Digital De-Subjectivation: Becoming-Imperceptible in the Machinery of Digital Capitalism

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Abstract

This article argues that the potential for resistance offered up by the internet as dominant mode of (social, political and commercial) interaction lies not in appeal to its potentially rhizomatic structure, but in the dissolution of digital subjectivity it makes possible. Responding to a notable example of the employment of misappropriated schizoanalytic terminology in the service of theorizing digital direct-action, I argue firstly that to efficiently adapt Deleuze and Guattari's work to an analysis of current digital revolutionary potential, we ought to focus instead on the novelties of digital capitalism itself, and how, if at all, the internet offers material for the creation of revolutionary weaponry. In the subsequent section I argue that, rhizomatic or not, connectivity is not enough to oppose a digital capitalism all-too-capable of itself weaponizing connection; that, instead, we must look to the destructive potential of becoming, thinkable through its link to the outside. In the final section, I argue that radical potential for change lies dormant in the possibility of a destructive dissolution of digital subjectivity, that this dissolution is what facilitates the requisite call to the outside, such that we may think an end to digital capitalism in terms of an a-subjective internet landscape which, if still hierarchically structured server-side, opens up to a chaos of a-subjective use.

Stop Calling the Internet a Rhizome

A trend has emerged from the last few decades of discourse aimed at founding a revolutionary mode of action fit for the internet age – drawn from Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalytic project: label the internet a rhizome. The intention here is noble, it seems: affirm the de-centred, amorphous nature of the internet taken as a relatively novel form of connection, interaction, and presentation of information which, in possessing these characteristics, may offer new possibilities for the subversion of (post-) modern capitalism's stratificatory modes of repression. What is missed by this, unfortunately, is not only the inaccuracy of the rhizomatic designation, but also its impotence. The internet – as, in effect, both the bastion of modern commercialism, and the breeding-grounds for ever new and increasingly-malleable forms of capitalistic evolution – is neither rightly, *nor fruitfully*, analysed on the basis of its malleable connectivity, or its non-hierarchical structure.

As an example of this internet-as-rhizome analysis, consider the following from Beck:

> With its decentered, morphological, and cartographic configuration, the Internet
> possesses the ability to connect people in novel ways, enhance new ways of
> approaching the lived world, and be a site of radical possibility. Due to the productive
> power of the rhizome, desire to control the power, and therefore the structure of the
> Internet, makes it a contested space. The Internet's spatiality goes beyond the idea of
> 'cyberspace' and directly affects digital activism's ability to be productive, useful, and
> coherent. (Beck 2016: 338)

Beck and I agree here on the level of general description; we both hold the internet to
be an interesting phenomenon of connection and communication, and think of it as
contested space. However, the additional appeal to the rhizome falls flat, as far as I am
concerned. The issue of the label's inaccuracy appears clearly defined first of all when we
consider working definitions. Where Beck takes a rhizome to be functionally definable by
"broad but relatable connections among seemingly disparate concepts, objects, or entities
as opposed to isolated singular constructions that arose completely independently" (Beck
2016: 335), I instead insist on the importance of Deleuze and Guattari's third principle of
the rhizome: *substantive multiplicity* (Deleuze & Guattari 2013). This entails that a given
system of *points* – be these subjects, objects, ideas or concepts, however related and
however disparate – is not in-itself a rhizome. Needed for rhizomaticity, beyond
systematic connection, is the subordination of the identity of the points to the relations
'*between*' them, such that these relations are taken to be primary, and the identities of
points become notable only through subsequent reflection. We should note here that

> *Between* things does not designate a localizable relation going from one thing to the
> other and back again, but a perpendicular direction, a transversal movement that
> sweeps one *and* the other away, a stream without beginning or end that undermines
> its banks and picks up speed in the middle. (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 27)

Beck and I thereby operate with different conceptions of the rhizome, in that while
Beck treats it as though it were comprised of connections *between* disparate objects,
concepts, or entities (each of these maintaining in its own right a relatively stable
identity), I take seriously Deleuze and Guattari's claim that: "there are no points or
positions in a rhizome, such as those found in a structure, tree, or root. *There are only
lines*" (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 7). The importance of such a terminological dispute
becomes clear only once we have more to say about the object whose relation to such
terms we wish to evaluate: we must first come to understand the internet.

Much of what Beck writes of the genesis of the internet and its current structure seems
to be approximately correct, or at the very least reasonable. With Beck, and with others
he cites in support (Jordan & Taylor 2004), we may note that the internet is notably
decentralised – there is no ostensible central node from which all connections may be
traced as though through successive branching operations. The internet is thusly not
arborescent – the category often directly, *yet mistakenly*, opposed to the rhizomatic by
those familiar with *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari 2013). However, it may not

be ignored that there is strictly no binary at play here; the non-arborescent is not thereby a rhizome in virtue of its forgoing a central node. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari oppose to both the rhizome and the arborescent root-structure a structure of interconnections organised around sub-centres acting as radicles:

> The radicle-system, or fascicular root, is the second figure… This time, the principal root has aborted, or its tip has been destroyed; an immediate, indefinite multiplicity of secondary roots grafts onto it and undergoes a flourishing development… Whenever a multiplicity is taken up in a structure, its growth is offset by a reduction in its laws of combination… This is as much as to say that the fascicular system does not really break with dualism… A rhizome as subterranean stem is absolutely different from roots and radicles. (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 4-5)

This amounts to the thesis that multiple secondary centres are *not* characteristic of the rhizome, but rather of a troublingly deceptive root-structure which, though having thrown off the guise of arborescence, still clings to its structural and organisational principle. Beck thereby has at his disposal precisely what I take to be sufficient for suspicion of his own "rhizomatic" analysis when he acknowledges that

> there is no singular 'center' of the Internet but rather multiple strategically interconnected network and router centers – hosted by commercial, government, and academic institutions – that support the majority of Internet traffic, referred to as the Internet backbone. (Beck 2016: 336)

Such a backbone, though not obviously singular in the sense which would facilitate talk of arborescence, seems essentially to *function* in a similarly repressive manner, precisely in that the majority of online content is accessible only by virtue of being traceable back to it. Indeed, that these multiple centres find unity of any sort in a 'backbone' label should give cause for concern.

At stake here is not merely a claim to exegetical accuracy, and my intention is explicitly not to divert the discussion into semantics. Rather, of importance is how this potential schizoanalytic misfire may carry over into the optimistic remainder of Beck's analysis, and how such a problem may be avoided in our analysis moving forward. Specifically, this is important in that the internet-as-rhizome model functions as the ground in Beck's framework for the potential success of a normalized practice of 'hacktivism' operating, in part, through the over-encumbering of servers with traffic which renders them temporarily inaccessible ("DDoS attacks"). He writes: "The power of DDoS attack performed by the digital war machine is directly related to, if not dependent upon the Internet as a rhizome" (Beck 2016: 345-346). In claiming that DDoS attacks *deterritorialize* webpages through the marked change of appearance and function of the pages in question, rendering the affected site one of indeterminacy with no fixed functional identity, Beck is asserting that the target of an attack is thereby removed from the broader network of relations in such a way that it forms a new, smooth digital space,

generative of connections in that it forces traffic into new channels.

There are several modes of response to this. One could quibble with the use of *deterritorialization* in conjunction with the DDoS attack, which seems at first glance to sit at odds with the former's partial function of *removing* blockages and *liberating* flows (does not the DDoS attach rather constitute a *new blockage* of flows?). Given our discussion of the rhizome above, however, it seems more fitting to evaluate the revolutionary potential of this hacktivism through consideration of its relation to the *structure* of the internet. As noted, the internet is comprised – at perhaps its 'deepest' (digital) layer – of network and router centres which constitute a "backbone". Keeping description imprecise enough so as not to feign unpossessed expertise, we may note a number of characteristics of the internet which add some sense to this image. The first is that the webpages accessible to us as users of the internet are both: the constitutive *content* of the internet (that in which our interactions with all things digital – communication, commerce, media and so forth – are incarnated); and asymmetrically related to the backbone (they are dependent on it, but it is not dependent on them: they connect to other pages in virtue of it, but it does not rely upon them to facilitate access to other pages). The second, which follows, is that the internet is structured such that our interaction with it occurs at a level noticeably removed from the backbone. We as users of the internet connect to other computers, to websites and web-pages, viewing, consuming, interacting and communicating, but all through use of the internet's structural exterior, conditioned ultimately by a singular semiotic chain; that of the code through which traffic is organised and distributed by the machinery of the backbone.

It may seem that the DDoS attack is perfect digital subversion, in that, exploiting the requirements placed on the backbone by the dependence of its accessible extremities, it allows for malignant surface-activity with effects which run deep (presuming we allow the temporary outage of a host server to count as sufficiently "deep"). However, when the servers are over-run with requests via the DDoS attack, any such 'deeper effect' is not thereby a re-structuring of the internet such that users may connect to, or interact with, the internet *without the backbone*. One gets the impression from Beck's characterisation of the DDoS attack's effects that users, finding the target of the attack compromised, will be redirected into new modes of digital interaction altogether, forming alternative connections which are in some sense *more immediate,* and which subvert the (albeit multiple) root-system of the internet, instead of merely utilising other pre-established connections still reliant on the same structure. Consider his claim that "[t]he DDoS attack redirects traffic away from the target into new spaces that are indeterminate and not obviously connected or linked. The DDoS attack creates a new map of the Internet through (re)distributed movement" (Beck 2016: 345). With the backbone intact (as it must be for internet use as we understand it), how may the space avoid being connected or linked, and how, moreover, may it be indeterminate, reliant still on the same backbone-dependent use of traffic-managing code? The map, so to speak, remains the same, though the paths already charted receive differing volumes of traffic. It appears to me that the only way we can take the DDoS attack to create such indeterminately connected space is

if the internet is, in its interiority and at a fundamental level, a rhizome, freely connective and only territorializable through state, or otherwise-repressive, intervention. That there is a use-preceding backbone and single dominant semiotic chain thusly characterised seems to render such a presupposition problematically untenable. It is the root structure which is primary, *the apparent rhizomaticity is the accident*.

However, we may also wonder if – beyond this matter of the aptness of judging the internet a rhizome – *there is any utility gained in making such a judgement to begin with*. I mean by this not that it is *unimportant* whether or not the internet is rhizomatic (after all, I do take its apparent radicle-root structure as *a* reason to doubt the disruptive potential of DDoS-attack-hacktivism). Rather, I think that there may be something errant in the thought that were we to succeed in proving the internet a rhizome, we would thereby have anti-capitalist weaponry at our disposal. Taking the internet's status as rhizome for granted, and taking, subsequently, various forms of disruption to the stability of digital-capitalist territoriality as feasible, we are left still with an issue: Capitalism fears no *disruption*. Here we may take *Anti-Oedipus* as informative:

> The social machine's limit is not attrition, but rather its misfirings; it can operate only by fits and starts, by grinding and breaking down, in spasms of minor explosions… The death of a social machine has never been heralded by a disharmony or a dysfunction; on the contrary, social machines make a habit of feeding on the contradictions they give rise to, on the crises they provoke, on the anxieties they *engender,* and on the infernal operations they regenerate. Capitalism has learned this, and has ceased doubting itself... the more it breaks down, the more it schizophrenizes, the better it works, the American way. (Deleuze & Guattari 1983: 151)

Disruption, deterritorialization feeding back into reterritorialization of digital space, redirection of traffic; these are surely things productive of *disharmony*. Capitalism is no stranger to such disharmony, however, and the more chaotic the result, the greater the potential for *capitalist* reterritorialization. Our take-away, when reflecting upon the internet through the lens of schizoanalysis, should be that yes, there is great potential for exploitation of the rhizome's malleability, but this potential is equally realizable by the machinery of capitalism, whose resources far outmatch its adversaries'.

In doubting the revolutionary utility of the rhizome-as-label, however, I mean also to give expression to a more general worry about the ineffectuality of re-appropriating Deleuze and Guattari's specific terminology: *is the rhizome really what will help us?* Perhaps, with Ian Buchanan, we should seek to imitate less schizoanalysis' vocabulary, and more so its ethos:

> If we were to follow Deleuze's watchword, that philosophy has the concepts it deserves according to how well it formulates its problems, then we would not start from the idea that the Internet might be a body without organs or looks like a rhizome or indeed any other pre-existing point of view. Instead we would try to see how the Internet works and develop our concepts from there. (Buchanan 2007: paragraph 24)

This, building upon the above, is precisely what I attempt in the remainder of this article, through enquiry into the novel reality of digital subjectivity in the final section, but also more immediately in the constructive discussion of the *'anti-connectivism'* of Andrew Culp's heretical "*Dark Deleuze"* below*.* Such discussion brings into play not only the issue of *negativity*, but also of the role to be played by the *outside*, such that when we do turn once again to the nature of the internet, we have to hand the mode of schizoanalytic methodology appropriate for the formulation of relevant concepts.

Connection or Destruction?

In stark opposition to the profound optimism of the stereotypical – if perhaps caricatured – Deleuze scholar (characteristic lust for joyous affirmation and stern aversion to negativity included), Andrew Culp's *Dark Deleuze* (Culp 2016) founds a Deleuzianism driven above all by a thirst for destruction – although this should not, at all costs, be confused with the now infamous *thirst for annihilation* of a post-*'Meltdown'* Nick Land (Land 2011). In establishing the "darkness" of its conceptual persona, *Dark Deleuze* makes its first target that which Culp names *connectivism*; the pseudo-Deleuzian push for unbridled connectivity and communication in the name of a neutralised destratification, or peaceful deterritorialization, which eschews destruction at all costs, tolerating it only minimally as necessary precondition for joyful creation. Quoting their resolute mantra from *What is Philosophy:* "We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 108), Culp turns Deleuze and Guattari back against the optimism of connectivist thought, blaming the dogmatic naivety of their 'canon of joy' for the ease with which Deleuze has been appropriated by Silicon Valley tech gurus and oppressive military forces alike:

> Flat hierarchies are touted as good for business management ('Power is vertical; potential is horizontal!'). And the deluge of digital content is treated as the world's greatest resource, held back only by unequal access ('Information wants to be free!'). As perverse as it sounds, many Deleuzians still promote concepts that equally motivate these slogans: transversal lines, rhizomatic connections, compositionist networks, complex assemblages, affective experiences, and enchanted objects. No wonder Deleuze has been so derided as the lava lamp saint of 'California Buddhism'. (Culp 2016: 7)

As satisfyingly polemical as this passage may be, however, alone it is inconsequential. It only has the force its prose begs us to believe it has if we work to understand the magnitude of the connectivist's error.

With all the affirmative talk of rhizomes, assemblages and liberated flows permeating the schizoanalytic oeuvre, does not the connectivist have charitable readings of canon on their side? Only at first glance. Even in the texts such a position draws from – *A Thousand Plateaus* standing as perhaps the finest example of this – talk of rhizomes is riddled with

discussion of virality (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 10), deterritorialization with panic and torment (84–85), lines-of-flight with suicide (268) and the Body-Without-Organs with various cancers and fascisms (189). The concepts with which schizoanalysis maps an anti-capitalist future turn back also against the modes of subversion they engender, blocking off the rebellions they sow and diverting revolutions into "way[s] out that [turn] the line of flight into a line of death" (268). The error made by those termed "connectivist", then, and this may be judged true also of the position represented by Beck above, is an affirmation of given concepts for only one side of their nature, for the potential they have for positive change and subversion, without due consideration paid to the equal potential of such concepts for not only the restitution of state apparatuses of control, but also of capitalism – both of which (albeit in different ways) make use of the virality, the panic-stricken chaos, and the suicidal self-immolation engendered by the phenomena suited to a properly *schizo*-analysis. Beyond even this capitalist-schizophrenization lies the danger that, through runaway processes of deterritorialization, we may be faced with the destruction of all that is worth cherishing in a post capitalist future, all for the protection and creation of which we exert ourselves in thinking an end to repressive forces (again here we may cite *Fanged Noumena* (Land 2011) as a wealth of insight into the dark potential of destratification and deterritorialization). Capitalists, military forces, and hyper-fascists alike, then, may willingly embrace a connectivist position. The immediately interactive twitter presence of corporations and business such as Wendy's and Starbucks, and likewise of military forces such as the IDF, and to a lesser but still notable degree ISIS, display blatantly *non*-radical affirmation of a drive towards rhizomatic connectivity, but at what conceivable benefit to that which we cherish in humanity? Is not such affirmation both i) subservient in its entirety to the demands of capital and of repressive ideology, while at once remaining ii) thoroughly connective and de-centred?

If the concepts of schizoanalysis are not obviously helpful in themselves, then, what is to be done with them, and what use is the schizoanalytic ethos which generated them? One answer which resonates with Buchanan's remark, quoted above, is to stress the importance of "'taking another step beyond Deleuze *avant la lettre*" (Culp 2016: 4), this, as far as Culp is concerned, requiring a resuscitation of the profoundly *negative* aspect of the schizoanalytic project, that concerned with the destruction of that which represses and forecloses experimentation and fruitful creation. Such resuscitation, however, far removed from the *joy* of experimental creation with which Deleuze is often associated, finds its motivation in an intense form of *hatred* (13–14). Hatred, in this sense, ought to be directed at the world, of all that is worth resisting and subverting in it, and even of ourselves as subjects all too incapable of effecting real change of it. This last object of hatred finds notable expression in Deleuze and Guattari's description, found in a footnote to a discussion of the 'timely' subject in *What is Philosophy?*, of a feeling of "shame that men could do this, shame that we have been unable to prevent it, shame at having survived, and shame at having been demeaned or diminished" (Deleuze & Guattari 1994: 225, note 17). The project then, negative in initial focus, is to channel this hatred and shame into destruction of that which so elicits hate, and blocks creative joy. "*Destroy*

worlds, become inhuman!" (Culp 2016: 23, 28).

Understanding precisely how this is to be accomplished, and how, moreover, this is truly a *schizoanalytic* endeavour, comes down to our ability to situate such a project of radical negativity in relation to the *Outside*. We should understand by this outside not simply a space not (yet) bounded or contained by an apparatus of control, nor one acting merely as the limit of an *inside* which is so bounded, but rather one which resembles "a moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside" (Deleuze 1988: 96–97). That is to say, as Symons notes:

> Deleuze bears witness to an outside that, in order to remain outside, cannot be recognized as such. His claim seems to be that, in the same way that the outside remains radically outside as far as it gains the strength to become indistinguishable with the inside, the inside, for its part, is to be considered as marked by the continuous effort to master the outside. (Symons 2006: Section II)

The outside is not merely that which limits the inside in virtue of its lying out-with the latter's bounds, but is rather that which, *in being outside,* conditions the inside as that which seeks but perpetually fails to capture it. This inside – of the state, of capitalism, *of digital capitalism* – is not only marked but *marred* by this disguised condition as sign of fundamental weakness. Schizoanalytic resistance thereby effectively seizes an opening when it exploits this deep-rooted genetic failure of the inside to totalise its procedure of capture. Here, a schizoanalytic project which affirms destruction of that which is worth hating can find in that negated world a conditioning fault preventing the inside not only from achieving total capture, but at its limit from distinguishing itself from that which escapes it. Schizoanalytic concepts then may be re-utilised in a negative project to the extent that they facilitate the indistinguishability of i) experimental subversion that draws on the forces of the outside from ii) the inside milieu to-be-subverted.

What, to be precise, actually functions to facilitate this indistinguishability? *Becoming*: "The imperceptible is the immanent end of becoming, its cosmic formula" (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 325). This is so by virtue of what *becoming* represents: a fundamental molecular movement which is in-itself imperceptible (though at once, *must be perceived,* is the object of perception *par excellence*). This ultimate molecular becoming, *becoming-imperceptible*, goes beyond its immediate individual sense. It is true that such becoming, on the level of the individual subject, consists in a way of being *like everybody else*, of blending in, but in this becoming-everyone, the world is itself forced into a becoming of its own:

> … becoming-everybody/everything, making the world a becoming, is to world, to make a world or worlds…. If one reduces oneself to one or several abstract lines that will prolong itself in and conjugate with others, producing immediately, directly *a* world in which it is *the* world that becomes, then one becomes-everybody/everything… One is then like grass: one has made the world,

everybody/everything, into a becoming, because one has made a necessarily communicating world, because one has suppressed in oneself everything that prevents us from slipping between things and growing in the midst of things. One has combined 'everything' ('*le tout*'): the indefinite article, the infinitive-becoming, and the proper name to which one is reduced. Saturate, eliminate, put everything in. (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 326–327)

One becomes everyone in order to make everyone/everything become. One becomes, thusly, imperceptible, in order that the world itself enters into *becoming* in its own way. To couch this in other terms, one becomes so that one may form a line to the outside, to the un-assimilable which is indistinguishable from the inside, in order that the inside itself is thrown into a chaotic becoming-outside which tears apart its coherence. Such movement, jointly of the subject and the world, constitutes a movement which "ceases to be the procedure of an always relative deterritorialization, becoming the process of an absolute deterritorialization" (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 328). Where in the above passage we read, then, of *making worlds*, and of *communication*, we should not quickly turn into connectivists, but instead understand the process of becoming to be one that, in forcing the world into movement, makes a world only in that it makes the world *become other*, and that this may only happen if the identity of the world forced to move is dissolved.

The importance of such a claim shows itself when we return to the discussion with which this section began. Schizoanalytic terminology opens up on both ends; one towards a positivity co-opted both by modern capitalists and connectivists alike, the other towards a destructive negativity also endorsed jointly by both reactionary accelerationists and radicalised leftists. As an act of situation, relating our schizoanalytic negativity to others, we must affirm the terminology only where it facilitates experimentation with one's relation to the outside. Only rhizomatic connection *of the indiscernible*; only deterritorialization spurred by *the movement of the world*. In this way, we may harness the potential of schizoanalysis without embracing the blind affirmation of deterritorialization we found manifest in the connectivist, and without clinging to the similarly blind faith in the rhizome. Equipped with rough guidelines of use, it falls then to us to determine the nature of digital capitalism's *inside* and constitutive *outside*, such that the conditions of its relative dissolution may be found and exploited. This, precisely, is the focus of this paper's final section.

Digital De-Subjectivation

Having chosen destruction-through-becoming, how are we to think specifically *digital* resistance? There is a somewhat naïve material answer available which would have the physical machinery on which the internet depends face obsolescence through a becoming-commonplace. Perhaps, that is, if we could advance personal technology to such a stage that an individual could enact a functional becoming-everything with regards

to the internet, making said individual's person-technology-assemblage indistinguishable from some section of the internet's genetic machinery (a router-centre perhaps), then the digital *world* could be thrown into a fatal becoming of its own, unable to distinguish its parts from its users. This form of transhumanism seems, however, fairly unrealistic, and despite its admirable optimism may indeed presuppose and require an already non-capitalist distribution of access to technologies. For now, we ought to take the internet as-is, and look for practical modes of digital subversion. As argued above, the internet itself is structured in such a way that disruption on the side of servers and machinery seems unlikely to be a plausible means of effecting real change, so long as the backbone retains its functional necessity. The destruction, the call to the outside, must instead come then on the side of surface-use, not deep-structure. Think *nomad*, not *nomos.*

Important, perhaps more so than a rigorously developed understanding of our modes of surface-connection and digital interaction, is analysis of whatever may be identified as conditioning or grounding the contemporary processes of subjectivation through which our initial digital 'identities' are constructed, and on which present forms of digital economy subsist. Without such a point of departure it is near impossible to think the direction of the required movement towards imperceptibility. We need to understand what '*everyone*' is in this context, and how it is comes about, before we can give any sense to a hypothetical *becoming-everyone* – the becoming-imperceptible we hope to find. For digital capitalism no less than its material counterpart, the production of physical goods plays an important role, and material forces and relations of production should of course not be omitted from any analysis aiming at completeness. However, concerned for the moment with particular, novel ways of subverting the former, the differences in genesis of subjectivities ought to take precedence over broader material similarities for the time being. Of these differences, the one perhaps most deserving of current attention is that between forms of advertisement, and their relation to subjectivation.

All incarnations of (at the very least, consumer-) capitalism recognisable to us as such cater to a consumer-class of some distinction, such that we may go as far to say that this class constitutes much of the recognizable "inside" of capitalism. With regards to pre-digital capitalism, this consumer class is, in principle, if not necessarily in reality, universal; all have needs and wants, and generally the way to acquire goods which meet these is to purchase them – so establishes, we could say, the most basic relation of consumption to production. Advertisement is necessary on the part of producers in order to convince consumers that their product is one that is required, or ought to be seen as so desirable that it may as well be. The degree to which such advertising is targeted is only so great as the wealth of information available to a given producer about the purchasing practices of consumers generally – be these practices rooted in rationality or not, it is of little concern to us here – and of subsets of those consumers definable by measurable characteristics deemed pertinent (males between 40 and 50 years old buy 'x' more frequently than other subsets; women in their 20s living in developed cities prefer 'y' over 'z', etc.). Important for us to note about this pre-digital capitalist marketing, however, is

that individuals of these subsets come pre-constituted as such; on a more fundamental level than the marketable subsets, there *are* subjects with such specified characteristics. The genesis of the subjectivities of these individuals occurs not completely independently of their forms of consumption, but to some degree prior – for brevity here we will chalk this up generally to the individuals being suitably socialised and caught up in broader socio-economic connections conditioned both by natural and material necessities and by capitalistic and state forces. While it must be acknowledged that throughout the 20th Century, the legacy of Edward Bernays, and the concomitant proliferation of tactics designated as '*public relations'* shook the presupposition of consistent categories of subjectivity (through, for instance, the genesis of new categories such as "teen" spawning new forms of category-specific marketing), this shaking nevertheless requires for its coherence a group of subjects which the new category may come to designate. That is, however capitalistic the means through which the category of 'teen' came around, those who fit this category do so in virtue of facets of their subjectivity which are in some sense prior to their marketability.

Turning to digital capitalism, most deserving of attention is the role played by *data* (relying here purely on a non-technical understanding) in the establishment of digital-commercial demographics. No longer do purchasing habits stand as the primary object of analysis for marketing strategists, but social interactions too, expressions of interest, emotions and identifications, political opinions, search histories, and just about anything else made trackable through use of Facebook, Twitter, Google, LinkedIn, and any other of the myriad networking sites jointly constitutive of the digital social space. In the same way that material forces and relations of production, state interests of control, and so forth, jointly form a system of signification and classification into which concrete individuals fit, and through which become subjects, so too does digital capitalism cohere with certain varieties of state control, engendering (admittedly far more complex and unstable) forms of subjectivating classification. Strikingly different from pre-digital capitalism is that our digital subjectivities, while coherent with state control in certain ways (through regulation of internet use, among other things), ultimately gain some degree of independence from it, if not obviously from the outset, then definitely with the addition of easily-accessible internet proxies and VPNs (Virtual Private Networks). Lacking this necessary genetic dependence on state control, the digital subject must find its genesis in the internet's own process of subjectivation; the amalgamation of user-data and history which is – *in-itself* – subservient to the interests of digital capitalism. We may say, again roughly here, that the digital subject is ultimately little more than a loosely-coherent bundle of data ascribable to one material person only insofar as their point, and method, of use remains stable, and their habits remain fairly consistent. For most users of the internet, it seems that this is approximately the case (if only in the weak sense that most netizens are comfortable having Facebook/google/amazon – perhaps combinations of multiple accounts, but this is no issue for us – retain and utilise data to inform other aspects of their internet experience. Sign-up procedures operating through linking of pre-established Facebook and Google accounts are both widespread, and a great example of

this). We may say in summary of the above that where in pre-digital capitalism there is a more stable, pre-market genesis of the subject distinct to the direct interests of capitalism manifest in marketability/advertising, in digital capitalism subjectivation is *directly* a synthetic process of capitalism's doing, only *fettered,* and no longer conditioned, by the state, and by socialisation more broadly insofar as these influence habits of use.

What use are these remarks to our project? Answering this requires consideration of the role of the subject in the destructive becoming-everyone. Culp writes:

> Deleuze with-holds praise for the subject but does not deny it a place… But subjects are only interesting when they cast a 'line to the outside' – in short, when they stop being subjects (with a double emphasis on 'being' and 'subjects'). This process is how Deleuze describes Foucault's subjectivization, which is not a "coming back" to subjectivity to rescue it but the disintegration of the subject as it evaporates into a field of forces where neither persons nor identities survive. This is the secret to becoming, for it has nothing to do with 'subjects developing into more of themselves'. Becoming is really a process of un-becoming. (Culp 2016: 28)

This, echoing Deleuze's remark from *Negotiations* that "it's not a question of being this or that sort of human, but of becoming inhuman, of a universal animal becoming" (Deleuze 1995: 11), gives us a clear use towards which we may put our discussion of the digital subject, in conjunction with the skeleton of a schizoanalytic project of negativity laid out above. The digital subject's role is still *becoming,* but this is a becoming-*less*, not *more*, subjective, an *un*–becoming-subject, and a shedding of the particularities (here, clusters of use-data and retainable habits of interaction) from which the coherence of a unified subject is drawn. In this way, the digital subject channels the subversive power of the outside; the un-quantizable quality, un-classifiable intensity, the indistinguishable conditioning fault of the internet-capitalism machine. The becoming-everyone suited to digital capitalism is less the production of the epistemological indiscernibility of a Kierkegaardian Knight of Faith, and more the genesis of fluid indiscernibility of chaotic, scrambled flows of information from which no coherent unity may be drawn; the absolute deterritorialization of the space constituted by chains of internet code lies not in altering the structures it facilitates directly, but in scrambling the traffic which code, as semiotic chain, is designed to manage. It is here that the schizoid experimentation which constitutes the very ethos we sought to preserve (even through our dismissal of connectivist rhizomatics) comes into its own. Deleuze & Guattari are clear: "Where psychoanalysis says, 'Stop, find yourself again', we should say instead, 'Let's go further still, we still haven't found our BwO yet, we haven't sufficiently dismantled our self'" (Deleuze & Guattari 2013: 175). Perhaps the greatest betrayal of the schizoanalytic enterprise is to ignore this final clause.

Explication of precisely what this experimental internet use entails such that it allows one to draw a line to the outside – to throw the digital world into a becoming-outside – cannot be stated conclusively here. The key truly is experimentation. We must find our digital zones of indiscernibility such that the loose ties of digital subjectivation are

undone. Here we may but suggest technologies (hardware and software) of privacy and anonymity, back-channels of transference, both of money and goods, as well as generalised practices of pseudonymity. The ultimate end of these techniques of becoming-indiscernible is to open up the internet, on the side of use, not onto a well-maintained, profitable matrix of points with reasonably well-defined, cohesive identities (regardless of how rhizomatically these may be connected), but onto a chaotic digital space of forces and intensities in which digital identity cannot thrive, and to which digital capitalism cannot consistently cater. This would be to enact a becoming-outside, an absolute deterritorialization through movement, of digital capitalism's endlessly-reterritorializing inside. Absolute deterritorialization is the drawing of a pure line of abolition, and so let us experiment with the abolition of what subjects us to digital capitalism. Let us find our ways of digital de-subjectivation through this becoming-everyone. In this way we may hope to dissolve the cohesion of the world necessary for the fruition of digital capitalism into the chaotic movement of an absolute becoming. This, and not the optimism of Beck, or of the connectivists, is the schizoanalytic project fit for the internet age.

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