get beyond any such system by never separating theoretical description from revolutionary praxis. However, that praxis normally comes up against its own limitation with a totally other kind of difference – the difference between the real desire of the mass of the people and the spokesmen who are supposed to represent them. The sociological way of thinking advances by reifying social entities and failing to recognize people's desire and creativity; revolutionary Marxist

thinking tries to overcome that failure, but sets itself up as a collective system to represent the desire of the people. It only recognizes the existence of revolutionary desire to the extent that it can channel it into being represented theoretically by Marxism and in practice by the party that supposedly expresses it. Thus a whole system of drive belts is set up to link the theory, the party leadership and militants, with the result that the endless variegation that diversifies the desire of the people becomes 'massified', reduced to certain standardized phraseology, the necessity for which is supposedly justified on the ground of working-class solidarity and the unity of the party. From the impotence of a system of mental representation we come to the impotence of a system of social representation. Nor is it coincidence that this neo-Marxist method of thinking and action becomes bogged down in bureaucratic procedure; it is due to the fact that it has never really freed its pseudo-dialectic from an inveterate dualism between representation and reality, between the lofty caste of those who preach the word and give the orders and the mass of the people whom they are supposedly teaching. We find this over-simplifying dualism among neo-Marxists in all their ideas: it affects their concept of the schematic opposition between city and countryside, their international alliances, their political theory of the peace camp versus the war camp, and so on. This systematic bi-polarization of every problem always centres upon a third term, but one not thereby constituting a dialectical synthesis. That third term essentially involves power, first and foremost, State power, and the power of the party which hopes to gain control of it. Every partial struggle always bears a relationship to this type of transcendent third term; everything gains its meaning from it, even when the cold light of history reveals it for what it is – a delusion, of just the same kind as the phallic object in the Oedipal triangle. It might be said of this dualism, and the transcendent object it sets up, that they represent the core of the revolutionary Oedipus that confronts the political analyst.

A political analysis, which should be inseparable from a politics of analysis, must refuse to tolerate the persistence of the traditional dichotomy between large social bodies and the problems people face as individuals, in their families, schools, jobs and so on. There must be no question of its automatically adapting its approach to problems of concrete situations to fit any goodies-and-baddies assumptions about classes or camps, or of trying to find all the answers via the action of a single revolutionary party seen as the central depository of all truth, theoretical and practical. The micro-politics of desire, therefore, would no longer aim to *represent* the people and *interpret* their desire. This is not to say that all party action, all thought of a party line or programme, or even all centralism should be rejected out of hand; but the aim would be to see what people actually do, in the context of, and in relation to, an analytic practice ever more firmly opposed to the repressive actions, the

bureaucratism, the moralizing Manicheism infecting current revolutionary movements. No transcendent object would then be needed as a basis or a security, nor would the micro-politics of desire remain centred upon a single point, such as, for instance, State power and the construction of a representative party capable of winning it for and on behalf of the mass of the people. On the contrary: a multiplicity of objectives would be established within the immediate reach of the most varied social groupings. It is only on the basis of an accumulation of partial struggles (though the word 'partial' is misleading, since they are not parts of any already existing whole) that collective, large-scale struggles can be undertaken.

Hence, the notion of a micro-politics of desire involves a radical new critique of mass movements that are run from the centre and set in motion armies of mass-produced individuals. What now becomes essential is the linking-up of many and various molecular desires, which would have a snowball effect and lead to large-scale confrontations. This was what happened at the start of the events of May 1968: the local and specific demonstration of the desire of small groups found its echo in a multiplicity of desires that had been repressed, isolated from one another, and crushed by the then dominant modes of expression and representation. The situation was not one in which an ideal *unity* represented and interpreted *multiple* interests, but one in which the development of a many-voiced *multiplicity* of desires produced its own guidelines and organization. This multiplicity of desire machines is not composed of standardized and orderly systems that can be disciplined and hierarchized in view of a single objective. Its different strata consist of different social groups as demarcated by class, age, sex, place of birth, type of job, sexual orientation, etc. It never achieves a monolithic unity. It is the unequivocal quality of the people's desire that is the basis for the unity of their struggle, not the channelling of that desire towards standardized objectives. Unification in this sense does not militate against multiplicity of desires as it did when those desires were 'processed' by the totalitarian-totalizing machine of a representative party.

In this situation, theoretical discourse no longer stands between the social entity and praxis. The social entity is enabled to speak for itself without being obliged to look to representatives or spokesmen to speak for it. The coincidence between the political struggle and the analysis of desire henceforth implies that the 'movement' will always be attentive to whoever speaks from a position of desire, even, indeed especially, when it means getting 'off the subject'. At home children are reproved for getting 'off the subject', and the same thing happens at school, in the army, in the factory, in the trade union, in the Party branch. One must always keep 'on the subject' and 'in line'. But desire by its very nature keeps tending to get 'off the subject', to wander away. Collectivities of utterances will express something about desire without

relating it to any subjective individuation, without directing it towards any pre-established subject, or pre-encoded signification. In these circumstances, no analysis can be begun until 'after' the terms and power-relationships have been laid down, 'after' the social pattern has crystallized into various mutually exclusive bodies: it takes part in that crystallization. It becomes directly political. 'When saying is doing', the division of labour as between saying specialists and doing specialists becomes blurred.

Collectivities of utterance formations produce their own means of expression – be it a new language, or slang, or a return to an older language. It makes no difference to them whether they are working with fluxes of symbols or with fluxes of matter and society. It is no longer a question of a subject facing an object, with a means of expression as the connecting third term; there is no longer a threefold division – the sphere of reality, that of representation or representativeness and that of subjectivity. The collective engagement is at once the subject, the object and the expression. No longer is the individual always the reference-point for the dominant significations. Everything can have a share in this kind of utterance – individuals, parts of the body, semiotic trajectories or machines connected up to the four corners of the world. Collective utterances thus link together the semiotic, the material and the social fluxes far more closely than they can be brought into any formal corpus of doctrine. How is this possible? Are we talking of some return to an anarchistic utopia? Is it not illusory to think one can let the masses speak for themselves in a highly complex industrialized society? How can a social entity – a group as subject – take the place of our representative system and our ideologies? The further I go in my analysis, the more paradoxical I find it: how can one conceivably talk of the authorship of collective utterances while one is oneself sitting on a chair facing an audience sitting politely in rows? For in fact, everything I am saying tends to show that no genuine political analysis can emerge out of the utterances of an individual, especially those of a foreign lecturer unfamiliar with both the language and the problems of his audience. An individual discourse is relevant only to the extent that it can link up with already functioning collective utterances, voices already involved in the social struggle. Otherwise, to whom is the individual speaking? Some universal listener? Someone who already knows the coding, the significations and all their possible combinations? The discourse of individuals is the prisoner of the dominant significations. Only a group as subject can work within the semiotic fluxes, destroying the significations, opening the language to different desires and creating different realities.

Let us look again at the problem of fascism and its relationship with Stalinism and Western-style 'democracies'. Our endeavour must not be to make comparisons that blur and over-simplify, but the reverse – to make our models as complex as possible, to the point where we find ourselves fitting

into them somewhere. There is, then, nothing academic about this analysis, for it relates as much to the present as to the past.

There have been many kinds of fascism, many kinds of Stalinism, and many kinds of bourgeois democracy. Each of the three categories becomes broken apart into a multitude of sub-categories the moment one starts to consider the role of such components as the industrial machine, the banking machine, the military machine, the politico-police machine, state techno-structures, the churches and so on. What matters is to discover what factors have made this or that power formula tick. The totalitarian systems of the present day have invented certain prototypes of the party as the police force: the Nazi police party, for instance, is worth studying in comparison with the Stalinist police party; it may emerge that the two are closer to one another than to the other component parts of the State in which either flourished. It would be useful to identify the various kinds of desire machines entering into the composition of both. And from this, one may conclude that one could usefully turn one's attention to things nearer home.

In point of fact, our analysis can progress only by going steadily further in the direction of molecularizing its object, so as to be able to get a closer grasp of its function within wider social formations. There was not just *one* Nazi Party: not only did the Nazi Party change and develop, but at every period it had different functions depending on the areas in which it was active. Himmler's SS machine was not the same as the SA, and both were very different from the kind of mass organizations envisaged by the Strasser brothers. And even inside the SS machine one finds elements of quasi-religious inspiration – remember how Himmler wanted the SS to be trained along lines similar to the methods of the Jesuits – alongside the overtly sadistic practices of a man like Heydrich. It is not a matter of creating unnecessary complexities, but of refusing to accept the kind of simplification that would blind us both to the *genealogy* and to the *permanence* of certain fascist machines. Long ago, the Inquisition had set up a kind of fascist machine that was only to find its fullest use very much later. Such an analysis of the molecular components of fascism may thus extend to widely different spheres, both at the macro-political level and the microscopic. It should enable us to understand more clearly how the same fascism continues to operate today, in other guises, in the family, the school, the trade union.

There are many different ways of approaching these problems of desire in the social sphere. One may quite simply fail to recognize them, or reduce them to over-simplified political alternatives. One may equally try to discover their mutations, their displacements and the fresh possibilities that they offer for revolutionary action. Stalinism and fascism have long been considered as proceeding from radically different definitions, whereas the various types of fascism have been classed under the same heading. Yet there can be greater

differences within fascism than there are between some aspects of Stalinism and some aspects of Nazism. Without forcing comparisons or ending up with the kind of amalgams produced by Hannah Arendt that Jean-Pierre Faye takes exception to,[2] it is impossible not to accept the continuity of one and the same totalitarian machine, worming its way through all the *structures* of fascism, Stalinism, bourgeois democracy and so on. Without going back as far as Diocletian or Constantine, we can trace its ancestry in the context of capitalism from the repression of the Paris Communards in 1871 to the forms it takes today. The different totalitarian systems have produced different formulae for controlling the desire of the masses, to suit the changes in productive forces and production relations. We have to try to analyse its 'machinic composition' – which is a bit like analysing something's chemical composition, but in this case it is a social chemistry of desire running not only through History, but also through the whole expanse of society.

The historical transversality of the desire machines on which totalitarian systems are based is inseparable from their social transversality. The analysis of fascism cannot be left just to the historian, because the processes established by it in the past are, as I say, still proliferating in different forms throughout the entire expanse of society today. There is a totalitarian chemistry at work in our State structures, our political and trade-union structures, our institutional and family structures, even in our individual structures – in the sense that one can, as I have suggested, talk of guilt-feelings and neurosis as a kind of fascism of the super-ego.

As the social division of labour has developed, it has led to the establishment of ever more enormous production units. But production on this vast scale has led to an ever greater molecularization of the human elements involved in the machinic forces of industry, the economy, education, the media and so on. It is never a human being who is working (and the same can be said of desire) but an agency composed of organs and machines. No longer does a person communicate with other persons: organs and functions take part in a machinic 'assembly' which puts together semiotic links and a great interweaving of material and social fluxes. (A good instance of this is driving a car, when one's eyes scan the road almost unconsciously, and one's hands and feet become an integral part of the workings of the machine.) Having broken up the traditional human territorialities, the forces of production are now in a position to liberate the 'molecular' energy of desire. We cannot yet assess the revolutionary extent of this machinic–semiotic revolution, but it is evidently irreversible. And it is also what enables totalitarian regimes and social bureaucracies incessantly to perfect and miniaturize their apparatuses of repression. In my view, therefore, the micro-political struggle of desire cannot

2. Cf. Jean-Pierre Faye, *La Critique du langage et son économie*, Galilée, 1973.

be fought out on any front without determining first the machinic–semiotic composition of the various power formations. Without such an analysis, one is continually swinging between a position of revolutionary openness and a position of totalitarian clamping down. Molecular analysis can only be the expression of a collection of molecular forces combining theory and action. It is not therefore, as might be objected, a case of concentrating merely on the minutiae of history, of suggesting like Pascal that had Cleopatra's nose been longer everything would have been different. It is simply a case of recognizing the impact of totalitarian machinism, which is still developing and constantly adapting itself in line with the balance of forces and the changes in society. The role of Hitler, as an individual with a specific ability, was of course negligible; but his role, as crystallizing a new form of that totalitarian machine, was, and still is, fundamental. For Hitler still lives. He is still active in dreams, in delusions, in films, in police torture rooms, and among the young who value mementoes of him even though they know nothing of Nazism.

Let us pause for a moment to consider a historical problem that is still, if only implicitly, working itself out in present-day politics. Why, after the debacle of 1918 and the crisis of 1929, was German capitalism not satisfied with making its basis a straightforward military dictatorship? Why Hitler and not General von Schleicher? Daniel Guérin has replied that big business hesitated to 'deprive itself of such an incomparable, irreplaceable means of penetration into every cell of society as the fascist mass organizations'.[3] Indeed, no military dictatorship could have succeeded in controlling the people as effectively as a party organized along police lines. No military dictatorship could mobilize libidinal energy like a fascist dictatorship, even though many of their end results might appear identical, even though they might resort to the same repressive methods, the same tortures, the same concentration camps and so on. The conjunction in the person of Hitler of at least four different strands of desire resulted in crystallizing among the mass of the people the mutation of a new desire machinism:

– a certain plebeian style, which enabled him to get the support of all who were to any extent affected by the social-democrat and Bolshevik machines;

– a certain army veteran style, symbolized by his Iron Cross from the 1914 war, which enabled him to neutralize the military, even if he could not gain their entire confidence;

– a shopkeeper-style opportunism, a yieldingness, a pliability, that enabled him to negotiate with the magnates of finance and industry, while giving them the impression that they could easily control and manipulate him;

– finally, and perhaps most importantly of all, a racist mania, a crazy

3. *Fascisme et Grand Capital*, Maspero, 1970.

paranoiac energy that was in tune with the collective death instinct let loose in the charnel houses of the First World War.

Clearly this is an over-schematized description. But what I wanted to stress, though there is no time to go into detail here, is the fact that the local conditions that made the Führer's 'irresistible ascent' possible, producing that extraordinary, machinic crystallization of desire in Hitler, were anything but negligible.

All this involves a whole micro-politics, and, let me say again, it is by no means a purely speculative psychoanalytic, or biographic, or historical problem. The micro-politics that created Hitler concern us, here and now – within our political and trade-union movements, within our smaller groups in families and schools and so on – in as much as new micro-crystallizations of fascism have replaced the old on the same totalitarian, machinic phylum. On the ground that the part played by the individual in history is negligible, we are advised to stand idly by while local tyrants and bureaucrats of all sorts perform their hysterical antics and paranoid double-dealing. The function of a micro-politics of desire will be to denounce such passivity, to refuse to countenance *any* expression of fascism at *any* level. Cinema and television would have us believe that Nazism was basically no more than a passing evil, a kind of historical mistake – and a golden page in the history of heroism. How moving it was to see the banners of capitalism and socialism intertwined against it! They would have us believe that there was real antagonism between the fascist Axis and the Allies. In fact, what was really at issue was the selection of the right model. The fascist recipe got off to a bad start, and it must therefore be eliminated and replaced with something better. Radek defined Nazism as something external to the bourgeoisie; he compared it to a series of iron hoops used by the bourgeoisie to try to reinforce 'the battered cask of capitalism'. But the image is altogether too reassuring: fascism remained only partly external to them, and the bourgeoisie decided to throw it over only from the moment they became convinced that, because of its instability and the overweening desire it stirred up among the masses, it was threatening to explode the regimes of bourgeois democracy from within.

The 'remedy', accepted when the crisis was at its paroxysm, was later to appear worse than the disease. However, international capitalism could contemplate getting rid of it only provided it had other means to hand for checking the class struggle, provided other totalitarian formulae for controlling the desire of the masses had been found satisfactory. Once Stalinism had worked out such a substitute formula, alliance with it became possible. Stalin's dictatorship offered enormous advantages over Hitler's. The fascist regimes, in fact, did not build a tight enough ring around problem areas. The impossible task of their leaders was, first, to establish a compromise among a number of different power groups seeking to preserve their autonomy (the

military machine, politico-police factions, the economic system, etc.[4]); and, second, to repress and channel popular revolutionary enthusiasm which threatened to surge up again at any moment in the apocalyptic atmosphere of the time. By gradually getting rid one by one of the old political classes, the most rebellious of the colonized peoples, the old Bolsheviks, young bureaucrats, and so on, the Stalinist machine was to go much further than the Nazi machine in the creation of a repressive model. The Nazis exterminated millions of Jews and hundreds of thousands of left-wing militants. In the sense that they were directed against people whom the Nazis saw as being outside their race, as scapegoats, these exterminations had a certain sacrificial quality about them. It cannot be said that the Nazis systematically attacked the leaders of the German bourgeoisie. Stalin's method was quite different. The strength of soviet bureaucratism lay in spreading terror everywhere, even within its own ranks, and far further than even the SS ever did, under any circumstances, within the Nazi leadership. Whatever else it may have been, the alliance between the Western democracies and Stalin's totalitarianism was never directed to 'preserving democracy'. Its prime aim was to destroy a lunatic machine that posed a threat to their own system of domination. Throughout that period, the entire world was gripped in a kind of end-of-the-world hysteria. It was as though all the previous regulating mechanisms – of social democracy, trade-unionism and so on – whereby the old balance had been maintained had suddenly been found wanting. One must not forget, of course, that all left-wing organizations had already been destroyed in Italy and Germany – but why should they all have collapsed like card-houses? They had never presented the people with any real alternative – certainly not with anything that mobilized their will to fight or their force of desire, anything that even tempted them away from the religion of fascism (on this it seems to me that the history of the German Reich is unequivocal).

It has often been pointed out that the fascist regimes, in their beginnings, provided certain basic economic solutions to the most urgent problems of the time – an artificial economic resurgence, jobs for the unemployed, a public works programme, currency controls – and these are contrasted with, for instance, the helplessness of the social-democratic governments of the Weimar Republic. The explanations run somewhat as follows: the socialists and communists had a bad programme, bad leaders, bad organization, bad alliances. Indeed there is no end to the catalogue of their weaknesses and betrayals. But no account is taken in these explanations of the fact that the new totalitarian desire machine had crystallized among the masses to such a point that international capitalism itself saw it as an even greater danger than

4. I need hardly reiterate that this is a highly simplified account. For instance there was no such thing as a homogeneous attitude on the part of capitalists: Krupp, who began by being hostile to Hitler, changed completely as time went on.

the dictatorship which had developed out of the October revolution. What no one is prepared to recognize is that the fascist machine, in the form it took in Italy and Germany, was a threat both to capitalism and Stalinism, because the masses invested in it the most fantastic collective death instinct. By re-territorializing their desire upon a leader, a people, a race, they were destroying, in a phantasy of catastrophe, a reality they hated – a reality that the revolutionaries either couldn't or wouldn't grapple with. Virility, blood, *Lebensraum* and death replaced for them a socialism too respectful of the prevailing values – and this despite the intrinsic dishonesty of fascism, its fake challenges to the absurd, its whole theatrical display of collective hysteria and feeblemindedness which brought them back again to those same values. All in all, however, the detour was much longer, and the mystification and the fascination far more intense in fascism than in Stalinism. All fascist significations centred upon a composite representation of love and death, in which Eros and Thanatos were one and the same thing. Hitler and the Nazis fought for death, up to and including the death of Germany, and the German people were prepared to follow them even to their own destruction. Indeed, it would be hard otherwise to understand how they could have gone on fighting the war for several years after it was obviously lost. As compared with this, the Stalinist machine, at least as seen from outside, appeared far more rational; though none the less implacable, it was far more stable. Thus it was not altogether surprising that English and American capitalism felt no great apprehension at allying itself with it. After the break-up of the Third International, it came to look like an alternative system for controlling the masses. No one could have been better placed that Stalin's police organization to check the more unruly movements of the working class, colonized peoples and oppressed national minorities.

Unlike fascism, capitalist totalitarian machines, while capturing the workers' desire energy, also set out to divide them, to privatize and molecularize them. These machines worm their way in among them, into their families, their marriages, their children, becoming ensconced at the very centre of their subjectivity and their view of the world. Capitalism is afraid of great mass movements. It seeks the support of automatic control systems, and it is that role which is played by the State and by all the various modes of 'social contract'. Should a conflict break out of certain accepted frameworks, it endeavours to contain it as purely an economic, or just a local, war. In this respect, it must be admitted that the Stalinist totalitarian machine looks like being left far behind by that of Western totalitarianism. What was the Stalinist State's greatest advantage as compared with the Nazi State is now its major defect as compared with 'democratic' states. As against fascism, the Stalinist State had the advantage of greater stability; the Party was on a different level from the military machine, the police machine or the economic

machine. It rigidly encoded the aims of all the power machines, and kept the people under relentless surveillance. It also succeeded in holding the vanguard of the international proletariat on a tight rein. The bankruptcy of classical Stalinism, which is undoubtedly one of the most noteworthy features of our present period, is probably due to its inability to adapt to the development of the forces of production, and, especially, to what I call the molecularization of the labour force. This has been demonstrated, inside the USSR, by a series of political and economic crises, by successive shifts of power which have restored a certain *de facto* autonomy, relative but fundamental all the same, to the machines of the State, of production, of the army, of the regions, etc. at the expense of the Party. Specific national and regional problems have once again come to preponderate everywhere. This has made it possible, among other things, for the States on the perimeter to regain some freedom of action, and for the capitalist countries to recognize and even partly to integrate their local communist parties. In this respect, Stalin's heritage has been totally lost. Of course Stalinism still survives in a few parties and trade unions, but it now operates more on the old social-democratic model, with the result that independent revolutionary conflicts and struggles of desire – like the workers' takeover of the Lip watch-making factories in France in May 1968 – tend more and more to elude its control.

What accounts for the change from the classic fascist leviathans of the past into the molecularization of fascism we are witnessing today? What causes the de-territorialization of human relationships, so that they lose their bases in family and territorial groupings, bodies, age-groups, etc.? Just what is this de-territorialization which rebounds to give rise to an upsurge of a new micro-fascism? It is not a matter merely of the ideological orientation of capitalism, or the strategy it adopts, but of an underlying material process: because industrial societies operate from semiotic machines which are, more and more, decoding all realities, all previous territorialities, because the machines of technology and of economic systems are more and more de-territorialized, they are capable of liberating ever greater fluxes of desire. Or, more precisely, because their mode of production is forced to effect that liberation, the forms of repression are also driven to become molecularized. A single, massive, straightforward repression is no longer enough. Capitalism has to construct and impose models of desire, and its survival depends on its success in getting them interiorized by the masses it exploits. Every individual, therefore, must have an individual childhood, sexual situation, relationship to knowledge, an individual idea of love, loyalty, death and so on. Capitalist production relations do not merely apply to large-scale social formations, but are working to mould the right kind of producing-consuming individual from the cradle onwards. The molecularization of the processes of repression, and consequently the need for a micro-politics of desire, are

related not to any development of ideas, but to a transformation of material processes, a de-territorialization of all forms of production, be it social production or desire production.

Lacking models that have been tried and tested, and given the unsuitability of the old formulae – of fascism, Stalinism and perhaps even social democracy – capitalism has to seek within itself for new formulae of totalitarianism. Unless and until it finds them, it will be at the mercy of movements on all kinds of fronts that it cannot foresee (wildcat strikes, campaigns for self-management, the struggles of immigrants or racial minorities, subversion in schools, prisons or mental hospitals, the battle for sexual freedom and so on). This new situation, when there are no longer great homogeneous social blocs whose activity can easily be channelled towards purely economic aims, will naturally evoke a more varied and intense backlash of repressive responses. As well as the fascism of concentration camps (and these still exist in many countries),[5] new forms of molecular fascism are developing: the crematoria of Belsen can be satisfactorily replaced with the small furnaces of the family, the school, racism, ghettoes of all sorts. All over the world the totalitarian machine is experimenting to find the structures best suited to the situation, in other words, best fitted to capture desire and harness it to the profit economy. Once and for all we must refuse to be taken in by such slogans as 'Fascism will not happen again' – it already has happened, and is still happening. It infiltrates through even our most intricate defences, and continues to change and develop. It appears to come from outside, but its energy comes from the core of desire within each one of us. In apparently tranquil situations, disaster can strike from one day to the next.[6] Fascism, like desire, is disseminated in fragments throughout the social spectrum; the form it takes in any one place will depend on the prevailing relations of power. It can be simultaneously described as super-powerful and laughably weak.

In the final analysis, everything depends on the capacity of groups of human beings to become the protagonists of history, in other words to govern the material and social forces at all levels that lead to a desire to live and to change the world.

5. One of present-day capitalism's major concerns is to discover suitable forms of totalitarianism for the Third World.

6. A disaster like the Chilean should make us unwilling ever again to lend an ear to the soothing words of social democrats. After all, Allende himself described the Chilean army as 'the most democratic in the world'! A military machine as such, regardless of the political regime of the country in which it operates, is always a crystallization of fascist desire. Trotsky's army was no exception; nor was Mao's; nor is Castro's. To say this is not to derogate from their respective merits.

Centralist Party or Revolutionary War Machine[7]

ACTUEL: Has there ever been at any time in the course of history a strong and lasting liberation of desire – apart from short periods during wars or revolutions or festivals or massacres? Or do you believe history will come to an end in some final revolution that will liberate desire once and for all?

FÉLIX GUATTARI: *Neither. I don't believe in the end-of-history, or in temporary outbursts.* Every civilization experiences its own history coming to an end, and it is not necessarily either conclusive or liberating. As for your outbursts, your saturnalias, they don't convince me either. Some active revolutionaries with an overpowering sense of responsibility say that 'excesses may occur "in the first stages" of the revolution, but it is essential to move on from that to serious matters, to organization and re-education'. We know quite well where that ends – in Siberian labour camps! Once again we are back to the old programme: setting up a vanguard for the purpose of effecting syntheses, of building up a party as an embryonic State apparatus, creaming off the educated working class; what is left is then the *Lumpenproletariat*, who are not to be trusted. Establishing such distinctions is a way of trapping desire to the service of a bureaucratic caste. As Michel Foucault has shown, the distinction between the 'proletarian vanguard' and the 'non-proletarianized plebs' was introduced by the Party or a State apparatus in order to unleash the action of the masses. Demanding a better legal framework, for instance, is like asking for good judges, good cops, good bosses – a bourgeoisie to stifle every manifestation of self-expression by the masses, to *marginalize* desire. Everything comes back to the problem of State power. 'It would be crazy to expect France to keep itself in order' – and so on. We are asked, for instance, how we propose to unify struggles on specific points without a Party. How is the machine to be run without a State apparatus? Of course the revolution requires a war machine, but that is by no means the same thing as a State apparatus. Of course it requires some authoritative analysis of the people's desires, but that does not mean an external synthesizing apparatus. For desire to be liberated means that desire emerges from the dead end of private individual phantasies: it is not a question of adapting it, socializing it or disciplining it, but rather of engaging it in such a way that its development is not brought to a halt in an impenetrable social body, but opens out into a collective utterance. What is important is not an authoritarian unification, but a kind of infinite swarming of desiring machines – in schools, factories, neighbourhoods, in day nurseries, in prisons, everywhere. It is not a question of trimming or totalizing all these various partial movements, but of connecting them together on the one stem. As long as we see ourselves having to

7. Extract from an interview with *Actuel*, in a special number entitled 'C'est demain la veille', late 1972.

choose between *either* the impotent spontaneism of the masses *or* the bureaucratic and hierarchical encoding of a party organization, then all 'liberation movements' of desire will find themselves taken over, or encircled and marginalized.

A.: Is it your view that ideological arguments by definition conceal conflicts of desire?

F.G.: In traditional political structures, we always find the same old stratagem: the great ideological debate takes place in the plenary sessions, while problems of organization are relegated to the background and dealt with by specialized commissions. They are represented as secondary by comparison with political decisions. Really, however, the opposite is the case: the real problems far more often relate to questions of organization that are never actually stated in so many words, but are 'projected' in ideological terms. The fact of the matter is that it is here that the real cleavage occurs – at the level of the relation between desire and power, at the level of cathexes, of group Oedipus complexes, group 'super-egos', of all the effects of bureaucratic corruption. Only following this do political differences become established: a person opts for one alternative rather than another because, on the level of organization and of power, he has already unconsciously chosen his opponent.

A.: Let's take a concrete example – Trotskyist groupuscules. What conflict of desire is at issue here? For all their political disagreements, each group seems to provide its members with the same things: a hierarchy that makes them feel secure, a solid social context, a satisfactory explanation of the world. I can't see any difference.

F.G.: Well, assuming that any resemblance to any existing group is purely coincidental, let us imagine that one such group starts off by defining itself by its fidelity to the positions of the communist left as fixed at the time of the setting-up of the Third International. This involves a whole set of axioms, even down to the right way to pronounce certain words and the right gestures to make when one uses them, as well as organizational structures, views of how to behave towards one's allies, 'centrists', 'revisionists' and so on. All this can correspond to a certain Oedipalizing image, an intangible and reassuring universe like the world of the obsessional who becomes helpless if a single familiar object is moved from its usual place. Throughout this identification with recurrent figures and images, what is being sought is a kind of effectiveness similar to that of Stalinism – but, precisely, *without* the ideology. In other cases, the general framework of method is preserved, but the group try to adapt themselves to it: 'Though it's still the same enemy, comrades, conditions have certainly changed.' In such instances, the group is far more open.

They have made a compromise, rectifying the first image while keeping its structure essentially intact; new ideas have been introduced, but they coexist with the old ones. There are more meetings, more study courses, and more interference from outside as well. In this type of revolutionary desire, despite the will to change, there remains, to paraphrase Zazie, a wish to shit on the militants. When one gets down to the basic problems, all these groups, it is true, will say more or less the same thing. But their styles are radically different – how they define their leaders or their propaganda, how they understand the discipline, loyalty, self-effacingness or asceticism of the militant. It is impossible to grasp these key points without studying in some depth the way the desire of these social machines operates. From anarchists to Maoists the spectrum is very broad both politically and analytically speaking. And all this is to say nothing of the numbers of people who are in contact with such groups without really knowing whether to opt for leftist activism, trade-union action, insurrection, waiting and seeing, or indifference.

It is necessary to describe the precise role of these machines for stifling desire – which is what all these splinter groups are as they grind and sift. The dilemma is whether to let ourselves be broken by the social system, or to become part of the existing fabric of these little churches. In this respect, May 1968 was an amazing revelation. The power of collective desire became so intense as to throw up all sorts of left splinter groups. But they came to lament their errors, and helped in their various ways to restore order alongside all the other repressive forces – the CGT, the Communist Party or Edgar Faure. I do not say this to be provocative. There is no denying that the revolutionaries fought bravely against the police. But the moment we leave the sphere of the struggle of interests to consider the function of desire, we have to recognize that the leadership of a number of left splinter groups approached the young in a spirit of repression, in order to contain and canalize the desire that had been set free.

Becoming a Woman[1]

In the larger social field, homosexual groups function rather like movements or sects, with their special ceremonials, their initiation rites and what René Nelli would call their loving myths. Despite the advent of groups of a more or less corporatist nature, like Arcadie, homosexuality is still tied to the values and systems of interaction of the dominant sexuality. Its dependence upon heterosexual norms can be seen in its policy of secrecy, of concealment – due partly to repression and partly to the sense of shame which still prevails in the 'respectable' circles (especially of business, literature and entertainment) over which psychoanalysis now rules supreme. The normality it dictates is a kind of second-degree normality – no longer moral in character, but scientific. Homosexuality is no longer a question of sin, but of perversion. It has become an illness, a sign of arrested development, a fixation at a pre-genital stage, etc.

At a different level, among an avant-garde minority, we find militant homosexuality in the various gay liberation movements. Homosexuals contest heterosexual power over their lives. It then becomes a matter of heterosexuality's having to explain itself; the problem is displaced, and phallocratic power in general comes into question. In theory there is at this point a possibility of feminist and homosexual action merging.

However, one has to distinguish a third, more *molecular*, level, at which categories and groups and 'specialities' are no longer differentiated in the same way, there are no clear-cut oppositions between one type of person and another – but rather an effort to find points in common among them, be they homosexuals, transvestites, drug-addicts, sado-masochists or prostitutes; be they women, men, children or adolescents; be they psychotics, artists or revolutionaries. And there are points in common among all sexual minorities, so long as one bears in mind that *every* category is a minority. At this molecular level, we come upon some fascinating paradoxes. For instance, it can be said both (1) that all forms of sexuality and all forms of sexual activity fundamentally exist alongside any individual differences between homo and hetero, and (2) that they are, none the less, nearer to homosexuality and what may be called feminine becoming.

1. Extracts from an interview with Christian Descamps in *La Quinzaine littéraire*, August 1975, no. 215.

At the level of the social body as a whole, the libido is in fact caught up in the two systems of opposition – of class and of sex. It is seen as being male and phallocratic, and as creating a duality in all values: opposing strong to weak, rich to poor, useful to useless, clean to dirty and so on.

At the level of the sexed body, however, it is caught up in a female becoming. Or, to be more precise, becoming a woman provides a point of reference, or possibly a projection screen, for other forms of becoming (for instance, becoming a child as with Schumann, becoming an animal as with Kafka, becoming a vegetable as with Novalis, becoming a mineral as with Beckett).

Feminine becoming can play this kind of intermediary role in relation to other sexual developments because it is not too far removed from the dualism of phallic power. To understand homosexuals better, we tell ourselves that they are somewhat 'like women', and even some homosexuals join in this convention to help normalize their situation. The feminine-passive/masculine-active couple thus remains a kind of obligatory model, dictated by authority, to enable it to situate, localize, territorialize and control the intensities of desire. Outside this exclusive bi-polarity there is no salvation, or rather there is a descent into meaninglessness, a trip to prison, to hospital, perhaps to the psychoanalyst. Even deviance, even all the various forms of marginalism have to be encoded in order to function as safety valves. The fact is that women are the only authorized repositories of the process of becoming a sexed body. If a man breaks away from the phallic rat race inherent in all power formations, he will become involved in various possible ways in this sort of feminine becoming. Only then can he go on to becoming animal, cosmos, words, colour, music.

In the nature of the case, then, homosexuality is inseparable from a feminine becoming – even homosexuality that is not Oedipus-orientated or personological. The same can be said of the sexuality of children, of psychotics, of poets (note the coincidence in Ginsberg, for instance, of a fundamental poetic mutation and a sexual mutation). More generally, then, every 'dissident' organization of the libido necessarily makes common cause with the feminine body in its becoming, as an escape route from the repressive social structure, as a possible route to a 'minimum' of sexual becoming, and as the last life-buoy to cling to for safety from the established order. I stress this point particularly, because the becoming of the female body must not be confused with the category of woman as considered in marriage, the family and so on. This kind of category can only exist within the particular social field that defines it, in any case. Woman as such does not exist at all. There is no absolute motherhood, no eternal feminine. The difference between men and women is even more necessary as a foundation of our social order than distinctions of class or caste or anything else. Conversely, anything that

infringes the norms, that breaks with the established order, is in some way related to animal becoming, feminine becoming and the rest. Wherever there is a semiotic system being broken down, there is also a sexualization being broken down. We should not, it seems to me, discuss the problem of homosexual writers, but rather try to discover the homosexual element in every great writer, even one who is heterosexual in other respects.

It seems to me important to destroy such gross concepts as 'woman', 'homosexual' and so on. Nothing is ever as simple as that. When we reduce people to categories – black or white, male or female – it is because of our own preconceptions, our need to ensure our power over them by a process of dualizing reduction. No love can ever be described in a univocal way: Proust's love was never specifically homosexual, but always included elements of the schizophrenic and the paranoiac, as well as a plant becoming, a feminine becoming, a music becoming.

Another of those massive notions that have done incalculable harm is the notion of the orgasm. The dominant sexual morality demands that a woman should have a quasi-hysterical identification of her pleasure with her man's, thus expressing symmetry, and a submission to his phallic power. The woman *owes* her orgasm to the man: if she 'refuses' him, she commits a sin. What a lot of dramatic nonsense is talked on this theme! To say nothing of the unhelpful sententiousness of psychoanalysts and sexologists on the subject. In fact, it is quite common to find that women who fail with masculine partners can easily reach orgasm by masturbating, or by making love with another woman. But what a scandal it would be if that came out!

Let us consider one final example – the prostitutes' movement. At first everyone, or almost everyone, was saying, 'Bravo. The prostitutes are quite right to make a stand. But one must distinguish: prostitutes themselves, fine, but no one must condone pimping.' It was explained to the prostitutes that they must defend their interests, that they were being exploited. The absurdity of this makes one gasp. How can anyone explain anything without first finding out what goes on between the prostitute and her pimp? There is, of course, the threefold relationship – prostitute–pimp–money. But there is also a whole micro-politics of desire, of enormous complexity, at work among these three elements, to say nothing of various other characters such as clients and the police. We can surely learn a lot about this from the prostitutes themselves: rather than prosecuting them, we should do better to subsidize them as we do research laboratories! I myself am convinced that if we study this micro-politics of prostitution, we shall one day come to understand whole new areas of the micro-politics of marriage and the family – especially the money relationship between husband and wife, parents and children and, beyond that, between psychoanalyst and client. (It is also worth taking another look at what the anarchists of the early 1900s wrote on the subject.)

Millions and Millions of Potential Alices[1]

Danger. Watch out. The slightest deviation and everything will go up in smoke. A specially close watch must be kept on those unsavoury little groups whose words and turns of phrase and attitudes could easily contaminate whole populations. Above all we must neutralize any who have any access to a transmitter. What we want are ghettoes – autonomous if possible – micro-Gulags, as small as the family, the couple, even the individual, so that everyone is restricted, day and night.

They talk, oh yes indeed, they talk all the time. They emit signs, words, fragments of signs, fragments of words, all trying to make us accept our roles – son, wife, father, worker, student – to get us to sit up and beg, to be disciplined, obedient, hard-working . . .

Fear is deep-rooted in our daily lives – fear of the prison and the looney-bin, of the army, of unemployment, of the family, of sexism. Fear to ward off desires, so as to reduce the daily round to the miserable state in which church, family and state have always kept it. But the class struggle is destroying domination in the workplace, sharing things is destroying the domination of isolation, desire is transforming the daily round. And the writing is moving from one order to another, rearranging them creatively and cutting across barriers.

The Desire of power of the discourse of order, or the power of desire against the order of discourse . . .

The viewpoint of autonomy towards the mass media of communication was that a hundred flowers should bloom, a hundred radio stations should broadcast . . .

The guerrilla war of information, the organized disruption of the circulation of news, the break in the relationship between broadcasting and the making known of facts . . . is to be found within the general

We have to start historically with the crisis of the extreme left in Italy after 1972, in particular that of one of the liveliest groups – both theoretically and in action: Potere Operaio. One whole sector of the extreme left was to be dispersed during that crisis, but only in order to animate movements of revolt in various *autonomie* (an Italian word for particular groups of women, young people, homosexuals, etc.). There then came into being a

1. Radio Alice, a free radio station in Bologna, was banned after the events of March 1977 in Italy. This essay was published as an introduction to the French translation of a book on the subject, *Radio-Alice, radio libre*, et. J. P. Delarge, 1977.

struggle against the organization and domination of work . . .

The interruption and subversion of the fluxes of production and the transmission of the signs given by authority represent a field of direct action . . .

number of political-cum-cultural groups, like the Gatto Selvaggio (Wild Cat) group in Bologna, which launched Radio Alice in 1974.

After the dispersal phase, there was a new process of reassembling the *movement* (another very important word in the new Italian vocabulary: Radio Alice was a station in the *movement*).

After the suppression of the State monopoly, masses of independent stations were to develop, from the most extreme left to the far right, or as mouthpieces for particular groups.

What was unique about Alice was that it went beyond what we may call the purely 'sociological' nature of the others, becoming a project in its own right.

Radio Alice entered the eye of the cultural storm – subverting the language, producing a paper called *A/traverso*, but also being directly caught up in the political action it sought to 'transversalize'.

Alice, *A/traverso*, rivista per l'autonomia, *Potere Operaio*, *Rosso*, giornale nel movimento – collective utterance actually being produced: theory – technology – poetry – imagination – slogans – groups – sex – solitude – joy – despair – history – meaning – nonsense.

The true work of art is the infinite body of man moving through all the incredible mutations of any one lifetime.

Stop the blackmail of poverty. Value of desire – value in use – labour value. Working-class aristocracy and *Lumpenproletariat* . . . What poverty? What work? Time must be reappropriated. It is our right to forget what time it is.

'I was lying on my bed.'

'That's right, comrade. You're tired and you've a right to rest . . .'

'I wasn't resting – I was reading.'

'Quite right, comrade. You're reading to raise your level of awareness and prepare yourself for further struggles . . .'

'I don't know. Maybe. I was reading Diabolik . . .'

No more of the blackmail of poverty, the discipline of work, the hierarchical order, sacrifice, patriotism, the general good. All this has been silencing the voice of the body. All our time has always been devoted to working, eight hours' work, two hours getting there and back, then relaxing over television and family supper. As far as the police and the law are concerned anything outside this routine is depraved.

Alice. A radio escape line. A whole engagement of theory – life – praxis – group – sex – solitude – machine – affection – caressing. No more of the blackmail of 'scientific' concepts. 'Organic intellectuals' are the bureaucrats of ideas. You know, the semiological battle. Of course, but this business is rather like Nanterre in '68 with sociology, or Ulm with epistemology, or St Anne with psychoanalysis . . . Let's re-read Marx, Freud, Lenin, Gramsci. Perhaps . . . but there are also the words and actions, the outline of a world we are ourselves creating, the major changes we are achieving with our minor languages.

When people are happy together, it becomes subversive behaviour.

In Bologna it all began with no more than a hundred people, trying to work out what to do. Radio Alice catalysed a process, something – not exactly something they had in common, but it is hard to know how else to describe it. Yes, a process at work in all the various autonomies – school students, feminists, homosexuals, migrant workers from the south. Then there began to be great developments in the movements of self-reduction and appropriation, refusal to work, absenteeism, etc. In 1976, Bifo, one of the moving spirits in Radio Alice, was arrested for 'morally instigating revolt'.

All this led to the riots of March 1977. The great shop-window of new-look communism was shattered into fragments. Thirty years of good behaviour and loyal service now went for nothing in the eyes of the bourgeoisie.

Up to then they had thought the PCI (Italian Communist Party) and the unions could control the masses better than anyone. They used, for instance, to say, '*In Cile i carri armati, in Italia i sindicati*' ('In Chile armoured cars, in Italy the trade unions'). But the communist Mayor of Bologna, Zangheri, called in the forces of repression in their most violent form, actually getting armoured cars brought into the city. He personally urged the police to do their worst, with the words, 'This is war! These people must be eliminated – by their own actions they have cut themselves off from the community.' There were 15,000 people in the streets – such a thing had never happened in Bologna before. Alice kept us informed about everything as it happened, by directly broadcasting reports from comrades who telephoned in to the

station. All the arrests and trials that followed were claimed to be necessary because of Radio Alice's 'military' role.

Conspiring means breathing together, and that is what we are being accused of; they want to stop us breathing, because we have refused to breathe deeply in their asphyxiating work-places, in their individualist relationships, their families, their pulverizing houses. Yes, I plead guilty to assault – to an assault on the separation of life from desire, on sexism in inter-personal relations, on reducing life to a wage-packet.

Alice, how wicked it all was! All those lower-middle-class bastards, drug addicts, queers, degenerates, layabouts, trying to poison the mind of our lovely Emilia. But they won't succeed, because everyone here has had a strong class-consciousness for thirty years. Even small employers here have their Party cards. And our hard-working young people aren't going to let themselves get caught up in this sort of nastiness. It's the people themselves who will turn it down. No one can accuse the PCI of being anti-democratic: we have supported people's committees and delegates' councils being set up everywhere – in all the factories, the neighbourhoods, the schools. And it is those committees and councils that are today becoming the best guarantees of law and order.

Our needs are having to be put forward everywhere by 'spokesmen', by delegates – they say we'll be able to speak for ourselves in the future. Mini-parliaments, school councils, neighbourhood councils, cultural decentralization, all sorts of different kinds of delegations where nothing actually changes – we have no real power. The management produce a sociologist here, a psychologist there, an anthropologist, a philanthropist, and, when it comes to the crunch, a cop with a truncheon.

An error of history. We went to them openhanded, trying to explain the correctness of our party line. Lama[2] came to Rome University to propound to them the workers' point of view – and they drove him out and threw stones at him. They've got no respect for anything. '*I Lama stanno nel Tibet*,' they said. ('The Lamas live in Tibet'). How could the Italian Communist Party, the party of the workers and all the people, let itself go on being intimidated by a handful of extremists, irresponsible agitators – why, they even call themselves 'city Indians'! Our only mistake is that we've been patient for too long. The legality of the State power today depends upon us. And in the last resort, it is up to our party to recognize what is good for the masses and what is not.

*

We love you. We are with you heart and soul, and that gives us the right to utter a warning. You have among you the best and the worst, and you must

2. General Secretary of the CGIL, the largest trade-union organization in Italy. It is controlled by the Communist Party.

sort out one from the other. Of course you can't be blamed for the present chaos, and it must be recognized that a lot of you were at the end of your tether, and it is our duty to tell you this: 'Keep calm – don't go too far.' Remember, there is a crisis; think of the danger of fascism. In other words, think as we do! Some of the things you say are wonderful, but you often deteriorate into confusion, tedium and a gratuitous obscenity that is far from attractive. Pull yourselves together, and be what you have never really stopped being – nice, high-spirited children!

*

You can't frighten us any more with talk of crisis and fascism. We want a crisis, and we won't help to calm things down. In fact we'd like to see it get worse, and even spread beyond Italy. It could easily happen, because Italy today is largely supported by the great capitalist powers – they are in a panic at the thought of its total collapse. The result is a kind of self-reduction on an international scale. Other classes, other countries will be affected: a whole world is crumbling. We don't want to stop at questioning the relationship between exploiters and exploited – we want to get at the root, the whole business of capitalist–bureaucratic exploitation, of working for a wage, of passively accepting the discrepancy between work and desire, of putting one's energies into work as a drug to abolish all desire that opens out onto the world. As for the fascists in Italy today – they are just a joke. They influence fewer and fewer people. The main danger isn't from them at all: it lies in the alliance between the capitalist state system and the bureaucratic systems of the PCI and the unions.

This new repressive alliance, with its tentacles spreading out in all directions, is trying by every means it can to keep the economic and political struggles of the workers separate from all the possible faces of autonomy. Its aim is to get the work of controlling and subjugating the masses done by the masses themselves, and to ensure that a majority conservative consensus is established among them against all the minorities of every kind – though in fact all those minorities together would add up to far more than any such majority! This seems to us to be the direction from which the danger of a mass reactionary movement will come. So don't let anyone use some imaginary anti-fascist crusade as an excuse to get us to ally with these people who really represent the embryonic form of a new sort of fascism.

*

In Bologna and Rome there have been kindled the fires of a revolution quite unlike the revolutions that overturned history in the past. This is a revolution that will sweep away not only capitalist regimes, but also the bastions of bureaucratic socialism – be they under the banner of Euro-communism, of Moscow or of Peking – and the lines of battle cannot be foretold: they may cover whole continents, but they will sometimes be concentrated in one urban neighbourhood, one street, one factory, one school. Not only are major economic and technological options at stake, but also people's attitudes, their relations with the world, particularities of desire. Managers, policemen,

politicians, bureaucrats, professors, psychoanalysts – all will join forces in vain to stop this revolution, to canalize it, to take it over; in vain will they sophisticate, diversify, miniaturize their weapons to the *n*th degree: they will never regain control of that massive movement of escape, the multitude of molecular mutations of desire that have now been let loose. The economic, political and moral order of the twentieth century is breaking up everywhere, and the people in power hardly know which way to turn. The enemy is intangible – you hear a twig snap beside you, and you find your son, your wife, even your own desire is betraying your mission as guardian of the established order. The police got rid of Radio Alice – its perpetrators were pursued, condemned and imprisoned, and its premises ransacked – but its work of revolutionary de-territorialization still goes on unabated, even affecting the nerves of the opposition.

But all this is hardly constructive, it will be objected. Perhaps not – though it would be hard to prove – but that is not the problem. The people who created Radio Alice would say something like this: it seemed to them that a movement that could succeed in destroying the vast capitalist-bureaucratic machine would, *a fortiori*, be capable of constructing a new world. Collective competence would grow with collective action; it is not necessary at this stage to be able to produce blueprints for a substitute society.

Social Democrats and Euro-Communists vis-à-vis the State[1]

1. Beyond the State

They constantly refer to their programme. But, in their attempts to achieve power, French socialists and communists depend far more upon the confidence they can inspire among ever wider sectors of the population, and upon an ever more intensive use of the media. That being so, their methods seem in many ways to have remained the same. Some of the most respected advisers in François Mitterand's entourage are once again returning to an old theme: 'To start with we need a strong Party, and even a strong State; we can then create the conditions for the growth of a self-management movement.' Of course the style is no longer that of Bolshevism, but it is hard not to remember that it was this type of argument that was used long ago in the Russian revolution, to justify the successive liquidation of soviets, of other parties, of other tendencies and, finally, of all expressions of dissidence. It is not my purpose to put the left on trial here, and one cannot say beforehand what their attitude would be if workers' committees were to develop beyond their control. All one can say is that, at present, they are certainly not encouraging the development of a large self-management movement, and that their obsessive electoralism ('Don't stir things till after polling day'!) results in their implicitly condemning anything that looks even remotely like an alternative centre of power. In this respect, their attitudes to soldiers' committees and to pirate radio stations are extremely significant.

The new style and the new use made of the media have borne fruit, especially among floating voters. But one may wonder whether, as the other side of the coin, the left are not in the process of causing the convictions of their traditional voters to float somewhat, as they grow ever more passive, and less convinced that any change can be hoped for from another election. Whatever the circumstances, their appeal to the confidence of the masses, coupled with their systematic conformism 'to reassure the man in the street', has never produced particularly spectacular results in times of serious social crisis. It is not easy to obliterate from public memory the half-dozen or so powerful swerves to the left in the past forty years, all of which ended in

1. First published in *Le Monde*, 9–11 July 1977.

retreat, in compromises with bourgeois parties and a consolidation of capitalism, and all of which were followed by long periods of demoralization and lethargy among the popular forces. While the militant base grows no stronger in its convictions and fails to expand in proportion to its enlarged audience among the parties of the left, the leadership, for its part, continues to consolidate its position, harden its views and bureaucratize itself. Preparatory to playing a role of normalizing and defending the established order at national level (as the Italian Communist Party leadership are already doing), officials are expected to maintain discipline within the organization, and keep a close watch on anyone who looks like upsetting sympathetic outsiders. Anything not relevant to the winning of the current election is felt to be dangerous, especially debates within the party and forecasts about the future. Nor merely has the 'triumphalism' of former years been abandoned (which is good), but all creative urges, whether inherited from 1968 or otherwise, all attempts to try new methods and struggles, all unplanned desires and strategies seem to be suspect.

This 'reformism' on the left would perhaps be justified if the current crisis were merely conjunctural, and did not affect the very foundations of production relations and social relations. But if, on the contrary, it were clear that no amount of contriving, of friendly plastering-over of cracks, could resolve the problem, then the demobilizing effect of reassuring the public at all costs would become apparent. What means are available to leftist leaders to cope with the crisis – to resist the sabotage by management and business circles, the flight of capital, the discontent of the French army, the pressures of international capitalism? Given the support of the union organizations which they control, they expect to enjoy a certain respite on the social front – but for how long? After all, the general strike of 1936 began when the victory of the left was announced. However, we are all too inclined to consider the present situation in the light of past precedents. If we want to try to recognize the specific features of the current crisis better, and consequently to assess the credibility of the new Popular Front taking shape on the horizon, we must not only study the public utterances or presumed intentions of the leftist leaders, but must compare these with the real situation and current development of the social groups they are supposed to be representing.

There are two series of factors that make this crisis different from others. The first is to do with the changes in the relationship between State power and economic structures, the second with the evolution of what we call 'the mass of the people', who have never in fact been as much of a mass as has been claimed, but who are at present tending to become even more sharply differentiated and producing a variety of struggles which the political and trade-union bureaucrats are going to find it harder and harder to control.

At this moment, would a Statist policy of stimulating production under

State control, that is creating a new demand with the framework of the old system, succeed in bringing back full employment, stopping inflation and restoring the confidence of investors? A 'left' government would, for instance, launch new programmes of low-cost housing, hospitals, schools, motorways, supersonic aviation, nuclear power stations and so on. But there are limitations to a policy of this kind – economic and human limitations – and in any case it could hardly be expected to restore the competitiveness of the French economy in world markets! Suppose that, in fulfilling the promises of the left's Common Programme, a few declining banks and corporations are taken into State control – and the State is already very largely at the service of capitalist enterprise – what real difference will it make? In effect, the State will continue to come more and more under the control of modern capitalism, and once again the left will have helped to speed up the change. Common sense – that widespread drug – would have us accept as self-evident the notion that the increasing extension of nationalization must constitute a lever that can transform our society in the direction of socialism *à la française*. Socialists never tire of repeating that they intend to promote democratic nationalizations and not bureaucratic State ownership. Yet it is very hard to see how an independent and self-managed national sector can possibly develop under present conditions. Either all enterprise will develop at an equal pace, or nothing will develop at all. The capitalist economy is all of a piece: at national level there is the public sector and the private sector; at international level there is the capitalist system, the bureaucratic socialist system and the exploitation of the Third World. And it is essentially the disorganization – or re-arrangement – of the various components of what has become literally worldwide capitalism that has brought about the mounting crises and the present devastation of national and regional economies. Finally, the more 'realistic' leaders of the Common Programme have put forward an idea – far less ambitious than a gradual passage to socialism – of using a limited extension of the nationalized sector (it is not quite clear how) to check the crisis in France; but even this highly technocratically minded notion will probably prove illusory!

Schematically, we can distinguish two phases in the evolution of the relationship between the French State and the economy since the Second World War: (1) a 'euphoric' phase, in which the technocrats felt hopeful of achieving a single nationally planned management; (2) a 'depressive' phase, in which they came to abandon all such ambition (today, for instance, such bodies as the General Planning Bureau are restricted to the role of a superior research department, with no real power over the economy).

During the rising, ambitious phase, the State came to assume control directly or indirectly of the least profitable branches of the economy; those, for example, requiring large amounts of available capital, or too large a work

force, or those which did not readily lend themselves to the various forms of misappropriation that make up the major part of the profits of capitalism (fictitious expenses, tax frauds, investment speculation, etc.). It thus ended by assuming responsibility for running and financing the general infrastructure of the capitalist economy – the installations of the infrastructure, of transport, communication and so on, public services of all kinds. Private profit began a kind of parasitical growth on the great tree trunk of the State and its national industries. State support for private capitalism and its national underpinning (which often takes very roundabout and barely visible forms) results in:

(a) over-taxing wage-earners, in order to finance the capitalist exploitation and bureaucratic despotism which continue to ramify throughout society; and

(b) artificially creating new areas of private profit (as for instance the publicity 'inseparable' from television, or the tourist industry 'inseparable' from seaside facilities).

In the circumstances, it is hardly possible to take any action against the various categories of exploiter, because of their juridical or administrative status. Be they bosses or shareholders, industrialists or businessmen, managers, technologists, officials, politicians or mandarins of whatever kind, they will all be found in the same circles, in the same lobbies or interest groups which, though not formally constituted, control among them all the structures of power.

Once the world market came to play a preponderant role in the various national economies, once the multinational companies became the real centres of decision-making for everything relating to currency, raw materials, the setting-up of industries, major technological decisions and so on, State authorities were stripped once and for all of the functions they traditionally had of arbitrating among all the economic and social interests within the same country. The functions of national bourgeoisies and State bureaucracies were consequently modified in their turn. To keep the collective labour force submissive, it was no longer adequate just to use straightforward methods of coercion (like the police and the army, or factory militias) or even such indirect methods as selective regulation of wage-earners' consumption, the regulation of workers' behaviour by systems of intimidation and suggestion so that individuals would passively accept laws, orders, moral, religious and educational commandments, and so on. It was, of course, the State that coordinated, supervised and in some cases directly ran the bodies and apparatus that ensured this manipulation, this incessant surveillance of individuals, families, human groupings of whatever kind. But, in proportion as, parallel to its internationalization, the development of the forces of production has meant that capitalism needs to exploit not so much the

muscle-power and manual dexterity of its workers as their capacity to adapt themselves and accept increasingly complex technical modes, coding systems and methods of work organization, all those means of education and control have become more and more diversified and miniaturized. It depends more and more on different forms of mutual surveillance and self-surveillance. These are, of course, always directed to the alienation of bodies, organs, functions, attitudes and interpersonal relationships by the ruling system, but, to achieve the same aim, additional refinements have now been introduced, and far more power brought to bear on people's desires, on their unconscious sexuality, their dreams and hopes. Thus, control today is less a matter of the direct subjection of individuals to 'visible' systems of authority, to publicly organized apparatuses of standardization, than of a multitude of more or less private institutional forces, associations of all kinds – sporting, social and cultural, community groups, young people's clubs, churches and so on.

Cash profits have never been the sole objective of capitalism. The pursuit of a certain kind of social domination, often linked with a sort of shortsighted and cynical (literally, ignoble) creativity has always been one of its essential motive forces. Around their two fundamental targets of money and power, the bourgeoisies and bureaucracies have thus worked out systems for regulating and controlling exploited populations, systems which have, both in the West and the East, the further function of establishing within the ruling class that minimum of collective discipline without which they could not stand up to the combined pressures of the class struggle and of the demands of growth. Present-day capitalism is unique in its capacity – unimpaired so far – to overcome the most serious crises and even emerge from them strengthened, and in its superiority over all the various models of bureaucratic socialism as a method of exploiting workers. This is clear from the fact that, up to the present crisis, the concentration of both political and economic powers has not brought about its isolation and encirclement, but the reverse: ever wider areas of support have developed for it in society. It can even be said that capitalism has managed to infect world society with its concept of profit and of alienation; so much so that every individual society, to some extent, and each in its own way (even including the socialist bureaucracies), takes part in the same form of exploitation and shares the same power-hunger. The working classes in the rich countries have an indirect share in the pillage of the Third World, all men share in the exploitation of women, all adults in the alienation of children and so on.

Schematically, we may therefore suggest that whatever belongs to the realm of law tends to be modelled on the State, whatever to the realm of desire on the pursuit of profit – individual fulfilment, and even love, being not more than the furthest reaches of free enterprise!

2. Inside the State

So much for the new relationship between States and world organization: a concentration of powers in the centre, a 'molecularization' of the forces of subjection. My second point relates to what is happening to the masses (or whatever term one uses). For the capitalist and bureaucratic transformations we have been considering have worked far more effectively in the economic sphere than in the political – where they have continually come up against national barriers, and, it would seem, archaisms of all sorts. In terms of capitalizing on the *economic* surplus-value, they have almost dissolved frontiers, imposing the operation of world markets to cover all antagonisms of governments, racial conflicts, disparities of development. In the terms of *power* surplus-values, however, we have witnessed a general narrowing of perspectives which has not merely made it impossible in our day to set up any further such mammoth territorial entities as the USA or the USSR, but has produced a seemingly unending proliferation of new linguistic, regional, ethnic and other issues.

It looks as though the term 'State' has outlived its usefulness, as though capitalism no longer possesses political and institutional tools to match its economic dynamism – which is, on the contrary, still formidable. The better the State has served industrial, commercial and finance capitalism (smoothing wage negotiations, supporting community life and even easing the day-to-day life of the individual), the less has it proved able to follow a coherent policy. Should this inability of the State to promote any overall rational planning be blamed on the political weakness of those currently in power, or the incompetence of the technocrats they employ? Could the situation be remedied by substituting left-wing politicians and technocrats for right-wing ones – who will in any case have been to the same schools and probably go to the same dinner parties? Or is the failure perhaps part of a far more fundamental development whereby modern governments have become no more than gear-boxes connecting the outside with the inside, linking supranational agents with pressure groups of all kinds inside the country?

This crisis, this failure of the State to adapt, does not solely favour the manoeuvres of international capitalism; it also offers new opportunities for mass action: and the masses, as I have said, are getting less and less massive, and are seeking to find new 'identities' that will enable them to recognize not merely their own material needs, but also their distinctive conditions of desire. All things considered, we should perhaps expect to find the 'weakest links' of capitalism in the sphere of collective forces of desire rather than in that of political economy. The two are obviously inseparable, but as the crisis develops they gradually become out of phase with one another. One can still imagine international capitalism managing to 'resolve' in its own way the

problems of raw materials and major technological change, or to re-draw the world map of industrial installations – but it is hard to see how it could find solutions to the political, demographic and ecological problems in which it is now becoming bogged down. The 'genius' of capitalism is that, for most of the twentieth century, it has been able not just to neutralize the revolutionary movements that sought to overthrow it, but actually to use them as a means of muzzling the international proletariat, and to some extent national liberation movements as well. Fundamentally, the current crisis is characterized not so much by economic breakdown as such, as by the ineptitude displayed by the political establishments in the developed capitalist countries in their endeavour to resolve social problems – be they national or international – along traditional reformist lines. The recipe of shoring up the State bureaucracy with a workers' bureaucracy is failing in countries as politically divergent as Italy and England. Nor does it seem that the French social democrats are being any more successful in this respect than their English counterparts or the Italian Communist Party. As long as the institutionalizing of the workers' movement coincided with the modernization of capitalism, and both processes remained in essence within the relatively narrow national framework, the discontent of the workers, that is, social pressure, functioned as a kind of 'selective' pressure on industry, and the weaker had to align themselves with the stronger or perish. With social progress and the progress of capitalism thus complementing each other, the tendency was for the working masses to be de-proletarianized and to conform to the patterns of consumerism that were essential both to production and to the stability of social relations. The coming to power of social-democrat or Euro-communist bureaucracies in a number of Western countries, as part of this 'crisis of reformism', can only, in my view, accelerate the development of this international crisis. Indeed, there is no reason to believe that they will have any more control over the international economy than over the State machine, which will go on spinning round on its own axis, passively registering economic facts, and taking note of the state of the parties, without having any real influence on the course of events at all. If these social democrats and Euro-communists restrict their activities to the mass media, to the world of the spectacle, then they will ultimately have no effect other than to demobilize those who could have been the agents of real social change.

Furthermore, it is by no means impossible that there will be a divorce between trade-unionism on the one hand and the socialist and communist parties on the other. An 'English-style' development, a process whereby the trade unions become independent of the labour movement, and which literally paralyses the various attempts of modern capitalism to escape from the crisis, cannot be ruled out in France. In the context of the fierce competitive struggles among the great industrial powers, the fact that the

trade-union bureaucracies are distancing themselves from the political parties of the left (not, of course, to opt for revolutionary syndicalism, but to become more firmly embedded in an American-style corporatism) could thus lead to the modernist rulers of those countries no longer having the option of using the social contract as a lever to turn intra-capitalist conflicts to their own advantage. The time may soon be past when, in a serious crisis, the parties of social democracy seem the best placed to save the bacon of the bourgeoisie and get the capitalist system going again. It is true that in Germany and Scandinavia it seems to have worked up to now – but how long will these success stories go on?

At present, neither the moguls of international capitalism, nor the bureaucracies of the East, nor the 'alternative' leaders of the European left have any means, or even any ideas, for coping with the gigantic landslides that are rocking our world. They are all still living in a Utopia in which the economic machine can go on indefinitely depending on the techniques provided by the State apparatus for controlling the masses – the army, schools, public services, trade-union bureaucracies and, most recent of all, the media. Certainly social control has never been achieved with as little violence as it is today. People are kept the prisoners of their environment – of the ideas, the taste, the models, the ways of being, the images constantly presented to them, even the turns of phrase that run through their heads. But this system of subjection by kindness, by collective somnolence, has begun to break down. People are being roused by a number of 'noises'. First of all, on the economic level, the 'normal' mechanisms of subjugation are going wrong: the 'normal' instrument of unemployment is approaching danger level almost everywhere, and 'normal' inflation – a way of indirectly taxing the wage-earner – is tending to get out of control. Regions of the world and countries believed quite recently to be major economic growth points are slumping down into under-development. The case of Italy is highly significant in this respect, in as much as that country has for several years survived only by being given international aid. England has settled into a long-term crisis whose upshot it is hard to predict. And finally, we are witnessing the general liquidation of the ideologies and models of reference of socialism, and the collapse, one after another, of the various socialist Meccas.

Schematically, again, one can distinguish four major periods in the history of working-class integration:

a period of intensive urbanization, with efforts to stop workers moving from place to place inside the country;

a period of worker education, of the semiotic integration of the labour force into the language of the ruling class and its systems of hierarchy;

a period of 'socialization' reflecting the incorporation of the workers' movement and the development of contractual trade-unionism;

a period of generalized subjugation, by means of the mass media, with the setting-up as the norm of a model based on the American Way of Life, and so on.

The various technologies of subjection, and the institutions that were set up during the course of these different periods (which have not been eliminated as time went on, but interwoven), no longer correspond to the development of the forces of production, the internationalization of the economy or the new type of desire now surging up among the masses. In other words – at least this is my hypothesis – the four sets of problems just mentioned are on the way to being replaced by four lines of crisis, of which one cannot at present say how they will develop:

a crisis of territorial control, and above all of State power (one can almost talk in terms of a 'withering away of the State', though in a sense very different from the Marxist one);

a crisis in the traditional methods of economic subjection (unemployment, inflation, etc.) which is essentially linked to the internationalization of economic and production mechanisms – that is, the de-territorialization of capitalism;

a crisis in the methods for subjecting the work force, the socialization of individuals (a crisis of institutions – schools, unions, traditional political activities, etc.), which is in turn related to the development of the mass media;

a crisis arising out of the new sensitivity developing among the masses, the emergence of a new sort of struggle – no longer concerned with the standard of living but with the quality of life – and a new type of demand concerned with what we may call 'the right to desire'.

One wonders how the leaders and theorists of the left who, on their own admission, have decided to make no essential changes ('at least to start with', they say) can possibly claim that their economic programme will make it possible to resolve these crises – in schools, workrooms, barracks, prisons, hospitals, etc. And what will happen if the great mass of workers decide to reject the 'necessary sacrifices' – as they are beginning to in Italy? And what if an ever-increasing minority refuse to go on playing the game, and start challenging in their everyday lives the legal, domestic or sexual relations of the present system, which the various components of the left are, by all the evidence, continuing to approve?

The alliance between official trade-unionism and the parties of the left is based upon a passive acceptance of capitalism by broad sections of the working class. But the economic and political bankruptcy of the right may well have an effect on this cooperative state of mind. Though, in an earlier phase, the growing independence of the union movement causes the working class to turn in upon itself, and even to some extent to intensify the *poujadism* of its more conformist elements, it may equally, in a later phase, foster the

development of moves towards 'workers' autonomy' – to borrow an Italian term suggestive of new revolutionary attitudes.

Without going so far as to imagine a recurrence of the kind of huge upheavals we saw in May 1968 in France, it does seem that a number of signs indicate that ever-widening social groups are not content to go on as they always have. An increasing number of people are beginning to reject certain forms of consumerism. To exhortations to acquire more cars, more private houses, more household machines, more ready-made entertainment and, in order to do so, to work harder, join the rat race, wear oneself out before one's time, they reply, 'What's the point? Who does it help?' Though essential to keep capitalism running smoothly, such exhortations may be partly missing the point. At bottom, the very idea that any solution to our present socio-economic problems can be found within the existing framework is losing its credibility. Nothing – no amount of being blackmailed into united action or frightened into passivity – should prevent our envisaging the possibility of a world very different from the one we are now almost forcibly made to accept. For example, should the left come to power:

– it would be unable to cure unemployment;

– it would be unable, while keeping to the rules of the capitalist game (both external and internal), to rid the French economy of its dependence on the world market and the super-powers that control it;

– there would be increased distancing between different regions, between different social and professional classes, between age-groups, between the sexes and so on: in other words on the one hand there would be social stratification and an ever more paralysing and demanding social and economic inertia, and on the other an increasingly confident marginalism, a breaking-away from 'marginal utilities' to adopt new ways of living.

Rather than being satisfied with sitting back to watch the electoral grand finale, we should be asking the left a certain number of preliminary questions. What, for instance, will they do to control the economy if they lose the unions, as has happened in Britain? What will they do to control young people, women and all the various minorities that seek to profit by the occasion to get some changes made? Will they be capable of ensuring law and order? We must also analyse in detail the motives underlying our own defeatism – for, in fact, the implicit hypothesis for many of us is that, whatever happens, we shall be the losers. After all, history shows that the left has always succeeded in restoring order and absorbing troublesome movements better than the right. Yet – who is to say that this must always happen? We must not, of course, delude ourselves: the parties of the left are already preparing to 'face up to their responsibilities', as they say – in other words, to make use of whatever forms of repression 'circumstances may require' (another hallowed phrase). But will they still have the means to do it this time? It is not a foregone

conclusion. Without entertaining any messianic visions of the power of crises and revolutions, it is undeniable that the complete disillusionment with the electoral process evidenced in the rise of the ecological movement and of the extreme left in France, the worsening of the crisis in Italy, the birth of the new Spain and the growth of dissidence in Eastern Europe would seem to herald a period of major upheavals. However, a kind of mass torpor, fostered by the mass media, still makes us all too often refuse to consider the possibility of any real historical rupture. It is not just a matter of speculation about the future. Instead of expecting the 'inevitable' return of fascism, since ultimately it is always the same mechanical schema that comes to mind, we could try starting from the contrary hypothesis: that at the turn of this century, a new type of revolution at last became possible, a revolution no longer solely affecting political systems, but leading to a questioning of all, even the tiniest, cogs and wheels of society. One hardly dares to utter such thoughts aloud these days, for fear of being ridiculed by the new leaders of leftist thought: 'Good God, here's another idiot who believes in dreams coming true: he doesn't seem to realize that May '68 is over and it won't be back – and a good thing too!'

Yet, after all, if historical references are so important, why not recall times when what were apparently the most totally secure people, and ideas, and institutions, were all swept away? Is it not at such moments that desire, far from being confused with reality, actually takes reality by the throat and transforms it?

Molecular Revolution and Class Struggle[1]

The End of Fetishism

Beneath Marx and Freud, beneath Marxology and Freudology, lies the shit reality of the communist movement and the psychoanalytic movement. We have to start from this fact, and keep coming back to it. And I use the word shit advisedly – it is hardly even a metaphor: capitalism reduces everything to a state of shit, of an amorphous and simplified flux from which everyone must extract his own share in his own private and guilt-ridden way. The keynote is exchange: absolutely anything, in the 'proper' proportions, can be equivalent to absolutely anything else. Marx and Freud, for instance, boiled down to a dogmatic pulp, can be introduced into common currency without any risk to the system. Marxism and Freudianism have been so painstakingly neutralized by the constituted bodies of the workers' movement, the psychoanalytic movement and the universities that not only do they upset nobody, but they have even become guarantors of the established order, thus showing by a *reductio ad absurdum* that that order cannot be seriously shaken. It may be objected that one ought not to blame these theories for the distorted forms of praxis that claim to be based on them, that their original message has been falsified, that one must get back to the sources, correct inaccurate translations, etc. This is the fetishist trap. There is no example anywhere in the sciences of this sort of respect for the texts and formulae propounded by the giants of the past. Revisionism is the norm. We are endlessly relativizing, rearranging, dismantling all the accepted theories, and those that resist remain under permanent attack. Far from setting out to mummify them, the aim is to open them out onto further constructions that are just as provisional, but more firmly grounded in the solid earth of experience. What matters, in the last resort, is how a theory is used. We cannot therefore simply ignore the practical manifestations of Marxism and Freudianism. We have to start off from what is actually being done in order to work our way back to the original flaws in the theories, in as much as it is they, in one way or another, that give a handle to such distortions in the first place. It is hard for the work of theorizing to evade the capitalist tendency to ritualize, to take over any

1. Interview with Arno Munster about Anti-Oedipus, *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 17 January 1973.

activity that is even minimally subversive, by cutting it off from all investments of desire; theorizing can only hope to emerge from its ghetto if it opens out onto real struggles. The first task of a theory of desire must be to try to pick out ways of breaking through into the social field, rather than sanctioning the quasi-mystical practice of the private psychoanalytical encounter as it has developed after Freud. Correspondingly, any theorizing that bears on the present class struggle must be concerned primarily with how to open that struggle out to the desire-production and creativity of the mass of the people. Marxism, in all its forms, is lacking in desire and loses its essence by tending towards bureaucratism and humanism, while Freudianism has not merely ignored the class struggle from the first, but has, further, continually falsified its early discoveries relative to unconscious desire by trying to handcuff them to the family and social norms of the prevailing order. Refusing to face these fundamental drawbacks and trying to gloss over them results in making it seem that the internal limitations of the theories are limitations that are intrinsically insuperable. There are two methods of receiving theoretical statements: the academic's way is to take, *or* leave, the text as it stands, whereas the enthusiast's way is to take it *and* leave it, manipulating it as he sees fit, trying to use it to throw light on his circumstances and direct his life. The point is to try and make the text work. And in this respect, what strikes one most forcefully in Marxism and Freudianism is not the consistency of their statements, but the tone of opposition in which they are made, the way they reject Hegelianism, bourgeois political economy, academic psychology, contemporary psychiatry and so on.

The very notion of a conjunction between these two separate bodies, Marxism and Freudianism, distorts the perspective. Detached scraps of Marxism can and should contribute to a praxis that bears on the class struggle. The very notion of a theory of and a separation between the private pursuit of desire and the public field of conflicts of interest leads implicitly to capitalist integration. Private ownership of the means of production is intrinsically bound up with making desire the property of the self, the family and the social order. First, every approach to desire on the part of the worker is blocked, by familialist castration and the traps of consumerism, and so on; after which it is not hard to take possession of his labour-power. It is Capital's first requirement to separate desire from work. The mission of the theorists who serve it is therefore to separate political economy from the economy of desire. Work and desire are in contradiction only in the framework of the clearly defined production relations, social relations and family relations of capitalism and bureaucratic socialism. No alienation of desire, no psycho-sexual complex, is radically and ultimately isolable from external repression and psycho-social complexes. To say, for instance, that the Maoism of the present-day Chinese is still dependent upon a universal Oedipus complex is

as much as to say that Maoism itself is something eternal, forever rising again from its own ashes. But of course history is not like that. A revolutionary in France after May 1968 is, from the point of view of desire, a totally different breed from his father in June 1936. There can be no possible Oedipal relationship there. There is neither identification nor rivalry. We cannot discern any continuity in the change. And if it is true to say that it is just this kind of break that makes contemporary history what it is, then theorists of the social scene and the psychoanalysis scene will have to prepare themselves for a fundamental re-training programme.

ARNO MUNSTER: Is it possible to de-Oedipalize psychoanalysis without totally revolutionizing both psychoanalysis and the institutional framework of psychiatry?

FÉLIX GUATTARI: Psychoanalysis and institutional psychiatry are not arenas of private combat. There is not one specific battle to be fought by workers in the factories, another by patients in the hospitals, yet another by students in the universities. As became obvious in '68, the problem of the university is not just that of the students and the teachers, but the problem of society as a whole and of how it sees the transmission of knowledge, the training of skilled workers, the desires of the mass of the people, the needs of industry and so on. What was the response of the State power to student agitation then? It was to re-centre the problem onto itself, to turn it back onto the structure and organization of the university. The same is true of psychiatry and psychoanalytic associations: the question is not how, today, one could alter the behaviour of psychiatrists and psychoanalysts, or the attitude of groups of patients, but the more fundamental one of how a society is functioning that it lets a situation like this arise at all? A society in which all production is geared to the law of profit tends to make a permanent separation between desire-production and social production. The former falls into the individual sphere, whereas the latter is bound up with working for profit. The question we must ask is whether the things produced by desire – a dream, an act of love, a realized Utopia – will ever achieve the same value on the social plane as the things produced commercially, such as cars or cooking fat? The value of anything depends, of course, on a combination of labour-force and available technology (that is, variable and fixed capital), but also, and far more basically, on its relation to the dividing line between what is accepted by desire and what is rejected. All the capitalist cares about are the various desire and production machines that he can link up to his exploitation machine: your arms if you are a street-sweeper, your intelligence if you are an engineer, your looks if you are a cover-girl; not merely does he not give a damn about anything else – he doesn't even want to hear people talking about it. Any voice that might be heard speaking up for

other things can only interfere with the order of his production system. So, though desire machines proliferate among the industrial and social machines, they are always being closely watched, channelled, isolated from one another, put into compartments. What we have to find out is whether this alienating control, which is believed to be legitimate and indeed inherent in the social situation of human beings, can ever be overcome.

A.M.: In attacking psychoanalysis for being wedded to the Oedipus complex and the super-ego, you are also attacking part of the theoretical heritage of Freud.

F.G.: Freud understood very little about schizophrenia. Many of the internecine quarrels in the psychoanalytic movement become clearer when one looks at them in the light of Freud's basic hostility to psychosis. Psychosis and revolution were both seen as bad subjects. Normality was identified with the acceptance of family life. Freud despised delusions like those of President Schreber. He also despised women. His vision of sexuality and society was totally phallocentric. In *Analysis Terminable and Interminable* the problem of castration figures as the final reef on which the analysis founders: the man refuses the castration he needs because he does not want to be 'like a woman', while the woman cannot accept her lack of a penis, and so on. Freud totally fails to see the kind of political conflict that underlies 'resistance' of this sort. The woman rejects castration as much as the man. The key notion is that of the super-ego. The question is whether the super-ego is a creation arising out of the social structure and handed on via the intermediary of the family, so that the individual comes actually to want repression and to accept it passed on from one source to the next, starting with the father, or, whether it is rather a matter of accepting it as a necessary break within the psychic apparatus area, the only way a person can achieve the right balance, the only way the ego can adapt properly to reality. If the latter, then the father's authority and the images of the social hierarchy are simply the accessories of this essential sacrosanct castration. Therefore one of two things: either one's desire comes to desire repression and becomes its collaborator – and thus gains a status, neurotic or agonized maybe, but still a status! – or it revolts against the established order, and comes then under siege on all sides.

Some twelve years ago, in an effort to get somewhere with these questions, I put forward the notion of *transversality* to convey the capacity of an institution to rearrange the 'introjects of the super-ego' in such a way as to get rid of certain symptoms and inhibitions. A modification of the 'local coefficient of transversality' implies the existence of a source of desire, a group eros, a takeover, if only a partial one, of the individual's organization by the group as subject. Thus a social formation can alter the unconscious 'causality' that stimulates the super-ego to act, and its modification of the introjects of the

super-ego can result in a rearrangement of the psychic area as a whole. In this situation, the problem of internal and external repression takes on a different form. When it is backing up what takes place at school, in the family, in the army, etc., psychoanalysis is quite simply reactionary. No existential bursting open, no splitting of the self, no lack, no castration, can justify intervention of a repressive third party. It is pointless to say that it is no longer the real father, that what is really involved is a structural logic that would enable the subject to become established as desire in the signifying order, that it is vital for him to give up his undifferentiated imaginary pleasures if he is to attain to the 'symbolic' – which is the be-all and end-all; all this paraphernalia of theory exists merely to justify the cosiness of the analytic session. Don't worry about society! Your desire is our affair – we'll give it a free run secretly, here on the couch. And it works, one must admit. Psychoanalysis works very well, which is why it is so dangerous. It is the capitalist opium *par excellence*. Just to expose it is not enough; some way must be found of rendering it ineffective, unprofitable.

A.M.: One consequence would be to shift the ground of the struggle against psychoanalysis into the social sphere, to fight in the political arena.

F.G.: I envisage schizo-analysis as a political struggle on all 'fronts' of desire-production. There can be no question of focusing on a single area. The problem of analysis is the problem of the revolutionary movement. The problem of the revolutionary movement is the problem of madness, which is the problem of artistic creation. What transversality means is simply continual movement from one 'front' to another. The unconscious is above all a social *agencement*, the collective force of latent utterances. Only secondarily can those utterances be divided into what belongs to you or to me. The unconscious does not recognize private ownership of utterance any more than of desire. Desire is always extra-territorial, de-territorialized, de-territorializing, escaping over and under all barriers. However much psychoanalysis may re-vamp its ideas, straining them through the sieves of linguistics, logic and anthropology, it never gets beyond its home territory of familialism and capitalism. For capitalism it works as a substitute religion. Its role is to regulate repression, to 'personalize' it, as the advertisements say. Sin and confession are not the same as in the past. Desire must make some compromises. Gimmicks are not enough: what is needed is something indestructible both from without and within: an active prostitution, a ritual that never ends. Once hooked on this new drug, there is no more risk of the subject's becoming seriously involved in any social struggle. Reality remains outside the consulting-room door. It is not so much a matter of defending the values of capitalism as of pretending that they do not exist. This dichotomy between social production and the productions of desire must be a target of

the revolutionary struggle wherever familialist repression works against women, children, drug-addicts, alcoholics, homosexuals or any other disadvantaged group. This micro-class war must therefore never be fought out solely in the psychoanalytic arena.

A.M.: What place could psychoanalysis have in the struggle for freedom?

F.G.: Frankly, I cannot really see any place in the struggle for psychoanalysis as it is now. This doesn't mean that every instance of analysis must be condemned, even dual one-to-one analysis. But there are two sorts of problems that arise: on the one hand the shifting of analysis onto groups actively involved in political reality, or onto the practice of creative self-analysis, and on the other a continuing struggle against any new acceptance of repressive social patterns. A group analysis of the Slavson or Ezriel type, for instance, can be quite as damaging as a dual analysis if the true function of the parental poles is not recognized: what aspects of the father and mother are involved in the neurotic relationship? Is the paternal pole a symbol of integration, or is the father not perhaps, in spite of himself, the homing head of the social hydra. Let us consider an example from Kafka.

At a time when K., the character in *The Trial*, is almost free from the grip of his Oedipal processes, he goes to see the painter Titorelli, who shows him his canvases. They are all exactly the same. A psychoanalyst might see this as a narcissistic mechanism of reducing all identifications to the same thing, thus initiating a system of dissociation. Schizo-analysis will not set out to discover a general key to this kind of mechanism, but will rather try to trace the strands of differentiation that develop from it, the proliferation of new intensities, development of new growths from the rhizome. It will never assume that it must deal with the self, the father and the mother as the basic frame of reference. It recognizes no father in general. Traditional psychoanalysts, on the other hand, always see the same father and mother, the same triangle. The father is the same whether he works in a bank, goes off to the factory, is an immigrant labourer, is unemployed, is an alcoholic. The father is simply part of an undifferentiated social machine. Yet, in reality, every family pattern is completely different, depending on its particular context. You don't find the same relationship to paternal authority in a shanty-town in Abidjan as you find in an industrial town in Germany. Nor the same Oedipus complex, nor the same homosexuality. It seems silly to have to say anything so obvious, yet one is continually faced with disingenuous assumptions of this kind: there is *no such thing* as a *universal* structure of the human mind, or of the libido!

A.M.: So the schizo-analyst is someone who is trying to make a synthesis between the analysis of the social economy and that of the libidinal economy within that society?

F.G.: Synthesis is probably not quite the right word. What matters above all is not to reduce everything to a logical skeleton, but to enrich it, to let one link lead to the next, to follow real trails, social implications. Repetition is the beginning of difference. The repetition here does not mark the end of something, the stopping of a process, but, on the contrary, the threshold of de-territorialization, the sign of a mutation of desire. The repetition of the same picture, unchanging representation, catatonia – all these can be responses to aggression. Photos, for instance, do not play the same role throughout Kafka's life and work. One finds oneself shuttled back and forth between hatred and fascination. As a person in authority (he was no shabby-genteel bureaucrat), Kafka had to cope with his own micro-fascist desire to control other people, to exercise control within the context of a bureaucratic hierarchy, for example. That other, pinned down in a photograph, was controlled from afar, crystallized into a kind of submission, the head lowered, the eyes evasive. After the meeting with Félice, things were different. The libido took the offensive. The aim was still to possess the other from afar, but not in the same way. Kafka sought to possess Félice simply by means of love letters. No longer was she a mere object – he wanted all that was most alive in her. No longer a fixed image, she began to increase and multiply in herself, her identity becoming a multiple one; via the letters, we find innumerable different Félices and Kafkas. No longer is his possession of her merely external – it is now internal as well. Seduction and symbolic subjection to the semiotic now become far more complex exercises. No longer is it a matter of a generalized imaginary phenomenon, but a kind of voodoo technique in which literary spellbinding is brought to bear as well as the prestige of title and high position. We come closer and closer to the social links that bind Félice and Kafka, and that alienate them in the same milieu. The fact is that both of them are bureaucrats, fascinated by the power of bureaucracy. (Kafka's denunciation of that bureaucracy is no more than a protest.) The analysis of a new kind of 'perversion' of the written word, a bureaucratic perversion, thus leads us on to the perversion represented by the decadent bureaucracy of Austria–Hungary and the culture medium in which the Nazi Eros grew. All this is, of course, far too schematic, but I just want to demonstrate how, if one were to rest content with an analysis that nonsensically identified Kafka with his shopkeeper father, one would be missing the whole social dynamic of the libido. Kafka is not, as some have said, a nineteenth-century writer imprisoned in family conflicts. He is a twenty-first-century writer describing the earliest stages of a process whose implications we are barely beginning to grasp today.

A.M.: When you talk about schizo-analysis in *Anti-Oedipus*, you suggest a possible identification of analyst, patient and militant. Just what do you mean by that?

F.G.: We never talked of an *identification* of the analyst and the schizophrenic. We said that the analyst, like the militant, like the writer, like anyone else in fact, is more or less caught up in a schizo procedure. And we always made a distinction between the schizo procedure and the schizophrenic in the bin whose schizo procedure is either brought to a stop or left spinning in a vacuum. We did not say that revolutionaries should identify with mad people spinning round aimlessly, but that they should carry out their undertakings along the lines of the schizo process. The schizophrenic is a person who, for one reason or another, has become caught up in a flux of desire that threatens the social order, if only at the level of his immediate neighbourhood. Those in that neighbourhood at once move in to put a stop to it. It is the libidinal energy in its process of de-territorialization that we are interested in here, not the stopping of the process. The analyst, like the revolutionary, must let himself be carried along with it, rather than letting himself be used by the social forces of Oedipianizing repression – and saying things like, 'It's all because of your homosexual tendency' (which is how President Schreber's delusions were interpreted), or 'It's because in you the death wish is confused with the life force.' Schizo-analysis will have a lot in common with revolutionary vision if social upheavals in the future really become (as I believe they will) inseparable from a multitude of *molecular* revolutions in the economy of desire. When the barriers are brought down, and the assumptions of capitalism, the over-encodings of the super-ego, all artificially reconstituted primitive territorialities, etc., done away with, then the work of the analyst, the revolutionary and the artist will meet.

A.M.: Has the La Borde clinic a special significance in furthering your liberation project, or is it no more than a semi-solution bearing all the signs of present-day reformism in psychoanalysis?

F.G.: In effect it is a reformist endeavour, hamstrung by the State, Social Security, the patients' own understanding of their illness, medical ideology, social hierarchy, money and so on. In this sense, therefore, it is only a small-scale experiment which can easily be stopped or even taken over. But, this being said, it is sufficiently out of step with the rest of society to provide a lot of people with food for thought. If I had had to work as a private psychoanalyst or a lecturer, I should certainly have found it hard to question the doctrines of psychoanalysis or Marxism, for instance. It is only by gradually modifying the constraints laid upon desire that a working team can set up analytic and revolutionary machines of a new kind. Illusory as I believe it to be to count on an approaching transformation of society, I am equally sure that projects on a tiny scale – communities, neighbourhood committees, setting up creches in university departments, etc. – can play a crucial role. It is by working on such mini-projects as these that one contributes to launching

such great breakthroughs as occurred in May 1968. (It is worth remembering that what happened on 22 March seemed at first almost a joke!) In this area, I believe in a permanent reformism for the revolutionary movement. Better ten successive failures or insignificant achievements than a gormless passivity in face of processes of co-option and the bureaucratic manipulation of professional militants.

Plan for the Planet[1]

Nothing is less marginal than the problem of the marginal. It cuts across all times and places. Without getting to the marginal there can be no question of social transformation, of innovation, of revolutionary change. But why do Order, the Law and 'Good Form' seem always to have to come out on top? Must we perhaps postulate the existence of a kind of semiotic entropy that is on the side of the dominant significations, and that is bound to rise in proportion as the fluxes turn back upon complete objects, closed territories, black holes that ensure a shut-in self-sufficiency and fix forever the hierarchization of social formations?

I do not trust metaphors from thermo-dynamics. There need not in theory be any need for a closed action/reaction circuit, a return to the original state. Both the laws of what calls itself the science of history and a-historical moral injunctions lack the micro-political force that constitutes the true fabric of history. One must dismiss equally both terms of the alternative: free will *or* fate (whatever 'dialectical' presentation one may offer of the latter!). One must rid oneself of all *a priori* values and norms: evaluation and trans-valuation of the evolutive and involutive lines of the socius. There is no royal road to change, but there are many approach roads, starting

(a) from the collective inflexion of the 'preferential choices' inherent in the various components of an economico-ecologico-technologico-scientific rhizome.

(b) from many possible 'destinations', as they are semiotized by social forces of every sort and shape, marginal ones included.

Does this mean that a real revolution would be impossible today? No. Merely that a molar, visible, large-scale revolution – unless it is to be fascist/Stalinist – has become inseparable from the expansion and extension of molecular revolutions involving the economy of desire.

In other words: we must reject any one-way system of causality, any one-way street of history. The test of reality and truth, in this sphere, is part of a kind of inverse dialectic, exhausting the contradictions without ever resolving them, deriving from the false problems of the past, and from the

1. Notes for a lecture given at a conference organized by Jean-Pierre Faye in Namur, on 3 and 4 June 1979, on the theme of minority thinking.

dead-end situations of non-signifying residues, de-territorializing machinisms from which everything can start afresh, just when one thought that all was lost.

What tends to happen: the old stratified, totalitarian–totalized systems of the past, fixated on a transcendent reference-point, are losing their consistency. They can succeed in hanging onto their control of large social units only if

(a) they concentrate their power;

(b) they miniaturize their instruments of coercion.

Of the *n* possible courses that events may take, here are two extreme possibilities:

(a) The consolidation and stabilization of an *integrated world capitalism*. This new type of capitalism results from transformations and mutual adjustments between monopoly capitalism and the various forms of State capitalism. Within a single world system, it integrates all the different elements of class and caste societies based on exploitation and social segregation. With its tentacles spreading all over the world, its centres of decision-making tend to develop a certain autonomy in relation to the national interests of the great powers, and to constitute a complicated network that can no longer be located in any one political area (networks of energy complexes, military/industrial complexes and so on). The *modus operandi* of this new type of capitalism involves a constant reinforcement of control by the mass media.

(b) A proliferation of *fringe groups, minorities and autonomist movements* (both new and established), leading to a flowering of particular desires (individual and/or collective) and the appearance of new forms of social grouping that will take over from the power-formations of the nation-States.

Stabilization of Integrated World Capitalism

Suppose the following things all happen:

- an increase in world population
- the gradual cutting-off of the flows of energy and raw materials
- the speeding-up of the concentration of machines and information systems

Then, in the framework of this first hypothesis, there could follow:

A RE-SHAPING OF CLASS ANTAGONISMS IN THE DEVELOPED COUNTRIES

– A relative reduction of the number of jobs in the sectors of industry on which the profit economy and State capitalism are based. Quite apart from the hazards of demand, the growth of jobs in the productive sector tends in practice to be limited by the world supply of energy and raw materials.

– An ever more marked integration of the more privileged sections of the working class into the ideology, life-style and interests of the petty bourgeoisie, while new social strata of great insecurity come into existence: immigrants, hyper-exploited women, casual workers, the unemployed, students without prospects, all those living on social security.

– Areas of under-development appearing within the great powers. The bankrupting of traditional economies and the failure to de-centralize industry lead to regionalist demands and nationalist movements of an ever more radical nature.

– What determines the re-structuring of the industrial map and the development of 'peripheral capitalism' will be not so much the technological options involved as the socio-political problems (a calculation of the social 'risks').

For some decades, the working classes and petty bourgeoisies of the imperialist metropolises 'benefited'

(a) from the existence of less integrated and less mechanized means of production than we have today, and

(b) from the hyper-exploitation of the colonies.

Apart from the most skilled workers, those classes will have to be 'brought to heel', to sacrifice their hopes of status, and lose some of the advantages they have gained. What is happening is not so much a race in which the great powers are competing for first place, as the creation of a new social segregation that will be the same all over the world. While high-level elites of workers, technologists and scientists are established in the poorest countries, there will still be large areas of extreme poverty in the richest.

The restructuring of capitalism in the established industrial powers thus involves a challenge to the most longstanding social achievements, to which the working classes cling tenaciously:

– all forms of social security, retirement pensions, family allowances and so on;

– collective bargaining, with government arbitration;

– government protection of important branches of the economy – State enterprises and nationalized enterprises, mixed enterprises and those with government subsidies, etc. From the standpoint of integrated capitalism, such protection is justified only in the case of sectors that make little or no profit (administration of the infrastructures, public services etc.). But in the dominant sectors, the managers of the multinationals expect to have complete freedom to decide such questions as the re-location of industries (at regional, national and continental level), and to make all decisions relating to technology, energy and so on.

The bureaucracies of the countries of Eastern Europe see the problem in different terms, but their discussions on profit-sharing, improved plan-

ning and so forth all have that same underlying objective of maximizing profits.

A RE-SHAPING OF THE INTERNATIONAL DIVISION OF LABOUR

Nineteenth-century capitalism made real headway only to the extent that the geographical and social barriers of the *ancien régime*, with its legacy of feudalism, were brought down.

Today it seems that national barriers, national 'franchises', and the class system, as stabilized and stratified in Europe in the past, especially in Europe around the Mediterranean, constitute a very real obstacle to the advance of twenty-first-century capitalism and the birth of a new, worldwide, dominant class (forged out of the bourgeois aristocracies and the bureaucracies of West and East).

The present world crisis is directed, in the last analysis, to establishing a new method for the general economic and political subjugation of the collective labour force all over the world. The gradual fading out of traditional forms of State capitalism and their replacement by multinational powers and techno-structures (the de-territorialization of the centres of decision-making in relation to any particular country) is accompanied by

(a) the relative advancement of a few Third World countries because of the permanent tension in the raw material market as a whole;

(b) the absolute pauperization of hundreds of millions of people living in the countries that do not share in that economic take-off;

(c) an intense exploitation of the countries and regions that lie between the super-rich and the super-poor.

Closer and closer relations between East and West, not only in economic terms, but also in policing the world: greater and greater cooperation between the technocrats, bureaucrats, armed forces etc. of the Eastern- and Western-bloc countries.

A change in the direction of the armaments race. It is not now so much a matter of preparing for the Third World War as

(a) preserving a military – and therefore also a politico-economic – equilibrium among the super-powers;

(b) of keeping a wide enough gap between them and the secondary powers;

(c) of enforcing a certain type of centralist model in such spheres as those of the armed forces, the police, energy and technology inside each country.

It may well be that this last objective is what conditions the first two. For, since the traditional models of political centralism are threatened, it is becoming necessary for integrated world capitalism to overcome the apparent contradiction between

– the relative reduction in the role of national governments in such sectors

as energy, raw materials, the siting of industry, technological options, currency, etc.;

– the need to re-establish and territorialize the collective labour force upon a new sort of power formation.

The new, worldwide, bourgeois–bureaucratic aristocracy will continue to be based upon the hierarchy of international powers. But its tendency is not to be identified with any particular one of them. (Just as we had recently to dispense with the myth of the '200 families', so today we have to move away from that of the absolute primacy of German/American capitalism. The real target is far from being so concentrated. The most dangerous seats of capitalism are to be found in Eastern-bloc and Third World countries as well as in the West.)

A RE-ARRANGEMENT OF THE GREAT INTERNATIONAL SUB-WHOLES

The formula now being experimented, that is to say the 'German model' (paralleling the attempt to set up a 'European arena'), is seeking to reconcile

– the increasing integration of a workers' aristocracy that is becoming ever more detached from the proletariat of nations of the second rank;

– a strengthening of the repressive power of governments, especially in all the spheres connected with civil society;

– complete docility towards the decisions emanating from the centres of integrated world capitalism (with its multi-centric, trans-national, de-territorialized network).

In other words, it is a question of combining

– at the *local* level: an idiosyncratic re-territorialization of the labour force. (The mass media have a crucial part to play in moulding individuals, and in creating a majority consensus in support of the established order);

– at the *European* level: 'Community' responsibility for social control and repression;

– at the *world* level: a faultless adjustment to the new way in which capitalism now operates.

One could also take into consideration various other attempts by integrated world capitalism to re-structure particular economic and social situations. For instance:

– the plan of an Inter-African force supported by France and the USA to counter Cuban and Russian intervention. The only tangible result of all this interference has been to reinforce the grip of world capitalism upon Africa.

– the ever greater role Brazil seems to be being called upon to play in Latin America.

Such examples make it clear that the role of 'international policemen' that had hitherto been played by the USA and USSR (remember Suez!) has now

been taken over by international agencies which, though not easily identifiable, are no less implacable.

WORLDWIDE DEVELOPMENT OF A NEW FORM OF FASCISM

In some respects, it would be in the interests of integrated world capitalism to resort as little as possible to classical authoritarian solutions that demand the support and upkeep of political bureaucracies and military castes, and the acceptance of formulas of compromise with traditional national structures – all of which could work against its own trans-national and de-territorializing logic. It would be preferable to rely on more flexible systems of control, using miniaturized methods: far better to have mutual surveillance, collective preparedness, social workers, psychiatrists and a spellbinding TV than a repression dependent upon riot police! Better the voluntary participation of individuals in institutions than a burdensome bureaucracy that crushes all initiative.

But the long-term, general crisis that has for some years been paralysing the workings of the economy as a whole is leading to a collapse of the modern capitalist ideology that characterized the third quarter of the twentieth century.

The old class balance, the ways in which the State used to arbitrate among the various sub-wholes of the bourgeoisie, the political and juridical safeguards inherent in bourgeois democracy – all this has to be re-assessed, as the super-managers of the Trilateral Commission have made clear. Integrated world capitalism can only hope to survive provided it can control the functioning

(a) of international relations and all major social changes (for instance the manipulation of the 'carnation coup' of 1974 in Portugal, or what is now happening in Italy);

(b) of the machinery of the State (including the machinery of justice – hence the importance of the current resistance among lawyers and magistrates);

(c) of the machinery of trade unions, works committees etc. Contractual negotiations with workers would have to be considered henceforth as an integral part of the normal operation of every company, and the unions will have something of the same sort of function as a personnel department in ensuring good staff–management relations;

(d) of all collective organizations – schools, universities and everything else that contributes to moulding the collective work force;

(e) of the workings of the press, the cinema, television and so on, and everything that contributes to moulding familial and individual subjectivity. A protest in the mind of one person becomes a danger the moment there is any

possibility of its contaminating others. It is therefore necessary to keep a close watch on all deviants and outsiders, even upon their unconscious reactions.

All this has not happened yet. Integrated world capitalism has so far proved quite incapable of offering any solution at all to the fundamental problems facing the world (demographic growth, ecological devastation, the need to define new goals for production, etc.). The answers it proposes to give to the problems of energy and raw materials have nothing to offer the vast mass of the world's population. Existing international bodies are clearly incapable of settling international disputes; in fact they seem to operate on the principle of setting up certain endemic military conflicts (the wars in the Middle East, Africa and so on) as safety valves. It hardly takes a hotheaded demagogue to point out that there is increasing anger and disillusionment with this form of 'guardianship' of the interests of mankind; capitalism is well aware of this, and is trying to make what preparations it can to deal with protest and revolution.

However, the new totalitarian regime that the 'experts' of the Trilateral Commission and the managers of integrated world capitalism are working to achieve cannot be identified purely and simply with national fascisms of the Hitler or Mussolini type. It will be everywhere and nowhere. It will contaminate whole areas of the world, but there will be zones of comparative freedom alongside zones of hyper-repression, and the borderline between the zones will remain fluid. This new regime will not act only through the instrumentality of governments, but through all the elements that contribute to the education of the work force, to the moulding of every individual and the imposing of a particular life-style – in other words through a multitude of systems of semiotic subjugation operating in schools, commercial sport, the media, advertising and all the various techniques used to 'help' people (social services, psychoanalysis on a large scale, cultural programmes and so on).

A Proliferation of Marginal Groups

Integrated world capitalism does not plan any systematic and generalized crushing of the labouring masses, women, young people or minorities. In fact, the means of production upon which it depends require a certain flexibility in production relations and social relations, and a certain minimum ability to adjust to the new forms of feeling and the new types of human relationships appearing in so many places. (The 'creative discoveries' of fringe groups are taken over by the mass media; there is a comparatively tolerant attitude to some forms of freedom of action; etc.) This being the case, a certain amount of protest, half-tolerated, half-encouraged and absorbed, can become an intrinsic part of the system.

Other forms of protest, on the other hand, are seen as far more dangerous,

in as much as they threaten the essential relationships on which the system is based (respect for work, for the social hierarchy, for the government, for the religion of consumerism). It is impossible to make a clear-cut distinction between the fringe ideas that can be recuperated and those that lead down the slippery slope to authentic 'molecular revolutions'. The borderline remains fluid, and fluctuates both in time and place. The essential difference is whether, in the final analysis, a given phenomenon – however broad its implications – is one that remains on the margins of the socius, or whether it poses a fundamental threat to it. In this sense, what characterizes the 'molecular' is that the lines of escape combine with the objective lines of de-territorialization of the system to create an irrepressible aspiration for new areas of freedom. (One example of such an escape line is the free radio stations. Technological development, and in particular the miniaturization of transmitters and the fact that they can be put together by amateurs, 'encounters' a collective aspiration for some new means of expression.)

There are various factors to be taken into consideration, both in 'objective' terms and in terms of new social behaviour, in order to understand the possibilities for revolutionary change in the future:

(a) Will integrated world capitalism manage to establish a social order accepted by the majority in which social segregation is intensified? Capital – in both West and East – is simply the *capital of power*, that is to say a mode of semiotizing, homogenizing and transmitting all the various forms of power. (Power over goods, land, work, over subordinates, 'inferiors', neighbours, family and so on.) Only the emergence of new ways of relating to the world and the socius will make it possible to transform this 'libidinal fixation' of individuals upon this system of capital and its various crystallizations of power. The capitalist system, in fact, can be maintained only so long as the vast majority of individuals do not merely share in it, but also give it their unconscious assent. The overthrow of modern capitalism, therefore, is not just a matter of struggling against material enslavement and the visible forms of repression, but also, and above all, of creating a whole lot of alternative ways of doing things, of *functioning*.

(b) Over the past decade, there has been a proliferation of 'fighting fronts' of a quite different sort from those that have always marked the traditional workers' movement. (Among hitherto conformist workers, the unskilled who resent the jobs they are forced to do, the unemployed, exploited women, ecologists, members of nationalist groups, people in mental hospitals, homosexuals, the old, the young, etc.) Will their demands finally prove capable of being accommodated within the framework of protest acceptable to the system? Or will there be a gradual ramification of agents of molecular revolution beneath them all? (Movements that elude the dominant means of identification, that produce their own referential axes, that are interlinked by

their own underground and transversal connections, and consequently undermine traditional production relations, traditional social and family systems, traditional attitudes to the body, to sex, to the universe.)

(c) Will all these micro-revolutions, these profound challenges to social relations, remain contained within restricted areas of the socius? Or will there be a new inter-connectedness that links one with another, without thereby setting up any new hierarchy or segregation? In short, will all these micro-revolutions end by producing a real revolution? Will they be capable of taking on board not only specific local problems but the management of the great economic units?

– In other words: are we going to get away from all the various utopias of nostalgia – getting back to our origins, to nature, to the transcendent? The objective lines of de-territorialization are irreversible. We have to come to terms with 'progress' in science and technology, or we shall get nowhere, and the power of world capitalism will rally once more.

For instance, take the struggles for self-determination in Corsica and Brittany. It is obvious that these will intensify over the next few years. Is this just another case of nostalgia for the past? Surely what is involved here is the building-up of a new Corsica, a new Brittany – and a new Sarcelles and a new Yvelines,[2] for that matter. It is a question of re-writing the past unashamedly into the web of a clear future. The demands of minorities, for instance, and nationalist demands as well, may contain within them a certain type of State power, of subjugation: in other words, they may be carriers of the capitalist virus.

What forms of resistance can be adopted by the most traditional groups now being disturbed by the way integrated world capitalism is developing? Will the trade unions and the classical parties of the left go on indefinitely letting themselves be manipulated and taken over by modern capitalism, or will they become profoundly transformed?

It is impossible to predict the forms of struggle and organization that the revolution now starting will adopt in future. It would seem at present that absolutely anything could happen. However, a few things seem clear – not as to what the questions will be, but what they most certainly will not be.

(a) They will not be centred solely upon quantitative aims, but will be re-examining the whole purpose of work, and consequently also of leisure and of culture too. They will reconsider the environment, daily life, family life, relations between men and women, adults and children, the perception of time, the meaning of life.

(b) They will not be centred solely upon those who are adult-male-white-skilled-industrial-workers. (There will be no more of the myth of the revol-

2. Sarcelles and Yvelines are dormitory towns around Paris that presented a challenge for reconstruction.

utionaries in the Putilov factories[3] in 1917.) Production today can in no sense be identified with heavy industry. Essentially, it involves both machine-tools and computers, social services as well as science and technology. Production is inseparable from the education of the work force, starting with the 'work' of the smallest children. It also includes the unit of 'maintenance', reproduction and education, that is the family, the burden of running which, in our present oppressive system, is borne in the main by women.

(c) They will not be centred solely on a vanguard party considered to be the theorist of struggle, the source from which all 'mass movements' will have to be defined. They will be centred on many different things. Their various components will certainly not be expected to harmonize totally, to speak the same stereotyped language: contradictions, and even irreducible antagonisms, may well exist among them. (As with the attitude women will inevitably have to movements dominated by men.) This sort of contradiction does not inhibit action, but merely indicates that a unique situation, a specific desire, is at issue.

(d) They will not be seen solely in a national context. While closely concerned with the most down-to-earth everyday reality, they will also involve social totalities that extend beyond national boundaries in every sense. Nowadays, any programme of struggle worked out solely in terms of a national framework is foredoomed to failure. Any party or political group, from the most reformist to the most revolutionary, that restricts itself to the aim of 'the takeover of the political power of the State' condemns itself to impotence. (The solution of the Italian problem, for example, will be found neither by the socialists, nor the communists, nor the independents. It needs a movement of struggle to develop in at least four or five other countries in Europe.)

(e) They will not be centred on a single body of theory. The various elements will, each at its own level, and following its own pace, develop their modes of semiotization in order to define themselves and direct their action. This brings us once again to the problem of getting rid of the opposition between productive and scientific or cultural work, between manual and intellectual work.

(f) They will stop putting value in exchange in one compartment, value in use in another, and the values of desire in yet a third. Such compartmentalization is one of the most fundamental bases of the self-enclosed, hierarchical, power formations upon which capitalism and social segregation depend.

Social production, under the control of capitalist and technocratic 'elites', is becoming ever more cut off from the interests and desires of individuals. This leads

3. The workers' centre of resistance in Petrograd.

(a) to a systematic over-valuing of industries that are endangering the very survival of the human race (the arms race, nuclear power and so on);

(b) to an under-estimation of essential use values (world hunger, the preservation of the environment);

(c) to the flattening-out and repression of the uniqueness of desires, in other words to losing the meaning in life.

This being so, we can no longer separate the prospect of revolutionary change from a collective assumption of responsibility for daily life and a full acceptance of desire at every level of society.

Capitalistic Systems, Structures and Processes[1]

by Félix Guattari and Eric Alliez

The question of capitalism can be envisaged from a number of angles, but those of the economy and the social constitute a necessary starting point.

First, capitalism can be defined as a general function of semiotization of a certain mode of production, circulation and distribution. Capitalism, the 'method' of Capital, will be considered as a specific procedure of valorization of commodities, such as goods, activities and services, founded on index and symbolization systems drawn from a particular syntax and allowing the over-encoding and the control of the management running it.

This 'formalist' definition can be sustained because, despite being indissociable from those of the technical and socio-economic arrangements (*agencement*) to which it is related, such a function of semiotization has no less an intrinsic coherence. From this point of view the styles (*modes*) of capitalistic 'writings' (cf. Derrida) could be compared to the mathematical corpus whose axiomatic consistence is not called in question by the application which might be made in extra-mathematical fields. We propose to call this first level the *semiotic system* of capitalism, or the *semiotic of capitalistic valorization*.

Second, capitalism appears more as the generator of a particular type of social relations; here regulations, laws, usages and practices come to the fore. The procedures of economic writing may vary; what counts is the maintenance of a certain type of social *order* founded on the division of roles between those who monopolize power and those who are subject to it, and that just as much in the areas of work and economic life, as in those of life-styles, knowledge and culture. All these divisions, with those of sex, age-groups and race, end up by constituting 'at the arrival-point' the concrete segments of the socius. This second level will be defined as the *structure of segmentation*, a level which seems also to maintain a certain degree of internal coherence whatever the transformations or the upheavals imposed upon it by history.

It is clear, however, that the 'codage' of capitalism does not proceed from a 'table of law' defining once and for all inter-human relations. The order which

1. Translated by Brian Darling. An unpublished article which will appear in a forthcoming issue of the review *Change-Internationale*.

it imposes evolves just as does its own economic syntax. In this domain, as in many others, the influences are not unilateral, we are never confronted with a one-way causality. Neither is it a question of being satisfied with a simple opposition between semiotic system and segmentation system. These two aspects always go together, and their distinction will become pertinent only to the extent that it allows us to clarify the interactions which each has with a third, equally important, level: that of the process of production. Let us be clear straightaway that, in the present perspective, this lesser level should not be identified with what Marxists designate by the expression 'relations of production' or 'economic relations of the infrastructure'. Doubtless our category of 'process of production' subsumes the Marxist one, but it goes largely beyond it in the infinitely extensible domain of machines, both concrete and abstract. These components of the process have therefore to include material forces, human labour, social relations as well as investments of desire. In the cases where the *ordering* of these components leads to an enrichment of their potentialities – where the whole exceeds the sum of the parts – these process interactions shall be called diagrammatic – and we shall speak of mechanistic surplus-value.

Is it still legitimate, under these conditions, to continue to envisage capitalism as a general entity? Will not these formal definitions which are proposed for it be condemned to obliterate its diversity in time and space? What is the place of capitalism as mystery? The only element of historical continuity which seems capable of characterizing its various experiences seems to be precisely the process character of its sphere of production, in the very wide sense we have just proposed. One can 'find' capitalism in all places and at all times, as soon as one considers it either from the point of view of the exploitation of proletarian classes, or from that of the setting-to-work of means of economic semiotization facilitating the rise of the great markets (paper money, money in circulation, credit, etc.). Nevertheless it remains true that the capitalisms of the last three centuries have really 'taken off' only from the moment when the sciences, the industrial and commercial techniques and society have tied their futures together within a single process of generalized transformation (a process combined with de-territorialization). And everything leads us to believe that in the absence of such a 'mechanical knot', of such a proliferation of the 'mecanosphere', the societies in which capitalist forms have developed would have been incapable of overcoming the major shocks which are brought about by world crises and wars and would certainly have ended up in the same sorts of blind alleys that were experienced by certain other great civilizations: an interminable agony or a sudden 'inexplicable' death.

Capitalism would therefore represent a paroxystic form of integration of different types of mechanisms, technical systems, economic systems, but also

conceptual systems, religious systems, aesthetic systems, perceptual systems, systems of wants. Its work of semiotization – the method of *Capital* – would form at the same time both a sort of collective computer[2] of society and production, and a 'homing head' of innovations adapted to its internal pulsions. In these conditions, its raw material, its basic diet, would not be, directly, human labour or machine labour but the whole gamut of the *means of semiotic pilotage* relative to the instrumentation, to the insertion in society, to the reproduction, to the circulation of many component parts concerned by this process of mechanical integration. What capitalizes capital is semiotic power. But not just any power – because in that case there would be no way of demarcating the earlier forms of exploitation – a semiotically deterritorialized power. Capitalism confers on certain social sub-systems a capacity for the selective control of society and production by means of a system of collective semiotization. What specifies it historically is that it only tries to control the different components which come together to maintain its processual character. Capitalism does not seek to exercise despotic power over all the wheels of society. It is even crucial to its survival that it manage to arrange marginal freedoms, relative spaces for creativity. What is of primary importance to it is the mastery of the semiotic wheels which are essential for the key productive arrangements and especially of those which are involved in changing machine processes (the adjustments of machine power). Doubtless it is obliged by the force of history to interest itself in all domains of the social – public order, education, religion, the arts, etc. But, originally, this is not its problem; it is first of all and continuously a *mode of evaluation* and *technical means of control* of the power arrangements and their corresponding formulations.

All its 'mystery' comes from the way it manages to articulate, within one and the same general system of enrolment and equivalence, entities which at first sight would seem radically different: of material and economic *goods*, of individual and collective human activities, and of technical, industrial and scientific processes. And the key to this mystery lies in the fact that it does not content itself with standardizing, comparing, ordering, informatizing these multiple domains but, with the opportunity offered by these diverse operations, it extracts from each of them one and the same *mechanical surplus-value* or *value of mechanical exploitation*. It is its capacity to re-order through a single system of semiotization the most diverse mechanical values which gives capitalism its hold, not only over material machines of the economic sphere (artisanal, manufacturing, industrial, etc.) but equally over the non-material machines working in the heart of human activities (productive–unproductive, public–private, real–imaginary, etc.).

2. Oskar Lange compares the capitalist market to a 'proto-computer'. Quoted by Fernand Braudel, *Civilisation matérielle, économie et capitalisme*, Vol. II, p. 192, Éditions Armand Colins, 1979.

Each 'manifest' economic market thus displays in parallel different 'latent' areas of mechanical values, values of desire, aesthetic values etc., which we could call values of content. The conscious and 'flat' economic valorization is thus doubled by modes of 'deep' valorization, relatively unconscious if compared to explicit systems of exchange valorizations. But the fact that these values of content are made, in the framework of the given relations of production, to give an account of themselves to the formal economic values is not without incidence on their internal organization. They find themselves, somehow in spite of themselves, brought within a framework of equivalence, brought into a generalized market of values of reference – and the whole problematic which turns around the division use value/exchange value is thus shown to be completely invalid by the fact that the setting-up of this framework of capitalist equivalence has as its effect to evacuate these forms of their social content. Use value is somehow drawn into the orbit of exchange value, thus eliminating from the surface of the capitalist process all that remained of naturalness, all spontaneity of 'needs'. Exit the unidimensional perspectives of revolutionary reappropriation of use value.

(Does this mean that the reign of exchange value is inevitable? Unless it means that we must rather imagine arrangements of desire which are so complex that they can express a subversive de-naturizing of human relations to exchange values? It being agreed that we shall speak here of value, or of *arrangements* of desire to mark ourselves off from any mythology of Otherness and of Absence which only takes up again, at another level, the project of 're-naturalization' or worldly relationships destroyed by capitalism.)

At the end of this process of integration, capitalistic valorization takes over based upon a double articulation with:

– the general market of formal economic values;

– the general market of mechanical values.

It is in this system of dual market that the essentially inegalitarian and manipulative character of exchange operations in a capitalistic context has its origin. It is in the nature of the mode of semiotization of capitalistic arrangements that, in the last instance, it always proceeds from a contradiction operation:

(1) of putting into communication and formal equivalence, asymmetric forces and powers from very different domains;

(2) of delimiting closed territories (rule of the laws of property) and of setting social divisions based on the programming of distribution of goods and rights, and similarly based on the definition of modes of feeling, of taste, of 'unconscious' choices appropriate to different social groups.

(We are thus faced with another type of difficulty: threatened now with no longer being able to get out of a simple opposition between onomic form and mechanical content, we run the risk of hypostatizing a historical necessity in

the generation of valorization processes, while the arrangements of pre-capitalist valorizations waiting to be over-encoded by a de-territorializing capitalist valorization, by their qualitative specificities, their heterogeneity, the unequal character of their relationships would appear as territorialized residues of an essentially quantifying movement of valorization, one that homogenizes and 'equalizes'.) If it is true, as Fernand Braudel has shown,[3] that the basically unequal character of capitalist markets was much more visible, much less 'genteel', at the time of world economies centred around cities such as Venice, Antwerp, Genoa, Amsterdam, than all that of contemporary world markets, these latter have not as a result become translucent and neutral economic writing surfaces. On the contrary it is clear that the exploitation of the Third World does not belong to equal relationships, but rather to that of pillage 'compensated' by the export of technological trinkets and a few luxury gadgets destined for consumption by a handful of privileged natives. All of which does not stop the 'new economists' and 'neo-liberals' from preaching the saving graces of the capitalist market, in all places and in all situations.

According to them, only this is capable of guaranteeing an optimum arbitration of cost and constraint.[4] The most reactionary economists seem thus to have interiorized an inverted dialectical vision of the progress of history. Since the worst aberrations are just part of historical necessity, one might just as well jump straight in without reservations. The market is thus alleged to be the only system which will ensure an optimal mobilization of all the information necessary to the regulation of complex societies. The market, explains Hayek,[5] is not only an anonymous mechanism allowing the exchange of goods and services or a 'static mechanism for the sharing of poverty', but, above all, a dynamic instrument for the production or diffusion of knowledge distributed to the social body. In short, it is the very idea of 'freedom' which will be linked to the notion of information, and which finds itself taken in a 'cybernetic' approach. Following Vera Lutz, it is 'the imperfection of information which gives to capitalism its fundamental *raison d'être* as a system of social organization. If information were perfect, there would be no need for capitalists; we could all be, without any trouble,

3. According to Fernand Braudel, the capitalist proto-markets were deployed in concentric zones starting from the metropolises which held economic keys allowing them to draw in most of the surplus value, while towards the peripheries they tended to a sort of zero point, because of the lethargy of exchanges and the low level of prices found there. Braudel considers that each economy-world was necessarily based on a single city-world. But perhaps he is a bit too systematic on this point. Could one not imagine urban and capitalist processes which are not developed according to a mono-centred model, but according to a multi-polar stock of 'archipeligoes of towns'?

4. Cf. Henri Lepage, *Demain le capitalisme*, Livre de Poche, p. 419.

5. *Individualism and Economic Order*, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1949.

socialists.'[6] Inequality of exchanges, according to the people who hold this theory, in the end depends only upon 'imperfections' of the structures of *information cost* in these societies.[7] One more effort on the costs and everything will work out! However, it is clear that the Third World does not really 'exchange' its labour and its riches for crates of Coca-Cola or even barrels of oil. It is aggressed and bled to death by the intrusion of dominant economies. And it is the same, though in different proportions, with the third and fourth worlds in the rich countries.

The unequal nature of capitalist markets really does not represent a streak of archaism, a historical residue. The pseudo-egalitarian presentation of 'exchanges' on the world market no more results from a lack of information than from an ideological disguise of the processes of social subjection. It is the essential complement of the techniques of integration of the collective subjectivity in order to obtain from it an optimal libidinal consent, even an active submission to the relations of exploitation and of segregation. Compared with the mechanical values and the values of desire, the relevance of the distinction between goods and activities would seem likely to blur. In a particular type of structure, human activities, properly controlled and guided by the capitalistic society, generate active mechanical goods, while the evolution of other structures makes certain goods economically dated, and they thus find their 'mechanical virulence' devalued. In the first case, a power of activity (a power asset) is transformed into a highly valuable *mechanical power*; in the second case a mechanical power (an Authority) tends to the side of the *formal powers*.

(We have seen that if we satisfy ourselves with an opposition – economic semiotic system (for example, that of the market) and segmentary social structure – we are lacking the mechanical integrating factors. On the other hand, if we stop at an opposition semiotic system – for example, economic information – and mechanical process, we risk losing the territorialized collective investments, the effective structures of the economic and social ethology. In the former case, we get bogged down in formalistic sociological reductions, and in the latter we fly off into dialectical extrapolations which lead us away from historical realities. We therefore have to 'hold' together the

6. Vera Lutz, *Central Planning for the Market Economy*, Longmans, 1969.

7. In contrast with what the theoreticians of 'public choice' proclaim, the growth of information in this domain – in particular of mass media information controlled by the system – can only accentuate the unequalizing effects of these techniques of integration. The project which consisted of wanting to complete the theory of production and exchange of market goods or services with an equivalent theory which would be, as far as possible, compatible with the workings of the political markets (James Buchanan) perhaps started out with good intentions, but the least one can say is that it was incomplete and that it turned sour (cf. the devastating exploits in Pinochet's Chile, of the 'Chicago Boys' of Milton Friedman). Economic, political and institutional markets are one thing, mechanical and libidinal markets are another. And it is only on the side of these latter that one can manage to seize the essential springs of social valorization and mechanical creativity.

three components, systematic, structural and processual, of capitalism without granting anything but contingent priority to any one of them.)

The different evaluative formulae which economists generally present as mutually exclusive[8] have, in fact, always been closely linked – either in competition or in complementarity – in real economic history.[9] Is there not a case for seeking to qualify each of them more clearly? Their different forms of existence (commercial, industrial, financial, monopolistic, statist or bureaucratic valorization) are the result of placing in the foreground one or other of their fundamental components, 'selected' from within the same range of basic components, which has thus been reduced here to three terms:

– the *processes* of mechanical production,
– the *structures* of social segmentation,
– the dominant economic semiotic *systems*.

From this minimum model – necessary, but hardly sufficient, because it is never a question of simple components themselves structured according to their own systems of priority – we now proceed to examine a sort of generative chemistry of structures of economic valorization resulting from the combination of contingent priorities between basic components.

In the following table of structures of capitalistic valorization:

(1) the structures of social segmentation shall only be considered from the point of view of the economic problematic of the *State* (the analysis of the consequences of centralist direction of an important part of economic movements – which can be observed in the national accounting – on the stratification of segmentary relations);

(2) the systems of economic semiotization will be considered only from the angle of the problematic of the *market* (in the widest sense, as referred to earlier, of markets of men, ideas, phantasmas, etc.);

(3) the productive processes will not be further specified.

8. On these modes of evaluation cf. Alain Cotta, *Théorie générale du capital, de la croissance et des fluctuations*, Paris, 1967, and *Encyclopaedia Universalis*, entry 'Capital'.

9. Examples of complementarity: the fact that the proto-capitalism of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, although predominantly market and finance, should have become industrial in certain circumstances (cf. the recovery of Antwerp by industrialization, discussed by Fernand Braudel, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 127); and the fact that a market economy, whatever its apparent 'liberalism', should always carry a certain dose of State intervention or of 'centralist' planning (Stalinist plans, for example), should have always preserved a minimum of market economy, either within its sphere of influence or in its relationship to the world market.

The Six Formulae of Structures of Capitalistic Valorization

(The priorities between components are indicated by arrows)

	Order of priorities	*Examples*
(a)	State → production → market	*Asiatic mode of production*[10] *Nazi-type war economy*
(b)	Market → production → state	*Commercial proto-capitalism* *World economies* centred on a network of cities[11]
(c)	Market → state → production	*Liberal capitalism*
(d)	Production → state → market	*Colonial monopoly economy*
(e)	Production → market → state	*Integrated world capitalism*
(f)	State → market → production	*State capitalism*

The object of this table, it should be emphasized, is not at all to present a general typology of historical forms of capitalism, but solely to show that *capitalism cannot be identified with a single formulation* (for example, market economy). One could make it more complex and refine it by introducing supplementary components or by differentiating the internal components of each cluster; the barriers are by no means watertight (there is 'mechanical production' in the semiotic wheels of the market and at the level of the State – for example, in public buildings and in the media; there is 'State power' at the heart of the most liberal economic systems; moreover these last-named always play a determinant role within the productive spheres). It is proposed here only to try to throw into relief, starting from certain correlations emerging from the second system of articulation which is found in each formula, certain correlations between systems which appear to be very distant the one from the other, but which go in the same historical direction.

In a general way:

(1) The capacity of certain structures to take on major historical upheavals or, to paraphrase a formula which is very dear to Ilya Prigogine, their capacity to direct 'processes far from historical equilibria' will depend on the primacy of productive components.

(2) The degree of resistance to change of the axioms of clan, ethnic, religious, urbanistic stratification, of castes, of classes, etc., depends on the primacy of the components of social segmentarity.

(3) On the more or less innovatory character of their semiotic valorization

10. For instance China in the second and third centuries A.D. Cf. *Sur le mode de production asiatique*, Sociales, 1969.

11. For instance Venice, Antwerp, Genoa, Amsterdam, between the thirteenth and seventeenth centuries.

(the fact that these should be capable, or not, of adaptation, of growing richer by new procedures: their degree of 'diagrammacity') will depend on their integrative power, their capacity to 'colonize' not only economic life, but also social life, libidinal life, in other words, their possibility to transform society, to subjugate it to the mechanical phylums.

The fact that the 'direction of history' should be related here to the evolutive phylum of production does not necessarily imply, it is worth noting, a finalization of history in transcendent objectives. The existence of a 'mechanical direction' of history does not at all stop this from 'going in all directions'. The *mechanical phylum* inhabits and directs the *historical rhizome* (root) of capitalism but without ever mastering its destiny which continues to be played out in an equal match between social segmentarity and the evolution of modes of economic valorization.

Let us look again at these different formulae of priorities:

(1) Priorities of the Market

– priority (b), relegating the question of the State to the third line, that, for example, of the *commercial proto-capitalism* of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries (questions of State came so far behind commercial interests for the merchants of the Dutch United Provinces of the seventeenth century that no one was really shocked by the fact that they provided arms for their Portuguese or French enemies).[12] It sets up a specific problem with the extension and consolidation of capitalism to the whole of society through a sort of baroque flowering of all the productive cultural and institutional spheres.

The phenomenon of credit – via the trade in letters of change which thrusts its roots into international commerce – constituted the 'clutch' of such a flowering. It should be noted that medieval law sought in vain to obstruct the free circulation of the effects of commerce; this practice ran into the hostility of public powers who wanted to stabilize exchanges and control monetary circulation. Hence the story of the 'endorsement war', declared by these merchant bankers who, *de facto*, extended to the letter of exchange (bank-deposited money) what had already been admitted for the schedules (currency in circulation): the *right of transfer* (the schedules circulated by simple discount, while the letters of exchange were not – in law – freely transferable). The answer, though long awaited, was no less clear, without being decisive: in Venice, for example, the accountants of the Banco del Giro were forbidden, by the decree of 6 July 1652, to allow book transfers in order to pay endorsed letters of exchange. This fact would have remained marginal if it had not been

12. Cf. Fernand Braudel, op. cit., Vol. III, pp. 172–3.

symptomatic of the slowness and the incapacity of the (para-)statist structures to control the capitalistic monetary movements. In 1766 Accarias de Scrione was still able to write: 'If ten or twelve first-class Amsterdam merchants got together for a banking operation, they could in a moment set into circulation throughout Europe more than two hundred millions of paper-money florins which were preferred to spot cash. There is no Sovereign who could do such a thing . . . Such credit is a power which these ten or twelve merchants wield in all the States of Europe with absolute independence of all authority.'[13]

– priority (c), relegating the question of production to the third line, that, for example, of the *crude liberalism of nineteenth-century capitalism*. It sets a specific historical problem with the constitution of modern territorialized States. Paradoxically, liberalism is always more preoccupied with the setting-up of a State apparatus than with a generalized growth of production. If one accepts Habermas's analysis that perhaps 'no ideology, properly speaking, existed at that time'[14] then one understands more easily that, far from crowning the free-trading edifice, Say's Law – the theory of general equilibrium – represents rather its *juridical* formulation; it 'throws the knife in the sea' and makes the body disappear in its fictional work. *Jurisdictio* of a linear, exclusive, algebraic representation; bring together therefore over-exploitation of the productive potential, general mobilization of the labour force, acceleration of the speed of circulation of goods, men and capital – and you will get an automatic equilibrium of supply and demand, thus verifying the self-regulation of the whole system . . . *'But on condition that there be no interference, other than economic in the exchanges.'*[15]

It can be seen what a unique historical conjunction was needed so that the liberal dream of a society free from any intervention from whatever authority could be set forth. Because of the equilibrium of free competition is more or less that: *power without authority*. Without the affirmation (of the reality) of this distinction, Hobbes's formula would never have resulted in that terrible inversion – *veritas non auctoritas facit legem*. The truth of a power, England, which, through its industrial potential, is sufficiently in control of the market channels to play the game of putting the political aspects of material wealth in

13. ibid., III, p. 207. And Fernand Braudel adds, magnanimously: 'multi-national companies of today have, as we see, ancestors'.

14. J. Habermas, *L'Espace publique, archéologie de la publicité comme dimension constitutive de la société bourgeoise*, Payot, 1978, p. 98.

15. Habermas, op. cit., p. 89. M. Aglietta correctly relates classical (and neo-classical) economic theory to a theological construction 'purely internal to the world of ideas, and the stricter it is the more cut off it is from any reality'. Such would be the fate of the theory of general equilibrium, if 'the end of theory is to express the essence in stripping it of all contingency; institutions, social interactions, conflicts . . . are the dross we must get rid of in order to find economic behaviour in its pure state' (M. Aglietta, *Régulation et crises du capitalisme*, Calman-Lévy, 1976, p. 12).

the background and still win more than that . . . (the repeal of the English Corn Laws dates, after all, only from the middle of the nineteenth century). In fact, the essence of liberalism is in the reverse movement, inseparable from that equivalence of content which translates the utopia of the absence of authority in terms of the affirmation of supreme power: *veritas* will only become *ratio* (the postulate of homogeneity, general equilibrium, henceforth drawing its legitimacy from the 'national' order which they display) if it enters into the essential relationship with a constant *rationalization* of domination. Which, in plain terms, means that the State 'has always been at least as strong as the social and political situation demanded'.[16] Scarcely modified translation of the celebrated phrase of Hobbes: *Wealth is power and power is wealth . . .*

The existence of a large market implies central control – albeit a subtle one – which is absolutely necessary. The 'teleguiding' of production based on an expanding market complements the interventions and arbitrages of territorialized States, without which the system would come up against its own limits. It would reveal itself, in particular, incapable of producing basic equipment (of the infrastructure, public services, collective facilities, military equipment, etc.).

(2) Priorities of the State

– priority (a), which relegates the market to third place is, for example, the *Asiatic mode of production*, or the *Nazi type of war economy* (forced labour, relatively minor role of monetary economy, incarnation of the all-powerful nature of the State in the Pharaoh or the Führer, etc.). This sets us specific historical problems:

(1) With the control of the accumulation of capital. Surplus-value has to be accumulated as a matter of priority off the power of the State and its military machine; the growth of the economic and social power of diverse aristocratic strata has to be limited, otherwise it would eventually threaten the ruling caste; it would eventually lead to the development of social classes. In the case of 'Asiatic' empires, this regulation can be brought about by the stopping of production,[17] by massive sacrificial consumption, by sumptuous constructions, luxury consumption, etc. In the case of Nazi regimes, by internal exterminations and total war.

(2) With mechanical intrusion from outside, especially innovations in military techniques which they fail to adopt in time, because of their conservatism, and the difficulty they have in letting creative initiative

16. F. Neumann, *Der Funktionswandel des Gesetzes im Recht der Jürgerlichen Gesellschaft*, quoted by Habermas.

17. Étienne Balazs, *La Bureaucratie céleste*, Gallimard, 1968.

develop. (Certain Asiatic empires have been liquidated in the space of a few years by nomadic war machines carrying some military innovation.)

– priority (f), which relegates the question of production to the third place is, for example, *State capitalism of the Soviet type* (Stalinist forms of planning, etc.), of which the affinities with the Asiatic mode of production have been many times underlined. (The Chinese model, at least that of the Maoist period, by its methods of massive enslavement of the collective labour force, belongs perhaps more to formula (a) than to formula (f).) This sets up a specific historical problem with the question of the instruments of economic semiotization, particularly with the setting-up of markets not only of economic values but also of prestige values, values of innovation, and of desires. In this sort of system, the disturbance of the market systems combined with a hyper-stratification of the social segments, is the correlate of an authoritarian control which can subsist only to the extent that its sphere of influence is not too exposed to outside influences, to competition from other branches of the mechanical productive phylum. Thus, in the end, the Gulag system is tenable only in so far as the Soviet economy freezes, at least partially, innovative arrangements in the advanced technological, scientific and cultural domains. This problematic is now prolonged by that of the demands for a democratization of the apparatus of social–semiotic control (the systems) (example: the Polish workers' struggle for 'workers' control').

(3) Priorities of Production

– priority (d), which relegates the question of the market to third place, for example, *classical imperialist exploitation*, constitutes a supplementary form of accumulation for the great capitalist entities without significant mechanical involvement[18] and without thought of the effects of disorganization on the colonized society. The commercial monopolism of the periphery tended to favour the tendencies of monopoly capital in the metropolis and the strengthening of the authority of the State. It sets up a specific historical question with the reconstitution of the devastated colonial society, including the setting-up of a highly artificial State.

– priority (e), which relegates the question of the State to third place, for example, *Integrated World Capitalism*, sets itself up 'above' and 'below' the pre-capitalist and capitalist segmentary relations (that is to say, at one and the same time, at the world level and at the molecular level), and based upon

18. And, doubtless, slowing up the development of the productive mechanism in the metropolis: cf. F. Sterberg, *Kapitalismus und Socialismus vor dem Weltgericht* (1951): 'The alliance between European imperialism and colonial feudalism: . . . slowed down, in an extraordinary way, industrial development and in general the progressive development of the economy of the colonial empires' (quoted by Maximilien Rubel in *Marx*, Pléiade edn, Vol. I).

semiotic means of evaluation and valorization of capital which are completely new and have an increased capacity for the mechanical integration of all human activities and faculties.

In principle, 'the entire society becomes productive; the rhythm of production is the rhythm of life'.[19] Considerably simplifying, we can say that this high point of the ascendancy of capital over society is established only on the conjunction between mechanical integration and social reproduction – this latter incidentally the result of a complex conservative mechanical re-territorialization if not of the exact terms of social segregation, at least of its essential axioms (hierarchical, racist, sexist, etc.). We shall speak here of *social-mechanical capital* and it is this which will lead us to take the rise of neo-liberal thought quite seriously, starting from the intrusion of information theory in the economic sphere. When information claims first place in the social machine, it would seem, in effect, that it ceases to be linked to the simple organization of the sphere of circulation to become, in its way, a factor of production. *Information as a factor of production* . . . here is the latest formula for decoding society through the formation of cybernetic capital. This is no longer the age of transcendental schematism *à la* Keynes (finding a new space and a new rhythm of production based on an investment of statist mediation, as a function of the quest for equilibrium), and circulation will no longer be just a vector of the social validation of the profits of power; it becomes immediately production – re-territorialization – capitalization of mechanical profits, taking the form of manipulation and control of the segmentarized reproduction of society. Henceforth capital seems to operate on 'a totality without origins, without contradictions, without criticism. Analytic of the totality where the totality is taken for granted'[20] and is itself indissociable from a totalitarian discourse which finds its form of expression in the cynicism of the 'new economics'. It should also be said that neo-liberal theory has no content outside this cynicism, which is all part of the will to affirm *production for production's sake, finally and in its most classic form* (it is in this context that we should place the unbelievable increase of American spending on military research). Hence the restructuration of productive space which will no longer be considered as it arises, in function the need to integrate new planetary 'data': *permanent restructuration* has become the rule of the capitalist process itself, and crisis, the form itself of circulation. 'Restructuration is not a rule for this phase, but an operation to develop in any phase, at all periods of the social process.'[21] Only the crisis permits such a degree of integrative fusion between production and circulation, production and information, production

19. Antonio Negri, *Macchina Tempo*, Feltrinelli, 1982, p. 271.
20. op. cit., p. 278.
21. op. cit., p. 275.

and resegmentalization of society, and to realize the expansive 'intension' of freed capital gaining a maximalized synergetic fluidity.

This fluidity can be verified at two levels:

– that of the mobile factory: it is indirectly through circulation that these 'pseudo-commodities', which are now only indirectly products of labour, will be made (the social conditions of production having fallen under the control of organization and information, the work process is now no more than a simple element in the process of valorization). For J. P. de Gaudemar 'any productive unit thus tends to appear as a nodal point in a fluid network, a point of connections or of temporary breakdowns of fluidity, but which can only be analysed relative to the place it occupies in the network'.[22] The management of productive space now becomes the arrangement of its optimal fluidity (temporary labour being, of course, an important part of this).

– from the territorial state to the 'mobile' State (better known, in liberal terminology, under the name of 'minimum' State); no longer conceiver and protector of an original national space of the valorization of capital, but promoter of increased participation in the trans-national space of valorization.[23] From contractual mechanics to thermo-dynamic balance – a long way from equilibrium.

The specific historical question which therefore arises with Integrated World Capitalism concerns the potential limits of its integrative power. It is by no means clear that it will indefinitely manage to innovate and to take over techniques and subjectivities. It is useful, once again, to underline here that Integrated World Capitalism is not a self-sufficient entity. Although it presents itself today as 'the highest stage of capitalism', it is, after all, only one capitalist formula among others. It accommodates itself to the survival of large zones of archaic economy; it lives in symbiosis with liberal and colonial economies of the classic type; it co-exists with Stalinist-type economies. Relatively progressive in the field of technico-scientific change, it is basically conservative in the social domain (not for ideological reasons, but for functional reasons). In addition one has the right to ask if we are not here dealing with one of its insurmountable contradictions. The capacity for adapting and reconversion shown by the economic structures of Integrated World Capitalism will perhaps find its limit with the renewal of the capacities of resistance of all social groups who refuse its 'unidimensionalizing' ends. Certainly the internal contradictions of Integrated World Capitalism are not

22. Jean Paul de Gaudemar, *Naissance de l'usine mobile*, in *Usine et ouvrier, figure du nouvel ordre productif*, Maspero, 1980, p. 24.

23. This formulation, which we borrow in part from Pascal Arnaud, escapes, in our view, the limits and restrictions which might be inherent in his frame of analysis (*Le Monétarisme appliqué aux économies chilienne et argentine*, cf. *Critiques de l'économie politique*, no. 18).

such that it must necessarily die of them. But its sickness is perhaps no less mortal: it results from the accumulation of all the *lateral* crises it throws up. The power of the productive process of Integrated World Capitalism seems inexorable, and its social effects incapable of being turned back; but it overturns so many things, comes into conflict with so many ways of life and social valorizations, that it does not seem at all absurd to anticipate that the development of new collective responses – new structures of declaration, evaluation and action – coming from the greatest variety of horizons, might finally succeed in bringing it down. (The appearance of new peoples' war machines as in Salvador; the struggle for workers' control in the countries of Eastern Europe; self-valorization of work struggles of the Italian style; a multitude of vectors of molecular revolution in all spheres of society.) As we see it, it is only through this sort of hypothesis that the redefinition of the objectives of the revolutionary transformation of society can be appreciated.

Glossary

Arche-writing (*Arche-écriture*): An expression advanced by Jacques Derrida, who puts forward the hypothesis of a writing at the basis of speech. This writing of scratches, prints, conserved in inscriptions, would be logically prior to the oppositions time and space, signified and signifying. Schizo-analysis objects that the vision of this conception of language is still too totalizing, too 'structuralist'.

Arrangement (*Agencement*): This is a wider idea than those of structure, system, form, process, etc. An arrangement contains heterogeneous components, as well as biological, sociological, mechanical, gnoseological, imaginary. In the schizo-analytic theory of the unconscious, arrangement is conceived as replacing the Freudian 'complex'.

Becoming: A term relating to the economics of desire. The flows of desire proceed by affects and becomings, independent of the fact that they can or cannot be turned onto persons, images, identifications. Thus an individual, anthropologically labelled masculine, could be shot through with multiple and apparently contradictory desires: feminine becoming, co-existing with an infant becoming, an invisible becoming, etc.

A dominant language (a language of authority operating on a national space) could be taken locally in a minority becoming. It would be characterized as a minor language. For example: the German dialect of Prague used by Kafka (cf. Klaus Wagenbach, *Franz Kafka*, Mercure de France, 1967).

Block (*Bloc*): A term close to that of arrangement (*agencement*). See the notion of 'block of childhood' in *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* by Deleuze and Guattari. It is not a question of infantile complexes, but of crystallizations of systems of intensity going through the psychogenetic stages and susceptible of operating through the most diverse perceptive systems. Another example of a block of intensity would be the constantly recurring musical passages in Proust inspired by the little phrase of Vinteuil.

Code, over-encode, surplus-value in encoding: The idea of code is used in a very wide meaning. It could apply to semiotic systems as well as to social fluxes and material fluxes. Over-encode: the term of over-encoding corresponds to a coding at the second degree. For example: primitive territorialized agrarian societies functioning according to their own system of coding are over-encoded by a relatively de-territorialized imperial system imposing on them its military, religious, fiscal hegemony etc.

Cut/Breakthrough (*Coupure*): Desiring machines are characterized as systems for cutting the flow (flux). In the *Anti-Oedipus*, the term 'cut' is inseparable from that of flow (flux), ('"Connecticut, connect – I cut," shouted the little Joey of Bettelheim', *Anti-Oedipus*, The Viking Press, 1977, p. 37).

Desiring production (*Économie désirante*): In contrast to the Freudian conception, desire is not associated with representation. Independently of subjective and inter-subjective relationships, it is in a direct position to produce its objects and the modes of subjectivation which correspond to them.

Enunciative disposition (*Énonciation collective*): Linguistic theories of enunciation centre linguistic production on individual subjects, even though language is, in essence, social and also diagrammatically connected to the surrounding realities. Beyond the appearances of individualized utterances, it is useful to make out what are the real *collective arrangements of utterance*. 'Collective' does not have to be understood here only in the sense of a social group; it also implies the involvement of diverse collections of technical objects, material and energetic flows, subjective incorporeal objects, mathematical ideas, aesthetics, etc.

Flux (*flow*): Material and semiotic fluxes 'precede' subjects and objects; desire, the economics of flow, is thus not primarily subjective and representative.

Group subject/subjectivity: Subjectivity is not envisaged here as a thing in itself, an unchanging essence. There is or there is not subjectivity of such or such a nature, according to whether an arrangement of enunciation produces it or not (for example: modern capitalism, by means of the media and the collective facilities, sets out to produce a new type of subjectivity on a large scale). Behind the appearance of individual subjectivity it is useful to try to discern the real process of subjectivation.

Group subjects are opposed to subjugated groups. This opposition implies a micro-political reference; the group subject's vocation is to control, as far as it is at all possible, its relation to the outside determinations and to be dominated by its own internal law (super-ego). (Cf. Félix Guattari, *Psychanalyse et transversalité*, Maspero, 1972.)

Imaginary/phantasy: To the extent that the imaginary and the phantasy are no longer in the central position of the economics of desire of schizo-analysis, these instances must be reformulated within notions such as arrangement, block, etc.

Machine (*and machinic*): Here we distinguish between the machine and mechanics. Mechanics is relatively self-enclosed; it only has perfectly coded relations with exterior flows. Machines, considered in their historical evolution, constitute, on the contrary, a phylum comparable to those of living species. They generate each other, select each other, eliminate each other, bring out new ways of potentiality.

Machines, in the wider sense, that is to say not only technical machines but also theoretical, social, aesthetic machines, never operate in isolation but by aggregation or by arrangements. A technical machine, for example, in a factory, in interaction with a social machine, a training machine, a research machine, a marketing machine, etc.

Molar order/molecularity: The same elements existing in fluxes, strata, arrangements, can be organized on a molar order or on a molecular order. Molar order corresponds to the stratifications which delimit objects, subjects, their representations and their systems of reference. Molecular order, in contrast, is that of flows, of becomings, of transitions between phases, of intensities or even what Félix Guattari has called 'Transversality' between different sorts of arrangements.

Non-signifying: Here we distinguish signifying semiologies – those which articulate

signifying chains and signifying contents – from non-signifying semiotics, which work from syntagmatic chains which do not produce effects of meaning and which are capable of entering into direct contact with their referents. Examples of signifying semiotics would be: musical notation, the mathematical corpus, information or robotic syntaxes, etc.

Objet petit 'a': A term proposed by Lacan in the framework of a generalized theory of partial objects in psychoanalysis. *Objet petit 'a'* is a function implying equally the oral object, the anal object, the penis, the gaze, the voice, etc. To this *objet petit 'a'* Félix Guattari proposed, some fifteen years ago, to add *petit 'b'* objects corresponding to the transitional objects of Winnicott, and *petit 'c'* objects, institutional objects.

Organless body: A notion proposed by Gilles Deleuze to mark the zero point of intensities. The idea of organless body is opposed to that of the death drive which implies a thermo-dynamic reference.

Over-encode: See *Code*.

Personological: An adjective to qualify the motor relations in the subjective order. The accent placed on the role of persons, on the role of identities, of identifications, characterizes the theoretical conceptions of psychoanalysis. The psychoanalytic Oedipus brings into play persons, typical personages, reduces the intensities, projects the molecular level of investments onto a 'personological theatre', that is to say onto a system of representations cut off from the real desiring production (equivalent expression: Oedipal triangulation).

Plane of consistency: The fluxes, the territories, the machines, the universes of desire, whatever their differences of nature they are related to the same plane of consistency (or plane of immanence), which must not be confused with a level of reference. In effect, these different ways of existence of systems of intensity do not spring from transcendental idealities but from real processes of generation and transformation.

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