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Taking Desires for Reality

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Edited by JEAN-SÉBASTIEN LABERGE

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Presentation

by RODRIGO NUNES & ULYSSES PINHEIRO

The texts assembled here represent part of the lectures given last year during the conference *Taking desires for reality. 50 years of Anti-Oedipus*, held in Rio de Janeiro between October 3 and 5. (The program and further information on the event can be found at https://congressoantiedipo.wixsite.com/my-site-1; the panels and discussions will soon be up on https://www.youtube.com/@grupodepesquisamaterialism3411.) The conference had in part a celebratory aspect, since the year 2022 marked the 50th anniversary of the publication of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Since then, the book's influence has spread across a wide range of fields, from philosophy to literary theory, anthropology, political theory, the social sciences, psychology, and psychoanalysis. At the same time, the book was very much a work of its time, written in the wake of May 1968 and amidst an explosion of social movements and demands of all kinds. Thus, the conference also intended to examine *Anti-Oedipus* according to the differences between its own time and ours, and to ask the question of how much of it remained adequate to the problems we faced today. To what extent can the project of liberating desire from social repression and psychoanalytic pacification be considered accomplished, failed, or overtaken by the transformations the world has undergone in recent decades? Do Deleuze and Guattari's theoretical and political claims in 1972 remain fully valid, or do they need to be rethought in light of a profoundly changed social reality and the very historical experience of their limits?

The first paper in this volume is by Jean-Pierre Caron. While not dealing directly with Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*, "The Vertigo of Reference" examines a recently published book by an important Brazilian philosopher, Paulo Arantes, which purports to offer an intellectual history and critique of post-structuralism as seen from the standpoint of the capitalist periphery. Caron's text proposes an immanent critique of Arantes' critique without abandoning this peripheral point of view.

The next article, titled "The Logic of the Production Process: The *Anti-Oedipus* and the Struggle for the Reconstitution of a Materialist Position in Philosophy", by Paulo Henrique Flores, analyzes Deleuze and Guattari's theses on the concept of the process of production, taking them to be a renewed version of Marxist-Leninist philosophy. Indeed, following Flores, *Anti-Oedipus* could be interpreted as the resolution of one of the greatest theoretical problems of such a philosophy, namely that of establishing a materialist dialectic capable of breaking with all conceptual forms inherited from Hegelianism.

"'The Economy Is the Homeland!' Neoliberalism, Fascism and Bolsonarism", by Rodrigo Guéron, applies the theses of Deleuze and Guattari to the analysis of Brazilian politics

under the recently concluded (2019-2022) government of Brazilian far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro. Exposing the nexus between the cult of a mystified State, which is characteristic of fascism, and a mystic relation with the market, which is proper to neoliberalism, Guéron argues against those who claim that Bolsonarismo could not be described as a form of fascism.

In "To Organize Desire: What Politics After *Anti-Oedipus*?", Rodrigo Nunes reconstructs some of the main political and ontological theses of the 1972 book so as to identify the kind of political practice that it advocates. This is done in order to show that, contrary to a common misapprehension, Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the molecular and the micropolitical is not indicative of obliviousness to matters of scale in politics. On the other hand, rendering the book useful to a political practice that takes such matters seriously demands that we revise *Anti-Oedipus*' tendency to hastily conflate molarity and fascism.

The next three essays all bear on the applicability of Deleuze and Guattari's conceptual framework to colonial and/or non-European realities. Ulysses Pinheiro's "Derrida's Role in *Anti-Oedipus*: The Colonial Archi-territorialization" examines the way Derrida was pictured in *Anti-Oedipus* in order to show that the ideas of deconstruction and schizoanalysis cannot be applied without qualification to the colonial situation. The text's central argument points to the ontological opacity of the colonies, which arises from a constitutive nothingness that prevents the emergence of becoming and difference.

In "Black readings of *Anti-Oedipus*. Critique and unconscious", Cristina Pósleman follows the traces of Frantz Fanon's thought in *Anti-Oedipus* with a view to showing what that book can offer to a thematization of the racialized colonial unconscious. Mixing biographical, autobiographical and academic registers, she sets out to pursue a "Black reading" of Deleuze and Guattari's work.

Finally, John Protevi employs Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a "regime of violence" to discuss the flight from (and fight against) enslavement in "The multiplicity of marronage". Drawing also from James C. Scott's work, he proposes a materialist account of maroon communities in the so-called New World that places preparation for a war at the center of their search for independence in the face of the plantation economy's overwhelming capacities for violence.

While not discussing *Anti-Oedipus* directly, Suely Rolnik's contribution takes the kind of micropolitical analysis first introduced by that book and applies it to the resurgence of the far right, particularly in Brazil. Her contribution, "Challenges in the Face of the Sinister", traces the appeal of figures like Jair Bolsonaro to the unresolved traumas of colonial and racial violence, and addresses the question of how the rise of a fascistic subjectivity can be resisted at the micropolitically.

Starting from the way Deleuze and Guattari use the sex of plants to elucidate certain aspects of their theory of desiring machines, Cíntia Viera da Silva examines in "Desiring Machines and the Sex of Plants" Paul Preciado's discussion of the molar homosexuality present in their work. Vieira's aim is to show that Preciado's critique does not take into

account that the relevant position for Deleuze and Guattari is situated in the domain of trans- and countersexuality, rather than in the bi-polarity between hetero- and homosexuality.

Closing this issue, Daniela Voss's essay, "On *Anti-Oedipus*: Deleuze and Guattari's Spinozism", highlights the surprisingly little remarked presence of Spinoza in the concept of a productive unconscious coextensive with the social, the political and the economic, which she identifies in three central theses of their first collective work: the unconscious' immanence to nature, the ways in which it is "machinated", and the fact that production and anti-production presuppose one another in them.

This sample offers a good sense of the breadth of approaches to *Anti-Oedipus* and Deleuze and Guattari's work more broadly that were on display at the conference in Rio (unfortunately, the papers by Anne Sauvagnargues, Brian Massumi, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro and Andrew Goffey were already published or scheduled for publication elsewhere and could not be included here). This is a sign, no doubt, of that work's continued capacity to yield insight and fresh ideas – even if those may sometimes have, as some of our authors argue here, to build on the basis laid by the book in order to argue against the book itself.

The Vertigo of Reference. On Paulo Arantes' Formação e Desconstrução *and the critique of "French Ideology"*[1]
by JEAN-PIERRE CARON

Abstract

While not delving directly with Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus, "The Vertigo of Reference" examines one recently published book by an important Brazilian philosopher that proposes to offer an intellectual history and a critique of Post-Structuralism and its dissemination in France, Germany, and the United States. As elsewhere in Paulo Arantes' oeuvre, the standpoint of the periphery is the point of view methodologically adopted in this book that was written in the 90s and was only published in 2021. The paper proposes to be an immanent critique of Arantes' critique, trying to offer a structural reading of the Brazilian philosopher's method, and reflecting on its limitations. By the end, some pointers about the theory of organization influenced by Rodrigo Nunes' appropriation of Deleuze and Guattari's thought are offered as a possible counterpoint to Arantes' conclusions.

> Tendances au maquillage
> Un regard désabusé
> Qui cache l'écran ténébreux
> "Ersatz" by Guerre Froide

I.

"We need to find out the real issue at stake." (Arantes 2021: 167) This is how Paulo Arantes responds to an intervention by Bento Prado Jr., the transcript of which is included in *Formação e Desconstrução.* Prado's text proposed an examination of a contemporary debate around the problem of relativism in philosophy, approached in its historical aspect through an interpretation of Protagoras, its contemporary reappropriation by Richard Rorty, and a counterattack by the so-called "universalist" field in the figure of Karl-Otto Apel. More on this below, but what is worth emphasizing in this initial moment is the central character of the question asked by Arantes for the book project as a whole: *we need to discover the real issue at stake.* A question that stresses precisely the already tense

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[1] Text originally published in Portuguese in *Estilhaco* (January 2023) and available online at https://www.xn--estilhao-y0a.com.br/vertigensdareferencia.

dialogue presented by Prado between two *philosophical forms* of relativism and universalism respectively. Arantes' approach here intends to introduce a point of view that is somewhat *external to the* philosophical immanences in question, dealing with the socio-historical constraints of the philosophical solutions proposed and examined in Bento Prado's intervention. Giovanni Zannotti comments in the afterword of the book about the period of Paulo Arantes's intellectual production to which this book belongs.

> The protagonists of the chapters in this book - which include, in addition to the French, their German and North American opponents and/or colleagues - not only subsequently undergo a partial rectification of judgments about them, but also tend to disappear from the surface of Arantes' tracings of the present, without their descendants occupying the same positions; and this could reflect nothing less than a 'change in structure and function' of ideology, as one of them would have said in other times. (Zanotti 2021: 282)

Zanotti refers to the relative disappearance *of contemporary ideas as an object* of Arantes' analyses after *O fio da meada,* the period to which, strictly speaking, the articles that make up *Formacão e Desconstrucão* belong. This first observation introduces a grain of salt to what we will have to say about it below, which will recover some proper *philosophical problems* with the *method-* pardon the heretical expression in the case of Arantes- in this and in some other writings by the Brazilian author. But we will do so in the hope of not falling into a "diversionism" the guarantor of which would be the division of labor from which the "professional discipline of philosophy" arises according to Arantes himself, but rather as a defense of a certain set of conceptions that, we believe, can be retrieved from the examination of the successes and shortcomings of the book, and reactivated in other sectors of experience beyond theory.

II.

Formação e desconstrução appears, therefore, late after its actual writing, and was received with relative silence. One wonders about the reasons for this silence. Those who visited a certain social network even before its launch saw a ripple of indignation at the announced "attack" on the strongholds of so-called post-structuralist French thought promoted by the book. This could indicate to the "Arantian" camp an important factor in our intellectual universe: that the delay of the book ends up being, still, a hit in the historical alignment, in some sense vindicating the central thesis that Paulo Arantes has been defending for decades, which was taken from Roberto Schwarz and Antonio Candido, explicitly: the delay in the adoption of foreign ideas in the national territory, make them doubly *out of place,* eliciting behavior that has a *doubly* distorted relation to their real content.

In the expression "distorted in relation to its real content" one may already encounter some important determinations. First, that ideas should supposedly have a ballast, a real social influence, an idea that Arantes recovers in *Ressentimento da Dialética* from the moment of XIXth century German Left Hegelianism in its ambition to reform social and political life. But at the same time, the impulse to reform *through ideas* is itself the result of a practical-political failure, of the lack of real social influence on the part of intellectuals, whose compensatory impulse takes the form of an attribution of power of social transformation to ideas themselves. That is, the very concept of the philosophical idea would not have lived up to itself once it failed to be brought to effectivity, thereby becoming an effigy without coin, an ideology with a compensatory function. Transplanted to the periphery, the falsification is doubled: if the claim to the effectiveness of ideas was already an ideological fabrication in its original form, in the periphery the ideological character of ideas is redoubled, as it becomes a symbol of the social status of a class that does not even intend to bring them to reality.

In the specific case of the "French Ideology", as the book abundantly insists, its reception was already, in a certain sense, prepared by the previous acclimatization of the French structural method of philosophical reading, particularly at the University of São Paulo, as documented in the classic *Um departamento francês de ultramar*. At the same time, the very delay in the consumption of the latest philosophical fads coming from the center would produce a certain lack of continuity in the unfolding of these same ideas in the periphery, always open to the adoption of the latest paradigm to compensate for its colonial complex. A discontinuity that, according to Arantes, was favored here by the content in question, in the supposedly ahistorical insistence present in that same French Ideology (from here on the FI) – belonging to the object itself the ability to be integrated without cumbersome adaptations to this historical discontinuity characteristic of the unfolding of ideas in the periphery.

This analysis of the turns and translations of ideas in a tense relationship with the social base that sustains/pretends to sustain them provides an approximative model of the work of Paulo Arantes in the phase in which the writing of these essays belongs. A model that stresses the search for a *real referent* corresponding to the discourses that acquire ideological guise at the very moment when their claim to truth seeks to establish itself directly. Hence the methodology itself is indirect, seeking to find the real ballast of discourse not in its direct content, but in the function they acquire when orienting social behaviors, clearly understanding "orienting" here not as the effective realization of the enunciated content, but as an *influence, including in a sense opposed to its literal meaning, of the enunciated content over a real social sphere*. Operation for which the theoretical figure of the "intellectual" is central.

> The wager was as follows. I needed to show that Hegelianism had a foothold in reality, that the Hegelian system had a referent. This referent is what every materialist program, a program for criticizing philosophy or ideology, must have, otherwise, you

are not a Marxist beyond mere methodological interventions. The link I needed to move from the system to reality was this *mix*: the figure of the intellectual, a thinking sociological entity who formulated sentences. (Arantes 2021b: 12)

This is how the movements of the FI are followed in the book, particularly in the first essay "Tentativa de identificacão da Ideologia Francesa"("Attempt to identify the French Ideology"), from its beginnings in the Structuralist phase, maturation around the thinkers that followed May 68, and final transplantation to the North American intellectual milieu in the 80s and 90s, a moment that is taken as the terminal phase of FI by our author at the time he writes these texts (the early to mid 90s). As Arantes says:

> Well then: one of the biggest commonplaces in the interpretation of the first chapter of the French Ideology, Structuralism, tends to associate it with the great modernizing wave of the Gaullist Fifth Republic, when contemporary capitalism finally arrives in France and with it the torpor of the society of consumption. In internal politics, the lull that follows the end of the Algerian War will accelerate the building of the new Welfare State, while in the international sphere, the conjuncture of *détente* and economic expansion, in addition to contributing to unblocking a country that has been stuck for centuries, will reinforce ideologically the impression that History had finally evaporated. As for this last mental construction, let's say that it was the projection of a feeling with strong local support, the feeling that the more the country recycled itself the less the gestures of the Gaullist grandeur *managed* to mask its gradual dwarfing in the planetary circle of big Capital. Hence the shortening of perspective noted above, and which manifests itself, among so many other signs, in the replacement of the philosophizing writer, spokesman of the world's conscience, by teachers, more precisely, by specialists in "human sciences". (Arantes 2021a: 16)

Several historical lines pursued by Arantes in this, and other essays intersect in this appreciation. Many appear in the book, which begins by monitoring the three trends - French, German, and North American – the story of which conditions the final format that the French ideology will take in its American reception. This is followed by a redefinition of scope in chapter 2 that introduces the Brazilian point of view (a point of view "from the periphery") on this process, which is followed, in turn, in chapter 3, by an outline of the US-Brazilian parallax regarding the reception of French ideas, exemplified by the figures of Rorty and Bento Prado. Parallax that reveals a common background to the tendencies examined in the book in the "demiurgic" centrality, as Arantes following Perry Anderson would say, given to language, and that finally leads to the debate between Prado and our author, with which we begin our review. This debate, almost a *mise en abîme* of the book's general debate, also occupies an architecturally central position in the arrangement of the different chapters, ending part I of the book. From there, in parts II and III, which are shorter, Arantes proceeds to an examination of the Hegelian and anti-Hegelian adventures, on the one hand of Gérard Lebrun (part II) and on the other hand, of the

period immediately prior to the emergence of Structuralism in France, with chapters on Kojève's and Lacan's readings of Hegel (part III).

In what follows, we intend to make some critical considerations about the kind of criticism operated by Paulo Arantes, trying to recover what we could defend as a *methodological dimension* (against the author himself) of his thought. This examination of an Arantian methodology will make clear the relationship between two planes: the *plane of construction* of the concepts themselves (often concealed by Arantes) and the *plane of the situation* of the social function of *ideas* in their societal context (which the author assumes), a difference that could begin to be outlined through the examination of the dialogue between Bento Prado and Arantes.

III.

The core of Bento Prado's article, "O relativismo como contraponto" ("Relativism as a Counterpoint"), is occupied by a debate between Rorty and Apel, resumed in Arantes' reply, only with Apel replaced by Habermas, as the representative of the universalist pole against relativism. After a technical approach to a possible Protagorean reply to the problem of the *peritropé,* which cannot be rehearsed here*,* Prado draws a contrast between the ethical consequences of Protagoras' sophistic thought, which he identifies as a *polycentrism*, against the *polis-centrism* of Socrates and Plato. The distinction covers the assumption of a *cosmopolitanism* of the Sophist, against a localism of the philosophers in their attachment to the law of the *Polis*. Prado thus emphasizes a certain universalism of the Protagorean position, inverting the signals that would traditionally associate universalism and localism respectively with philosophy and sophistic. "As if Protagoras, a foreigner who knew exile in Athens, could say, anticipating the exiled Latin poet: *Barbarus hic ego sum*. Indeed, for the foreigner and exiled, the *external place* reveals the relativity of space and culture, as well as the breadth of the world." (Prado Jr. 2021: 146) In contrast, the contemporary Rortyan position is unapologetically ethnocentric. For Protagoras, the geographic range of the various forms of life pluralizes reason and law, emphasizing their *conventional* character. For Rorty, the absence of trans-local ("universal") reasons to break ties within conflicts over forms of life makes it such that in the absence of a trans-local criterion, one is left with one's own cultural criterion, ratifying one's *self-centrism*.

Mentioning Rorty's criticism of the idea of philosophy as being necessary for ongoing political debates, Bento Prado is already sailing in Arantian waters, by relating this problem to the planetary unity of a "globalized economy":

> What this disqualification of "social theory" misses, beneath the local diversity of political and cultural forms (through willful ethnocentrism), is the global unity within which they are combined and which carries them all into a single movement. The very contemporary swarm of reinvigorated nationalisms and racisms seems to be the

symptom (even if going against the current) of this process of unification that is not purely economic. It is not a question here of putting together a complicated theory of Reason or of truth with a cross-cultural reach or of building a metaphysics of the social. It is a *fact* - the globalized economy ignores cultural borders and governs the different *Lebensformen* - and to discover that, it is enough to read the daily news. (Ibid.: 151)

To this question posed by the concrete conditions, an answer is given and commented by Prado in the figure of Apel's universalist ethics: the proposal of an ethics that, while universally sustainable, respects local differences. This is not the place to criticize or praise the solutions proposed by Apel, but rather to highlight a difference in the formulations that animated Prado's intervention (even though he was closer to the Arantian framework than the authors discussed in his intervention) and the question cited at the beginning by Arantes: what is the *real subject matter of the debate around relativism*?

If Prado's question appeared as a *problem* to be *solved* by a specific theoretical approach (exemplified in the second part of his article by a presentation and critique of Apel's proposal), that is, the "glue" that would bring together the forms of life, currently forcibly related by the hands of an international division of labor operated in a world-economy would be "philosophical", putting forward the need for a *social theory* attuned to the political problems of the day; for Arantes, the *real issue is less the directly thematized problem- the theoretical* object of relativism and its discontents- and more its *conditions*, that which gives rise to the various masking operations- diversionist strategies- that philosophy provides. Therefore, two *types of answers* to the question: for Prado, capitalism is a problem that can properly receive a philosophical *answer*; for Arantes, the *philosophical answer* is a *reaction* to another problem that remains unspoken. Therefore, it *masks the true subject matter*. In one case, *a response* (Prado), in another, *a symptom* (Arantes).

Putting it more simply, Arantes locates a common background under the apparent antagonism between relativism and universalism - first in the very "conversational" character of the philosophy practiced by both contenders, Rorty and Habermas. But a conversational character that has a non-philosophical background: the normalization of capitalism over the background of its management by the national State in the post-war period.

> Our two antagonists in Bento Prado Jr's exposition, the two antagonistic philosophical positions, in fact, converge in the same pragmatic-linguistic paradigm to show in what way we can coexist or in what way we can manage something that they are assuming as already established, the normality of capitalism that is here to stay. (Arantes 2021a: 176)

IV.

It is not uncommon for Arantes to be asked to explain his method or his categorical or ontological basis. This is how he interprets the criticism made by Vladimir Safatle in *Dar corpo ao impossível*, that not only would there be, but that *there would have to be* an "implicit philosophy" in Arantes' procedure. Some interesting points emerge from the problem.

> Like a Moebius strip, the time of contemporary philosophy, with its triad of contemporary French philosophy, German neopragmatism, and Anglo-Saxon linguistic turn, would enter the tracks of historical repetition, of a succession of impasses already lived and about which there would be not much to add. Hence the sovereign way in which Arantes dispatches them all to the recesses of empty phraseology (one of those gestures that will necessarily bear a price to pay). (Safatle 2019: 255)

The Moebius strip is an interesting image to conceptualize the balance of solutions as Bento Prado defends it: "relativism as a counterpoint" to absolutism, the latter identified with philosophy, in the mutual passage from one to the other as necessary moments not only to the external identification of each pole but of the very self-determination of each one that passes through the other. Arantes's attempt to find what motivates this balance could be thought of as, precisely, a way out of the strip, a point of view external to the ideal dialectic thus assembled.

For Safatle, the Arantian discourse would work from a set of presuppositions that refuse to be explicitly stated. Otherwise, there would be no criterion by which he could guide himself in the ideological denunciation of the mystifying discourses of the intellectual class. The question seems to be: from what *theoretical* point of view is it possible to make the critique that Arantes makes if the point of view is not made explicit in the critique itself? We will have an answer of our own below. For Safatle, the problem effectively assumes at first the appearance of a performative contradiction. At the same time, *positing*, clearly enunciating these presuppositions, would incur a betrayal of their truth content, insofar as "in certain situations, positing a concept directly is the best way to annul it".

> In the same way that keeping the cake and eating it at the same time is not exactly an obvious operation, refusing that dialectics is yet another pathology of intellectuals, and leaving philosophy is something that has not yet been seen in this world. Therefore, I would insist that there is an "implicit philosophy" in Paulo Arantes, a philosophy that, for reasons that we will see later, believes should remain implicit in order not to be annulled. (Ibid.: 259)

Crossing this diagnosis with the image already used by Safatle of the "Moebius strip" that links the various philosophical "solutions" criticized to "impasses already experienced", constituting an eternal return of the Same, it could be said that non-enunciation is a way of safeguarding the concept that is not yet mature for effectiveness. However, a problem creeps in here. If the linguistic turn is the course that is taken by the French, Anglo-Saxon, and German tendencies examined according to Arantes, another presupposition animates the specifically French tendency, which explains in turn its eventual assimilation to the linguistic turn itself: avant-garde artistic modernism. If the avant-garde and the linguistic turn are united in the French *literary absolute* criticized by Arantes, we propose two lines of treatment of these two elements respectively in what follows, and which would bring critical consequences for Arantes's positions.

V.

On the return of North American philosophy to pragmatism after the post-positivist cycle, Arantes comments:

> Therefore, the reunion I spoke of just now was ripe through the following interpretation. Everything happens as if "logical analysis", turning back on itself (in the best continental "reflexive" tradition), thanks in particular to the pragmatics of the second Wittgenstein, to Quine's critique of Carnap's semantics, to the demolition of the empiricist myth of the "Given" by Sellars, added to the holism of Davidson, to the "historicism" of Kuhn, etc., etc., have finally shelved the phraseology of the Plato-Kant canon (as it is said in the current *lingua franca*) about the final authority of philosophy as an autonomous discipline which object is the meaning and rationality of our assertions and actions. (Arantes 2021a: 105)

Within the family album assembled by Arantes there is a forgetfulness of one aspect of these ancestors of the Rortyan position- the latest widely commented on by our author. He mentions *en passant* one of them, Sellars, in the above passage, as one of the guarantors of the liquidation of the authority of "traditional" philosophy in the North American context. By "traditional philosophy" we could say that Arantes already refers to what comes after the Kantian line of influence, which, for him, grounds a "professional philosophy" that deals not with the things of the world, but with the conditions for thinking the things of the world- inaugurating epistemology as a discipline that guarantees for the philosophical domain the last word on any subject matter. But a guarantee that comes with the emptying out of its object. This first step towards the constitution of a self-referentiality of philosophy prepares, in the North American context through the post-positivist development in the lineage of Kantianism and in the French

context through the discipline of the History of Philosophy in the molds of the structural reading of Martial Gueroult, among others, the arrival of the French Ideology, mediated by the recollection, in the case of the United States, of its pragmatist past. The Rortyan step appears as a contender, internal to the North American reception of the FI, to its direct transplantation to the discipline of literary criticism in that country- aiming at maintaining some relevance to philosophy as a public discipline, despite Rorty's own anti philosophical tendencies. The search for a neo-pragmatist lineage internal to the very development of analytic philosophy would be part of his program set out in *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, where Wittgenstein, Sellars and Dewey feature prominently.

However, an important distinction must be made here between the Rortyan reading and the letter of the aforementioned "critique of the Given" by Sellars. It is the *realist* element of Sellarsian philosophy, which is conveniently forgotten by Rorty, a forgetfulness that is inherited, albeit justifiably, by the Arantian reading, insofar as its subject is the reception of the FI in the USA, which leads to the specific form with which Rorty reads also the recent history of analytic philosophy. But recovering the realist side of Sellars' philosophy may help to express something about Arantes' position.

The Sellarsian critique of the Given is not a demolition of philosophy or of its *referential claims*. It is a critique of the idea that there would be something like content "given" to consciousness in an unmediated way. This idea, according to some approaches, would guarantee a foundation for the empiricist philosophical edifice. Sellars' critique is not aimed at questioning the representational capacities of thought, as much as just at undoing a specific understanding of how these are actualized. The quickest and most concise way to recover the critique of the Given for our purposes is the formula employed by Willem deVries to describe it: "The given is epistemically independent, that is, whatever positive epistemic status our cognitive encounter with the object has, it does not depend on the epistemic status of any other cognitive state. [...] It is epistemically efficacious, that is, it can transmit positive epistemic status to other cognitive states of ours." (deVries 2005: 98-99)

This means that the Given, in this critical sense, should be able to do two incompatible jobs. It should be experienced content acquired independently of any previous state of knowledge or conceptualization, and at the same time be able to *justify* other contents. If the Given is epistemically independent, it is not in the justificatory network - it is not epistemically efficacious - if it is epistemically efficacious, it is not epistemically independent. Sellars solves the problem by separating the *causal sphere, independent of any epistemic state, and the justificatory sphere*, which depends on a coherentist network of justifications that would compose the *space of reasons*.[2] Thus, between the content of experience and the concept there is *non-identity* (the Adornian gloss is intentional here): the concept is a candidate to subsume the content of experience, only insofar as this is

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[2]   John McDowell offers an alternative outlook of the relationship between the space of reasons and the causal sphere which, while building upon the Sellarsian approach, is critical of it. See McDowell (1994).

related to other contents in an interrelation that thinking tries to replicate in the order of reasons. This is also how Sellars arrives at a historical concept of reason as an unfolding transformation of different frames of reference, Images-of-man-in-the-world, which accompanies the development of scientific frameworks in their successful or unsuccessful conceptualizations. But the referent is not thereby eliminated. These are different approaches to a real referent tending towards greater adequacy insofar as the compositions in the horizontal dimension – inferential links between concepts- augment the capacity for the explanation of the vertical dimension - relationships from concept to thing. A difference that can be mapped onto the Wittgensteinian distinction between *seeing* (simple sensible contact with the object) and *seeing-as* (conceptualized sensible contact, in which the thing is seen-as-"something", understanding "something" here as a concept with categorical-justificatory traction: a "this-such").

But if the idea of *seeings-as* seems to recover a constitutive subjective character of phenomena, repeating the Kantian gesture that is being criticized by Arantes, we can recover it in a materialist key in terms of an *appearing-as*. The idea is familiar to Marx and covers his critical conception of commodity fetishism: the way in which social relations of production *appear-as* relations between commodities. The theoretical work of recovering the circuits of commodity and commodity-fetishism operated by the critique of political economy would be able to pierce through this, by offering an alternative image with greater explanatory power. At the same time, a danger lurks here of falling back into a form of the Given once one is supposed to have "reached the bedrock, and my spade is turned" (Wittgenstein 1986: §217) in the description of the mode of production and its determinative circuits. The shovel does not bend because one finds a positive foundation, "given" by the *framework* of the critique of political economy or any other, but, precisely, by finding a facticity that cannot positively ground the seeings-as, even if it conditions them. But a facticity that appears negatively as the impossibility of absolutely grounding, and not as a positive grounding. This does not authorize the "frictionless spinning in a void" (McDowell), that the Arantian critique seems to attribute to contemporary philosophy. It just means that every explanatory apparatus, no matter how close it intends to be to its object, has a *thrust* from the conceptual constellation that it manages to elaborate between the two poles, that of the immanence and that of the conceptual transcendence to the object.

The critique of the Given, therefore, intends to support both simultaneously, the pole of the self-referentiality of discourse as a *specific form of appearing mediated (non-exclusively) by the very concepts that make up the expressive linguistic medium at a given moment*; and that of the referent that *appears* within the discourse thus constituted, that imposes constraints on its conformation within this conceptual space. The separation between the poles gave rise to the division between left-wing Sellarsians (those who

began to develop the logical space of reasons)[3] and right-wing Sellarsians – the distinction has nothing to do with politics- who began to develop the frames of reference and scientific means by which the manifest image of man can be denounced and debunked in the name of an Outside recoverable by scientific practice.[4]

VI.

We could ask here: isn't it exactly what Arantes is doing, debunking the manifest image produced by discursive self-conceptions, by tracing the circuits that run *underneath* ideologies? There is even a *materialist* version of the variation of seeings-as proposed by our author: precisely the mobilization of the *periphery* in the description of the processes of Capital. It is a *seeing-as*, because it mobilizes a distinction of visibility: what is available to be seen of the world from the center is different from what is available to be seen from the periphery. It is *materialist*, because the points of view are situated entirely within a world-system determined by the international division of labor in the context of uneven and combined development. Thus, it is not a theoretical apparatus that makes one see the difference, but the very material situation of the one doing the seeing. One part of the world sees the whole differently from another part of the same world.

But describing it in this way represses the *vocabulary*: Capital, commodity, international division of labor, periphery-center, etc. A batch of concepts that manage *to make* the difference between the *appearances* of the world of Capital from the point of view of the center to the point of view of the periphery. It is here that an internal distinction within the space of reasons is articulated: in addition to the framing given by the concrete position from which one looks, the frame of reference of *logical categories* employed - which is not directly deduced from the concrete position, being able to vary independently of it - allows the description of an interaction between the system of references and the logical system of categories that track those references. An internal difference that is also expressed in the materialist point of view: a point of view locally situated in the social totality, but equipped with specific concepts that provide cognitive friction. The necessary cognitive *friction*, codified precisely in the *non-identity between object and concept*, which causes movements of adjustment and maladjustment that provide information about the systems of concepts and of objects thereby intertwined. A maladjustment that appears *for us within* the conceptual system- as shortcomings in theorization. This is the distinction alluded to earlier between a *plan of situation,* from

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3 Even if they do not allow themselves to be reduced to the thesis of redescription in the Rortyan way. Brandom and McDowell have their ways of safeguarding representational success within their left Sellarsian positions.

4 This division is based on the dialectic between the "manifest image", phenomenologically available*,* and the "scientific image", theoretically elaborated and conceptually *incompatible* with the manifest image – as presented in Sellars (1963).

which a vision of the whole is envisaged, and through which a problem posed by the historical conjuncture is highlighted, and a *plan of construction*, through which the internal history of concepts is called upon to pronounce on the situation.

Here we can give our answer to the "price paid" by Arantes for the implicitness of his methodological position. If Safatle supposed that the implicitness of Arantes' position would result from the need to keep in a state of latency what is immature to come to effectivity, there is in our view an internal division in the very materialist maneuver employed by the author regarding one part of the world seeing the other part of the world: the one pertaining to the constructive plan of the vocabulary used, which should be submitted, like it or not, to the same type of critical discipline that Arantes directs at other vocabularies. Being in the periphery position is a *fact* but acquired through the transduction of a practical-material set of consequences to an explanatory frame of reference, for which the set of concepts employed is not an inessential part. Thus, the materialist *appearing-as maneuver*, as we call it, *without explicitness* runs two risks: a lesser risk of *flattening* the various dimensions that compose the dialectics to a base understood as "given" insofar as the logical vocabulary that theoretically constitutes it isn´t explicitly posited. And a greater risk of hardening the procedure into a fixed *maxim*, according to which philosophies never say what they mean. Here, what was an important distrust of the philosophical pretensions of having an *immediate political valence* in *Ressentimento da Dialética* becomes a fixed doctrinal element and, therefore, instead of uncovering the "true subject matter" of the discourses, *dissolves* them in their *effects*, retrieved, as described according to the lower risk mentioned above, from a unique and never explicitly posited point of view. Effects verified in the exclusive tracking of the behavior of the operational figure of the *intellectual*. But, in doing so, "subject matter" is reduced to an effect on, or of, behavior, a procedure that brings with it as a consequence an *a priori* irrelevance of the specific philosophy being addressed by Arantes.

Note that the criticism is not of a supposed performative contradiction that Arantes incurs. It is directed at the possible *loss of expressive capacity* of the model itself by not taking into account the conceptual and not just the material moment of *appearing-as*, which runs the risk (not always in Arantes, but often in *Formacão e Desconstrucão*) of flattening the dialectic which consists of not perceiving the emancipatory moment in discourses that are preemptively considered as ideological.

This reductionism seems to be applied without further ado to the whole of the so-called "French Ideology". Despite the reservations made by Zanotti in the afterword to the book, that some judgments would have to be reconsidered after the writing of these essays, what one sees in them specifically about the content of the works of Foucault, Deleuze, Derrida, and co. is a disavowal made from the standpoint of a different theoretical basis. That is, it is immanent critique (from the point of view of Capital and its effects on discourse), but not immanent critique from the standpoint *of the philosophical object in question*. This justifies the wave of indignation mentioned in our subtopic II and the

accusations that Arantes "haven't read" the authors in question. We did not want to follow this path of external critique of Arantes but rather try to justify as much as possible the Arantian method in its virtues and affordances before being able to effectively show *where* the accusation that *he did not read* could have relevance.

VII.

To understand this insufficiency, it may be useful to return to the second line of influence on the FI mentioned in the book, that of the artistic avant-garde. If the Arantian method, as we said, consists of using the difference between one part of the world and another to extract information about the whole, could a part of the world in a different sense, here not understood in the sense of the geographical-economical periphery, but in the sense of a specific practice *among* practices, do the same operation? The question has to do with the possibility of an *immanent* point of view not only existing in a geographic place in the topos of international capitalism but in a *specific form of practice* that follows an immanent logic, which may be able to extract information about the whole.

It is a turn of such a nature that Sérgio Ferro's thought performs with the visual arts, not falling back on denouncing the particular as false for being contradicted by the whole, but defending the determined negation that the particular exerts in relation to the tendency of the whole. The question is relevant to think about a possible emancipatory valence for the thesis of the "literary absolute" that Paulo Arantes intends to trace from the avant-garde to the FI.

For Ferro, the plastic arts are the only *material activity* that *resists* its subordination to Capital, not by discourse, but by proposing a form of action that exemplifies, albeit in a *limited way*, from the Renaissance to the outbreak of the First World War, where his analysis ends, what "free" labor would mean in the context of capitalism.

> Despite taking place in a secondary province of social production, the leap is symbolically immense. The confrontation overflows the localized dispute, it overcomes the narrow particularity. If the language continues to be that of an isolated craft, what it says has general reach [...] What they do can be considered as a reduced, schematic model of a socially valid response. More precisely as an example (in the sense of containing in itself what it exemplifies, as proposed by the American philosopher Nelson Goodman) of non-subordinate labor. (Ferro 2015: 11)

The central point of Ferro's argument is that the history of certain procedures in art since the Renaissance is the history of determined negations operated by *artistic procedures* to avoid integration into manual labor that is fully subordinated to Capital. This evasion would depend on the rise of the visual arts to the status of liberal arts, wherein the amount or the importance of the manual labor involved should be concealed.

A search, therefore, for social *status* within the system. But, in the wake of this search for status, something different begins to appear. By seeking to differentiate itself through determined negations of subordinate handicraft procedures, the visual arts would carve out a negative space of freedom. The opposite movement to that of Arantes, which consists of finding the ideological moment in what is claimed to have emancipatory traction, here it is a question of recovering a real movement of denial in the practice of the self-interested artist. A point that is already illustrated on the first page of Ferro's two volumes:

> At a time when the craftsman who produces images still dines in the kitchen, the "kitchen" of manual crafts constitutes an apparently definitive obstacle to promotion. It cannot be avoided, otherwise, there is no work. But it must be hidden, otherwise, the intended *status* will never be achieved. The solution to the impasse must deal with this antinomy.
> Several solutions are tested. I quote three. *Virtuosity*, which seeks to compensate for the lack *of* prestige of the hardworking hand with the sophistication of the productive gesture. *Denegation* – which I will call the "smooth" style -, which eliminates its traces. These two have an apparent defect: they require redoubled artisan application. The third is worthy of the impasse: it shows the labor – but a labor opposed, point by point, to that of the contemporary craftsman, its determined negation. In this sense, the most outstanding figures are the *sprezzatura* and the *non finito*. […] The artisanal tradition aims at ensuring the pre-established operational correctness; the new artistic plasticism, to possible discoveries, thanks to the openness to productive dynamism. (Ibid: 1-2)

The approach is not unrelated to Adorno's procedure of defending in the monadic nature of the work of art the critical distance that allows the critique of the social whole through the treatment of the material understood as social matter sedimented in the work. In Ferro, however, this criticism is not retrieved through the examination of the finished product, but in the procedures adopted by artists who deny the work ethic present in other material productions of society.

But the point that touches us directly, that of the avant-garde, is addressed only in the final chapter of Ferro's two volumes, and in the specific manifestation of Abstract Cubism. Following the direction given by Ferro, the trajectory of negations of the visual arts throughout the two volumes: after the three logical moments of negation of subordinate labor embodied in its exacerbation (virtuosity), denial (smooth), and assumption (demonstration of the traces of confection in the finished result, as in the *sprezzatura* and voluntary unfinishing of the work, as in the *non finito*), one arrives at the passage to Modernism, where the *idea* represented becomes the object of negations - first in Manet's dynamic plasticity without an external model object, passing through the *systems* from Van Gogh and Gauguin, arriving at Abstract Cubism, which *avows the* essential flatness of

pictorial art. A thesis familiar to Clement Greenberg's readers, but that in Ferro's hands is an example of labor (step 1) that denies the hegemonic type of labor (step 2).

> This radical unveiling obliges us to recognize that art is also labor, perhaps above all labor, like the others – but free. This would also oblige us to recognize the counterpart: other types of labor - or at least many - could, in the same way, be art - if they were free. But this built-in consequence deeply displeases Capital's minions and assistants when they sense it. So goes the common phrase of spite: Anyone can do it. (Ibid.: 23)

Here, a gap seems to open between the vision defended by Sérgio Ferro, of an impulse for emancipation present in the avant-garde gesture of *non-differentiation* between work and its exterior, which stands in agreement with Peter Bürger; and a positioning that sees in this *negative exemplarity* of the work the need for an aesthetic distance guaranteed by the autonomy of art, as defended by Adorno. "Here we are faced with what could be called with a touch of provocation Adorno's anti-avant-gardism. I am referring to his attitude of refusal in the face of the attempt undertaken by the avant-garde to dissolve art in everyday life." (Bürger 1990: 189) Anti-vanguardism quoted approvingly by Arantes:

> For this very reason, nothing could be more instructive than the comparison between this apotheosis without atmosphere – hence the superlative emphasis that distinguishes it – and the sober Adornian balance of the aging of the modern, even more revealing since resulting from an "aesthetic theory" of the same thematic-conceptual progression as the process of de-aestheticization of art reflected by itself since its inception. Not to mention Adorno's peculiar anti-avant-gardism, more than the disgust we can imagine, also a point of view on the surrealist aftermath of post-structuralism, armed, so to speak, *avant la lettre.* (Arantes 2021a: 47)

What seems strange in Arantes' approval of Adornian diagnoses is that, if on the one hand Adorno insists on the character of the autonomous *artwork* (its *heterotopia*) resistant to the disintegrating attempt exemplified by the avant-garde, on the other hand, it is precisely in the character of *separation from the outside introduced by self-referentiality,* in the heterotopic moment of the FI- that Arantes will find the avant-gardist element. Heterotopia that functions on the one hand (in the work of art) as a critical safeguard, on the other (in the FI) as false consciousness. A false paradox that explains itself: the opening of the aesthetic form present in the avant-garde has as a corollary the taking of itself as thematic content. Self-referentiality distorts the character of aesthetic appearance, displaying it as labor amongst labors, as Ferro wants. Thus, the *formal* openness to its exterior- the indifference to the outside- is directly proportional to the doubling of itself as *content – art about artmaking*. This doubling, while illustrating an emancipatory tendency insofar as it sustains the moment of *heteronomy* (art is labor between labors) of the *heterotopia* (art is free labor, detached form other labor) present

in the work; is also what maintains the exemplifying character of the individual work (there must be a "work"), which imprisons, therefore, the avant-garde in a concept from which it intends to escape. Hence its failure (Adorno) or its modification (Bürger) from a self-critical moment of art as a whole to a local transformation of the artwork concept.

An important issue would be to trace, accepting the proposed link between the avant-garde and the FI, how this paradoxical-exemplifying character of the avant-garde is transplanted to the position of theoretical production in the FI, which Arantes doesn´t explain. For Ferro, the heterotopia proposed by the avant-garde has an emancipatory vector insofar as the visual arts seek to generalize their specific condition of *free labor* to all the arts. But it encounters a real obstacle, which depends on the concrete conditions of labor under capitalism. Free labor *must* become widespread or instead pay the price of remaining a privilege reserved for the few. This deadlock ends up placing the artist in contradiction with the position of the common laborer.

Perhaps here a critique of the comfort of an avant-garde aesthetic position is possible, but not simply because of a *referential deficit* of the discourses, but of their inability to universalize the emancipatory impulse that is their own. This makes the repetition of the avant-garde gesture in theory the prerogative of the disengaged intellectual, as commented on several occasions by Arantes. But deciding on this issue is not so simple.

VIII.

Let's do a brief retrospective. From an approach to the Prado-Arantes debate, we arrive at a formulation of the Arantian position as the search for an external determinant of the "Moebius strip" of philosophy and its subject matter. This model presupposes a difference between the material basis and the way it appears *to theoretical thought* - that is, a difference between symptom and response. Arantes seeks to leave theoretical immanence behind through a materialist anchoring of his theoretical perspective: this perspective coincides with a point of view *within* the world-system, which shows what another point of view, also within the world-system, does not see. This standpoint of the periphery displays the symptoms of the formations of the center. But the symptom itself is approached from a set of concepts taken from the critique of political economy. The *appearing-as* of the formations of capitalism is mediated by the ("materialist") difference between center and periphery and by the seeings-as determined by the logical-conceptual apparatus in use.

Safatle's criticism of the concealment of the "implicit philosophy" takes on by this token the less generous appearance of an attempt by Arantes not to expose oneself to the same criticism leveled at others. This may be, as Arantes said at the launch of Safatle's book (Arantes; Chaui; Safatle 2019), a performative contradiction, but being a performative contradiction is not the heart of the matter. The core is that the appearance of leaving the

discursive universe is guaranteed by a denial of the conceptual aspect. In addition, the lack of explanation of the apparatus imply an impoverishment of the possible relationships to be drawn between the dynamics of the material base and the possibility of variation of the explanatory *frameworks*, a discussion that Arantes consistently refuses, which would condense, in the worst cases, in a flattening of the different moments of dialectic and a stiffening of the point of view. According to this flat point of view, philosophy/theory is always suspicious in advance, as its subject matter is never the subject matter it declares to be its own, but always the subject matter determined by the Arantian point of view. As Safatle said:

> We will be forced to accept a strategy that will see, in the end, all production of the idea in its philosophical nudity as a simple compensatory realization of the impotence of social life, as a "mere idea" that hides its empty spinning. Disqualified in its force of inducing events, philosophy will be relegated at most to an implicit discourse, since its explanation in current conditions can only lead to its reduction to the condition of ideology. (Safatle 2019: 268)

In this context, the phenomenon of the French Ideology fits like a glove to confirm the model - having as confirmers the double determination of the *linguistic turn*, which supposedly removes it from the universe of material effects and the *affiliation to the artistic avant-garde*, a conjunction that leads to the recovery of the thesis of the *literary absolute*, which would enclose the FI in an aesthetic effect without a referential converse.

Ultimately, the issue boils down to the question: Is *discursive self-referentiality* the name *for what* in the context of poststructuralism? *We need to find out the real issue at stake.*

To respond, we must return to our distinction between response and symptom taken from the conversation between Bento Prado and Paulo Arantes. Against the discursive "glue" provided by the intellectuals, which Prado comments on, Arantes understands them as a set of diversionary strategies in relation to the true glue that produces history, not theoretical discourse, but the real movement of the dominant and dominated classes. But what our passage through the realistic moment of the critique of the Given reveals is the role not of the constituted theory that seeks to provide unity where there is none, but of the *vocabularies* that appear in the context of both the real movement and the theories that think it. It is about sustaining a more immanent imbrication of discourse and action, also conditioned by the *appearances-as* of impasses in a social reality for which we have no determined answer. Another concept surreptitiously appears here, which, in some sense, unites *response and symptom*, which is that of *adaptation*.

Adaptation can be something, according to Lampedusa 's formula, that promotes change to leave everything as it is. The best example is capitalism itself, in its accommodating transformations in the relations between Capital and labor. But adaptation can also be a tactical replication, which creates a space of homogeneity

between the environment and the action that transforms it. This tactical replication needs to be adapted to the *form* and *scale* of phenomena in which it manages to act. Something that, in Rodrigo Nunes' vocabulary, appears as *fitness*, and which is well illustrated in the space of indifference between artistic practice and material practice, as shown by Sérgio Ferro. About *fitness* in this sense, Nunes says:

> If it is to work, an inflection introduced into a situation must be sufficiently compatible with it. That is, it must be materially feasible, it must be comprehensible and desirable to a large enough number of people that it can produce the desired effects, and so on. This condition establishes a superior threshold: a modulation of collective or aggregate behaviour cannot be too discontinuous with existing conditions, or it will not be viable; if it is too different from the situation it is in, it cannot transform it. The lesson here is simple: not everything is possible at any given time. (Nunes 2021: 234)

Or, as Sérgio Ferro says, it is because plastic art is labor that it can be *free labor*. Its operability is predicated on the negative adaptation to the context. But while in art and in theoretical practice there is always an irreducible heterogeneity with respect to social reality, which dislocates them into the terrain of exemplification or analogy, organizational adaptation to context in the movement of real politics is *sine qua non* for real change - even if it does not *guarantee it*.

It is in this context that perhaps we can, considering the type of thinking offered by Paulo Arantes, provide a more charitable vision of its targets. In this sense, the change commented by Arantes, inherited from Perry Anderson's previous criticism of the structuralist and post-structuralist arc, is less a change in *attitude* than a transformation in the *actual political referent itself*. Contradicting this hypothesis, Arantes' formulation, reiterating Castoriadis' judgments, which appears at the beginning of the book, is as follows:

> While the weakened "main ideology" of the dominant system would undertake the routine task, and today quite discredited, of persuading individuals that the problem of society as such has no place or is being solved by the hegemonic bloc on duty, the deviant discourse of the *maitres-à-penser,* amplified by the educational apparatus, the media, etc., would assume proportions of a true diversionary maneuver, aborting the gestation of pertinent ideas about pertinent questions. With each new figure, this cutting-edge phraseology would resume its exclusive "complementary ideology" role. In other words, in the ideology of our time, the false consciousness of the ruling classes is not reflected, by an innumerable number of truncated ideas, but by the variable diagram of a pseudo-alternative of global subversion. (Arantes 2021a: 13)

According to Perry Anderson, the hegemony of Structuralist and Post-Structuralist thought would have aborted the possibility of a new cycle of unity between theory and praxis in the countries of Latin Europe. This is because, despite the success of

Structuralism being explained by its attempt to solve a problem left open by Marxism, namely, that of the relationship between Subject and Structure, the former propagated a philosophy out of place in relation to political collective praxis, without penetration within organized movements. This evaluation calls into question the centrality that these forms of thought would assume to understand the moment of 1968 in France, Italy, and Latin Europe as a whole, a moment valued by Anderson in his reading of this theoretical arc. The question that is posed acutely then is that of the *role* of theory and its relationship with *praxis*.

Kristin Ross adds to the criticism of the understanding of May 68 derived from the pantheon of post-structuralism:

> A new renegade historical practice could continue the desire of '68 to give voice to the "voiceless", to contest the domain of the experts. While the theories that would come to dominate the 1970s—structuralism and post-structuralism—carried out what Fredric Jameson has called their "relentless search-and-destroy mission against the diachronic", another kind of work, deriving directly from the experience of '68, was being carried on within and on the outskirts of the discipline of "official history." It is here that we should look, rather than to the sociologists, or to the philosophers of Desire like Lyotard or Deleuze frequently summoned up to embody the legacy of May within intellectual production, to find some of the most interesting and radical political experiments around the question of equality. (Ross 2002: 116)

Contrary to Ross and Anderson/Arantes, it is not a question here of recovering Deleuze and Lyotard to speak of May, but of speaking of May to recover Deleuze and Lyotard. For example, the insistence on becoming-minority and the role of desire against the representative striated space of democracy and inclusion in the Communist Party reflect the organizational practice that Ross herself comments on. As the events of May respond, among other things, to situations outside French territory, particularly the repercussions of the wars in Algeria and Vietnam, to which the French Communist Party reacts in a moderate way, the dimension of the lock-in into representation by the centrally controlled organization becomes thinkable. To the extent that May 1968 was also characterized by the pursuit of the *question of equality* as a critique of *specialization* - the movement included students, factory workers, and non-aligned groups - an attempt was made to criticize the distinction between manual and intellectual labor. The movement thus tested new organizational forms, across the boundaries of these constituted social groups, in a practice of *assembly* of heterogeneous elements as advocated in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari and resistance to disciplinary power, as thought, among others, by Michel Foucault.

Regarding the organizational forms of the moment, Ross contrasts a *Leninist perspective* with a *Luxemburgist perspective* on the actual organizations of 68.

> The distinction I am making can perhaps be illustrated by comparing a Leninist tendency to one deriving from the theories of Rosa Luxemburg. Both tendencies share, as did all the radical groups in '68, an anticapitalist goal. But a Leninist party is in essence a radical intelligentsia that says we have the right to rule. Their goal of "seizing power" is as much determined by that objective as it is by the adversary it confronts: the bourgeois state. In the hope of conquering that adversary, the party borrows the adversary's own arms and methods; in a kind of underanalyzed fascination, it imitates the enemy's organization down to the last detail. And it becomes its faithful replica, particularly in the hierarchical relation between militants and the working masses, reproducing the social division that is the very foundation of the existence of the state. But a dominant aspect of May—closer to Luxemburg than to Lenin—focused instead on that social division, on avoiding the hierarchy inherent in Leninism, and as such produced organizations that were an effect of the struggle. (Ibid.: 75)

The paragraph is very important, as it weaves many tense relationships with what this section is about to show. First, it illustrates a phenomenon of adaptation – but with the aim of criticizing it. When Ross speaks of the imitation by a Party of the State that it purports to overthrow, she is referring to one of these phenomena. At the same time, opposing it to a less hierarchical form of organization, presented here as influenced by Luxemburg, non-adaptability is seen as in some sense a virtue, as it runs less the risk of assimilation, while the dimension of *immanent* organization is an example, or *a pre-figuration* of the practices that one wants to embrace. An opposition that poses a problem that underlies the criticism, both by Arantes and Anderson, of Structuralism and Post-Structuralism as, to some extent, losing sight of the real struggle of the subaltern classes in favor of pseudo-revolutionary dandyism that, by the end of the day, ends up reiterating the enemy's individualized and atomized form of action. Regarding this hypothesis of assimilation, it is something to be decided by the observation of the *conjuncture*, and not a conclusion inscribed in the theoretical apparatus itself.

IX.

We had mentioned that, if the criterion used by Arantes to read the FI is *political*, proposing this arc of thought as *diversionary par rapport* to more politically realistic practices, it is worth asking what practices these would be. The question positions Arantes' thinking as oscillating between two forms of action that Rodrigo Nunes mentions in a paragraph that we have already quoted, that of *collective action* and that of *aggregate action*: "a modulation of collective or aggregate behaviour cannot be too discontinuous with existing conditions, or it will not be viable; if it is too different from the situation it is in, it cannot transform it." This distinction seems to be at stake in the accusation against the FI, as Perry Anderson says, "the reunification of Marxist theory and popular practice

in a mass revolutionary movement signally failed to materialize. The intellectual consequence of this failure was, logically and fatally, the general death of real strategical thinking on the Left in the advanced countries - that is, an elaboration of a concrete or plausible perspective for a transition beyond capitalist democracy to a socialist democracy." (Anderson 1984: 27)

An underlying question arises, which is: to what extent does Arantes subscribe to the importance assumed by Anderson for the influence of the theoretical arc in question - *as a theory*, not just as an ideological effect? A question that brings with it the distinction already mentioned. Would the importance of theory be predicated on its ability to directly *guide* collective actions (in the sense of Nunes) in the figure of a form of unity of theory and praxis, as Anderson wanted? Or would it be something more diffuse, in the form of an aggregated action, where, in the absence of an effective tissue between the intellectuality and a mass movement, wage on incremental effects at a distance?

Citing an answer that Deleuze and Guattari give to the question about what could be an example of the *molecular revolution* propagated by both, Nunes proposes their distinction:

> Thus, for instance, the sexual revolution, a good example of the type of process that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari described as 'molecular revolutions'. A farreaching, ever-unfolding transformation of gender relations and social mores, it produced rapid and fundamental changes in a relatively short period of time between the late 1950s, when the contraceptive pill started becoming widely available, and the mid 1970s. The various modifications that make up this broader shift, happening at various scales at once, often required no collective deliberation, no planning or coming together. They rippled across different societies without anyone taking the time, let alone being able, to direct or oversee them. The sexual revolution can thus be described for the most part as the aggregate result of these manifold small changes, and therefore as an example of the aggregate action of large numbers of individuals.
> By contrast, collective action properly speaking would refer to those cases in which people not only perceive themselves as participating in a broader common identity – that is, as belonging to a collective subject – but also intentionally come together and engage in processes of deliberation, planning, assessing, intervening, and so forth. (Nunes 2021: 23)

Further theorizing the combined action of collective behavior and aggregated behavior, Nunes proposes the idea of *distributed action*: "the common space in which collective and aggregate action combine, communicate, relate and establish positive and negative feedback loops with one another." (Ibid.: 26)

Here a way out of the problem is suggested: if the political obstacle encountered at that moment is objective, the emphasis on tactics is also objective, under the condition that a bet is placed on a distributed form of *action,* in which theoretical practice participates, that *paves the way* in the midst of the current fragmentation to more collective forms of

action. Distributed action that, from being *a problem*, becomes a *solution*, as it appears as the only possible form of action in the absence of an organized social base. The same wager on the aggregate action can be seen in the context of artistic action, as presented by Ferro: if art does not directly mobilize politics as a *mass organization*, it contributes with its own internal politics in an *ecosystem* of distributed actions with different media and long-term effects on the organization of sensibility and on the possibility of a political movement to come. If this is the case for art and if the aggregate influence that a field such as philosophy can play is unpredictable, it becomes plausible that, even if we grant the precedence of political practice over theory, its products may be recovered by that same practice, thus participating in organizational ecology through aggregate action, and not only through the collective action claimed by Anderson.

In this regard, it is unclear in what sense Arantes could consider the thinking coming from post-structuralism to be *a diversionary maneuver*. One who talks about *diversionism* is presupposing something that would *not be it*. We have encountered this something before: the search for the "real referent". But whoever talks about diversionism is not just talking about a theoretical error, but about a distraction from *what should be done*: instead of doing what should be done, diversionism orients towards the mistake, disperses energies; deceives by presenting a *simulacrum as if it were the real thing*. The relationship between theory and praxis is posited, therefore, by the thesis of diversionism. However, unlike Anderson, Arantes does not explicitly appeal to a missed opportunity for the reunification of revolutionary theory and practice at the 1968 moment, moving away from an expectation, we would dare to say, that Arantes would consider "naive" of a collective action, concentrating, on the contrary, in the properly intra-theoretical denunciation, of a *masking of the real conditions* that would have been imposed on the figure of the intellectual in the period of the FI. Thus, if it is not a question of appealing to what should be done, but what should be *thought*, the previously proposed problem of the lack of explicitness of the conceptual apparatus is acutely present, insofar as the criterion of the adequacy of the theory to the real remains concealed, a criterion whose presence shows the prevalence not only of the *appearing-as* in a materialist sense, but of *seeing-as* determined by the logic employed. The frame of reference of the FI according to Arantes would not allow us to see what there is to see.

But seeing is not necessarily *acting.* If Arantes does not endorse the thesis of the reunification of theoretical practice and political practice in the form of collective action at the very moment in which this possibility is blocked, his position becomes a kind of well-meaning critique of the *status quo*. A critique that, as such, could be assimilated as much as the FI to the immobilist position of the intellectual who performs it, in this case, Arantes himself. But if there is a way to defend FI, there is a way to defend Arantes- and since this way ends up being the *same* in both cases, it is worth asking, apart from the use of different theoretical apparatuses, and which gives rise to a properly theoretical discussion about them, which is effectively the type of action required by Arantes and

which is also not required by the FI. This is a problem of *participation* in political processes at times of real blockage of the mass movement. Participation that tends to resolve itself into forms of *aggregate action*.

Content which in the case of FI is duplicated in practice, therefore to the extent that the tactical dimension prevails in the critique of centralized forms of control, the strategic dimension remains suspended; this relationship of theory to the tactical dimension is replicated in practice by the fragmentation of the social base that consumes this literature. Thus, according to the hypothesis advanced, we could read the emphasis on the micropolitical, tactical, and *pre-figurative dimension* present in post-structuralism, even with all its limits and exaggerations, as not necessarily a diversion, but an attempt to gain agency at a time when the global transformation of the productive system is at a standstill. Its formal experimentation with theoretical writing would seek to carve out spaces of freedom *by example*, while its thematic emphasis on the molecular versus the molar, on difference versus identity, thematizes this movement of *local constitution* of spaces of freedom that does not necessarily *mask* a condition, as much as *adapts* to it, facing the inevitable risk of assimilation. But this risk is also present in centralized organizing, as Ross comments. Its *one-sidedness* in favor of tactics is effectively a limit, but it is not evident that it is a limit decided within the theory.

If the hypothesis that the problem with the FI is not so much one of compensatory delusion as of an adaptive development is correct, the complaint appears as a complaint against an adaptation that is, nonetheless, objective. The denouncement would surreptitiously make a demand for a form of action that would not be possible in the conjuncture, perhaps making the demand, itself, into an ideological demand.

X.

I conclude with an anecdote. One of many times I have been to a seminar of Deleuzians, after listening to a long presentation on the shortcomings of the molar, and on the subversive capacity of the molecular present in artistic productions, I raise my hand and ask about whether this approach contemplates the possibility of the global transformation of the productive system. To which I was answered almost aggressively about how I was bringing back the molar and identity and… Hegel in my question. And how, according to their apparatus, it was instead a matter of resisting locally and drawing lines of flight. I replied with another question: *isn't that a bit of a "scab" attitude*?

Discourse is indeed suspect. But not because it is always masking something else, but because it does not clearly *differentiate between the generalized adoption of a position (sometimes just because of its seductive character) and the discursive adaptation* to the real context and, in the second case, between the affirmative endorsement of the current situation and the calculated homogeneity between the current means and the

construction of the new. This is evident in many discourses that come from the so-called FI. The question I asked about the scab-like character of the speaker's intervention has the same two sides. Am I demanding something objective in terms of *available action*, but which is being ignored by my opponent due to the seduction of a philosophy, or am I taken by a fantasy of transformation *unavailable* on the real horizon?

A third possibility is suggested by the admission of this impossibility itself as an element of the theory. And, in this context, the philosophical discourse of the FI would acquire the features of a denial *not of the possibilities, but of the impossibilities* on the horizon. A disenchanted attitude that has always been a hallmark of Paulo Arantes' thinking. A disenchantment that, on the one hand, distrusts the affirmative emphasis on the local dimension present in the thoughts arising from the arc of the French Ideology, on the other hand, it is equally suspicious of "Leninist" solutions destined to take control of the repressed energy of the subordinate classes. This poses an oscillation between two extremes that alternate as opponents of Arantian thought: distributed localism and centralist universalism. The twofold negation that balances itself between the poles becomes relatively clear: the support of an implicit impetus towards an unnamed transformation. It was Safatle's hypothesis that there was a critique of finitude that must remain implicit in Arantes. And that it also paid the price of renouncing the theoretical means of putting this negativity into action, transitioning from resentful anomie to the emergence of new conditions. Conditions which, if are not to be the result of a pure accident (which is not excluded in advance) need to be *thought through*. Negative position, which in its anti-theoretical acumen overlooks a subtle difference between the Leninist *plan* and the explanatory *vocabulary underlying both plan and localism* which increases the understanding of the processes in the fabrication of *seeings-as* in contact with the real dynamics of exploitation.

Here it is revealed, amid the negative equilibrium that has just been shown, that is, the support of the negative, a further consequence: the denial of the role of the explanatory framework, duplicated in the emphasis on the purely negative that presents itself as *without form, as formless,* as that which is yet to come. The hypothesis of the concealed logical frame of reference reveals here another path that critical theory could take: the point of view of the search for the complex *forms that this informal* can take. But, if according to Safatle, the "true nihilism" proposed by Arantes is the one that "implies taking a position that leads the finite to implode" (Safatle 2019: 265), and, with it, the categories of thought already determined within the grammar of finitude, paraphrasing Pierre Boulez who by in turn paraphrased Antonin Artaud saying that he had learned to "organize the delirium" (Boulez 1966), we say: it is necessary *to organize nihilism*. Finding the *zooming* levels from which the field that is complexly *shaped* by the prevailing social formations, reveals its secrets and opens itself up to intervention. If discourse can always mask, it is at the same time, inevitable. If there is no more specific form that political action *should* take, it is not about determining it in advance, but about finding vocabularies, in

connection with effective practices, that provide the means of increasing understanding in a way that favors the emergence of the new.

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"The Economy Is the Homeland!" – Neoliberalism, Fascism and Bolsonarismo
by RODRIGO GUÉRON

Abstract

We decided to write the present essay as a way of opposing some current statements which affirm that bolsonarismo cannot be viewed as a form of fascism since it sponsors a neoliberal program and therefore does not have a "nationalist" program – a characteristic of fascism. We aim to demonstrate the articulation between the cult of a mystified State, a characteristic of fascism, and neoliberalism, something that was already present in the constitution of a liberal individual, as well as in the equally mystic relation with the market – with capital – and also with the State that this individual brought, or brings, within himself.

I – Liberalism, nationalism and fascism: a genealogy

> The economic discourse of 1836 and 1850 was, among ourselves, a pragmatic variant of certain positions already adopted by the so-called 'patriots' or 'liberals' that inherited the fruits of September 7th. [...] Free commerce, the first and foremost banner of the patriot colonizers, did not necessarily mean, and in effect was not, synonymous with free labor. [...] From there results the conjunction that is peculiar to the Brazilian economic-political system, but not only Brazilian, during the first half of the 19th century: liberalism plus slavery.
>
> Alfredo Bosi

Foucault points out, in *The Birth of Biopolitics*, that liberalism finds in the "market" a criterion of truth (Foucault 2004: 33) – a certain "regimen of truths", as he liked to call it. It was this "truth" that should rule the management of the State. We are talking about a kind of "rationality" pattern produced by the so-called market – in fact, the capital – which,

in the same gesture that claims for itself a functioning that is free of State interventions, presents itself as a force that determines the patterns of a kind of economic health of this same State. However, it is exactly in this context of "liberal rationalization", and as a decisive part of it, that a strong policy of State intervention arises, aiming at a kind of social control that was supposed to guarantee the highest possible productivity, directly implicating the positive results – preferably robust – of the State's finances, which, by their turn, would have implications for the proper functioning of the market and, consequently, in the efficiency and volume of social productivity.

We are referring to the appearance of something Foucault would call biopolitics or biopower, which roughly works as a kind of application of this "truth" of the market – which, in our view, we insist, is a "truth" of the capital – upon a management of life that occurs directly as a management of bodies. It is in this moment that individuals, now understood statistically from the concept of "population", divided in groups and submitted to hierarchies according to their physical characteristics, their genders, their origins and supposed "natural" aptitudes "(or lack thereof)", are crushed by the violence of the rationalization produced by the capital – the "truth of the market" – by means of the State. This rationalization would be, in this sense, the operation of pushing to its limits the capacity of production – production as conceived by capitalism –of individuals and, consequently, of the population, converting, separating or simply eliminating everything that could threaten the proper functioning of the market. In fact, in the lower decks, below those bodies divided and hierarchically disposed, there were those bodies deemed incapable, dangerous or monstrous, supposedly closer to savages than humans, therefore viewed as a threat to "rationality". We write "rationality" or "criterion of rationality" between quotation marks because we believe to be present here a strong mystical component where the old mystification of the State is coupled with a new form of mystification produced by capitalism – a conclusion we arrive at not exactly in a dialogue with Foucault. In any case, this violent social hierarchy expressed in biopolitics is a decisive part of this "rationalization": it is society itself that must be rationalized in this statistical and quantitative operation that separates and hierarchizes bodies, organizing them in population groups, in an operation for which the State is responsible and that implies, necessarily, a hyper-rationalization of this very State. At the limit – in the previous chapter, we saw how Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe demonstrates this – an "irrational" and "uncivilized" population is either naturalized as destined to brutal manual labor, thus separated and subjugated to serve "the reasons of the market", or is simply exterminated. In this sense, we feel we can consider that this new "reason", the "reason of the market" – "the reason of capital" – constitutes a new form of "reason of the State", different from that which the despotic State generated in its own core. Here we have the strong State of liberalism, born amidst the motto of "non-intervention" of the State. Here we have, therefore, the strong State of capitalism – that which, at the limits of its expansionist politics, where the expansion of the State occurs in ways almost

completely immanent to the expansion of capital, practices pillage and extermination in order to obtain surplus value and profit.

Cameroonian philosopher Achille Mbembe shows us that biopolitics – the operations of biopower – was decisive to every colonial and neo-colonial operation, to every pillage, slavery and genocide, to all violence that befalls peoples crushed by the expansion of capital. Upon reading Mbembe, one may wonder why Foucault did not point out that biopolitcs was already present in the horrors of slave trafficking across the Atlantic, or in the gigantic single-crop farms – the plantations – that depended on the slave labor of these Africans in the Americas and the Caribbean (Mbembe 2018: 21). In a similar and more effective way, Silvia Federici reprobates the French philosopher for having ignored how these politics affected in a direct and systematic way the bodies of women, extreme victims of the productive rationality of the capital, which reduced them to machines to reproduce – in fact, produce – labor work (Federici 2017: 35-36). Foucault has been recently criticized for supposedly not having made a connection between biopolitics and a strategy, by means of the State, of domination of the capital and, therefore, of class domination. According to these critics, the philosopher would have failed to see how biopolitics was a decisive part of "primitive accumulation" (Ibid.), that is, part of the process that would have created the conditions for the formation of capitalism, as described by Marx. This process was later readdressed and redefined by several authors (Guéron 2020: 184), among them the same Silvia Federici, who stated that there is not only a "primitive accumulation" in the historical origins of capitalism, but also that it frequently engenders new movements of "primitive accumulation" every time it wishes to intensify its expansionist process.

In general terms, we may agree with these criticisms towards Foucault, yet we maintain the concept of biopolitics, which seems to bring us an extraordinary inventory of power technology in the capitalist State. Understanding the origins of capitalism is, in fact, what Foucault is doing, given that the birth of biopolitics and biopower is found at the heart of the analysis he makes about the origins of economic politics and liberalism, which, in its turn, bring this technology of power in their core. In any case, although we recognize that going deep into the relation between biopolitics, State and capitalism proposed by Foucault – in the scope, limits and paradoxes of this analysis – is a very important debate, we shall not dwell into it here. Our interest lies, at the moment, in observing that, in capitalism, the State that should be non-interventionist, according to the motto of the liberal order, ends up being characterized by an astonishing intervention in the lives of individuals and the population. In this sense, we believe liberalism to be far more than an "ideology", since it is a way of organization of capitalist production, a way of organizing and managing the State that even brings about an intense process for producing enunciations, affects and subjectivities, which acquires a new configuration and strength in neoliberalism. Thus, even though there is an evident element of submission of the State to the capital, determining the appearance of biopolitics and

biopower practices – the "truth" of the market determining the actions of the State –, this should not be viewed as a weakening or debilitation of said State. On the contrary, liberalism, at the same time that subjects the State to the rules of the market, decidedly relies on the structure, strength and violence of the State in order to manage all living beings according to its rules. This is where the violence of biopower is produced, that is, a "statization of the biological", as Foucault would say, that allows the State to operate a direct management of bodies and a subjection of life to quantitative imperatives of rationality.

Nothing is more exemplary of the way in which the enunciations and slogans of liberalism produce a complete subjection of bodies than the minute description made by Alfredo Bosi in the text "Slavery between two liberalisms", a chapter in his renowned book *A Dialética da Colonização [Brazil and the Dialectics of Colonization]* (Bosi 2002: 194). Bosi demonstrates the way in which the enunciations of liberalism constituted the basis for defending slavery in Brazil, in the Americas as a whole and also in the Caribbean. Evidently, the concept of biopolitics does not appear in Bosi's texts, but bodies reduced to form-commodity surely do: in the "liberal" defense of slavery, quite recurrent in the discourse of slaveholders, resting on the enunciation of "private property" and "right to property". Yet, Bosi also shows us that the relation between "market" and State – the slave market and the market of goods produced with slave labor – are not found only in the legitimization of the right to property translated into the "right" to own slaves, to sell and buy human beings, in a complete ownership of their bodies and lives. They are also present in the noticeable "patriotism" of slaveholders, plantation owners and slave traffickers who would constantly speak of "national sovereignty" in the parliament, opposing the British pressure against African slavery (Ibid.: 197). Incidentally, in this context, historian Manolo Florentino, responsible for a turning point in researches about Brazilian slavery, shows us that slave traffickers were equally, or even more important, to the Brazilian economy of those days than the big landowners and their plantations (Florentino 1997: 184). Their political-economic power would be proof of an already important internal economy in Brazil, to the point that the Brazilian dominant class was able to resist for decades to the British pressure for the end of slaved Africans. Slave bodies are bodies reduced to commodities: bodies to produce surplus value and profit. So, they are also bodies reduced to statistics, like in the procedures of biopolitics that, for instance, evaluate mortality and disease rates, establishing a maximum limit of what is admissible and the "rationally" necessary moment for the introduction of health care policies, since excessive deaths, or deaths in an epidemic rate, hindered productivity, caused expenses and/or a drop in State revenues, thus threatening the proper functioning of the market. In this same logic, we can say that a kind of biopolitics was already in place in the assessment of the numbers of dead and diseased bodies in slave ships, playing a decisive part in the balance of costs of these horrid voyages (Ibid.: 171) that crossed the

Atlantic from Africa to Brazil, which were nothing more than economic-commercial enterprises[1].

French thinkers Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, on the other hand, find in Christianity a determining factor for the relations between State and capitalist production. These French authors transform the genealogy of Christian guilt made by Nietzsche – a genealogy of the "Judeo-Christian west" – into a genealogy of capitalism. Guilt would be expressed in the internalization of a debt in every individual and also in every social body, determining a force of subjection, thus constituting a decisive power relation not only for the stability but above all for the functioning of the productive intensity that characterizes the social capitalist machine[2]. By living the existential experience of a debt inscribed in their bodies and minds, even if they do not in fact owe anything to a capitalist entity (in spite of the fact that billions of people actually do), individuals feel the need to constantly produce. In this sense, the singularity of the experience of debt in capitalism lies in the fact that it becomes an instrument of power and social coercion that, besides producing a repression and a limitation in production, also produces the opposite movement: an intense production. This production is not related to life itself, but is a reproduction of the capital's imperative of always producing more money: more value.

This unique view of Christianity as a decisive factor in the formation of capitalism, with the inscription of guilt into the bodies of individuals, introduced by the two French thinkers, was resumed and systematized by Maurizio Lazzarato in a small and important book entitled *The making of the indebted man* (Lazzarato 2011: 140). In it, the Italian author goes deep into the analysis of debt as a power instrument of the capitalist machine, observing the power of financial capital not only in macro-political terms but also in micro-political ones, that is, in the way neoliberalism uses, as a crucial element of power, the construction of an "indebted subjectivity". The "indebted man", whom we would rather call "indebted individual", is constituted and inscribed in that which neoliberalism created as its greatest cliché and its biggest catchword: the "entrepreneur". That is, people who must be their own managers, managing their life and the lives of their families as if running a company, becoming in fact the "indebted individual", an expression that may be a little redundant.

In fact, for Deleuze and Guattari, the constitution of some kind of debt is a decisive element for the appearance of any form of what they would rather call "social machines": social relations, societies themselves, not only capitalist ones. For them, the experience of constitution of a *socius* among human beings did not arise from the need of exchanging and circulating goods and individuals, by then a predominant hypothesis in Anthropology,

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[1] Florentino presents us a table with an estimation of investments and profits (and occasional deficits) of several vessels in their trips to bring over enslaved Africans.

[2] "The infinite creditor and infinite credit have replaced the blocks of mobile and finite debts. There is always monotheism on the horizon of despotism: the debt becomes a *debt of existence*, a debt of existence of the subjects themselves. A time will come when the creditor has not yet lent while the debtor never quits repaying, for repaying is a duty but lending is an option." (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 197)

but rather from a debt relation that would have been synthetically described by Nietzsche in *On the genealogy of morality* as a "creditor-debtor relation" (Nietzsche 2004: 53). The very circulation and distribution of goods and individuals could only exist, or not exist, from conditions determined by this debt. In the same movement, the process of socialization and the determination of the social functions of these individuals would be characterized by the inscription of this debt in their bodies. Thus, the French authors identify three kinds of debts that would determine the functioning of three distinct kinds of social machines, the third of them being the capitalist one:

1) A "finite immanent debt" that characterizes societies without a State, marked by compromises between social groups, such as lineages or clans, which would determine a permanent flow of lateral exchanges in such a way that a debt settled by one of the parts – one of the lineages, for example – would mark the emergence of a new debt going the other way. For example, a lineage could supply some kind of food or utensils to another lineage that, now indebted, would "repay" by offering an offspring to the first lineage for marriage, tossing the debt back and forth in succession. 2) The appearance of the State, which would mark the appearance of a "transcendent infinite debt" that would upstage all others: a debt towards a superior and precedent instance that should even manage, judge and decide all lateral debts, which do not disappear altogether. Thus, a mystified instance – the Despot-State-God – would become the lineage of all lineages, referred to a mystical time identified with creation and origin. This mystification legitimates the fact that the State claims the monopoly of judgment and, consequently, the monopoly of violence: it has given us life, therefore it owns life. Thus, the State is born like a paranoid machine that creates, at the same time, its own interior space and also a menacing exteriority: an exteriority that can even be found within of its own territory. Since it has given us life, the State would own life, and everything that threatened it would also threaten its "subjects", including these very subjects whenever they rebelled against the sovereign: domestic enemies turned into "external evil", enemies that the State would be legitimately entitled to eliminate. Deleuze and Guattari even claim that money would have been created due to the State – by the debt towards the State expressed by collecting taxes –, and not as a means to facilitate the exchange and circulation of goods. 3) Finally, in capitalism, without the entire elimination of the transcendent debt towards the State, what appears is, according to these authors, an "infinite immanent debt". It would result from a minute process of interiorization in human beings of a moral Judaic God, a judge and savior. For this process, the figure of the crucified Jesus would have been decisive, that is, the figure of a deity – the "son of God" – that would have become a victim due to his condition, since he then becomes a God that, aside from being a judge and a savior, is also a victim. The issue here would be the interiorization of this God-law, of this judging God, which means, in a certain way, the interiorization of the State. In fact, the French philosophers wrote that this Judaic God-law functioned like a "portable State", in reference to Moses and its tablets, leading the Hebrew across the desert. This God, this

transcendent instance to whom we are indebted, is interiorized in Christianity, helping to create individuals that are judges of themselves, even though this deity had, for a long time, kept his transcendent function also as a Christian God, like in the absolutist States founded upon a so-called "divine right".

As an expression of this operation, there would be a genealogical lineage that originated from the fear of the single Judaic God – the people that must fear the God-law as a condition to achieve their freedom – and reached the categorical Kantian imperative, the fundament of the "rational" individual of the Enlightenment. According to this moral imperative, Reason, taken as a universal presupposition of human beings, should be obeyed precisely due to its universality, in an obeisance that would be a precondition for the freedom of human beings. That is, the obeisance to Reason, just like the obeisance to a monotheist God, would be a condition for freedom, with the difference that, this time around, this obeisance would work as a process of interiorization: the creation of a (bad) conscience, a guilt. In this sense, Nietzsche says that Christianity was an interiorized religion, forming individuals that did not even need to declare themselves Christians anymore. This interiorization was already, in a certain way, perceived by Marx himself, when he identified, more specifically in Lutheranism, a process of interiorization of faith, turning religion into "that which is innermost to man"[3]. However, it is Nietzsche who realizes how decisive this is to a certain concept of the "rational" individual created in the Enlightenment.

In this context, therefore, we see the rise of an individual that should obey himself, manage himself, according to an imperative of rationality that was also a moral imperative, in an operation that Deleuze and Guattari consider decisive for the constitution of the indebtedness that marks the relations of capitalist production: the "infinite immanent debt". Here is the mechanism of Christian guilt, decisive for the constitution and functioning of the social capitalist machine.

We shall remember that Foucault spoke of a truth of the market that is imposed upon the State as a criterion of "rationality" born at the core of capitalist production, which, for us, indicates a kind of submission of the State to capital. But let us also remember that this was not synonymous with a feeble State. This State, which would have to operate within a regime of truths of the market, operates a violent policy of social rationalization to guarantee, at once, its own financial health – "rational" – and the proper functioning of the market, supposedly thanks to this "health". These politics are what we call biopolitics. Through biopolitics – through practices of biopower – the lives of individuals are submitted to this rational criterion of the capital, which quantifies them in statistical groups, reduces them to numerical units within a group denominated "population",

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[3] "Luther, to be sure, overcame servitude based on devotion, but by replacing it with servitude based on conviction. He shattered faith in authority by restoring the authority of faith. He transformed the priests into laymen by changing the laymen into priests. He liberated man from external religiosity by making religiosity that which is innermost to man. He freed the body of chains by putting the heart in chains." (Marx 1970: 138)

classifying them hierarchically according to their supposed physical aptitudes – thus, productive – or lack thereof.

Yet, this self-managing of the State according to this assumed criterion of rationality created by the market – by capital – is also that which, in a certain way, introjects itself into the individual as self-"management": the interiorization of the State is also the interiorization of the "truth" of capitalism. It is up to individuals to manage themselves according to this supposed rationality, and their ability to do so will guarantee their supposed freedom, that is, their prosperity in a "market economy". As Lazzarato has shown, this operation, in neoliberalism, characterizes the constitution of a capitalist subjectivity completely disseminated across the social body, aiming to turn every individual into a so-called "entrepreneur" while actually creating an indebted individual, therefore subdued, as a kind of existential condition disseminated throughout the entire social capitalist machine.

Financial capital, in this sense, is more than an operating element that allows for the functioning of capitalism; it is rather the great instrument of capital power that is radically interiorized in the figure of the "duty" of the liberal individual. The entrepreneurial man is in constant debt with himself, but this debt with himself is what determines all his life in function of the capitalist production, that is, all his life in the incessant process of "making" money that feeds the core process of capital, that is, an infinite and endless production that is also, and always, money producing money. That is one reason that makes Deleuze and Guattari consider "immanent" this debt that marks the functioning of capitalist production. It is immanent to the very capitalist production, that is, it is precisely the reason why the entrepreneurial individual is, in fact, existentially indebted, unable to remove himself from the incessant and increasingly intense process of capitalist production: he produces because he is indebted and he becomes indebted since he needs to produce. Debt and capitalist production operate in immanent fashion, which is different from the old transcendent debt towards a Despotic State. This State, in general, threw itself upon the productive process from outside, as in, for example, in operations of tax collecting often carried out as police operations.

The individual's debt, immanent to his very existence and to the actual way he is constituted as an individual, is a debt towards his economic health and his prosperity. By properly managing himself, according to the neoliberal logic, he will contribute to the prosperity of the economy – of the "market" – and, consequently, of the State, since those who properly manage themselves become, as much as possible, one less burden to the State. In this sense, his debt is also towards the State: it is the duty of the individual to look after the economic health, the integrity and the prosperity of the State. Which means to say that, in a certain way, the debt of the State is also his debt. The State is present both as an interiorized element in this individual, who judges himself according to a criterion of rationality – responsible and indebted to himself –, and also in the way that this criterion of rationality determines his duty towards the State. There is a kind of "patriotic"

duty that is already insinuated in the constitution of liberalism and that, in neoliberalism, gets introjected more effectively as a subjectivity, namely the rational duty of the individual to look after the rationality of the State: the criterion of a "truth" of the market that would guarantee at once the economic health of the State and the proper functioning of the economy. Duty towards the State gets confused with duty towards the "economy": in fact, the "market", the "capital" – "The economy is the country!"

Even though the "immanent" character of this debt seems evident, as described by Deleuze and Guattari, we believe it still keeps an important element of "transcendent debt", even if it is an interiorized transcendence. This is what we observe in the very "rationality" taken as the truth of the market – of capital –, which is written here between quotation marks precisely because it occurs as a mystification, thus producing, as we shall see further ahead, a demonization of everything that may threaten it. Foucault, when speaking of this "truth of the market" that came to determine the government of the State, helped us perceive – even if not putting it in these terms – that the immanence, so well observed by Deleuze and Guattari, is articulated as a kind of indiscernibility between State and "market", where both share the same mystified "truth". We dare say that, in neoliberalism, it is exactly this "truth" of the capital, now also the "truth" of the State, that gets interiorized in the form of a guilty subjectivity: indebtedness. We are not referring just to indebtedness in the more mundane economic sense, which in fact affects large part of the population, but also to the constitution of an indebted subjectivity as an existential experience. This existential experience of indebtedness will be decisive in keeping every individual fully immersed in productive activity, in the way it is conceived by capitalism: intense labor, interminable duty, a life lived towards the incessant flow of money making; the production of capital itself.

At this point, one of the most important and invaluable contributions of Marx to the criticism of capitalism, namely the creation of a counter-theology of capital, seems to acquire a newfound relevance. In fact, Marx points out several times that the capital is mystified as the origin of all production and that this is a key operation of political economy: of liberalism. This would be, in fact, the fetish of all fetishes in capitalism, that is, making every production go from labor to capital, transforming the latter in a kind of "mythical entity" (Marx 2017: 890), thus deflating the protagonist aspect of labor. However, in order to demystify capital, Marx also needed to demystify the capitalist concept of State. Every incisive criticism he makes of the way Hegel conceived the State and described its fundaments in mystical terms (Marx 2005: 29-36) is, in fact, a denunciation of the way the bourgeoisie conceived the State in a mystified form. Hegel's mystification appears when he claims the precedence of the State in relation to civil society, while Marx proposes an inversion of this equation, showing how such thinking is typically bourgeois and how capitalism needs such mystification to legitimize all its juridical and repressive apparatus.

So, what we suggest here, working towards the conclusion of the first part, is that the relation between State and capital occurs, in contemporary capitalism, through an "indiscernibility" that contains an element of immanence but also an element of transcendence, that is, of mystification, despite being an interiorized mystification. What is indiscernible are exactly these two mystifications blended into one: the mystification of the State and the mystification of capital. A mystification that is interiorized in the individual, that is, inscribed within him as debt and guilt in a more effective way than any ideological convincing or any alienation that obscured his conscience. It is an inscription that brings impotence and, from there, potentializes capitalist production. The State gets inscribed in the bodies of individuals and also in the entire social body, inscribing there its "truth". But its truth is, as we have seen, the criterion of "rationality" of the market and, therefore, of the capital. Once again, it is the indiscernibility between capital and State interiorized as a mystification that expresses itself in an enunciation that is disseminated as a motto, inscribed in bodies and minds: "The economy is the homeland!"

II – The war for the economy.

"The economy is the homeland!" Was that not the main motto of Bolsonaro and his *bolsonaristas*, especially during the pandemic?

Bolsonarismo created a false dilemma between sanitary measures and the economy, pointing to sanitary measures, mainly social distancing and quarantine, as a threat to the economy. In this context, it is interesting to observe the dislocation, and eventually an alternation, between two constructions that even contradict themselves. First we have one that tried, and still tries, to deny the threat of the virus and the pandemic, or at least minimize it considerably. In this logic, all kinds of rumors were fabricated – the so-called "fake news" – to discredit the numbers that notified of the infected and the death tolls. In general, state governments, city governments and the media were accused of falsifying and inflating numbers, of creating an ambience of fear around a pandemic that would have far less scope and danger than was it was attributed to it. There were quite a few statements made by Bolsonaro himself in this sense. We should point out that, in this case, it is *bolsonarismo* that accused its adversaries of producing fake news and information, in an alleged case of "psychological terrorism", that is, blaming adversaries for something that is one of its own most striking characteristics. This first construction, while never completely abandoned, ceased to be the only one, or even the most predominant.

Soon we saw the emergence of another, which admitted the existence of the virus, of the pandemic and its dangers, substituting the argument that a great lie, part of a great conspiracy, was threatening us, to deem the existence of the virus and the pandemic the creation of this menacing conspiracy. In this case, those who were accused of being responsible for the fabrication of fake news about the severity of the pandemic,

supposedly inflating the numbers of dead and infected, were now blamed for creating and disseminating the virus – the "Chinese virus" – and the pandemic itself. However, we shall notice that, in both cases, the great threat, the great conspiracy, the one that involves an alleged lie about the pandemic and the one claiming there was an alleged creation and dissemination of the virus and the pandemic, was always aimed towards the Brazilian economy, even if it was part of a purported Chinese conspiracy against the entire planetary economy. Thus, Brazil was being threatened – the "homeland" was being threatened – and there was in course, supposedly, a sordid plot to paralyze its economic and productive activities. It is also interesting to observe that, although the two arguments are contradictory – since one can either say the virus is a hoax or else admit its existence as a key element in a big sordid plot –, this fact has no importance whatsoever to the *bolsonarista* strategy, which jumps unabashedly from one argument to the other. In fact, being coherent in the construction of its arguments was never a characteristic of fascism and we might find here an important similarity between *bolsonarismo* and the European fascist movements, given that the latter articulated demonizing and denial campaigns that, in present times, are intimately related to the concept of fake news.

In fact, we do not believe the term or concept of "fake news" best refers to the phenomenon it describes, although it is very important to investigate the phenomenon itself. We believe these so-called "fake news" are not characterized mainly as something that opposes lies, illusions or falsehoods to the truth, that is, they appear to be only secondarily a phenomenon that should be analyzed from an opposition of "truth vs. lies". These millions of messages, many of them little audiovisual productions, that get spread across social media – namely WhatsApp and the such – are rather characterized by mobilizing a certain regime of affects. Which means they are a decisive factor in what we call "the economic-politics of violence and death", triggering, mobilizing and intensifying a certain state of affects. In this sense, the existing contradiction between the two main forms through which *bolsonaristas* referred to the pandemic matters less than the mobilization of fear, a terror and hatred against an alleged foreign threat articulated with a domestic enemy, that is, a threat that would also be found in the heart of Brazilian society.

Thus, in the list of demonized "foreign enemies", China often plays the main role, the leading force of an alleged international communist alliance disseminated throughout the world in several forms and different movements – LGBTQIA+, feminists, ecologists, globalists –, controlling other governments but especially international organizations, among which the WHO (World Health Organization) is usually accused of being the main conspirator. To this curious alliance of foreign demons, listed by *bolsonarismo* and Bolsonaro himself, would be added, as political allies, a list of "domestic enemies" formed by the same LGBTQIA+, feminists, ecologists, globalists – in the forms by which they get organized in Brazil –, in short, a list often encompassed by the greatest demonizing denomination: again, "the communists". These were already demonized before the

pandemic, in a mobilization that targeted, for example, professors and artists, and that attacked universities and scientists. This strategy, however, acquired new characteristics and strength at the onset of the pandemic, also because these categories would be, among us, representative of organizations like the WHO.

Yet, there is no doubt that the second construction, the one that admits the existence of the virus and blames its creation on the Chinese, was favored because it proved especially adequate to the logic of "economic warfare". The construction is quite clear and easily verifiable, both in statements by Bolsonaro and also in *bolsonarista* discourses that circulate in social media. It means, basically, declaring war on the pandemic not by a social mobilization around sanitary measures but by a social mobilization to save the economy, ignoring the pandemic as a threat to human lives. In this logic, there is exaltation, even glorification, of the citizens that leave their homes to keep the economy spinning: workers that risk their lives in public transportation, micro and small businessmen that keep their shops open, delivery workers and ride-share drivers, and every other example we can think of. These would be the true "patriots", risking their lives, exposing themselves to the virus, facing disease and death to save the economy. At the other end, we found those who supported and practiced social distancing, quarantines and, in extreme measures, lockdowns. Accused of conspiring against the economy, therefore "unpatriotic", they were also deemed coward, feeble, deserters of a war that needed to be fought: the war for the economy.

It is precisely the admission of the existence of the virus and the dangers of the pandemic that brings forth this element of war and death, in the way both have been long related, especially when war is immediately understood as a State business – a war of the State: the glorification of death. Bolsonaro and *bolsonarismo* found in the pandemic an amazing opportunity to intensify this economy-politics of affects that operates by constructing the paranoid idea of the great enemy – which is, by the way, a characteristic of the cult of the State as a mystical instance. An economy-politics of fear, but also a positive intensity that offers a glorifying fruition, a heroic excitement to those who were supposed to be the soldiers of the country, risking their lives in a war to save the economy.

When we define fascism as an economic-politics of death and violence (Guéron 2020: 354), we are referring to the way in which death and violence circulate in a dynamic of intensification of flows that is typical of capitalism. This dynamic of flows detaches death and violence from the institutions of the force of the State and makes them circulate as commodities, constituting an entire sector of economic activity, an entire "market" with their own ways of life and, therefore, a whole dynamic for producing subjectivity. But the first part of the present text allows us to claim that there is, in this movement, a strong element of a State at once mystified and interiorized. Why? Because every mystical component that attributes a transcendent power to the State – for instance, the monopoly of judgment, the monopoly of violence, the right to kill or spare lives –, usually revered and intensified in repressive institutions of the State (for example, in the processes that

form and manage police and military forces), also begin to circulate socially, creating an economy, even a sector of economic activity, where it becomes evident that the economic-politics in the "conventional" sense and the libidinal economic-politics constitute the same flow and are, in fact, the same thing. In fact, violence and death are often put in circulation as the key element of a mystified State. Perhaps it is precisely in this mystical component of the State that we can spot a decisive factor that allows this force to get detached from it, just like a State that gets detached from a State and, paradoxically as it may sound, begin to socially circulate as a nomadic flow. In this sense, also, a fascist flow tends to acquire characteristics of a messianic movement.

We can even claim that there is always, in a certain measure, a tendency towards a fascist flow, even the existence of a fascist flow in capitalist society, which does not exclude the countries once called "socialist", maybe because these never actually overcame the organizational ways of capitalist production. Yet, this flow is quite capable of remaining in relative control, without great economic-political expression, or with an expression restricted to certain areas of activity, being even occasionally utilized by the State and/or by sectors of the capital. It even seems that the stability of the capitalist social machine always depended on some kind of management of these fascist flows. Phenomena like *bolsonarismo*, however, have to do with a rupture of this stability.

One could argue that this political economy of violence and death often detaches itself from structures of repression that, while being a strong social presence, do not necessarily belong to the State. Let us take as an example what is generally called in Brazil *capatazes* – roughly, a private assembly of thugs, musclemen hired by large monoculture landowners and grain exporters to carry tasks related to security and repression since the time of plantations and slavery. There is, however, a State present in these private power formations, even if only as an evoked mystical element; just like there is, frequently, an actual statization of these armed "private" structures, with grey areas established from the beginning: it should be enough to point out that the military police of Rio de Janeiro displays, on its blazon, a branch of coffee and a branch of sugar cane, the two main produce of old slave plantations. It is no wonder that powerful landowners in Brazil were called "colonels" and received from the State, in 1831, the denomination of commanders of a military institution, created upon their demand: the "National Guard". In this operation, those *capatazes*, or any other denomination given to them – *jagunços, capitães do mato* – officially became the State police force of these large farmland properties, under the orders of their oligarchs, who kept being called "colonels" way into the 20th century, even after the official dissolution of the National Guard.

In any case, what interests us at the moment is less the permanence of a structure of *capatazes* similar to that of the 19th century, with their respective productive organizations, but rather how this structure is reconfigured as a contemporary force, thanks to an economic-political process. In order for this to happen, it is necessary an element we recently identified as being paradoxical, that is, the fact that the mystification

of the State – a State that, at first, defined itself as a sedentary force – begins to circulate socially in a clearly nomadic dynamic, yet in the same way as it occurs in capitalism. The cult of the State gets detached from the actual institutions of the State, and its mystification becomes a phenomenon of messianism. This should be a good moment to ask to what point one can speak of messianism, referring to the way it occurred before capitalism, since we are describing a phenomenon that gets detached from the State exactly due to the characteristics of a capitalist economy and its intense dynamic of flows. We raise here the hypothesis that there is, in Brazil, an economy-politics of *capatazes* as a kind of economy-politics of violence and death and that, with its strong component of messianic mystification of the State, it circulates as commodities, produces subjectivities – "an object for the subject, but also a subject for an object" (Marx 2013: 47) – as a way of maintaining and expanding its businesses, that is, its market. Here, however, we must observe that the typically nomadic characteristic of messianism often turns it into a force of rupture that can be extremely threatening to the established powers and can eventually produce important social transformations. Which means that if, according to our theme, we articulate messianism with fascism and the economy-politics of death, there is also a possible messianic vitality, as seen in some heretic movements of Christianity, among them, for example, the experience of Canudos, in Brazil. If fascism has a messianic element, it has to do with the way in which a line of rupture can end up being an economy-politics of death, a point we shall soon return to, when we enumerate the several flows that converge to constitute fascism as an organicity.

Besides that, if messianism is characterized, on the one hand, by being a kind of force of flow, that is, a nomadic force that circulates socially in a typically anti-State action, on the other hand, it has always been decisive as a force of expansion of the States, even if it may cause them problems later. Colonial expansion itself, decisive for the formation of capitalism, had a noticeable characteristic: *bandeirantes*, pirates, cowboys and even Jesuit priests are, at certain moments, examples of the nomadic potency in the expansionist operation of the States. However, the State that gets detached from the State in a capitalist social machine is, rather, a State whose own mystification was subjected to the mystification of capital. It is that State which, based on Foucault, we described in the first lines of this text as one subjected to the "truth" – a criterion of "rationality" – of the capital. It is this "truth" of the capital that we identify, using a vocabulary that Foucault probably would not use, as a "mystification" that appears in the heart of the economy-politics. Before that, the great pioneer to denounce the mystifications of economy-politics and liberalism was, as we know, Marx himself. He viewed them as kinds of self-mystification of the capital itself, which magically conceived all production as if emanating from itself, in a series of enunciations or mottos that can still be easily perceived in capitalism nowadays, or perhaps more present than ever. So the discourse of the entrepreneurs – the "capitalists", as Marx liked to call them – are disseminated in the extreme neoliberal subjectivity of the "entrepreneurs". They never stop saying that production only exists

thanks to them, that employment only exists thanks to them, that scientific and economic development only exists thanks to them, even that prosperity only exists thanks to capitalism, to "investors" and "entrepreneurs". In fact, this was the "truth" of the capital and, hence, the State, which should interfere as little as possible in order not to disturb the proper functioning of the market, yet engenders a violent operation for managing lives and bodies – biopolitics, biopower – whose extreme manifestations are racism, slavery and the politics of extermination.

It is this State, subjected to the capitalist rationality, that ends up mystified and, as we pointed out, interiorized. A State that is also indebted to the capital itself at the same time that it creates and guarantees planetary patterns which determine both its indebtedness and the indebtedness of individuals: the global axioms of financial capitalism. But the indebtedness of individuals, in the sense of a disseminated social experience of debt, also occurs because the State that is interiorized is actually the indebted State which is typical of capitalism. The State itself is subjected to the infinite flows of the financial market, and this is a decisive way of keeping it subjected to the capital, but also a way of keeping individuals subjected to it. Meaning that it is not only the debt of individuals, guaranteed by the juridical and repressive system of the State, which works as a decisive operation of power in the capitalist social machine, but also – and perhaps above all – the debt of the State. This indebtedness is experienced by a gigantic mass of individuals as both a debt towards the State and towards the capital. It is an indebtedness that may not even exist in fact, that is, the bills of a certain individual may all be paid and yet he is constituted as an indebted subjectivity: he lives the experience of never being able to stop, and actually never stops. Evidently, we cannot say that "every individual" or "each individual" is constituted as an indebted being in the same way, since what we have here is an astonishing machine for extracting life through debt, feeding the machine for producing capital at the other end, since it is debts that throws individuals into an infinite and insane intensity of production – in fact, the reproductive intensity of capital, where lives are consumed in function of the incessant dynamics of money producing money: the (re)production of the capital itself. That is why, in capitalism, debt works in an immanent way with the productive machine: a mechanism of violence inscribed in bodies, working like a key element in social oppression, instead of just producing some kind of paralyzing and destructive effect – as happened in social machines before capitalism –, keeps individuals and the social machine intensely productive and, above all, circulates socially as an economic activity: it is constituted as commodity and market.

Here, perhaps, it is not correct to say that the State-capital is interiorized in individuals, but rather that its internalization is the very process of formation of the "liberal individual" – one that should be entirely responsible for himself, for his "success" or "failure", but also, of course, for his family, given that this logic is profoundly patriarchal. But this State that is interiorized, at once subjected and strong, inscribing and marking the bodies of individuals in a libidinal economy that makes it incessantly productive – in

the way the capital understands "production" –, also tears from it a political action forged at the heart of this libidinal economy-politics; and here is a point of particular interest to us.

This process is already inscribed, in a latent form, in this liberal man, described here as a man of the State – of the State-capital –, when he gets dislocated from debtors to creditors, transforming his political action in a kind of action for the defense of this austere State of capitalism. But what is he, in fact, collecting? He is collecting for all his sacrifices, for everything he went through – or imagines he went through – in order to be "self-made" without any "help from the State". In this logic, he goes against anyone who would be allegedly responsible for the indebtedness of the State, directing a special kind of resentment against those who are very near him, those who are socially similar to him, although he hates to admit so, those who would have refused to make the efforts that turned him into a "successful man": those who showed cowardice before the sacrifice of work and therefore, supposedly, are "dependent" of the State and, consequently, responsible for its indebtedness. Thus, resentment is a decisive force in the constitution of a neoliberal economic-politics which, much more than just an ideology, is a force that gets inscribed in bodies and therefore creates the preconditions for a series of micro-fascist actions that may get articulated in a fascist organicity of macro dimensions. A force that emerges from this individual who turned his debt-guilt experience into the action of a creditor, since he was able to construct, sometimes just barely, a life structure "in spite of everything": those who are disciplined amidst misery, those who suffered to 'serve good' amidst violence, those who feel threatened in the rigid structures they toiled to maintain.

This is the game of the libidinal economy-politics, immanent to every capitalist economy-politics, to which we frequently refer here, as if the relation creditors-debtors described by Nietzsche in the second essay of *The genealogy of morals* now worked inversely, that is, as a debtor-creditor relation that is inscribed and constitutes the affect economy of the liberal individual, who works micro-politically as a man-State. Still according to Nietzsche's terms, in his description of the two stages of what he called "European nihilism", this is a transition from the stage of guilt, of those who are self-judging, towards a stage of resentment: of those who judge others. We say here "neoliberal" instead of "liberal" because this is a striking difference between neoliberalism and classic liberalism: the constitution of an ingrained capitalist subjectivity that constitutes the "entrepreneurial man" as a paradigm in the hearts of the destitute and the working class.

There is, in the social capitalist machine, a series of violence and sufferings that do not derive exclusively from the repressive apparatus of the State, but also from the way in which the demand for incessant work, typical of capitalism, marks bodies. This is decisive to create a neoliberal subjectivity that combines the paranoid fear of anything that allegedly threatens a social condition that was "conquered" with resentment, expressed

in hatred and revenge, towards those who would have "failed" or refused to endure this affliction. Here we observe, once again, how the Christian operation that establishes a political-affect economy with sacrifices, guilt, punishment and compensation is so important for this immanent and infinite indebtedness of capitalism. We also see a noticeable intersection between that which threatens the individual and that which threatens the State, creating a kind of resentful and paranoid machine in liberal individuals that is like an anteroom of fascism, that is, something that turns a fascist flow – therefore, a fascist action – into something latent. But let us remember, once again, that this individual, historically constructed in a process of interiorization of the State, lives in a paradoxical situation. On the one hand, he constructs an identity combining his defense as an individual – his "freedom" – against any form of intervention of the State while, on the other hand, defending the State against anything that supposedly threatens it, including the supposed threats to the economic health of this State. It is this defense of the State and its "market rationality" that becomes this individual's support of any kind of violent action of this State against a kind of territory of irrationality, where human beings that are "less human" would dwell: the spaces of the "lawless", of those "without Reason", as shown by Achille Mbembe (2018: 12). Defending the rationality of the State would be, therefore, defending the (supposed) rationality of the market, identified with the (supposed) rationality of the capital. In this logic, it is the financially austere and balanced State that would allegedly guarantee a "free" individual capable of managing himself – with an identity formed between personal freedom and the freedom of the market – and also this same State that should protect this individual against all "irrationality" that could, supposedly, threaten it at the same time that it would threaten the market – the "economy" – and the State. In this sense, the interiorization of the State in capitalism is a kind of interiorization of the biopolitics and, further down, of the very necropolitics, where every individual is pushed, in the violence of this economy-politics of affection that marks him, into being an agent of the capitalist "rationality" and, at the extreme, of the extermination machine. In fact, as Mbembe shows us in his genealogical analysis, death and extermination are forged at the heart of the western conception of Reason. This individual, a kind of agent for the capitalist "rationality", operates with bases on the defense of himself and his family – conceived, in a patriarchal micropolitcs, as "the responsibility of the male" –, which is, at the same time, the defense of the State whose mystification is mingled with the mystification of the capital. We are faced with the neoliberal patriot, who finds in the description of the *bolsonarista* militant, or the Trumpist militant, a perfect image-cliché.

We shall point out that what we described a few paragraphs before already took place, that is, the State got already detached from the State, it acquired a dynamic of flow, so what we are calling the political economy of violence and death can now be called – since it has always been so – a political economy of the mystified State: the mystified State-capital that begins to circulate as messianism. We are evidently speaking of the

dissemination of war, which constitutes the neoliberal subjectivity in the same movement in which the mystified and interiorized State, in capitalism, is an interiorization and mystification of the capital. The neoliberal patriot is born at the heart of this interiorized war that, paradoxically, identifies this "free individual" with a soldier, in a war fought by "good men" to defend the economy from anything that threatens it: a threat to the individual (which is also a threat to his family), a threat to the "economy" (in the sense of a threat to the "market") and a threat to the State; in short, a logic in which everything that supposedly goes against the "capitalist rationality" must be fought and eliminated. That is why we said that the patriot of neoliberalism – the *bolsonarista* – is a kind of activist of biopower or, furthermore, an activist of necropolitcs, since it has been described by Mbembe as an unfolding and transformation of biopolitics. Biopower and necropolitics begin to express themselves, in the neoliberal way of life, also – and decisively – as a micropolitical phenomenon and force. The call to arms to save the economy, frequently made by Bolsonaro, is an extreme moment of this neoliberal fascism, particularly when glorified as the courage to face disease, of facing the possibility of contamination by virus and death: the mission of a patriot soldier that would risk life to ensure the functioning of the "economy".

III – The glorification of death.

By now, we believe to have dismantled the argument that claims that *bolsonarismo* cannot be considered fascist due to the fact that it is not "nationalist". It is true that we witnessed the application of a savage neoliberal program that advances with relatively little resistance amidst the cynicism of part of the dominant classes, which pretend not to know that it can only have the political conditions to advance thanks to the violence of bolsonarismo. Thus, we have a kind of liberal *anti-bolsonarismo* in Brazil, which appears to vehemently criticize Bolsonaro, yet does so while defending the extreme program of neoliberal government proposed by Bolsonaro's minister of the economy. In truth, there are also those who unabashedly celebrate, with strong doses of mockery and class perversity, both patriarchal and racist, this neoliberal advance that, in itself, is but a social massacre. In any case, going back to the undeniable nationalist component of fascism, this has always been a delirious and paranoid element that, on the one hand, intensified capitalist production, like in the gigantic productive mobilization of war in Germany, and, on the other hand, extremely intensified the horrors of biopower as the politics of extermination of a supposedly monstrous "less human" irrationality, expressed in the figure of "the Jew" and often articulated with "communism", both liable for a great international conspiracy that would have provoked the downfall of the German economy and the impoverishment of its population. So, if we consider possible to think of a State with bases on its civilian society and not only as a mystified entity – a theme that would

place some of the authors mentioned here in a heated divergence –, we do not believe we can affirm that Hitler or even Mussolini were defending the States, the "people" and the "civilian society" of their respective countries. It is not about measuring what happens in Brazil based on European phenomena, but rather understanding a country like Brazil at the heart of the capitalist economy-politics of violence, death and extermination. We affirm this as an answer to the argument, often heard lately, which considers that the identification of *bolsonarismo* as a kind of fascism is "Eurocentric". For us, on the contrary, it would be Eurocentric to consider fascism as a solely European phenomenon that would have reached its definitive form in countries like Germany and Italy. We believe, in fact, that from the characteristics of the Brazilian phenomenon we can view the European cases against the grain: that is, from the experience we are having today, with the intensification of the economy-politics of violence and death in Brazil, we can understand in a new perspective, with new aspects, what happened in those countries. Let us remember, once again, that Mbembe has shown us that biopower was already a colonial and slaveholder politics, just like some authors have been calling attention to the fact that European colonial politics of social control, repression and extermination, beginning in the mid-19th century, were brought back to repress the rebellion of working classes in the metropolises (Alliez; Lazzarato 2021: 140), as if colonialism – especially neocolonialism – was a laboratory for the technologies of capitalist power.

"Patriotic" subjectivity acquires a strong tendency of becoming an actual fascist subjectivity when, among other motives, it begins to circulate within the logic of capitalist commodities, attached to the circulation of violence and death as commodities, the theme of our first two texts. As part of the economy-politics of the State, it is now death glorified and, as a part of the economic politics of the capitalist State that now circulates socially as an intensification of the capitalist subjectivity, it is also a demarcation and an amplification of a certain "market". Yet, if it is true that we consider that every kind of social circulation is, in a certain way, the circulation of desire, including the circulation of the simplest and most prosaic merchandise, it is also true that we must consider that the economy of the *capatazes* puts in circulation something that is not an average commodity.

If capitalism cannot do without these intense flows to survive, it needs a mechanism to make sure this intense production of flows does not destroy it, since the aspect of desire in every production – their very intensity – greatly exceeds the form-commodity. We also know, however, that the decisive moment of capitalism is reducing great part of the productive intensity – the entire dynamic of flows – to abstract quantities in the form of currency. It is an operation in which the entire singularity of produced goods and the entire qualitative force of production is emptied in a quantitative measure, which is what characterizes the form-commodity. In this movement, and even more perceivable in contemporary capitalism, every vital and creative activity, and not only those which happened in the space classically reserved for work, is captured by a productive machine that exists "only" to produce money: the production of the capital itself. If Marx has shown

us that the main commodity of capitalism is the labor force, we can say that what is turned into a commodity is human activity in general: every act of creation and, in the end, every life reduced to an exchange value.

Yet, we must again insist, if everything in capitalism can be reduced to the form-commodity, the "products" of the economy-politics of *capatazes* are not an average commodity: violence glorified, the messianic cult of the State, a war interiorized and disseminated as a war for the economy – an immanent war –seem to have such an intensity that it greatly exceeds the quantitative reductions to the form-commodity. Again we are faced with a paradoxical element, that is, at the same time that a fascist flow is a typical phenomenon of capitalism and can be adopted or not, and in different intensities, by the main structures of capital, it strengthens itself as a last possible intensity in a social machine where every life seems to be emptied as form-commodity. It is as if, from the creative intensity of life, nothing had remained but the extreme experience of betting everything in a game against death, that is, betting everything in the destruction of the other that supposedly threatens us to the very limits of our lives: therefore, of our deaths.

It is difficult to make here an evaluation of the composition of forces that makes these flows converge and get intensified, the role of each one of them, the ways and conditions through which they associate. It is also difficult to know precisely which moment something that circulated in a dynamic of flows acquires a new organicity, acquires new – higher and more complex – dimensions in the occupation of, and in the relation with, the structures of the State, aspiring to it in a more totalizing way; as, for example, organizing a presidential candidacy with chances of success and in fact winning the elections, like happened in Brazil. We organize these flows in five different kinds, in a list that is perhaps too schematic, especially since they have many intersecting points:

1) The economic-politics of the *capatazes* itself, which we place first in the list since the fascist phenomenon is characterized exactly by a moment when this flow begins to attract and gather every other, acquiring a surprising force as a sector of the economy. This force both augments and is augmented as a political force, way beyond what would be a traditional economic mensuration of a certain sector of the economy, even though this should not be disregarded. That happens precisely due to the especially non-quantifiable characteristics that it puts in circulation, which are still reduced significantly to the abstract quantities of form-commodities. We are referring to violence, fear and hatred, the glorification of war and death, the cult of a mystified State and everything that gets organized around them: the grey zone between State and businesses, be these of formal or informal economy (formality and informality also having a grey zone between them). Again, we are talking about examples given here: security firms and militias in a direct relation with police forces, positions in the State ranks and so on. In any case, it is in the economy-politics of *capatazes* that an affect economy is mobilized, decisive to compose the libidinal intensity of fascism, and which also constitutes its political force.

2) A flow that has to do with a way of life that we shall call here by an expression many precipitately deemed "over", that is, the bourgeois way of life: the evaluation and valuing of life reduced to the form of commodities. This is socially disseminated as subjectivity and way of life, intimately linked to the liberal subjectivity that we mentioned in the beginning of this text, and seems to express itself in a kind of micropolitical force in the figure – the image-cliché – of the petit-bourgeois. It is curious because, if the bourgeoisie is the dominant class of capitalism, capitalism is characterized by having a strange subjected dominant class, no less powerful and violent because of this; in fact, the opposite. Marx, by the way, had noticed this aspect: it is as if the bourgeoisie was always dependent, submitted and terrorized by the process, which needs to be incessant and intense, of producing money. Evidently, we know that those actually submitted to this process are those who need to work, day in, day out, to maintain it: we are not minimizing here the violence of the capital in subjecting work and life. We perceive, however, in the liberal-bourgeois way of managing their own lives, at least two aspects that make a fascist economy-politics become latent. First, the relation of the bourgeois with will, that is, the way in which he experiences life, evaluates himself, his family and all his vital activity in which almost everything is emptied in a merely quantitative evaluation. Bourgeois life, as plentiful as it may be, tends to reduce the experience of will to a minus: to the form-commodity, to abstract quantities in the form of currency. Secondly, and entirely linked to this first aspect, it is the fact that fear constitutes the bourgeois subjectivity, which makes the dominant class of capitalism especially violent but also disseminates this violence socially. In this case, it is perhaps the figure of the petit-bourgeois that better expresses a micropolitical aspect of this subjectivity that is experienced as indebted, which oscillates between an incessant production, albeit qualitatively empty, and the horror of losing everything. The dissemination of the image-cliché and the neoliberal enunciations of the "entrepreneur" is, without a doubt, an extreme unfolding of this aspect.

3) The flow of aid to the poor, to those exploited in capitalism. We have spoken of this flow in this text – it mobilizes, in a remarkable way, the economy-politics affections of suffering and deprivations that constitutes life in capitalism: as we mentioned, those who were able to remain "honest workers" "in spite of everything", those who endured by working much and sleeping little when everything around seemed to conspire against them, and so forth. It is a decisive flow in the constitution of a fascist economy-politics, turning every violence suffered into resentment among peers, be it class violence, racist, patriarchal and, especially in this case, the violence that is immanent to the routine of work and to the struggle for life in general in a capitalist society. This is a decisive political-affective operation for fascism. It is important to notice that this flow contains important zones of intersections with the two previous flows, whether because this small distinction among peers, imagined or not, results into an explicit support of the economy-politics of the *capatazes*: something like becoming an actual *"capataz"*; whether because social

ascension, small as it may be, produces a shift towards a liberal subjectivity: the value of the "self-made man", who despises those that were born in the same conditions and did not "arrive where he arrived" because, supposedly, they did not make an effort and did not "deserve it".

4) The anti-capitalist flow itself, converted into fascist flow. Here is another decisive element, this time with an important intersection zone with the flow mentioned above. It is the way in which fascism is also constructed from the mobilization of an entire economy-politics of affects, of an entire vital practice of resistance to capitalism, even though it is, in itself, a capitalist phenomenon, both in the origin of its violence and also because it only acquires force and expressive social organicity when it is taken on by big capital. This reversion takes place when the masses that somehow experience their lives under permanent expropriation, that realize and formulate that a great part of their vital force is being extracted, and that rebel against this in many ways – the experience of being constituted as a class that is exploited and robbed by another – get dislocated to the messianic cult of the State that brings with it the economy-politics of disseminated war and glorified death. It is difficult to know exactly the moment in which this reversion occurs and a mythical State is evoked, in all its paranoid dimension, against this force that actually steals from the masses, yet gets dislocated in a scapegoat logic to another place in which all its monstrosity is deposited – that of the actual suffering and horror of the classes oppressed by the capital. It is then, paradoxical as it may sound, that this mystical State receives the rescuing mission of relieving the victims of expropriation from their tormentors. This is a paradox of fascism that often confounds and paralyzes the left: the oppressed masses evoking and adoring those who have always been their greatest tormentors – the State and its institutions of force and repression – to save them from the misery they were actually thrown into. Here, the German example is classic, given that a strong sentiment of class revolt from millions of workers thrown by capital into the squalor caused by World War I, expressed in the revolution of 1918-1919[4], gets dislocated, 15 years later, to a hatred towards the "Jew", the delirious and alleged expression of a conspiracy to expropriate the German people. Quite often, this deluded image of the Jew as monsters was linked in Nazi discourse to the "Bolsheviks" and

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[4]   The revolution of 1918-1919 had antecedents in the middle of World War I, in Germany, deepening the opposition between the main leftist party in Germany, the SPD, and the dissidence led by Rosa Luxemburg, at first denominated "Spartacus League" and later Communist Party of Germany. Briefly, we could say that the SPD, pushed by the economic crisis and the widespread poverty caused by the war – Germany's engagement in the conflict was supported by the party –, settled in leading a process to overthrow the Kaiser and the monarchic parliament of Germany, introducing a republic alongside the liberal parties linked to the bourgeoisie, while the dissidents led by Rosa, in a position very similar to that of Lenin in Russia, tried to make this process evolve to socialism, even founding the People's State of Bavaria, at the end of 1918, and leading a general strike in Berlin, at the beginning of the following year, which resulted in the Spartacist uprising. The SPD, in alliance with extreme-right militias (*Freikorps*) crushed both revolts and was responsible for the execution of Rosa Luxemburg and other communist leaders. The revolution officially ended in August 1919, with the foundation of the Weimar Republic.

"communists", part of an international conspiracy that, at this point, is similar to the one that *bolsonaristas* claim to be threatening Brazil, with the difference that these do not mention the Jews and even tried to form an alliance with the Zionist right; which is not synonymous with an alliance with Judaism, let us be clear. There is here a dislocation of the risks taken in a rebellious revolution – the political-affect mobilization of those that, in revolt and suffering, decide to put their bodies in risk towards a future that means betting on life – towards a flow that bets everything on the death of the other, in a movement where the risk of the revolutionary becoming, which can also imply confrontation and combat, becomes an end in itself, that is, the war itself becomes something that mobilizes life: here, once again, we find the fascist "patriot". In Brazil, for sure, we cannot speak of revolutionary flow, but there was something like an economy-politics of hope, a disposition towards political struggles and social mobilization that began to be produced in the two decades that preceded the arrival of PT and Lula at the presidency, stemming from the last years of struggle against the military dictatorship and deepened in important ways with the experiences of social ascension in the first eight years of Lula's government. It is important to notice here that a political-economical shift takes place, making masses of people that stood behind PT move towards *bolsonarismo* somewhere in the second decade of this century, particularly in the metropolitan regions of the southern and southeastern regions of the country. Here, of course, the economic crisis itself is not a factor to be disregarded, since every kind of quantitatively measured deprivation immediately constitutes a movement of libidinal economy-politics that is captured and intensified by strategies of power and political action, more or less organized, that kept gaining momentum and organicity while converging towards *bolsonarismo*. Here, it is interesting to perceive that the paranoid construction of a monstrous force that would be responsible for the expropriation of the people, constitutive of the fascist economy-politics, has an important element of the capture of a sentiment of class revolt, which continues to circulate socially, but not in the formulation that some leftist organization would like it to have. Besides that, as we have already seen, this paranoid operation is constructed, in fascist *bolsonarismo*, by identifying and mixing the alleged communists of the alleged international conspiracy and every kind of alleged incapable person, the lazy and the virtueless, the criminals and monsters that, at the same time, would threaten the State and the economy: the enemies of the "market", the enemies of the nation.

5) Finally, something that we place last, something that can almost no longer be considered a "flow", since it is a decisive stage for the organicity that the fascist flow may or may not acquire – especially to the way this organicity will operate in order for this flow to seize the State in a more traditional way, not only in the mixed game of internal and external relations that is typical, say, of militias. We are referring to the form in which the economy-politics of *capatazes* is undertaken by capitalist micro-powers. To employ once again the image we have been using to illustrate the Brazilian case: the moment in

which the Casa Grande – the plantation farmhouse – (re)plays the game, inviting the *capatazes* to the dining table – since they had, perhaps without being invited, already entered the dining room – as if accepting a bastard son and/or surrendering to an economic-political force that they achieved in ways beyond what was expected. The dining table of the Casa Grande was already listed here: agribusinesses, large retail chains, industries, financial markets. This is curious, given that the economy-politics of death, as described in the second flow, can seep through the political evaluation of the high bourgeoisie, whose supposed rationality, aimed at the proper functioning of its accumulating machine, is still capable of being imbued with paranoid elements like that of "subversion" or "communist threat". In this experience of a situation-limit, albeit delusional and paranoid, the economy-politics of *capatazes* can offer to the capital the irresistible perspective of "finally" and completely subjecting the State to the "truth" of the market. Yet, without a doubt, a decisive role is played at this moment by the terror experienced by capitalist macro-structures when facing forces that, in one way or another, oppose them, as mentioned in the fourth item.

But, above all, the violence of the economy-politics of *capatazes* is undertaken by the big capital because it offers the irresistible chance of new movements of pillaging and expropriation of what still remains of public and common, like in a new movement of primitive accumulation. That is what we seem to be witnessing now, when *bolsonarismo* offers to the capital several privatizations under special rates and conditions, including the natural resources that come with them – from oil to water –, the same way it harasses and attacks forests and indigenous lands, good examples of what still preserves a kind of collective and common dimension and that have yet to be "privatized". We are not making a simplistic argument in defense of state-owned companies, as if we ignored that forms of capitalist accumulation and expropriation can occur in them and through them, even to benefit private groups. We are, rather, diagnosing the obvious: once again, the harrying of what is left of a life – life in general, not just "human" life – still not immediately subjected to the dynamics of capitalist production.

The economic-politics of the *capatazes* – a kind of Brazilian case of fascist economy-politics –, with its capacity of attracting the conversion of several flows, gives it a clear advantage over the flows of resistance and revolutionary flows of anti-capitalist tendencies, besides appearing to offer something far more exciting than the well-behaved, austere and moralist programs sometimes offered by the left, as was observed, in a certain way, by Felix Guattari[5]. This advantage lies mainly in the fact that this convergence offers

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[5] "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 fantasy 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, it's fake challenges to the absurd, its whole theatrical display of collective hysteria and feeblemindedness, which brought them back again to the same values." (Guattari 1984: 227)

a certain social "stability", a version of the "social peace" dreamed of by the bourgeoisie of the 19th century, which places the libidinal economic-politics as something very attractive to be brought by the *capatazes* to the dining room of the Casa Grande, besides the already mentioned new wave of intensified pillage of collective goods: a new movement of "primitive accumulation". These kinds of surplus-value commodity offered by the *capatazes* to the dominant classes, turn them more and more into a part of it, in a movement that lies at the heart of the immanence and indiscernibility between economics and politics that is typical of capitalism. That is why the economic-politics of the *capatazes* expresses, in a privileged way, how much the "economy-politics", understood in the more conventional meaning of the term, and the libidinal "economy-politics" are, in fact, one and the same.

Evidently, we cannot only write the expression "social peace" between quotation marks, not only because social peace in capitalism can frequently only be achieved thanks to subjection, violence and even extermination, but also because a so-called peace based on an economy-politics of violence and death is a paradox. Paradox is found in what makes possible the convergence of all the flows listed above, in a fascist economy-politics that reaches an intensity that works like a sort of last possible experience of life beyond the form-commodity – as we have seen, betting one's life on the death of the other, all the way: death as a limit. It is the dissemination and interiorization of a libidinal-economy of war – total war – that gives rise to a suicidal element: what prompted philosopher Paul Virilio to call the Nazi State a "suicidal State", in a description fully adopted by Deleuze and Guattari at the end of *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (2005: 169).

The problem with this intensification of the economy-politics of death may also be, in a certain degree, menacing to the capital. This happens not only due to total destruction – which was a fact in Germany – but also because, prior to that, it destroys a series of productive flows that are important for the intensity and multiplication of the very capitalist production, that is, an intensity necessary for the production of commodities. This is a threat that can be felt even within the structure of the State, whose destruction, in large part celebrated with the advancement of the neoliberal program, can nevertheless extend to old power structures that are imbricated in the functioning of Brazilian capitalism as we know it, and also to modern State structures that the capitalist economy-politics needs in order to survive. We seem to be living in this impasse nowadays in Brazil. That is why we witness some of the more traditional economic and political forces of power simply trying to "regulate" once more this violence, in an effort to keep *bolsonarismo* under relative control, in a kind of parlor liberal *anti-bolsonarismo* that cynically turns a blind eye to the fact that the conditions for the advance of an extreme neoliberal program can only happen thanks to the atmosphere of terror and violence brought about by *bolsonarismo*.

We believe the anti-fascist resistance needs to operate in a place-limit, trying to remain active in a game between the macro and the micro-political. As a matter of fact, this is a

game that the big power arrangements in capitalism can play very well, knowing how to combine their operations among the hierarchical structures of the State and the dynamics of the flow of capital, especially in the ways through which these are socially disseminated, mobilizing the bodies of individuals and social groups. In regard to ourselves, we may have to find another composition between organization and flow. It is necessary to be mobilized against the big power structures but, in this mobilization, we need to construct our own "immanence" in the ways we get organized, act and live, coming up with our own enunciations – our "mottos", which need to be rather like mobilizing speeches. The anti-fascist struggle, as my friend, the professor and philosopher Jorge Vasconcellos always says, is less about "raising consciousness" or "convincing" and more about an effort to create sensitivity. The very struggle needs to be constructed like another affective economy-politics, that is, a political strategy that is also an aesthetic strategy: aesthetic-political. It is not only about opposing "our" mottos to "theirs", even though screaming our wishes and our revolt in street marches is more than necessary: it is desirable. Yet, when we say that it is not only about a clash of mottos and that we must go beyond that, it is because we believe that the struggle against fascism is a struggle to overcome an impotence that was decisive in its formation as an economy-politics of violence and death. An impotence that lies, for example, in the way by which we describe here how millions of people that were expropriated and violated by the State-capital adhered to fascism, taking vengeance upon every form of life and resistance around them, as if collecting the debt of their pain: an active impotence.

It is difficult to know exactly how to accomplish all this, as it is difficult to keep the final part of this text from becoming an empty and academic intellectual-activist verbiage. Roughly, we would say that the struggle should come up with enunciates at the same time that it comes up with new ways of life; again, creating a new economic-politics. In opposition to the active impotence of the economy-politics of violence and death, it is necessary to construct an economic-politics of creation without any transcendence that may intimidate it. Some may read this affirmation as an invitation to atheism; it may well be, as long as it remains far from the Eurocentric rationalism of the Enlightenment, a twin brother of the mystification and violence of the State-capital. We can also consider a "sacred" aspect, if the reader so wishes, as far as it lies in something that brings us together as a common force, which in fact we have always shared, far beyond any Enlightenment opposition between nature and culture: life as a self-inventing force. It is true that every political struggle has its eyes on the future – a common and collective future –, but it cannot be shut and sealed like the impotence, power and even violence of a purified future paradise and a mystical time. It is true that we need plans and projects, as much as we need the stability in which to meet again our friends and loved ones, to relax and enjoy the abundance of what we have managed to create, while being kept in check by a future that may have a degree of indefiniteness but does not frighten us.

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The Logic of the Production Process: the Anti-Oedipus *and the Struggle for the Reconstitution of a Materialist Position in Philosophy*

by PAULO HENRIQUE FLORES

Abstract

In this contribution we try to analyze the theses of Deleuze and Guattari - especially in *Anti-Oedipus* - on the concept of production process. We assume these as constituting the basis for a critical resumption of Marxist-Leninist philosophy and for a materialist logic of processes. Thus, the *Anti-Oedipus* could be interpreted as the resolution of one of the greatest theoretical problems of Marxist-Leninist philosophy: the configuration of a materialist dialectic, capable of breaking with all conceptual forms inherited from Hegelianism.

1.

The practice of reading is not, like any other social practice, a transhistorical activity. It does not operate with the same methods and does not have the same results in all situations. The practice of reading is always determined in its operation by the semantic universe of the ideological formation in which it takes place, as well as by the theoretical means that it mobilizes in its process. That is why every reading always produces a singular result: it is the reading of a singular text, in a singular situation and through determined theoretical means. And this even though we must defend, from our position, that it is always possible, and even necessary, a reading practice that produces more or less true results insofar as it mobilizes *scientific* theoretical means[1].

In this sense, the reading of a text – and, of course, that of a political philosophy text – must vary according to the concrete situation in which it is operated. This concrete situation, we Marxist-Leninists call it *conjuncture.* Evidently, *Anti-Oedipus* is a text marked by the conjuncture to which it responds, namely the French May 1968. There we witness the mark of the parallel rise of proletarian and student struggles, of the blockade that the French Communist Party – by then already openly a revisionist Party – tries to impose on

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[1] See on this point, the theory of reading defended by Althusser 2005: 17-18. We think that it is in this same sense that Deleuze points to the scientific character of Martial Guéroult's reading method in the history of philosophy. Cf. Deleuze 2002: 216.

the communication of these struggles, of the mass struggles against the welfare state of Europe's postwar period[2].

In the same way, reading *Anti-Oedipus* in the current context is an operation that is not without theoretical effects on the meaning produced from its text, effects that are determined precisely by the concrete situation in which this reading is carried out. Now, we think it is fair to present the following work hypothesis: the event that organizes the entire current historical series in the Brazilian social formation, *an event to which all the movements for restructuring the capitalist State in Brazil in recent years respond in part*, are the June 2013 protests. Once again, the parallel rise of youth struggles in the streets *and* proletarian struggles[3], the blockade that reformism tried to impose on these struggles, even participating actively in the construction of "anti-terrorist" laws, mass struggles against the repression apparatus of the Brazilian police state, as well as the ideological operation of deformation of what happened in this event, mainly on the part of the then-governing reformism that sought and continues to seek to legitimize the "democratic" facade of this same police state – this whole sequence is fundamental for the formation of our conjuncture, not only that of our historical conjuncture, but also that of our theoretical conjuncture.

And this because the event that was the mass struggles of 2013 necessarily imposed the need for a rupture with all the political imaginary built by the "leftists" – real or fantastic – in the last decades of the Brazilian social formation. On the one hand, the 2013 cycle of struggles made clear the alignment of the reformist "lefts" with the capitalist State apparatuses, including and above all its repressive apparatus (Cf. Oliveira 2018), making evident the need to fight for the reconstruction of a mass revolutionary political position. On the other hand, practice has demonstrated – and has been demonstrating since 2013 – the inability of both anarchist and dogmatic communist positions to make this reconstruction effective and combat the fascistization of the capitalist State in Brazil, a fascistization of which the Bolsonarista movement is the open expression.

For us the only political and theoretical way out of this impasse, then, was to reassess Marxism-Leninism from a position that was not only anti-revisionist, but also anti-dogmatic, operating an internal critique of its theoretical position and a consistent assessment of its victories and defeats throughout the historical series of the 20th century. This reassessment should always be posed – as it was by the very few who took on the task – primarily in terms of an intervention in social practices and mass struggles. But it simultaneously demanded that the *theoretical* problem of a broad critical evaluation of the legacy of Marxism-Leninism is posed. And this not only due to the need to reactivate it in a new context, but, above all, the need to analyze its impasses and the reason why it

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[2] (Cf. Sibertin-Blanc 2010: 9; Badiou 2009: 31-38). Our work owes much to the masterful works of Sibertin-Blanc, which we believe to be the starting point for any Marxist-Leninist analysis of Deleuze's texts.

[3] It should be noted that the year 2013 recorded the highest number of strikes in the historical series of the previous 30 years. (Cf. Departamento Intersindical de Estatísticas e Estudos Socioeconômicos 2015).

could be defeated *from within* by the development of revisionist and bureaucratic positions in its historical development (Cf. Rodrigues 2008).

Now, on this theoretical front there is, of course, a philosophical struggle to be waged, insofar as it is also the Marxist-Leninist philosophy that must be analyzed and taken up again in all its implications. As Althusser pointed out, it is not a question of assuming the frankly idealist position according to which all historical deviations and impasses of Marxism-Leninism would be the direct result of its theses in philosophy; nor, on the other hand, to assume the opposite – and equally idealistic – thesis that Marxism-Leninism can persist in an inviolable way in its first formulation since these same deviations and impasses do not concern its theoretical formulations, which would remain in a doctrinal purity completely indifferent to its practical developments (Cf. Althusser 1998: 271). Marxist-Leninist philosophy is necessarily implicated in all political practices that can claim it with any consistency in such a way that it is not without political effects on these practices and neither are these practices without theoretical effects on it.

Which is just another way of stating that theoretical practice, although specific, cannot be understood without its determination by social and political practice, especially communist theoretical practice. The last cycle of this struggle for the theoretical reassessment of Marxist-Leninist philosophy was undoubtedly led by the works of Louis Althusser. Althusser's work, however, remained inconclusive on a number of points. This was certainly partly due to his personal tragedies, but also because his theoretical practice was still linked, in one way or another, to the devices and forms of the same cycle of struggles that had already found its exhaustion in the 1970s[4]. With regard to Marxist-Leninist philosophy, even though Althusser established a series of absolutely necessary theses – the elaboration of a new concept of historical time, the critique of humanism and economism, the indication of philosophy as "class struggle in the theory", the analysis of the development of a new practice of philosophy by Lenin, etc. (Cf. Althusser 2005: 274-288; Althusser 1978: 60-64; Althusser 2011: 240-247; Althusser 1998: 134-136)–, his work is still limited to an initiatory and descriptive value on one of the fundamental questions: the meaning of the *materialist dialectics*.

This limitation is not unimportant. The issue of materialist dialectics is central to the problematic of the works of Marx, Engels and Lenin, having important theoretical effects on their theory of history, but also on their theory of the State – although, in many senses, this remains absent in the work of Marx with the exception of some crucial indications on the problem of class dictatorship. As we shall see, the issue of materialist dialectics is implicated in a series of practical impasses faced by the communist movement.

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[4] It is worth noting that despite his frankly anti-revisionist positions, especially regarding the defense 1. of the centrality of the concept of dictatorship of the proletariat, against its integration into the institutions and forms of bourgeois politics, and 2. of the scientific form of historical materialism, against the reduction of Marxism to a humanist "philosophy of conscience", Althusser continues to locate himself until the end within the organizational constellation of the already openly revisionist Communist Party of France (PCF).

For example, the enigma of philosophy, and in particular that of dialectics, about which Marx was silent after some formulas too schematic to be taken literally, and too equivocal to be thinkable. It's about the relationship between dialectics in Marx and dialectics in Hegel. Under very abstract appearances and under philosophical references, the question was important: its stakes were the conception of necessity in history and its forms (does history have a meaning and an end? Is the end of capitalism a fatality? Etc.), and the conception of class struggle and revolutionary action. Marx's silence and the difficulty of reconstituting his philosophical positions from his work opened – with few exceptions (Lenin, Gramsci) – the path to positivism and evolutionism, of which Stalin's chapter on *Dialectical and Historical Materialism* set and consolidated the formulas for thirty years. (Althusser 1998: 276)

It is true that since his articles "Contradiction and Overdetermination" and "On Materialist Dialectics", written in the 1960s and republished in *For Marx*, Althusser advances a series of points on the issue of materialist dialectics, starting from a summary analysis of the Hegelian dialectics and pointing to some notable traits of the logical structures of Marxist dialectics (the complexity of contradictions, the inequality between the terms of a contradiction, a multilinear conception of time, etc.). However, beyond the absolutely fundamental thesis that the process of sensible differentiation of dialectical structures determines the very mode of operation of these structures – a process that Althusser designates, borrowing the term of "overdetermination" from psychoanalysis – the analyzes of *For Marx* assume mainly a critical sense and do not advance in the elaboration of these same logical structures.

At this point we think it's possible for us to assume a hypothesis that has been fundamental in the development of our own theoretical practice: *Deleuze's works,* and in particular the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia, are fundamental intercessors to rethink a materialist dialectics*. This statement at first may seem startling. Didn't Deleuze denounced the dialectic as a thought of the negative, of reactive forces, which remains, as such, necessarily idealist? Didn't he already find in dialectics, and even in dialectics such as mobilized by Marx, a logic that results from an insufficient theoretical criticism and that allows the traditional values of morality and religion to subsist within the form of self-consciousness (Deleuze 2010: 9-10, 111)? The Marx of *The German Ideology* could thus appear, in Deleuze's first texts, as the final limit of the Hegelian dialectic, inverting it only insofar as he subordinates it to a final figure, the proletariat (Deleuze 2010: 186).

These initial theses on dialectics must, however, be placed in their immediate theoretical context and compared with his later theoretical developments. They contain, it is true, an important part of the truth. By presenting these criticisms in *Nietzsche and Philosophy,* in 1962, Deleuze takes Marx's youth writings as a theoretical object: his

doctoral thesis on the *Difference Between the Philosophy of Nature of Democritus and that of Epicurus* and, above all, *The German Ideology*.

But as the articles gathered by Althusser in *For Marx*, published in 1965, will demonstrate, these texts are precisely those that are situated before or in the initial moments of the *epistemological break* in which Marx and Engels settle accounts "with their previous philosophical conscience", breaking procedurally with the themes and structures of Hegelianism and the philosophies of history. It should be remembered that this break, beyond the caricatural versions in which it was tried to be framed, is a *continuous process* that will have no end either in Marx's work or in the development of Marxism-Leninism (Cf. Althusser 2005: 69-73; Althusser 1998: 164-165). Precisely in this sense, it is legitimate to indicate that in the initial stages of the process, everything passes as if the Marxist dialectic was limited to the forms of the idealist dialectic.

However, to affirm that the process of the epistemological break will never end is, at the same time, to affirm that the survivals of Hegelian idealism never end in Marx's work. And this is because the class struggle itself is present in the development of Marx's theoretical practice – as, indeed, in any theoretical practice. The fight against the logical structures of idealism is, within each philosophy, a continuous struggle that takes up in its own forms the class struggle that is objectively developed within capitalist social formations. As Althusser remarked, the survival of Hegelian logical structures will be dramatically present even within *Capital* (Althusser 1998: 250-260). However, the famous *Preface* of the second Russian edition of *Capital* already establishes the conceptual frameworks by which it could be possible to theoretically reconstruct the structures of the materialist dialectic.

> My dialectical method, *in its fundamentals*, is not only different from the Hegelian method, but *its exact opposite* [*ihr direktes Gegenteil*, "is directly opposed to it"]. For Hegel, the thought process that he, under the name of Idea, even manages to transform into an autonomous subject, is the demiurge of the actual process, which is only an external manifestation of the first. *For me, on the contrary, the ideal is nothing more than the material transposed and translated in man's head*.
> [...] The mystification that dialectics suffers at the hands of Hegel does not at all prevent him from being the first to expose, *in a wide and conscious way, its general forms of movement.* In him, it is turned upside down. *It is necessary to turn it around in order to discover the rational core within the mystical envelope.*
> In its *mystified form* [*mystifizierten Form*], dialectics was in vogue in Germany because it seemed to glorify the existing. In its rational configuration [*ihrer rationellen Gestalt*, "in its rational form"], it constitutes a scandal and a horror for the bourgeoisie and its doctrinal spokesmen, since in the positive intellection of the existing [*Bestehenden*] it includes, *at the same time*, the intellection of its negation, of its necessary perishing. Furthermore, it apprehends every form developed in the flow of movement, therefore

including its transitory side; because it is not intimidated by anything and is, by essence, critical and revolutionary. (Marx 2013: 90-91)[5]

It is not without reason that Marx insists on the problem of the "mystified form" of the Hegelian dialectics, to which he opposes a "rational configuration" of dialectics. What Marx claims, as we see, is that *within* the "mystified form" of the Hegelian dialectics are found "the general forms of movement" that a "rational configuration" of dialectics must have. And this in such a way that these "general forms" are, by the very fact of their subordination to the "mystified form", *deformed* by Hegelianism. As Althusser showed, for the Marx of *Capital*, the inversion dialectics is only the initial moment from which a true extraction and transformation of the "general forms" must be carried out and in which a "rational form" dialectic must be constituted (Althusser 2005: 89-92)[6].

What constitutes the "rational core" of Hegel's dialectic, as Marx understands it, are the following theses: 1. that in the "positive intellection of the existing [dialectics] includes, at the same time, the intellection of its negation, of their necessary perishing"; 2. that the dialectic "apprehends every developed form in the flow of movement, therefore including its transitory side". From this point of view, Althusser once again is correct when he says that one of Marx's great lessons from reading Hegel is the idea of a «*logic of a process*, of which the Hegelian dialectic offers him an abstract and "pure" model» (Althusser 2005: 82).

It is true that the elaboration of this materialist logic of process is elaborated by Marx in a too summarily, and that its formulation is the result of a long theoretical struggle against the survivals of an idealist logic of process that runs, as we have seen, not only in Marx's works but also in the whole history of the communist movement.

It's precisely regarding the problem of the constitution of this logic of the processes of production that we believe that Deleuze's philosophy assumes a crucial importance for the development of Marxism-Leninism. One should not, on this point, raise the objection that Deleuze's philosophy assumes the position of a "generalized anti-Hegelianism". Rather, it is also precisely for this reason that Deleuze's philosophy occupies such an important role. Thus, it seems to us a mistake to point to the possibility that, from a certain moment in his work – let's say, with the end of *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression* – he abandons the fight against Hegelianism[7]. On this we think that all of Deleuze's work *has Kant and Hegel as its main theoretical enemies*, that it is a war machine set up against the central theses of modern idealism.

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[5] Emphasis, insertions from the original German and alternative translations to the current Brazilian one are ours.

[6] It is not surprising, moreover, that these "general forms" can be found within Hegelianism, since the entire second book of the *Science of Logic*, central to Marx and Engels, develops a strange kind of absorption of Spinozism, already conceived by Hegel as a philosophy of the process of production of the real, and of its subordination to the idealist category of Subject. For an analysis of this problem, see our Introduction to the Brazilian edition of Marx's *Spinozist Notebooks*, in press, and Hegel 2016a: 173-228.

[7] For this position, see Hardt 1996: 10-18. Despite this disagreement, Hardt's book seems to us of great importance.

Contrary to what could be said, Deleuze's rejection of dialectics is not reduced to a vague terminological clash. Rather, Deleuze precisely determines the logical structures he struggles against in the Hegelian dialectics.

> A relationship, even an essential one, between the same and the other [*l'un et l'autre*] is not enough to form a dialectic: everything depends on the role of the negative in this relationship. Nietzsche even says that a force has another force as an object. More precisely, it is with other forces that a force enters into a relationship. It is with *another kind* of life that life comes into conflict. Pluralism occasionally has dialectical appearances; he is its fiercest enemy, its only deep enemy. [...] In Nietzsche, the essential relation of one force to another is never conceived as a negative element in essence. In its relationship with the other, the force that makes itself obey does not deny the other or what it is not, it affirms its own difference and enjoys this difference. The negative is not present in essence as that from which force derives its activity: on the contrary, it results from this activity, from the existence of an active force and from the affirmation of its difference. The negative is a product of existence itself: the aggressiveness necessarily linked to an active existence, the aggressiveness of an affirmation. (Deleuze 2010: 9-10)

We see that what Deleuze refuses in dialectics is not the idea of a logic of process, central to his philosophy. It's rather the thesis that *the negative is the logical operator capable of reproducing real movement*. It's this thesis, absolutely central to Hegelian philosophy (Hegel 2015: 30, 60, 88-89, 103-140 and Hegel 2016a: 88-89), that will be refused by Deleuze. The negative and, therefore, Hegelian dialectics would then be only capable of generating a false movement (Cf. Deleuze 2012:37-38). And this because in Hegel the negative is, in fact, the logical operator necessary to *extract difference from identity* in such a way that it is through its self-negation that the identity becomes capable of producing a difference. This, in effect, is the entire theoretical movement by which Hegel seeks to construct the *Science of Logic* as a philosophy of the identity of identity and difference.

As Gérard Lebrun shows, the role of the negative in Hegel is not that of a simple opposition or determination, as would be the case in the early Kant or Spinoza, «understood as the reciprocal exclusion of coexisting positive contents». In these cases, in which the example of the relation of forces in Nietzsche is also inserted, the «contents are simultaneously unified and distinct, simultaneously dependent and independent. Simultaneously, but above all not "at the same moment" or "from the same point of view" [...] There is, therefore, union and difference, but not union in difference» (Lebrun 2000: 267-268).

On the other hand, the Hegelian negation presents itself as a logical self-negation, but a self-negation operated in such a way that its result is not just the suppression of the initial term, but its cumulative development or its enrichment, insofar as, containing and

subordinating to itself its Other, the Same constitutes its own temporality (Cf. Lebrun 2000: 299-306) - this is, after all, the identity of identity and difference.

It is noteworthy that Marx's formulation eschews this conceptual construction. Not only is movement presented as external to forms, as its condition, but the inclusion of its transience is affirmed as a consequence of this productive movement. Thus, the intellection of the negation of a given form, of "its necessary perishing", is operated simultaneously [*zugleich*, "at the same time"] with the positive intellection of an existing form not as its self-negation, but as the real opposition of two positive forces[8].

At this point, we must draw attention to the fact that since *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze identified the transcendental logic to be constructed by a philosophy of difference as a *dialectics* (Deleuze 2011a: 22, 39, 83, 104 and 205) freed from the figures of the negative – and, for that very reason, from the primacy of identity. In this sense Deleuze states that

> Dialectics is the art of problems and questions, combinatorics, the calculation of problems as such. But dialectics loses its own power – and then begins the story of its long denaturation, which makes it fall under the power of the negative – when it is content to trace problems from propositions. (Deleuze 2011a: 204)

In the same sense, in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze states that

> Dialectics is precisely this science of incorporeal events as they are expressed in propositions and of the liens of events as they are expressed in relations between propositions. Dialectics is in fact the art of conjugation (cf. the *confatalia* or series of events that depend on each other). (Deleuze 2005: 18)

Now it is precisely the elaboration of this "new logic", which is not to be confused with that of the structures of Hegelian logic, which Althusser affirms to be the necessary task of Marxists in philosophy, a logic that is none other than the materialist dialectics (Althusser et alii 2008: 88). We should not be surprised, therefore, that in one of his unpublished notes on this new logic of the process Althusser writes:

> The world is henceforth an unpredictable flux. If you want to give it an image, you have to go back to Heraclitus (we don't step in the same river twice), or Epicurus (the primacy of emptiness over atomic corpuscles). If one wants to give a closer image, following that of Deleuze [...], it is no longer necessary to represent the world in the manner of Descartes, as a hierarchical tree, but rather, as a rhizome. (Quoted in Mascaro; Morfino 2020:65)

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8   For a extensive analysis of this problem and the need to constitute the proletariat as a positive force beyond the capitalist mode of production, see Tronti 1976: 209-222. For the centrality of the complex in materialist dialectics, as opposed to Hegel's identity-negation schema, see Althusser 2005: 198-204.

2.

The further development of this new logic of process is perhaps one of the main theoretical achievements of the two books *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Already in *Anti-Oedipus* this logic is presented as a *logic of the production process*. The concept of process was already essential in the first formulation of Marxist theory[9]. Marx states in a note to the French edition of *Capital* that «the word 'process' expresses *a development considered in the set of its real conditions*» (Quoted in Althusser 1989: 95).

However, the materialist concept of process is essentially different from that with which Hegelian dialectics operated. In Hegelian dialectics, as Althusser saw, the process is always the process *of a subject*, insofar as it is the development of the same origin and, for that very reason, is necessarily subordinated to an end. In Hegel every process finds its truth and purpose in the constitution of a subject capable of attributing the process to itself – that is in the constitution of an identity capable of attributing the concrete process of differentiation to itself (Cf. Hegel 2016b: 14-18). All of Marx's specifically philosophical trajectory consists, in a certain sense, in the transition from the concept of the process of a subject to the concept of a *process without a subject*[10].

> When this becomes clear, the question of the "subject" of history disappears. History is an immense "*natural-human*" system in motion, whose motor is the class struggle. The question of how "*man* makes history" disappears altogether; Marxist theory definitively rejects it in its birthplace: bourgeois ideology. [...] One thing is certain: one cannot *start* from man, because that would be starting from a bourgeois idea of "man" [...]. This idea of "man", from which one must "start" as an absolute starting point, is the background of all bourgeois ideology, it is the soul even of the great classical political economy. (Althusser 1978: 29-30)

What is at stake in the concept of process as the process of a subject is the very core of bourgeois ideology, insofar as it is constituted around the pair humanism/economism. Myths about history as "man's self-transcendence" and those about history as "the development of productive forces and the satisfaction of needs" are the two necessary faces of the same class position.

It is with all this conceptual framework that *Anti-Oedipus* breaks. By taking the psychic process of the schizophrenic as the logical form of process, Deleuze takes up and re-elaborates one of his initial theses, already presented in his work on empiricism: by

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[9] As the entire text of *Capital* bears witness, since all its theoretical problems are posed in terms of the analysis of processes.

[10] So that when Althusser states that Marx's main Hegelian heritage is the concept of a process without a subject, what is being said is that Marx's main Hegelian heritage *is the transformation that Marx operates in Hegel.* (Cf. Althusser 1989: 95).

stating that "the bottom of the spirit is delirium" what is affirmed is that mental activity is *de jure* a "movement of ideas", a "set of their actions and reactions" that is composed as a collection of singular and at the same time indistinct elements (Deleuze 2011b: 11).

This collection, which is already the first model of an intensive multiplicity, does not group its elements according to internal rules of constancy or uniformity. Although these necessarily present themselves, the necessity of unification is more external than internal. Unification is not what the spirit develops, but what *supervenes* on it. The same can be said of the distinction between the elements of the process. This logical form, in surprising parallelism with the function of self-consciousness in Hegelian logic and in its transposition to objective logic, is also the *form* of the process of material production.

> What the schizophrenic experiences specifically, generically is by no means a specific pole of nature, but nature as a production process. What does process mean here? At one level, nature is likely to be distinguished from industry: on the one hand industry opposes nature, on the other it absorbs materials from nature; on the other hand, it restores to them their residues, etc. This distinctive relationship man-nature, nature-industry, society-nature, conditions, in society itself, the distinction of relatively autonomous spheres, which we will call "production", "distribution", "consumption". But this level of general distinction, considered in its developed formal structure, presupposes (as Marx showed) not only capital and the division of labor, but also the false consciousness that the capitalist being has in essence of himself and of the elements crystallized in the set of a process. (Deleuze; Guattari 2011: 14)

Deleuze and Guattari resume Marx's developments in the famous *Introduction to the Method of Political Economy*, from 1857, on the relationship between production, distribution, exchange and consumption as supposedly different moments of political economy. This distinction is all the more important for Marx's understanding of the new logic since they're directly opposed to the moments of development of the categories of the syllogism in the Science of Logic. Thus, for classical political economy, the logical development of economic activities follows the following order: 1. Production, as a starting point, socially creates objects corresponding to human needs (universality); 2. The distribution distributes these objects according to social laws (particularity A1); 3. The exchange prolongs this distribution movement (particularity A2); 4. Consumption causes objects to leave society to be used and satisfy the needs of individuals (singularity) (Cf. Marx 2011: 44).

Marx points out that if these moments are by no means identical, they are not separated. Rather, they are differences within a same process, differences that determine each other immediately and reciprocally: production is also consumption, as productive consumption (consumption creates need as an internal object of production), it is also distribution, as distribution of the factor of production (production presupposes a certain distribution of means of production and producers). In the same way, each of these

moments is also implicated in the process of production. Thus, production "superimposes itself on other moments", as the activity that establishes the conditions for the whole process (Marx 2011: 53). Which is the same as saying that the production process is thought of, within the field of materialist philosophy, as a *process of immanent differentiation* that does not refer to any *principle of identity*.

Keeping on the comparative analysis of the speculative theory of syllogism in the *Science of Logic*, what it is affirmed is not only that throughout the process of logical development universality is progressively determined as particularity and later as singularity, to discover itself in the end as the identity of the universal and the singular. *Universality itself is already immediately determined by singularity and particularity*, and finds its presuppositions in them. In other words, if there is a universal logical form, this is precisely the form of an "unpredictable flow" since the universal is nothing other than the universality of singularity, in such a way that the materialist dialectic is nothing other than a "science of events".

One of the most important theoretical effects of this development in *Anti-Oedipus* is correctly analyzed by Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc in the Althusserian terms of a critique of the "spontaneous philosophy of psychoanalysis" (Sibertin-Blanc 2010: 22)[11]. Departing from the Freudian discovery of the productivity of desire, Deleuze and Guattari point out that this discovery remains limited by theses that block its development. After all, in the same theoretical movement that he discovers that desire must be comprehended in the terms of an unconscious process of production «Freud compromises his concept by referring him directly to the idea of a work focused on 'unconscious representations' and maintaining the assumption according to which the being of desire consists in its representation *by a subject or in a subject*» (Sibertin-Blanc 2010: 22).

In a certain sense, everything happens as if, through the critique of the idealistic elements of Freud's thought, Deleuze and Guattari aimed not only at the idealism of Plato and Kant, but also pursued a silent critique of Hegel. Desire appears, then, as the process of a subject precisely to the extent that it is brought back to the model of representation and is assumed as a potential for the realization of subjective representations in the face of an objective lack. Thus, on the one hand, a distinction is reaffirmed between different moments of the process, the internal and the external, fantasy and reality. On the other hand, the objective lack could even be affirmed as resulting from the activity of desire itself, as its projection, even if it does not fail in this way to distinguish itself from the positive moment that constitutes it. Desire would thus find its satisfaction through the

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[11] From this point of view, it is worth remembering that Althusser, in *Philosophy and Spontaneous Philosophy of Scientists*, denounced the tendency of the sciences, when developed within a class society, to be pressured by the dominant ideologies, thus developing a "spontaneous philosophy" that interprets its own scientific results through an idealistic lens. Against this, one of the roles of Marxist philosophy would be to rectify this deformation, shifting the sciences to the field of materialism. In this sense, *Anti-Oedipus* contains a critique of the "spontaneous philosophy" of psychoanalysis, see king to place its theoretical conquests in the field of a materialist psychiatry.

motor of the negative precisely in the act of consuming itself, in the same way that in Hegelian logic the universal becomes concrete with the *Aufhebung* of the singular.

Anti-Oedipus will then affirm, against this idealist thesis, the materialist thesis of the *univocity of desire's process of production* (Sibertin-Blanc 2010: 26). The final meaning of this thesis is to attribute an *immediate* objectivity to desire in such a way that not only is the distinction between the subjective and objective regimes overcome (but not their differentiation), but also the activity of desire is directly singularized in the forms of its material objects in their social and historical coordinates.

What is stated at this point is that the production process is not subordinated to a norm that is transcendent to it, whether this transcendence is absolute or relative. There is no instance of universality that does not find, from the outset, its conditions and its form in singularity itself. This is exactly the logical model to which Althusser pointed in *For Marx* by taking the concept of *overdetermination* from psychoanalysis, and by making structural causality a causality that is always modified by the operation of its singular effects (Althusser 2005: 100-115). By the way, it is also explained, then, that Althusser and Deleuze can find themselves in the field of Spinozism, since this new logic is nothing other than the unfolding of Spinoza's theses on *immanent causality.*

As a process of immanent singularization, the production process is immediately a process of singularization. In this sense,

> If desire produces, its product is the real. If desire is productive, it can only be so in the real world and can produce only reality. Desire is this set of *passive syntheses* that engineers partial objects, flows and bodies, and that function as production units. The real results from this, it is the result of the passive syntheses of desire as a self-production of the unconscious. Desire lacks nothing, it does not lack its object. It is *the subject*, above all, that desire lacks, or it is desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is only a subject fixed by repression. Desire and its object constitute one and the same thing: the machine, as a machine of a machines. [...] The objective being of desire is the Real in itself. (Deleuze; Guattari 2011: 43)

What are these syntheses that operate as singular production units and that constitute the Real? We think it is legitimate to say that for the materialist these productive syntheses are the minimum determinations of the concrete. They link, in each case, two different processes, so that one operates a transformation in the other in order to extract a product from the first.

> The productive synthesis, the production of production, has a connective form: "and", "and afterwards"... It is because there is always a machine that produces a flow, and another one that is connected to it, operating a cut, an extraction of flow (the breast – the mouth). And since the first, in turn, is connected to another relative to which it behaves like a cut or an extraction, the binary series is linear in all directions. Desire never stops coupling continuous flows and essentially fragmentary and fragmented

> partial objects. [...] Bladder and kidney stones; flow of hair, flow of drool, flow of
> sperm, shit or urine produced by partial objects that, in turn, produce other flows also
> cut by other partial objects. Every "object" supposes the continuity of a flow, and every
> flow supposes the fragmentation of the object. (Deleuze; Guattari 2011: 16)

The thesis that the fundamental concept of a logic of process is this synthesis that brings together two disparate singularities in the same process is not, moreover, new to Deleuze's philosophy. This is none other, after all, than the concept of *becoming* that was affirmed, at least, since the *Logic of Sense*[12]. As such, becoming is the reality of paradox. If we raise this point, it is to point out that the binary character of the productive syntheses, which simultaneously affirms the terms of a positive disparity in the same process and which forms the logical nucleus of the new dialectics, is directly opposed to the concept that constitutes the logical nucleus of Hegelian dialectics, the concept of *contradiction*.

The Hegelian contradiction is not so much an assertion of disparity as an assertion of unity. It is true that in Hegel the concept of contradiction is intended to express a becoming, but only insofar as it is a question of the becoming *of identity*. As a logical figure what defines the Hegelian contradiction is that the terms it relates are constituted by the negation of its other, not only in the form of its reciprocal limitation, but especially in the form of their self-suppression: since each of the terms exists only insofar as it relates to its opposite term, the suppression of its own opposite is also the suppression of itself. Thus the mouth does not just deny the breast, in the sense that it limits or determines it, but in the sense that it seeks to suppress it and, by suppressing it, suppresses itself.

In this sense the contradiction contains within itself the means of its resolution, a resolution towards which it is guided by an internal necessity. The self-negation of each of the terms of a contradiction, implied by their ultimate relationality and the negation of their other, abolishes the subsistence of each of these terms in such a way that the contradiction is suppressed in the reciprocal negation of the terms related. This reciprocal negation results in «a unity that is for itself and, in reality, self-subsistent» (Hegel 2016a: 60-61).

Thus if Hegel can enunciate the speculative proposition that «All things are, in themselves, contradictory» and claim that contradiction «is the negative in its essential determination, the principle of all self-movement, self-movement that consists of nothing

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[12] «When I say 'Alice grows' I mean that she becomes bigger than she was. But for that very reason she becomes smaller than she is now. Certainly is not at the same time that she is greater and lesser. But it is at the same time that she becomes itself. She is bigger now, she was smaller before. But it is at the same time, in the same act, that we become bigger than we were and become smaller than we are. This is the simultaneity of a becoming whose property is to avoid the present. While it avoids the present, becoming does not support the separation or distinction between before and after, past and future. It belongs to the essence of becoming to go, to point in both directions at the same time: Alice does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa. Common sense is the assertion that, in all things, there is a determinable sense; but the paradox is the affirmation of both meanings simultaneously». (Deleuze 2005: 9).

but of contradiction», that it is «the root of all movement and all vitality» (Hegel 2016a: 60-61), it is only to the extent that, through the mediation of reciprocal negation, the contradiction directs all processes towards the constitution of a unity that suppresses and integrates in itself the opposites from which it was generated.

This self-suppression of the disparity of becoming in a higher unity is inadmissible for the materialist logic of processes. Singularities not only persists in their disparity, but this disparity can only feed a new process of singularization. In other words, the result of process of production is never a unit that totalizes the previous moments – and, precisely to that extent, negates them or suppresses their position – but a new partial product that, in turn, begins a new moment in the process of production.

The new logic does not find "the root of all movement and all vitality" in contradiction, but rather in paradox. Becoming is not the self-negation of difference, the discovery of the identity of identity and difference, but the affirmation of difference as difference, in such a way that the process of production is not subordinated to a necessary and internal unification. We thus return to Althusser's thesis about the world as an unpredictable flux. The only necessary norm for the process of its contingency – «first of all, universal history is that of contingencies, not that of necessity; is that of cuts and limits, not continuity» (Deleuze; Guattari 2011: 185).

The assertion of the *Anti-Oedipus* that the Real is the result of these productive syntheses can be better understood at this point. The Real is not a uniform totality as the universal logical condition presupposed by the singular and capable of integrating all singularities into an organic unit as a unilinear and teleological natural or historical process. The Real is a result precisely because it is constituted by the conjunction of these singular production processes. The global is not what unifies local determinations, but what is constituted by their connection. It is in this sense that we asserted that the universal immediately has the form of the singular.

Also, the concept of Real is no longer defined as universal negation opposed to the subjective power of desire. Its universality is that of power of production in immanence with all its singular determinations. The syntheses of the process of production – which form, as it were, its units of production – are connections of determined singularities. Now, for the materialist, the Real is immediately concrete. The multiplicity of the Real can only be logically understood as the result of a process of differentiating synthesis. «The concrete is concrete because it is the synthesis of multiple determinations, therefore, unity of diversity. For this reason, the concrete appears in thought as a process of synthesis, as a result, not as a starting point, despite being the effective starting point» (Marx 2011: 54). The concrete is, then, a global synthesis of these local syntheses, a synthesis of syntheses.

This is exactly the dialectics that Marx had already presented to us since *Capital*, when he refused the reality of universal laws of operation for all social formations and all historical periods. That is why he endorses one of his Russian critics when he asserts that,

according to the logic of *Capital*, «one and the same phenomenon is governed by completely different laws as a result of the different general structure [of social formations], the differentiation of some of its organs, the diversity of the conditions under which they function etc. » (Marx 2013: 90).

As Marx writes in response to the controversy raised in Russia about the unilinearity or plurality of historical routes (must all societies repeat the same process of economic development, going through the same stages?),

> Events of striking similarity, but occurring at different historical periods, led to entirely different results. Studying each of these developments separately and then comparing them, we will easily find the key to this phenomenon, but we would never arrive at it with the generic [*passe-partout*] solution of a general historical-philosophical theory, whose supreme virtue consists in being supra- historical. (Quoted in Fernandes 1982: 168)

If Marx did not further elaborate this new materialist logic of processes in his lifetime, it was certainly because the theoretical obstacles raised by the logical structures inherited from idealism only became explicit over time, insofar as their practical effects were shown in the development of the proletarian practice of class struggles. It took this development time for the obstacle to begin to show itself, a development time much longer than the lifetimes of Marx and Engels. It was necessary that, under the guise of Marxism, the revisionism of the Second International elaborated the so-called "theory of productive forces", it was necessary the weight of bureaucratism in the Soviet experience, it was necessary the development of modern revisionism both in the USSR and in China and, beyond them, in the international communist movement as a whole.

When Althusser finally poses the problem in the years 1960-1980, it is already in the development of the crisis of Marxism-Leninism. The hiatus imposed on Althusser's theoretical task confuses itself, in many ways, with the decomposition of the Marxist-Leninist field. Today, when the imminent crises of capitalism, the return of fascism on a world scale and the destruction of the relative stability of the biosphere generated by capitalist development put the struggle for the theoretical and practical reconstruction of Marxism-Leninism back on the agenda, it is this unfinished task that imposes itself, along with many other practical and theoretical tasks. The elaboration and development of this new materialist logic of processes and its articulation with the Marxist-Leninist ideology is one of the theoretical struggles that must be fought. From our position, that Deleuze and Guattari are intercessors of first importance in this line of struggle is not a coincidence. It is a consequence of the ideological alignment and the theoretical program of their philosophy and the political objectives it sets to itself. By stating that minority, as a process of socialization, is the becoming of the whole world capable of producing an antagonistic position in relation to the State and capitalism, the second book of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* already establishes these political objectives clearly.

The power of minority, of particularity, finds its figure or its universal consciousness in the proletariat. But while the working class defines itself by an acquired status or even by a theoretically conquered State, it appears only as 'capital', part of capital (variable capital) and does not leave the plane of capital. At most the plan becomes bureaucratic. On the other hand, it is by leaving the plane of capital, not ceasing to leave it, that a mass must ceaselessly revolutionize and destroy the dominant equilibrium of countable groups. [...] In the same way, the issue of minorities is rather to overthrow capitalism, redefine socialism, constitute a war machine capable of responding to the world war machine with other means. (Deleuze; Guattari 2012: 189)

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To Organize Desire: What Politics After Anti-Oedipus*?*

by RODRIGO NUNES

Abstract

This article offers a reconstruction of the type of political practice advocated by Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* which points out how a hasty association between the molar and the reactionary or fascistic ends up producing a normative problem as well as a difficulty for thinking such a politics at scale (both numerical and temporal). Since I argue that Deleuze and Guattari's proposal cannot be properly thought without taking into account matters of scale, I suggest it is this problematic association that must be overcome.

Among the many things that *Anti-Oedipus* is, one of them is undoubtedly a critical diagnosis of a certain way of doing politics, or of a certain kind of militancy, as well as an attempt to develop an alternative conception of militant practice. As Félix Guattari explained in an interview on the occasion of the book's publication, his meeting with Gilles Deleuze took place in the context of "this aborted revolution that was May 68," in which "more than the pooling of knowledge", it was an "accumulation of uncertainties, and even a certain bewilderment with the direction things had taken" that initially moved them (Deleuze; Guattari 2002a: 301).[1] Part of this critical diagnosis had to do with the danger of a kind of militancy based on too many certainties, and the need to open the exercise of politics to uncertainty. In an interview published the following year, Guattari pointed to the "identification with recurrent figures and images" on the part of organizations that had tried to give direction to the revolt as an element of Oedipianization – as if the faithful performance of a certain style were in and of itself a guarantee of achieving the success that this style had found in the past. He concluded: "To be sure, the militants fought courageously with the police. But [...] it must be recognized that the direction provided by some groupuscules approached the youth in a spirit of repression: to contain the liberated desire in order to channel it" (Deleuze; Guattari 2002b: 301).

What I would like to do in this paper is to explore this aspect of *Anti-Oedipus* in order to identify what exactly is at stake in it, both from a theoretical and practical point of view, while simultaneously developing an immanent critique of the conceptual apparatus that the authors construct in the book in order to point out some limits that it inevitably runs

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[1]   See also: "*Anti-Oedipus* is post-68: it was a time of effervescence, of searching." (Deleuze; Guattari 2003, 162).

up against. The reform or revision of this conceptual apparatus will serve us, in the end, to update *Anti-Oedipus*'s analysis and political proposal to a historical and political context that, despite several points of contact with the one in which the work was originally written, is also quite distinct in other respects; and to defend that analysis and proposal from what I find to be some rather common risks of misinterpretation.

I open with a quote:

> Revolutionaries often forget, or do not want to acknowledge, that one wants and makes revolution out of desire rather than duty. On this point, as in others, the concept of ideology is an execrable concept which conceals the real problems, which are always organizational in nature.[2] (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 412)

This passage is notable, first of all, for the emphasis it places on the organizational dimension of politics and the relationship it establishes between that dimension and desire. The question of revolution, or the problem of politics to put it more generally, would consist fundamentally in the organization of desire; or as the collective responsible for the Italian journal A/Traverso (2004a: 187), deeply influenced by *Anti-Oedipus*, would put it five years later: "the problem of strategy is the composition of desiring flows in a direction that is that of liberation." But the passage is equally important for the fact that it begins to give us a key with which to understand at once Deleuze and Guattari's answer to the main question the book asks itself and the famous assertion, central to the project of a critique of psychoanalysis and of Oedipalization as a broader social process, that desire is not to be confused with lack.

This key is fully to be found in the distinction, which is only made explicit relatively late in *Anti-Oedipus*, between desire (unconscious) and interest (preconscious). Near the end of the book, Deleuze and Guattari's (1972: 413) write that "[t]here is an unconscious libidinal investment of desire that does not necessarily coincide with the preconscious investments of interest", and this is what explains why these can be "disturbed" and "perverted [...] beyond any ideology". It is this difference of regime, as well as the difference of orientation it makes possible, that answers the "fundamental question of political philosophy", posed at the very beginning, "which Spinoza was able to ask (and Reich rediscovered): 'Why do men [*sic*] fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?'" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 37) The answer, as we finally discover, is this: because it is possible that we desire against our own interests, or, as Spinoza would say, because we do not desire things because they are good, but believe

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[2] See also: "[Organizational questions] appear as secondary, as being determined by political options. Whereas, on the contrary, the real problems are organizational, never made explicit or rationalized, but retrospectively cast in ideological terms. That is where the real divisions emerge: a way of treating desire and power, investments, group Oedipus, group superegos, phenomena of perversion... Only then are political oppositions constituted: an individual chooses one position over another because, on the plane of organization and power, they have already chosen and hate their adversary." (Deleuze; Guattari 2002b: 368).

that they are good because we desire them. (Cf. Spinoza 2002: EIIP9Sch) It is because interest and desire belong to different levels or orders that they can be in contradiction; hence why we see "the most disadvantaged, the most excluded, invest with passion in a system that oppresses them, and where they always find an interest, because that is where they seek it and measure it. Interest always comes in tow [*suit toujours*]" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 415).[3] This is not a confusion about how things are, a matter of misconceptions – ideology as Deleuze and Guattari understand the term –, but a problem concerning an effective investment of desire. People do not want one thing because they wrongly think it is another; *they want exactly what they want*, believing it to be for their own good even if it is in fact bad for them. In Deleuze and Guattari's (1972: 37) gloss of Wilhelm Reich: "no, the masses were not deceived; at one time, under certain circumstances, they desired fascism, and that is what needs to be explained, this perversion of gregarious desire."

What does this opposition between desire and interest consist of? For Deleuze and Guattari, it derives from a difference of levels (unconscious for desire, preconscious for interest) that follows, in turn, from the crucial difference between the two regimes according to which social investments operate and can be understood. Interests always refer to ends and goals, and these in turn are formed within a society by selective pressures that define, through the progressive totalization and statistical accumulation of a dispersion of molecular forces and movements, the large molar sets that define what "everybody does" and "everybody wants" – and with it also a distribution of the standard and the non-standard, the normal and the abnormal, the majority and the minority. This is why, incidentally, the authors of *Anti-Oedipus* assert that the interest formed by a society is always properly speaking the interest of the dominant class (the standard, the normal, the majority), and the formation of conflicting interests is always already a counter-investment pointing to another socius yet to be constituted – an idea that is not without its problems.[4]

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[3]   "No doubt interests predispose us to such and such a libidinal investment, but they are not to be confused with it. Even more, it is unconscious libidinal investment that determines us to seek our interest in one place rather than another, to fix our goals in a certain direction, convinced that that is where all our chances lie" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 412).

[4]   While it is in some sense true that all the investments of interest convergent with a given social formation ultimately serve the interests of the dominant class best of all, three things should be borne in mind. First, that sustaining consent often entails that the interests of that class cannot be satisfied in an absolute way but must make concessions to the interest of other classes and groups. Second, that both those concessions and the way in which capitalism exploits distinctions in class, gendering and racialization generate contradictory interests insofar as they give a stake in the reproduction of the existing system to individuals who in some other respects we might describe as having anti-systemic interests. Thus, for instance, a staunchly socialist white male worker in the Global North might nevertheless remain largely indifferent to the plight of women, non-whites or workers in the Global South to the extent that the latter's relatively inferior positions offer him some material and immaterial advantages. See, for example, W.E.B. Dubois' (1935:700ff) discussion of the "psychological wages of whiteness", Silvia Federici's (2012) remarks on the exploitation of unwaged reproductive labor, and Guattari's (2003: 80; italics in the original) own examination of the "*material and unconscious*

To the extent that they establish these distributions, however, these molarizing tendencies also constitute, by contrast, a zone of exclusion. That which is outside the standard, the normal, and the majoritarian now presents itself not with the positivity of what is simply other, but with the negativity of that from which something is missing, or which is oriented toward something outside itself. The definition of "collective and personal ends, goals, or intentions" is thus coextensive with the "welding of desire to lack" (1972: 410). In other words, if Deleuze and Guattari say that desire is not to be conflated with lack, this absolutely does not mean that lack does not exist, but rather that it does not belong to the order of desire, only to that of interest. Lack, to be sure, exists. But it is there where it has been placed, where a certain arrangement of social machines has instituted it; whereas desire, in its infinitely expansive dynamics and innocent disregard towards the standard, the normal, the majoritarian, the proper, the adequate and the necessary, is something else. Lack is only said of that which is finite and determinate, but desire is by nature infinite and indeterminate. It is "the statistical transformation of molecular multiplicity into molar whole that organizes lack on a grand scale. [...] There is no society that does not manage lack within itself, through its own variable means" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 409).

At the same time, the opposition between a desire pertaining to the molecular and interests pertaining to the molar creates a difficulty for thinking through the question of "the organization of desire". This difficulty appears in relation to the power of contagion or the force of implication that desire might have by comparison with molarity; in other words, as a matter of scale. As Deleuze and Guattari (1972: 348) themselves acknowledge, "Hitler made a lot of people horny. Flags, nations, armies, banks make a lot of people horny. A revolutionary machine is nothing if it does not acquire at least as much power of cut and flow as these coercive machines". How, though, to make desire a collective force capable of standing up to molar machines without also passing into the large scale, or macro-behavior from a statistical point of view, and the risks that are proper to these?

A possible solution appears in the passage that seems to me to contain the core of the politics proposed by *Anti-Oedipus*:

> Pre-conscious revolution refers to a new regime of production that creates, distributes and satisfies new ends and interests; but unconscious revolution not only refers to the *socius* that conditions this change as a form of power, it refers within this *socius* to the regime of desiring production [...] [I]n one case [that of revolution in the pre-conscious level of

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participation" of the working class in capitalism. This is not just a contradiction between interests and desires, but among interests themselves, and recognizing that this contradiction is not just a matter of subjective adhesion but also an objective feature of the system is essential to the work of unmaking it. Finally, we should also consider the possibility that interest in systemic change might be counteracted by the potential cost of going through such a change, so that people will find a stronger interest in continuing to live in a situation in which they have less to gain if they feel they stand too much to lose from seeking one that is qualitatively better. On this point, see Przeworski's (1985: 176ff) discussion of the "transitional valley".

interest] the cut is between two *socius*, where the second is measured by its capacity to introduce the flows of desire into a new code or a new axiomatic; in the other case [that of revolution at the unconscious level of desire], the cut is in the *socius* itself, insofar as it has the capacity to make the flows of desire pass according to its positive lines of flight [...] Now, if the preconscious revolutionary rupture appears at the first level, and is defined by the characteristics of a new set [*ensemble*], the unconscious or libidinal belongs to the second level and is defined by the driving role of desiring production and the position of its multiplicities. (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 416-7)

In other words, the challenge of the "composition of desiring flows in a direction that is that of liberation" depends, on the one hand, on the *convergence* between desire and the interests of emancipation in a given situation – that is, the counter-investment of interest of a dominated or subaltern class –; but it also depends, on the other hand, on an *excess* of desire over this counter-investment. It is not only a matter of desiring (or making desirable) determinate interests that are distinct from those posed by dominant molar arrangements, but equally of keeping active the indeterminacy of desire itself, so as to retain the openness of the new molar arrangement to the molecular movement that escapes and scrambles it. A revolutionary anti-Oedipal practice can thus be conceived by analogy with what Gilbert Simondon (2005: 152-3) says about the difference between physical and biological individuation. Like the latter, it retards the exhaustion of its own potentials (its charge of pre-individuality), extending them in time and opening them up to interaction with the environment, postponing as much as possible its final freezing in a fixed form, or being ready at any moment to call into question the molar sets it has been able to constitute. In other words, it is characterized by what Guattari had, eight years earlier, called "transversality": "a dimension that intends to overcome the double impasse of pure verticality and mere horizontality" and can be reached "when there is maximum communication between different levels and, above all, in different directions" (Guattari 2003a: 80).[5]

It is this difference – between a revolution aimed solely at constituting a new socius and one that simultaneously seeks to institute a new socius and keep it open to the molecular movements of desire – that allows us to distinguish between a group that is revolutionary only from "the point of view of class interest and its preconscious investments," and which could thus "remain even fascist and police-like from the point of view of its libidinal investments" (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 417); and, on the other hand, a group that is revolutionary *also* from the point of view of desire. It would be here, then, that *Anti-Oedipus*'s critique of the kind of militancy that Deleuze and Guattari saw as an obstacle to true revolutionary potential would be situated. By remaining stuck exclusively at the pre-conscious level of interest, a revolutionary group would continue to have

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5   I do not know if Guattari had by that point *read L'Individu et sa genèse physico-biologique*, published in 1964, but the talk of "communication of different levels" has strong Simondonian resonances.

> All the unconscious characteristics of a subjected group, even if it conquers power [...]: the subordination to a *socius* as a fixed support which assigns itself all productive forces, extracting and appropriating their surplus value; the effusion of anti-production and deadly elements within a system which intends itself as all the more immortal; the phenomena of 'superegoization,' of narcissism and group hierarchy – the mechanisms for the repression of desire. (Deleuze and Guattari 1972: 417)

Against this tendency to make revolutionary action necessarily pass through egoic and superegoic (i.e., Oedipalized) investment, transversality is proposed as an opening to the outside and, consequently, to the possibility of one's own obsolescence and overcoming. As Guattari puts it, the question ultimately is always

> Whether the group can pursue its economic and social goals while allowing individuals to maintain a certain access to desire and a certain lucidity about their destiny? Or again: is the group able to deal with the problem of its own death? Is a group with a historical mission able to conceive of the end of that mission – the state to conceive of the withering away of the state, revolutionary parties to conceive of the end of their supposed mission to direct the masses, etc.? (2003b: 169)

The strength of this proposal is undeniable, and in general terms it undoubtedly seems correct. Yet it also shows that the relationship between the molecular and the molar cannot be thought in abstract, as if it were merely a matter of striking the right balance between two quantities once and for all, but must be conceived in practice as unfolding over time. And it is precisely at this level of the temporal scale in which the negotiation between preconscious investment (revolutionary interest) and unconscious investment (revolutionary desire) takes place that some of the problems in how *Anti-Oedipus* lays out its political project, and thus also the potential misunderstandings that surround it, become visible.

Deleuze and Guattari (1972: 418) write that there is "a speed of subjection [in what is revolutionary from the preconscious point of view] that is opposed to the coefficients of transversality [of what is revolutionary from the unconscious point of view]"; and they provoke: "what revolution does not have the temptation to turn against its subject-groups, qualified as anarchist or irresponsible, and liquidate them?" Put in these terms, the choice seems very simple; after all, most readers would presumably prefer not to identify with the bureaucrats or autocrats who strangle the revolution. But choices do not always present themselves in such an obvious way. From the fact that one must be prepared to deal with the problem of one's own death it does not follow that one should die at any moment; from the fact that one must maintain an openness to the new and to difference it does not follow that any novelty and any difference is always good; from the fact that one must always seek displacement and transformation it does not follow that

all movement and change are for the better, nor that political processes are also not made of moments of patient construction and consolidation of what has been obtained. Moreover, the judgment that decides whether it is time to move or to stand still is never made from the infinite and indeterminate perspective of desire, but from the point of view of individuals and groups who have no way of foreseeing all the ramifications of their choices, nor to know whether, at any given moment, it is courage or prudence that will be their undoing.

We can illustrate these questions with two episodes taken from Guattari's own life. The first is the schism that took place in the wake of May 68 between him and Jean Oury, who blamed him for the disruption that the protests caused at the La Borde clinic. In François Dosse's account, although Oury was sympathetic to the struggle, he

> Felt that the protests forming against institutions like the one he managed were irresponsible and fatal for the future of psychiatry. He hated seeing trainees wake up at noon, when they were supposed to start work at nine, and denounce everyone who was already working as being "alienated by capitalism". (2010: 176)

In the second episode, Guattari himself sounds a note of caution in a conversation in 1980s Brazil. Faced with someone who tells him that they understand that the message of "molecular revolution" was that the groups of gays and lesbians, women and Black people should disinvest from the PT, which reproduced the patriarchal structure in its interior, he replies: "Maybe. But to think that it's good that a movement like the PT should disappear is questionable, to say the least" (Guattari; Rolnik 2007: 125).

Should we describe Oury and Guattari on these two occasions as representing the repression of desire, or worse, a "sedentary and biunivocizing investment, of a reactionary or fascist tendency" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 407) and a "paranoid fascizing tendency that invests the formation of central sovereignty [and makes it] an eternal final cause" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 329)? Or should we rather see in both the perfectly reasonable concerns of two finite individuals regarding the finitude of the processes before them, the realization that these were not trivial and that it would be extremely difficult to construct equivalent ones from scratch, and the fear that the expression of desire in this case might threaten structures that served not only as supports for a counter-investment of interest, but also as spaces for the nurturing of desire?

Because after all, as the A/Traverso collective (2004b: 192) would put it five years later, it often happens that, "when desire emerges on the movement scene, it is reduced to mere immediacy; if no strategic practice of desire is made, it ends up leading to anguish and terrorism." Or, as Deleuze and Guattari (1972: 329) remind us, it is not all flight that is revolutionary, but only that which "pulls the towel or makes one end of the system flee". Or again, according to one of the most important (but also most enigmatic) passages in *Anti-Oedipus*: "Despite what certain revolutionaries think, desire is in its essence

revolutionary – desire, not parties [*la fête*]!" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 138).[6] True desire, not parties; but who is capable of distinguishing between the two in absolute terms, if for the one who believes their desire to be true the other who considers it mere escapism will inevitably appear as an agent of repression, and the latter will only see the search for instant gratification where the former sees an effective line of flight? To which interpreter, then, should we entrust the task of telling us what true desire is and wants – that desire which is not revolutionary because it "'wants' the revolution, [but rather] is revolutionary in its own right and as though involuntarily, by wanting what it wants?" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 138).

Let us look at this last passage more closely. Desire is not revolutionary because it has a determinate object, be it revolution or, as the Hobbesian machinery of Oedipus would have it, transgression ("It is annoying to have to say such rudimentary things: desire does not threaten society because it is desire to sleep with the mother"; Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 138). It is revolutionary because of its own indeterminacy, because it is always connecting to other objects, and therefore always flees. The problem is that making flight automatically revolutionary eliminates the possibility of distinguishing between things that one should flee from and those things that perhaps we should hold on to longer; and thereby deprives us of the criteria by which it would be possible to distinguish between good and bad, or at least better or worse, flights. Thus, notwithstanding the subtlety of the concrete analyses of concrete situations that Deleuze and Guattari can offer us, there is a normative issue at the heart of their conceptual apparatus: the dualism between determinacy and indeterminacy, finitude and infinitude, "paranoid and fascisizing" molarity and "schizo-revolutionary" molecularity that they establish suggests a normativity – a "preferential option" for deterritorialization, let us say – that they themselves acknowledge is impossible to sustain in all cases.[7] To put it differently,

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[6] The translators of the English-language edition of *Anti-Oedipus* understood *fête* in this passage as referring not to parties in general but to "left-wing holidays", presumably thinking of such things as the Fête de L'Humanité that the newspaper of the French Communist Party organizes each year, or its Italian equivalent, the Festa de l'Unità. See Deleuze; Guattari (1983: 116). While conceding that the meaning of the word in this context is far from evident, I am unconvinced by this interpretation.

[7] To be clear, the question here is that, while the recurrent references to George Jackson ("all the while I am fleeing, I will be looking for a weapon") and the theme of an "active" or "revolutionary" flight (Deleuze; Guattari 2002b: 376) clearly show that they do *not* consider all flight to be automatically revolutionary, not only do Deleuze and Guattari fail to specify the criteria that would allow us to differentiate active from passive forms of flight, they also define the basic conceptual distinction between the molar and the molecular in terms that appear to suggest that no such distinction is needed. What could the traits through which we recognize active flight be? If we attempt to reconstruct them from Deleuze and Guattari's statements on the subject, we can speculate that they involve an objective relationship to what one flees from rather than a merely subjective attitude – they must effectively "make the system flee" instead of being just an imaginary rejection of it – and an offensive rather than merely defensive stance – not just a retreat that can be easily accommodated within the system but an attack to the extent that it has the potential to undermine it. That is why they can be distinguished from the "junky flight" and "hippie micro-societies" (see Deleuze; Guattari [2002b: 376] and Deleuze [2002: 341]). The latter implies, finally, a certain relationship to scale: not that active flight is necessarily large scale – Jackson was after all a single exemplary individual – but that that it has some degree of intentional

through reference to a slogan quite popular in the context in which the book was written, the problem is that, if things are put in this way, it is not the case that it is right to revolt against reactionaries, but rather that by definition the one against whom one revolt is automatically reactionary. With this, it becomes impossible to draw a distinction between "just" revolt ("real desire") and its "unjust" counterparts ("parties"), and building *any* process in the long run will always necessarily appear worse than simply fleeing, that is, not building.

The issue becomes even clearer when we pay attention to the other dimension discussed by Deleuze and Guattari in the passage presenting "the general features of a molar formation". The "totalization of molecular forces by statistical accumulation obeying the law of large numbers" constitutes units that can be "the biological unit of a species or the structural unit of a *socius*: an organism, social or living, is found composed as a whole, as a total or complete object" to which lack will then apply (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 409). The point here is, first, that this means lack cannot therefore be said solely to be managed by the social structure. Lack does not come to us solely "from without", that is, from the socius within which we live, but also "from within", in that it is intrinsic to our condition as finite biological beings. This imposes on us, in Spinozian terms, an essence as *conatus*, that is, as a striving to persist in existence; and hence also some interests which, if they can be given determinate forms by the society in which we exist, remain partially invariable regardless of our changing circumstances insofar as they pertain to our very continuity as organisms. (Society decides whether we eat organic or processed food, but not that we need to eat.) Not only would this seem to give lack a biological substrate beyond or beneath the social, it complicates the attribution of interest exclusively to the dimension of the socius: there are biological interests that underlie whatever social interests we might have.

But the most important point here is something else: the implicit (but easier to make than when we are talking about the social dimension) acknowledgment that a certain closure in relation to the outside – to the infinitely productive and essentially indeterminate dynamics of desire – is not just an obstacle to be overcome, but also a positive condition for the existence of any given thing. It is *because* there is molarity that "generic" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 8) or "anorganic life" (Deleuze; Guattari 1980: 628) can acquire plateaus of minimal consistency in organisms, and thereby gain complexity – even if that complexity will then often bypass the limits of the organism in order to unfold. Plane of organization and plane of consistency are not opposed, but interpenetrate; molarity is not just a limit to the expression of the molecular, it is also a condition of possibility for it to express itself.

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publicness and would have the potential to produce systemic change were it to be inscribed in a large enough number of individuals.

Ultimately, then, it becomes apparent where the crux of the problem lies: in *Anti-Oedipus*'s all-too-quick identification of the molar with the "paranoid and fascisizing" and the molecular with the revolutionary. For what this association does is both to moralize the distinction between the two levels (thus inevitably suggesting that there is a choice to be made between them) and obscure the ways in which they are necessarily entangled. Accepting that entanglement, on the other hand, confronts us with the need for a decision. Either we accept the automatic equivalence of the molar with the Oedipal, the "paranoid" and the "fascistic", and then we are forced into the paradoxical (and unpleasant) conclusion that a little Oedipus, paranoia and fascism is always necessary; or else we make the opposition run through molar social investments themselves, and admit of two different ways in which the molecular can be subordinated to the molar: one that does so through paranoid horror in the face of any movement of desire, and one that does so through care, caution, and the search for consistency. While it is obvious that one can easily become the other, it is nonetheless essential to recognize a difference in principle between the two, and the zone of indiscernibility that can exist between them for any situated observer – such as Oury and Guattari and those they opposed in the two moments recalled above.

Despite its powerful assertion of the importance of organizational issues, it is in moments such as this that *Anti-Oedipus* shows the mark of its time in the form of what I have elsewhere called "trauma of organization" (Nunes 2021: 34ff): a legitimate but excessive response to the defeats and disasters of the 20th century's attempts at large-scale social change that comes to regard organization and scale only as risk, threat or cause for suspicion, and also not as an enabling condition and a necessity for acquiring some degree of consistency.[8] While no doubt correct in criticizing the political and psychoanalytical experts whose pleas for "realism" amount to little more than asking us to reconcile ourselves and identifying with our own limits, it is as if Deleuze and Guattari overshot their reaction, occasionally losing sight of two elementary facts. First, that the very thing that allows us to say that a molecular transformation has taken place is the fact that it has inscribed itself in a sufficiently large number of bodies so as to produce a statistically observable change in behavior (multitudes taking to the streets, for example, or people losing respect for authority). Consequently, if we take molar statistical accumulation to be automatically synonymous with discipline and capture – or worse, fascism – we are turning the very idea of a "molecular revolution" into a *contradictio in adjecto*. And second, that while opening politics to desire entails opening the finite and

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8   This is not the only trace of the trauma of organization in *Anti-Oedipus*. A tendency to wish away the problem of scale (and therefore of organization at scale) is also evidenced in such statements as "no society can support a position of true desire without its structures of exploitation, subjection, and hierarchy being compromised" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 138) and "a single living desire would be enough to blow up the system, or to make it flee over an edge through which everything would eventually follow and fall into a hole" (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 404). The implication is, of course, that if the molar arrangements of our societies are so fragile, the struggle could bypass scale entirely.

determinate to an infinite, indeterminate process, this is still done from standpoints that are cognitively, positionally and existentially finite – which both raise questions about the need to retain some minimal consistency and produces the indiscernibility and perspectival undecidability that we discovered in those examples taken from Oury's and Guattari's lives.

This reform of *Anti-Oedipus*'s conceptual apparatus – which in all fairness would be partially undertaken in *A Thousand Plateaus* (for example, in the discussion of stratification and destratification) – seems to me fundamental if we are to defend the politics that the book attempts to formulate from two fairly common misinterpretations. The first is the one that assumes that an anti-Oedipal exercise of politics can only take place in a very specific context of practices, and thus limits it to artistic or very small-scale forms of activism that would be "micropolitical" in opposition to other forms that would always necessarily be "macropolitical", assuming that the point is to choose one over the other rather than using the former to inflect the latter (and vice versa). The second is the one that reduces it to an intransitive commandment abstracted from any context of application ("always deterritorialize"), turning it into an essentially parasitic activity, capable of criticizing what exists but not of committing to the construction and maintenance of anything concrete – or worse, a non-situated, no-skin-in-the-game wager on an infinite potentiality that never assumes any determinate form because only permanent indeterminacy on a par with the radicality of desire.

When Guattari put the ability to deal with the problem of our own death (and that of our investments, wagers, beliefs and desires) at the center of politics, he clearly had in mind the fear we experience in the face of finitude, the difficulty we find in letting go, and the potential for paranoid and reactionary investments that lies therein. But we should remember that there is another way in which this fear can express itself: that which consists of indefinitely postponing any finite commitment, as if one could remain forever in a state of potentiality in which it is impossible to be wrong because one never affirms anything, or never bears out the consequences of doing so. If I propose this critique of *Anti-Oedipus* here, it is so that we can rescue the anti-Oedipal exercise for the purposes of a practice that fully embraces the absence of guarantees because it does not shy away from taking risks – even or especially the risk of becoming its own enemy.

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Derrida's Role in Anti-Oedipus:
The Colonial Archi-territorialization
by ULYSSES PINHEIRO

Abstract

The aim of this essay is to show that the references to Derrida in *Anti-Oedipus* may serve as a reminder that life forms and thinking situated in a post- and decolonial position possess an element that is undeconstructible and impervious to schizo processes. If this analysis is correct, then the philosophy of difference, whether in its Derridean or its Deleuzean-Guattarian version, cannot be applied, without qualification, to the colonial situation. But it will also be shown that this is not an indication of a flaw in their theories, but only a way of pointing out some of their extrinsic limits.

> The great flaw of the Europeans is always to philosophize about the origin of things according to what happens around them.
> Rousseau, *Essay on the Origin of Languages*.

(I) Introduction

Jacques Derrida's name is mentioned four times in *Anti-Oedipus*, three of them in footnotes. This graphic position suggests that Derrida generally appears in the book as an ally, being invoked to corroborate or make more precise certain theses defended by Deleuze and Guattari[1]. It is true that the only time it is mentioned other than in footnotes, Derrida's name is the sign of a partial disagreement – but, precisely because of this restricted character, it is at this point more a matter of establishing the precise terms of an alliance than of marking a frontal opposition[2]. Derrida would be one of the numerous allies called upon by its authors in their peculiar synthesis – a disjunctive and subversive

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[1] In a joint interview with Guattari about *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze thematizes his politics of alliances: « Nous cherchons des alliés. Nous avons besoin d'alliés. Et nous avons l'impression que ces alliés sont déjà là, qu'ils ne nous ont pas attendus, qu'il y a beaucoup de gens qui en ont assez, qui pensent, sentent et travaillent dans des directions analogues : pas question de mode, mais d'un 'air du temps' plus profond où des recherches convergentes se font dans des domaines très divers » (Deleuze 1990 : 36).

[2] Nevertheless, some have identified in this passage a radical opposition between the central theses of *Anti-Oedipus* and Derrida's philosophy. See, for example, Cross 2017.

synthesis – between psychoanalysis, Marxism, and ethnology, and would compose with these other conceptual personae a network of references that would give to the theses defended therein the status of a new movement of thought.

Underneath this initial impression, however, lies a more complex relationship, in which fundamental questions are articulated and crucial metaphysical-political decisions are made. We will address one such question, concerning the relevance of Deleuze and Guattari's work for postcolonial and decolonial philosophy, by examining it through the way in which Derrida's thinking on deconstruction (insofar as it deals with the phenomenon of coloniality) is figured or disfigured within *Anti-Oedipus*. The fact that non-European peoples are thematized by Derrida from the point of view from which European anthropology has described them, what also occurs in the work of Deleuze and Guattari (although all three adopt a critical tone toward anthropology), could reinforce the suspicions of some, such as Gayatri Spivak, that their theories remain circumscribed within the narrow confines of Eurocentrism (although Spivak exempts Derrida from this problem, at least to some extent). These suspicions will give us the opportunity to show that there is a kind of secret alliance uniting Deleuze, Guattari, and – despite Spivak – Derrida, and separating them *en bloc* from what would be the impossible colonial *position*.

Before beginning what could only improperly – we shall see – be called a "comparison" between deconstruction and schizoanalysis, it is important to emphasize what we all already know – but which needs to be said: that this congress around *Anti-Oedipus* takes place in a former colony, in a country that occupies the periphery of the capitalist empire, and that, therefore, the effects that this book-machine has produced in the last half century receive a singular inflection from this political geography. It is also important to notice, within the initial limits of this lecture, that Brazil is not mentioned in this book, at least not insofar as Brazil is the name assumed by this former colony in the context of the formation of nation-states during the 19th century. And yet *Anti-Oedipus* contains an indirect reference to Brazil, in a footnote in chapter 3 – actually a two-fold indirect reference, since it only appears as a quotation of the formula used by Derrida in *On grammatology* to account for the impossibility of incest. Derrida examines therein the drift that unites and separates Lévi-Strauss and Rousseau, especially insofar as it occurs around the phenomenon of the prohibition of incest; in this context, Derrida comments on Lévi-Strauss's descriptions and analyses of the Nambikwara, the Native American people living in the high headwaters of the Juruena and Guaporé rivers. Therefore, the presence of Brazil in Deleuze and Guattari's book could only improperly be described as the presence of something like a "Brazilian" subject, if we understand this adjective from the perspective of the state formation created by the Portuguese – but, for this very reason, such absence and such impropriety concern us to the highest degree.

(II) The internal splitting of metaphysics

Oppressive identity systems always have, in *Anti-Oedipus* (but also for Derrida), a more or less visible fracture that divides them from within. Given that the recognition of the constitutive indeterminacy of thought and power structures fundamentally characterizes both the procedure of deconstruction and that of schizoanalysis, we propose in this presentation is the following hypothesis: life forms and thought situated in a post- and de-colonial position have an element that is indeconstructible and impermeable to schizo processes, such that neither *Anti-Oedipus* nor *On Grammatology* can be "applied", without qualification, to the colonial situation. This is not to point out a "flaw" in these theories, but only to delineate some of their extrinsic limits. It is worth noting, in this respect, that asserting that there are indeconstructible events should not be a problem if we accept, with Derrida, the thesis that deconstruction is not a method, that is, it is not a procedure *a priori* available for any and all realities that present themselves as presence – after all, for Derrida, justice, for example, is indeconstructible.

Let us examine, then, the limits of deconstruction and schizoanalysis together. Deleuze and Guattari quote, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Derrida's two important works at the time, *On Grammatology* and *Writing and Difference*. The quotations made by them revolve around the aforementioned incest, but also around dreaming and writing. What interests us in the present context is the first of these themes, because it is where Derrida's work is invoked in the context of Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the psychoanalytic and ethnological interpretation of the prohibition of incest, the Oedipal topic *par excellence*.

Indeed, the first mention of Derrida in *Anti-Oedipus* is made in order to corroborate the thesis that the prohibition of incest does not repress the desire for a particular member of the family group, but, on the contrary, that the object of this desire is produced by the very act of prohibition. What is repressed [refoulé] is not the Oedipal desire, but an intensive state of indifferentiation, which is determined by the repression "in relation to extensive affiliations and lateral alliances" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 188). Instead of being a symptom of an erasure of the object of desire, Oedipus operates the repression that shapes and, therefore, creates the desire for the forbidden object by becoming the disfigured image of the true repressed [*refoulé*] object. This idea resumes a central point of the previous chapter of the book, "Psychoanalysis and familialism", which already understood the supposedly private Oedipal dramas on the basis of social formations. But whereas in chapter 2 the family of capitalist societies was the focal point of the analyses[3], the section of chapter 3 in which Derrida is first summoned deals with the way European and North American ethnology has described non-(or: not yet) capitalist, so-called

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[3] « Le refoulement est tel que la répression devient désirée, cessant d'être consciente ; et il induit un désir de conséquence, une image truquée de ce sur quoi il porte […] *C'est dans un même mouvement que la production sociale répressive se fait remplacer par la famille refoulante, et que celle-ci donne de la production désirante une image déplacée qui représente le refoulé comme pulsions familiales incestueuses* » (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 142; emphasis in original).

"savage" societies. The colonialist temptation to "oedipianize" these societies takes as one of the main examples, in chapter 3, the analyses made by Marcel Griaule of the Dogon people (in the area of present-day Mali). It is in this context that Deleuze and Guattari affirm "that it is not Hamlet that is an extension of Oedipus [....] on the contrary, a negative or inverted Hamlet is first with respect to Oedipus" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 187). The Dogon myth reported by Griaule is, according to the authors of *Anti-Oedipus*, the record of the institution of the somatic order in which the son is no longer figured as the twin-brother of his mother, so that what he recriminates the uncle of is not having performed what was interdicted to the son's position, but rather "not having done what he, the son, could not do" - and what he "could not do", what the uncle himself did for the wrong reasons, was to unite with the mother "in the name of that germinal filiation, marked by ambiguous signs of gemination and bisexuality, according to which the son could have done it too, and be himself this uncle in intensive relationship with the mother-twin" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 187). What is repressed, in short, is this "great nocturnal memory of intensive germinal filiation" (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 188). Incest is logically impossible, because it is impossible that concrete persons belonging to a social group (the mother, the sister, the father, the child) can be objects of sexual fruition if they are *named* as such (Deleuze & Guattari 1972: 190). It is in this context that Derrida's *On Grammatolgy* is invoked; here is the passage from the note that interests us:

> Jacques Derrida wrote, in a commentary of Rousseau: "Before the feast there was no incest because there was no prohibition of incest. After the feast there is no longer any incest because it is prohibited… The feast *itself* would be the incest *itself* if any such thing – *itself* – could take place" (*De la grammatologie*, p. 372-377) (Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 189).

We should notice that this quotation is not taken directly from the section of *On grammatology* in which Lévi-Strauss and the Nambiwara are examined, but rather from the chapter devoted more specifically to Rousseau, concerning his *Essay on the Origin of Languages*; this makes reference to the Brazilian and American colonies even more indirect than we pointed out above, insofar as they now appear only as the implicit object of Rousseau's considerations on the so-called primitive societies. We know well the role that the discovery of America, in the 16th century, played in European culture – and, in the 18th century, the paradisiacal image of peoples without a state and without civilization continued to structure the political thought of philosophers, including Rousseau[4]. In the framework of the deconstruction of Rousseau's philosophy of language, Derrida shows that the boundary between the state of nature and civilization – or what is usually called "culture" – is indeterminate. Derrida's reading of Rousseau attributes to the

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[4]   In the opposite direction of this movement, we cannot forget the role that Rousseau's reading will play in the independence processes in the colonies, among them the Brazilian "Inconfidência Mineira", also in the 18th century.

latter a kind of movement of denial. On the one hand, deconstruction tries to introduce indeterminacy into supposedly closed and well-delimited systems, thus opening them to an Outside that makes the production of meaning infinite – and the criticism against Rousseau on this point is precisely that he supposed that there is a determined limit between nature and culture, i.e*., between indeterminacy and determination*. In order to be able to "imagine the unimaginable" that is this determinate boundary, Rousseau had to suppose, as a founding fiction, that "negativity, the origin of evil, society, articulation, *come from outside*" (Derrida 1967a: 363) – it is as if the State appeared from nowhere on the horizon, already entirely ready and functioning (Cf. Deleuze; Guattari 1972: 257). On the other hand, however, deconstruction shows that Rousseau himself (and here we might paraphrase Derrida, wondering if something as such – *Rousseau himself* – can take place) takes care of blurring such a precise boundary: the feast in primitive societies would be precisely the thicknessless but endless moment that infinitely precedes the establishment of the Law. This means that systems, like Rousseau's, that oppose exclusive disjunctions, characteristic of metaphysics, never fail to present a constitutive fissure, a "condition of impossibility" that at the same time allows and prevents the binary opposition and the determined limit. That is to say, because the passage from nature to culture is both impossible and necessary, it is required to introduce between them a moment that is both natural and cultural, an arbitrary and yet instinctive artifice. The "age of the supplement" would be preceded by itself and by its opposite, thus constituting a continuity and a rupture with the state of nature. In other words, metaphysics itself would already contain in itself – if something like "metaphysics itself" were to take place – its own deconstruction. In this sense, if there is a movement of denial in Rousseau, it is precisely insofar as he represses such a fracture, imposing on the system a closure that it never had.

The sharp separation between these two apparently distinct domains, that of the feast and that of the Law, is also what would be denied by Deleuze and Guattari when they claim that "incest does not exist". In fact, the idea of a determined limit is foreign to the thought of Deleuze and Guattari. In the folds involved in the processes of individuation and actualization, the absence of a crucial limit that would separate the inside from its outside is precisely what is in question, although this indeterminacy should not be confused with an indifferentiation (on the contrary, it is where there is a profusion of differential processes that indeterminacy is produced). In the same way, the idea of invagination proposed by Derrida in his writings, especially those of a more directly political character, has in view a similar kind of indeterminacy through excess of determination – this is why deconstruction is, in a certain sense, constructivism.

In examining the passages of the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* in which Rousseau fictionally retraces the origin of civilization, a central moment is the one that locates in the "hot countries" (Africa, the Mediterranean, but also South America[5]) the birth of

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[5]   Cf. Rousseau 1995: 395: « Les véritables langues n'ont point une origine domestique, il n'y a qu'une convention plus générale et plus durable qui les puisse établir. Les Sauvages de l'Amérique ne parlent

culture: it is in them that language is more original, closer to music, and in which men finally leave the reigning solitude of the state of nature to a communal life. Now, in these "hot countries", says Derrida, paraphrasing – that is, deconstructing – Rousseau, lies "the intangible [*insaisissable*] limit where society was formed without having begun to degrade" (Derrida 1967a: 370). It is at this moment that the feast occurs. As we have seen, if incest does not exist, it is because we are always before or after this limit, which is figured by Rousseau as the eternal present of the feast, or the feast as a paradigm of presence. Subtracted from ordinary temporality, it "has *properly* [the emphasis is Derrida's] no place" (Derrida 1967a: 377). The birth of society is this unstable point that subtracts itself from time and passage, as a kind of infinite instant. In other words, in having to account for the passage from nature to culture, Rousseau must oppose two realities that have nothing in common: society is the accident that comes from outside and strikes like lightning upon natural innocence. The instant of this transmutation is the condition of the impossibility of Rousseau's discourse, as well as of every discourse that, after him, pretends to speak of something like a "culture." Let us not forget that, for Lévi-Strauss, Rousseau was the patron of ethnology.

If *Anti-Oedipus* is to be distinguished from the *Essay on the Origin of Languages* it is because it does not conceal (and neither does Derrida) the indeterminacy of the feast with an operation of denial that represents it as pure instantaneous and immediate passage, without depth. It would not be unfair, then, to conclude that Derrida, Deleuze, and Guattari criticize classical metaphysics through by exploring its fractures, already mapped – but duly repressed – by its own official representatives, such as Rousseau. It remains to be investigated to what extent the colonial situation subtracts itself from metaphysics, that is, from the deconstruction of metaphysics, precisely by the act of categorically inscribing itself in it.

(III) Spivak's Critique of *Anti-Oedipus*

According to the hypothesis we would like to propose here, the colonial situation would occupy a place analogous to the one that justice, forgiveness, gift, and hospitality have in Derridian deconstruction: it would be precisely that situation in which something like a "determined limit" could take place, the one in which there was no time of the feast , in which the Law and the State literally and suddenly appeared from outside. In other words: in the colony, Oedipus has been crowned emperor, and between a before and an

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presque jamais que hors de chez eux ; chacun garde le silence dans sa cabane, il parle par signes à sa famille, et ces signes sont peu fréquents parce qu'un Sauvage est moins inquiet, moins impatient qu'un Européen, qu'il n'a pas tant de besoins et qu'il prend soin d'y pourvoir lui-même ». If, in this passage, the "savages" are situated outside society, in other Rousseau seems to hesitate about where to situate them in the genetic description of society; thus, on p. 385, they are described as belonging to one of the stages in the history of men gathered [*rassemblés*] into nations.

after there is a precise boundary. Or again: the forms of life and thought situated in a colonial position possess an element that is indeconstructible and impermeable to schizo processes, precisely insofar as here the real took place, and a sharp border was drawn separating us from Europe, that is, from this binary system of oppression crossed by a more or less perceptible internal fracture.

We should note that this hypothesis about the emergence of the real in the colonies has nothing to do with the various realisms that still haunt us, because, contrary to what the advocates of the latter propose, the real we are dealing with here depends on European indeterminacy, from which it is distinguished and from which it is formed. That is, what is called "real" here does not refer to the supposed mode of being of things themselves, understood as the origin of representations and their criterion of correctness, but rather to an unapproachable remainder – less a fracture of the symbolic, in Lacan's key, than what remains, often in the form of merchandise, as pure opaque presence, under the processes of social and political production. Far from being the place of the feast, before incest and guilt, the "*tristes tropiques*" would be the great laboratory of the production of the real – not because of the commonplace according to which we would be anticipating today what will soon come to be reality in the metropolitan centers, such as the climatic cataclysm, but rather because of the fact that the real (that is, Europe) only came to be in the colonies, and that since the 16th century. The colonies would be, in short, the actualization of the unrealized past of and by Europe, what Europe could never be – namely itself. It is as if the colony were the fulfillment of the dreams – or rather the nightmares – of the metropolis.

Let us examine whether this hypothesis is plausible.

In her famous paper "Can the Subaltern Speak?", originally published in 1988, Spivak made a polemical intervention in the area of post- and de-colonial studies. As is well known, this text is structured around a harsh criticism of the supposed Eurocentrism of Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari – and, in relation to the latter two, her analysis of *Anti-Oedipus* has a certain importance in the course of the argument developed there (which is not surprising, given Spivak's affinities with Marxism). Her essay is complex and cannot be easily summarized; as it has become an inescapable reference in this field of investigation, we will limit ourselves to highlighting its central critique of Deleuze and Guattari's book.

Before we do that, however, we must remember that Spivak was the translator of *On Grammatology* into English: her translation was published in 1976, only four years after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*. This affinity to Derrida's thought, then still relatively unknown in the United States, leads her to state that the merit of the author of *On Grammatology* lies in the fact that his critique of the concept of subject shows that the latter is "not a general problem, but a *European* problem," (Spivak 1994: 89) in contrast to Foucault, Deleuze, and Guattari, who would have succumbed to the "danger of appropriating the other by assimilation" – and, in the same tone, she points out that these

last three authors are "dangerous" precisely because they are "enthusiastic radicals" (Spivak 1994: 104).

The core of Spivak's critique lies in the identification of what she believes to be an unacknowledged kernel of Enlightenment universalism at the very moment when Deleuze, Guattari and Foucault claim to give up representing or speaking on behalf of the oppressed, assuming in this way precisely *that the subalterns can speak* – i.e., assuming, according to Spivak, that the peripheral otherness can integrate into an ideal cosmopolitan speech arena. Precisely because of this, she concludes, Deleuze, Guattari, and Foucault, despite appearances of promoting a radical critique of the sovereignty of the classical subject, would have kept it intact. As a consequence of this assessment, Spivak identifies, in the theories of these three authors, the impossibility of an ideological critique based on class interest and an admission of the foreclosure that, according to her, characterizes the absence of the colonial (non)subject.

There are already some critical analyses of Spivak's critique of Deleuze and Guattari. In Spivak's more direct criticism of *Anti-Oedipus*, she could perhaps be accused of committing a petition of principle, insofar as she assumes the validity of her more orthodox version of Marxism against the heterodox reading proposed in the book[6]. In a recent paper, Andrew Robinson and Simon Tormey show, quite convincingly, that the validity of Spivak's position depends on the acceptance of a false exclusive disjunction, namely either the subject is to be understood as barred, on the basis of a constitutive lack, or s/he is to be understood as the self-transparent subject of the Enlightenment tradition. From this disjunctive premise, Spivak concludes that since Deleuze and Guattari do not accept the first definition of the subject, they inevitably fall into the second, despite their intentions. Robinson and Tormey's criticism of Spivak consists of denying the premise of her disjunctive syllogism: instead of only two alternatives, there would be a third way, ignored by her: "Deleuze offers, against the lacking divided self, not an undivided self, but a non-lacking divided self" (Robinson and Tormey 2010: 35).

Even accepting this critique of Spivak's critique, yet *something* of the latter's position perhaps holds. *De jure*, she suggests, the colonial condition, insofar as it is a condition of subalternity, was necessarily constituted as absolute inaccessibility, as incommensurable difference and radical otherness in relation to European thought. Coloniality is essentially silence. Attempts by anthropology and the so-called "human sciences" to describe this otherness cannot, therefore, erase the constitutive position of its "object" as "fully other", under the risk of projecting inadequate spatio-temporal– that is, Eurocentric and anachronistic – schemes onto the colony. In sum: in order not to be Eurocentric, European science has to be Eurocentric, because it must construct its object of studies as an absolute otherness; and this construction, if it wants to be coherent, cannot access such a radical

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6   For example, in the following passage: "I have tried to argue that the substantive concern for the politics of the oppressed which often accounts for Foucault's appeal can hide a privileging of the intellectual and of the 'concrete' subject of oppression that, in fact, compounds the appeal" (Spivak 1994: 87).

otherness, but must adopt a kind of pure and simple reverential silence, which assumes beforehand that the subaltern can speak[7]. This is where Spivak's objection comes in: the subaltern is essentially the one who cannot speak, her/his constitutive aphasia defining the colonial position.

(IV) Afropessimism and colonization

Retaining this aspect of Spivak's critique, we can reverse it in an unforeseen direction, namely if nothing is shown in the colonies, it is because nothing is given here except a Europe that has finally fully actualized itself. The "real" of the colony is the reified presence of Europe, a fullness that does not admit internal differences, fissures, or becoming. If the simulacrum marks the absence of the origin and the reversal of Platonism, we can say that the colony has become the origin of Europe, which is only its image and likeness.

It is in the contemporary context of Afropessimism that we will find a common ground for thinking of the colonial situation as the form *par excellence* of non-being and for characterizing (post)colonial thought as the absence or lack of ontology – a vacuity that expels from its empty domains the becoming and indeterminacy. Going back to one of the cores of Frantz Fanon's thought – by the way, one of the "allies" listed in *Anti-Oedipus* –, a lineage of authors have been thinking about the enslavement of black people precisely from the point of view of this character of total nullification, of the transformation of subjects into objects; as Fanon says: "I came into the world preoccupied with arousing meaning in things, my soul full of the desire to be the origin of the world, and here I find myself an object in the midst of other objects" (Fanon 1952: 88). One thinker who opposes Afropessimism, but precisely insofar as he recognizes that his own position is in some sense indiscernible from it, is Fred Moten; in his essay "Blackness and Nothingness," Moten takes the positionality of enslaved black lives as a "displacement of ontology" (Moten 2013: 739). If ontology is the inventory of things from a certain inescapably political circumscription, enslaved people would be the objects – the commodities – expelled from the political realm and therefore reduced to nothingness, mere objects endowed with exchange value. The mass of enslaved people and their descendants would therefore not occupy a perspective, since the latter would be the privilege of those who are recognized as individuals in the political field. We must remember that, in modern times, to be an individual is precisely to be endowed with a perspective. It is only by assuming the radicalness of the thesis according to which blackness is nothingness that a thought about this nothingness can give way – even if in the form of atopy – to forms of

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[7] Lévi-Strauss attempted to avoid this paradox by characterizing anthropology itself as a Western "myth." For a critique of this move by Lévi-Strauss, see Derrida, "The Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences" (Derrida 1967b).

resistance to the colonizer, to the white European man, that is, to Being and Becoming.

Moten himself does not see his position as opposable to some themes in Deleuze's philosophy. Thus, at a certain point in his essay, he formulates a series of questions, taken as equivalent, namely "What is nothingness? What is blackness? What is the relation between blackness, thingliness, nothingness, and the (de/re)generative operations of what Deleuze might call *a life* in common?" (Moten 2013: 742). "A life," that is, the Deleuzian form of indeterminacy, would then be, for Moten, the way to account for the nothingness that (de)characterizes black lives. Nothingness, Moten warns, is not absence – rather, we might add, it is the objectness of the commodity fetish. That is why Moten makes another approach to Deleuze in the same essay, this time to the way the latter deals with the combinatory in Samuel Beckett's texts: the exhausted, says Moten, marks "the real presence, the presence of the thing in exhaustion" (Moten 2013: 774). If we were to move closer to the field of psychiatry, which was Fanon's, but using a reference that is not his, we could perhaps say, with Lacan, that this nothing, understood as pure presence, is the real itself, that is, the impossible; in the words of Slavoj Žižek, "one must keep in mind Lacan's *motto* according to which *nothing is lacking in the real*: every perception of a lack or an excess ('not enough of this', 'too much of that') always involves the symbolic universe" (Zizek 1994: 11).

Extending these reflections on the equivalence between blackness and nothingness to the colonial situation beyond the desubjectivation involved in the transformation of living bodies into inert commodities, we can say that the colony is the absolute realization of land as a real estate – and we must remember that the word "estate" comes from the Latin word "*status*", meaning condition, position, and place[8]. A real estate is, in this context, a property without becoming. If enslavement transforms people into commodities, the colonization of land constitutes its geopolitical structures into mere economic instances of territorial administration. More than an ahistorical place, the colony is the instance that allows the opening of modern history in metropolitan societies: to the extent that it ontologically derives from and precedes, at the same time, the metropolis, it is what makes such historicity possible. As Carl Schmitt has already shown, the constitution of modern European nations and their system of international jurisdiction depended on the domination and sharing of the "free" seas. The colony is the inert block of land separated from the civilized nations by the infinite oceans, an original soil conceived as archi-territory, in both senses of the prefix "archi-": origin and preeminence. Imagined as mere static soil from which wealth is extracted (agriculture, cattle, minerals), many colonies – among them the South American ones –never really constituted themselves politically as an intrinsic unit. The internal wars in the various former African colonies illustrate this point exemplarily. Or still, to use a South American event as an illustration of the same

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8   In Portuguese, "real estate" is translated as "propriedade imobiliária" or "bem imóvel", and in this last expression, the adjective "imóvel" indicates, in a broader way, the quality of everything that does not have movement, as when I say that someone is motionless.

thesis: when the Portuguese court was introjected into Brazil in 1808, fleeing from the Napoleonic wars, what happened was not a Derridian invagination of metropolitan power, but a real encapsulation of power in Rio de Janeiro – Brazil then became, in Maria Odila da Silva Dias's words, a colony of itself (Dias 1972) (which is true even today).

If the colony is the originary being-in-itself and for-itself, the thing itself in itself, and if, nevertheless, this *ens realissimum* has been derived from Europe, are we not, with all these formulations, courting too much the taste for paradoxes? It would not be necessary to resort to the *ex-nihilo* creation of the Christians to dispel these metaphysical concerns: it is enough to consider that the real is taken, in this context, as a remnant of the colonial enterprise, as the waste left over from the processes of extracting the wealth of the devastated land, conceived only as real estate. If it were still the case to believe in the opposition between the symbolic and the real, the latter would be the eternal present – not even the so-called "nature" yet, but that which allows us to think of it from a constitutive meaninglessness.

Therefore, if the "real" of the colonies can be approximated to the real in itself, it is only in the Kantian sense of the thing-in-itself, by designating something unknowable – but a thing-in-itself strangely *caused* by phenomena. More than Kant, however, it is Hegel who can clarify this sense of the real in which being is immediately converted into nothing. In the First Section of Book I of the *Science of Logic*, titled "Determinability (Quality)", Hegel states that being is the "immediate indeterminate"; however, by opposing itself to any qualities or determinations, the very indeterminacy of being becomes its characteristic quality. In this immediate determinacy, no difference is thought and nothing is intuited – the nothing "is the pure empty intuition" and, in this sense, in it nothing itself is thought. The conclusion of this movement is that "Being, the indeterminate immediacy, is in fact nothing, and neither more nor less than nothing"; in this immediate passage from being to nothingness, it is also possible to conclude, in the opposite way – but, as we have seen, it is *the same way* – that nothingness "is the same determination, or rather absence of determination, and is therefore completely the same as that which pure being is" (Hegel 1983: 69). To think about the colony, or at least some of its geopolitical structures, is to think as if this dialectic ended in this first initial moment of identity, violently denying to it the *passage* from being to nothingness – that is, the becoming –, the third figure of the *Science of Logic*. In this sense, the colony is the place of the *proper*, of property taken both in an ontological and economic sense, the place of all places, the fixed point on the globe that allowed the reconfiguration of European politics in the 16th and 17th centuries – and, hence, the primitive accumulation of nascent capitalism.

At this point, one might object that modern colonies undoubtedly have peculiar qualities distinct from each other, have a history and have a becoming, and that they are therefore not to be confused with pure being in general – thus the Iberian colonies of the Americas are quite different from the Asian colonies of England or the French colonies of Africa, even when we consider the colonial world in the same time period. To answer this

objection, let us admit that the colonies are indeed qualitatively different from each other. In assimilating the colony to nothingness, that is, to being, we are not proposing that all aspects of colonial life fall under this ontological characterization. The situation of the globalized world-system is too complex and varied to allow such a broad extension of the assimilation between coloniality and nothingness. But the terrible aspect of colonial life is that, unlike what happens in the metropoles – which, in a proper sense, do not exist, just as incest does not exist (if existence means being fully determined and identical to oneself) – the colonies exist, that is, they are identical to the nothingness of pure presence. If, therefore, deconstruction and schizoanalysis do indeed encounter an extrinsic limit in the face of this ontological characterization of certain central elements of colonial life, would there be a clear criterion for enunciating what these elements subtracted from becoming and history would be? In other words: what exactly, in the colonies, would be opaque to the conceptual instruments of *Anti-Oedipus*?

A first answer would be what remains opaque are the operators of totalizing identity syntheses, such as the State and other geopolitical institutions, which are complete presence to itself – that is, they are presence to the metropolitan other that inhabits it. Let us understand well: there is certainly a *history* of these syntheses. The Brazil of the 16th century is not the Brazil of the 21st century. However, whenever a totalizing synthesis is set in motion in the colonies, it takes place without leaving room for internal indetermination and, therefore, without leaving room for its deconstruction. The operators of totalizing syntheses escape attempts at deterritorialization and de-stratification, insofar as they always succeed in creating a real and true unity, without internal fractures, due to their character of simple merchandise. The "history" of the succession of these identity operators is more like the projection of cinematographic frames that give the illusion of movement, but that are, within each of them, perfectly still and well determined, in an eternal return of the same. Or even: if the former Latin American and African colonies are subtracted from history, taking the latter in its modern sense, perhaps they are inscribed in the seventeenth-century conception of "natural history" – and we can remember the numerous treatises that took Brazil as a privileged example of natural history[9]. In this sense, it would be ironically true to reread the "Geographical Foundations of History," which opened Hegel's *Lessons on the Philosophy of History*, as the most accurate description of South American colonial reality: Hegel does not recognize in South America any internal principle of unification; its unity would be purely extrinsic, given by military force, in an uninterrupted succession of *coups d'état*. South American history, Hegel says, lacks the stability that guarantees the manifestation of the constitutional state; without such stability, South America revolts in a "permanent revolution" (*fortdauernder Umsturz*) (Hegel 1986: 111).

Let us return to a point made earlier: to affirm that there is something

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9   The scientific travels and scientific works of zoologist Johann Baptist von Spix and botanist Carl Friedrich
     Martius are the best known example of this kind of natural history as it was conceived in the 19th century.

indeconstructible in colonial reality not only does not refute deconstruction but is, in fact, its condition of possibility, insofar as deconstruction is itself indeconstructible. That is, deconstruction is the experience of the impossible. This is why, in *Force of Law*, Derrida, in a Benjaminian key, states that justice, situated beyond the positive systems of laws, is indeconstructible and, for this very reason, that deconstruction is justice. In other words, deconstruction itself has conditions of possibility, that is, of impossibility, to the point of being identified, in a certain sense, with the impossible.

(V) Conclusion: The Derridian Supplement to Anti-Oedipus

In the last lecture Derrida gave, a few months before his death, he draws the colonial situation closer to the indeconstructible. This lecture took place in the year 2004, right here in Rio de Janeiro, at the Maison de France, a few kilometers from this building and auditorium where we are now, there on Avenida Presidente Antonio Carlos. Already very ill, Derrida addressed the audience with a demand for justice regarding Europe's – that is, America's – enslaving past. In this address, when discussing the process of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, on the occasion of the end of the apartheid regime, Derrida was obliquely addressing Brazilians, whose slave heritage is as terrible as that of the former South African racist regime. It was a matter, in this last conference, of pointing out once again the existence – but perhaps this word is inappropriate – of an experience of the impossible, namely, one that opens up to unconditional forgiveness, that is, to a forgiveness that is not inscribed in an economy of symbolic exchanges, mobilizing compensations, forgetfulness, negotiations.

One of the parts of this lecture is entitled "*Aufhebung* of slavery". The specter of Hegel, Derrida says, haunted the Truth and Reconciliation Commission chaired by the Anglican pastor Desmond Tutu, giving it an excessively Christian tone, insofar as it inscribed forgiveness in a dialectic of recomposition, mediated by the forgetfulness of past crimes. Africa, says Hegel (also in his *Lessons on the Philosophy of History*), has not *yet* reached representation, that is, the category of universality; its inhabitants, reduced by Europe to the condition of merchandise, are not *yet* self-conscious of their own freedom. Derrida underlines this "yet," [*encore*] a word that indicates a future progress and a promise of redemption, similar to what Tutu's Christianity promised at the end of the Commission's work. Note that Hegel does not explain the nothinglessness status of enslaved black people by the fact that they were subjected to slavery, but, on the contrary, he explains slavery by the Africans' character as worthless things. In this promise of redemption, the same one that Father Antonio Vieira promised the enslaved Brazilians in a future life, is played out the injunction of an etapist politics, in which abolition must be the fruit of a process that is itself dialectical – "the gradual abolition of slavery", Hegel says, "is a more convenient and more just thing" (*etwas Angemesseneres und Richtigeres*) (Derrida 2016:

90). In sum, he proposes a gradual abolition, without a "sudden supersumption" (*plözliche Aufhebung*), which culminates ironically, in the case of the Hegelian *Lessons*, with the sudden abandonment of Africa from its theoretical horizon ("We leave Africa here," Hegel concludes, "without making mention of it in the sequel. For it is not a part of the historical world: it shows neither movement nor development..." (Derrida 2016: 91)). This sudden and untimely silence may well be a symptom of the objectification and the nullification of Africa and Africans and would illustrate the constitutive situation of the subaltern as those who cannot speak – provided, of course, that we reverse the direction that Hegel assigned to them: it is enslavement and colonization that produce nullification, and not the other way around.

To conclude, let us return to the meta-philosophical question about what could only improperly be called a "comparison" between deconstruction and schizoanalysis. It is quite common for parallels between Deleuze and Derrida to mention the eulogy that the latter delivered before the former's grave; it is also relatively frequent to doubt Derrida's sincerity – but, in our view, this doubt is not pertinent. It is true that Derrida hated *Anti-Oedipus*; as his biographer Benoît Peeters recounts, in a chapter meaningfully entitled "Ruptures", Derrida said at a dinner with friends soon after the launching of the work that *Anti-Oedipus* "is a very bad book (confused, full of crisp denials, etc.)", and that its success in the eyes of "a very suspect sector of public opinion" only proved his judgment (Peeters 2010: 301). Even taking note of these reservations, which make Derrida a less obvious ally than Deleuze and Guattari thought in their *Anti-Oedipus* footnotes, it is inaccurate to situate them simply in *opposing* trenches. Just as Moten could say that he was located at the opposite pole from Frank Wilderson's Afropessimism, and, *for that very reason*, that they were saying the same thing, we should take Derrida's eulogy at Deleuze's funeral seriously when he says that *almost nothing* separated them. Placed in parallel series, like Hegel and Genet in *Glas*, the differential relation between Deleuze and Derrida should not be thought of from the usual terms of comparison, in which a common and general predicate is complemented by a specific difference. It is more productive to think of them united and separated as two strategies that, in their difference, affect each other, but without this meaning that they complement each other. Perhaps it is more appropriate to say that one is the supplement of the other, taking the word "supplement" in the Derridian sense of the term. Or again: that if Derrida appears in *Anti-Oedipus* as an ally, perhaps it would not be too much to take this alliance in the same sense in which, in chapter 3 of the book, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that extensive alliances are preceded by an intensive affiliation, an undetermined common ground in which differences are real but articulated in inclusive disjunctions. In this mirrored difference, what is left out, decisively excluded by an exclusive disjunction, are the colonies, situated through the looking glass.

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Black Reading of Anti-Oedipus. Critique and Unconscious
by CRISTINA PÓSLEMAN

Abstract

This essay proposes an approach to *Anti-Oedipus*, which discusses some guidelines for a critique of the colonial racialized unconscious. To do this, I dwell on the marks of Franz Fanon's philosophy in the honored book, proposing to carry out a black reading, following the philosopher Lewis Gordon. I focus preferably on the category of Oedipus understood as the operating nucleus of familial psychoanalysis.

1. Contextual confidences

> We are all little colonies and it is Oedipus that colonizes us.
>
> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

What follows is a transcription of the presentation I made in October 2022, at the Congresso Internacional *Tomar os Desejos por Realidade. 50 Anos de O Anti-Édipo.* I warn about the tone of orality that, for this reason, the text assumes at times, and about that this article replicates much of what during this year of tributes I shared in conferences and publications.

The name of this section has to do with an ambition, already risky and excessive, which is to involve the biographical dimension in essays, but also to mobilize the relational logic that constitutes us as an academic community. In addition, this name has to do with another circumstance, this time related to the need to make explicit the fact that the experiences that I share here were eventually incommensurable in relation to the theoretical and methodological materials that I had at the time. But this situation would not have been relevant, if it were not for the fact that what it was about, was a deficit that indicated a condition of epistemological submission, which in Latin America we have strongly rooted. Today they are susceptible to be articulated, of course, without guarantees, thanks to factors that I hope to make explicit. Then, let us go to the confidences.

During the nineties, the democracy that Argentina had achieved was bastardized by the fervor of the financialization process that, in our Latin American countries, had been applied in a disembodied manner. Accordingly, the idea spread that philosophical thought should inevitably aim at generating that extra value that would allow it to be at the forefront of financial market activity.

I completed my studies at an Argentinian university, under the pressure of an intellectual model in order to these contextual circumstances. The maximum disobedience regarding the terms of the academic contract was at that time to remove the time line that was imposed on us from the so-called Westernist philosophy[1]. In our institutions we witnessed the battles that some professors had to face to incorporate texts, problems, categories, that deviated from this line and that still did not receive a name: was it Latin American philosophy? Or better Argentine, Brazilian, Chilean, Colombian? Was it convenient to include the word thought? Or was it better to leave the word philosophy?

In this context, I finished my undergraduate studies and began the postgraduate stage. I turned to Gilles Deleuze, because he offered me the lyrics of a certain rebellion. And in the course of my thesis on the concept of creation in the work of this philosopher, I found, in addition to support, severe criticism. I met Gayatri Spivak, an emblem of deconstruction used at the service of the Indian diaspora, with Julie Wuthnow, defender of indigenous policies; both determined to confront Deleuzian nomadism. But I also met Néstor Perlongher, Luis Orlandi, Gregorio Barembleitt, Eduardo Viveiros de Castro, Suely Rolnik. As I wrote there, "Looked at from today, what seems like a museum of names, is showing itself more and more clearly as a struggle between deconstruction and anthropophagy" (Pósleman 2022: 17).

But what profoundly marked this kind of turn that I describe was my encounter with Frantz Fanon, in the heat of theorizing about the unconscious, especially in chapter II of *Anti-Oedipus*. Each portrait that I have to make of the Martinican, shows new nuances that outline the impressive character he is: the author of some very powerful books that marked the independence militancy of the mid-twentieth century with fire, the psychiatrist who preceded Guattari at the *Saint Alban Clinic*, the militant of the Algerian independence struggle, the author of explosive articles in the newspaper of the Algerian National Liberation Front El Moudjahid. Today, I add: the author of censored books. I return to this circumstance in the next section. But firstly, I share a memory that illustrates this turn that I experience regarding Fanon. Like all Deleuze Studies Conferences, one of the last days is the official presentation of the conferences that follow. On one of those occasions was presented the meeting that would be held in London. One

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[1]   I use the term Westernalist, instead of Western, to highlight the performative strength of philosophy that perceives itself as exclusive. In addition, I insist on its roots because it seems to me the best way to frame the majority editorial proposal that comes to us from France, Germany, England, Australia and the United States.

of the images that was shared was the immense and luxurious castle where it would take place. The memory I keep is of a Mexican colleague and I, somewhat moved by the enormous difference between the effect that these images had on us and on most of our colleagues. At that moment I ratified my desire that my presentations make it clear that the image of a castle for certain people is that of a slave ship for others.

2. The censored of the academy

The same year that marks the fiftieth anniversary of *Anti-Oedipus* also marks the seventieth anniversary of *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), one of Fanon's most famous books. Although it must be recognized that *Anti-Oedipus* has not had an easy life, if compared to the fate of *Black Skin...* or other books of the Martinique writer, the tensions that he may have experienced seem derisory candid. *Black skin...* is the thesis rejected and the one that had to be readapted to pass the filter of the metropolitan academy[2]. And, although not specifically this text, another one by Fanon, *L'an V de la révolution algérienne*, published in French in 1959 and as *A Dying Colonialism*, in English in 1965, was censored in France[3]. In the South, in the emblematic 68, is the Portuguese version of *The Wretched of the Earth*, published in France in 1961, the one censored in Brazil (Guimarães 2008; 105).

It was to be hoped that Fanon's censorship would not shock many intellectuals in France. A clear symptom of a latent tendency in the colonial academic epistemological contract[4]: that of sparing listening to voices that destabilize the fortified buildings that erect their landscape. Lewis Gordon presents an example of this tendency, referring particularly to the relations between Sartre and Fanon. Gordon shares the presumption that Sartre's thought of an open dialectic, which broke with the rigid attitude of scientific socialism, could have been fueled by reading *Black Skin*.... more than for his visit to Poland and for having seen Stalinism there. But, according to Gordon, this reference is not made expressed precisely because of the difficulty of some European authors to assume the influence of an author who goes beyond the metropolitan borders (2014: 57).

I presume that the history of those preferences and exclusions, specifically related to the work of Guattari and Deleuze is already being written. Behind this image of a compact block with which the publishing offer circulates, which contributes to increase the sale of

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[2] I take the concept of "metropolitan" as Frantz Fanon understands it throughout his work. With this term he refers to the place and project that establishes a certain way of understanding the effects of civilizational discourses and the imperial exercise of modern colonialism.

[3] In November 1959, *L'an V de la révolution algérienne* was published in Paris, edited by Francois Maspero, in the Cahiers libres collection. It was translated into Spanish as *El año V de la Revolución algeriana* or *Sociología de la Revolución* (1968). This book is prohibited for threatening national security (Valdés García, F. 2017: 31).

[4] With this expression I refer to the conditions under which a contractual configuration is expanded corresponding to academic institutions linked to Eurocentric historical contexts.

books and which crowns the theories, there is indifference that touches very sensitive points of this dominant encyclopedia. A black reading of this block, which in our case points to the so-called contemporary French philosophy in particular, has been showing us these cracks. The methodological guidelines of the approach that I propose, owe much to the thought of Lewis Gordon. Fundamentally, in a black reading, the problem of the dehumanization of the world resonates or, in other words, the urgency of reformulating the terms of criticism, but not in the abstract, or as an irrepressible destiny to which Humanity (with a capital letter) must attend with care. A black reading assumes the problem of dehumanization, or the distancing of life from the world -in Deleuze's terms-, but hand in hand with the particular experience that throbs in certain writings postponed by Westernist thought. Gordon refers specifically to the voices coming from those people who have been systematically denied being. Let us evoke the famous rude men of Tierra del Fuego and New Holland, to whom Kant denies the possession of transcendental reason, incorporating the category of sub humanity into the colonial theoretical edifice (Kant 1991: 269). That case is worth as a sample of an immense gallery with which we have been dealing with for a few decades.

For example, one of those episodes that merit this approach, directly related to the authors of the honored book, is the one that occurred in connection with Palestine. I occupy a few lines to summarize it. It is worth it. Indeed, there are testimonies about two meetings that take place at the end of the seventies in Paris. One, at CERFI (Centre d'études, de recherches et de formation Institutionnelles), where Israelis and Palestinians meet, and where Guattari has organized a colloquium on the Zionist-Palestinian conflict with his friend Halévi. Of course, in this meeting, the favor belongs to Palestine. The other, in Foucault's house, where Sartre is, as editor of Les temps modernes and Sartre's guest, Edward Said, who will be our rapporteur and who is, inwardly, surprised by the positions adopted. In Foucault's house, who strangely does not participate directly in the debate, a defense of the state of Israel is being drawn up (Svirsky; Ben-Arie, 2020). However, the deep meaning that these circumstances entail, or perhaps for that very reason, the history of these encounters and disagreements are not given to us as theoretical priorities.

As I anticipated in my confidences, Fanon is quoted in the middle of a key moment in the plot development of the famous anti-oedipal productive unconscious. Let us bear in mind that there are few occasions, in the sea of essays on the unconscious, in which Fanon is a reference. So, a variable is added to this investigation of what explains the lack of interest in the censorship of Fanon's text in France at the time. And it is that, if it is the unconscious that is theorized, this indifference regarding censorship is more than eloquent. It demonstrates how, paying attention to the performative dimension of a writing, is possible to blow away the fog with which the statement tries to cover up some terms of an alleged semiotic pact full of asymmetries.

What effects did Fanon's censorship have? Summarily, if I am allowed to give as evidence what results from a sweeping tour of the theoretical limits through which

Fanonian texts will circulate when they are released from the prohibition, I must say that these are absorbed by anthropology, sociology, political theory, even for film theory and for film itself, but not by psychoanalysis or philosophy. It is extremely striking that an entire gigantic archive that calls itself responsible for critical thinking par excellence, does not integrate materials of the nature of these texts I am referring. Thousands of pages written around desire, the will to power, thousands of pages written based on the suspicion directed at consciousness, at the subject, in which neither the representatives of the movement of blackness nor those of the theoreticians of coloniality, in short, no anti-colonialist voice is present[5]. Fanon had given the body to a France that first recruited him into its ranks in the First World War, and then segregated him with decoration included. He had put his body into the anti-colonialist struggles that made Algeria and Tunisia boil. Precisely that character is conspicuously absent. Obviously, this difficulty in assuming authors who deviate from the canons strongly influenced the field of philosophy and psychoanalysis. Even today, a figure like Suely Rolnik, author of such an important text as *Esferas da insurreiçâo. Notas para uma vida nâo cafetinada*, confesses not having read Fanon (2018: 109). Being that she was a friend of Guattari, the protagonist of the fervent seventies, times par excellence of investigation and, I would say, of the militancy of desire, it is bizarre that she has not come across this character.

All this tells us about the difficulty involved in noticing the cranks that move what we can risk calling the theoretical unconscious. What would not imply major problems if it were not that this category, that of the unconscious, is one of the emblems precisely of the critical exercise of the theory; it is considered the tool par excellence that presumably allows dissipating the claims of a philosophy of consciousness that is established as the fundamental nucleus of the famous philosophical modernity. I think that the great Westernalist illusion of having "discovered" [sic] this sphere of the unconscious goes hand in hand with another illusion, that of the alleged transgressive potential of criticism. That is why I consider it important to give ourselves some time to review the privacy of this link. I presume that a black reading should do it, if it is true that it is expected to reconsider the terms of the academic contract.

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[5] I pause for a second on this notion. While colonization is the historical process, coloniality is a category linked to it, but which refers to the analytical historical condition. The semantic scope of coloniality has not stagnated. Aníbal Quijano (2007) is the one who introduces it, articulated in the notion of coloniality of power. With this term Quijano refers to a specific and historical pattern of power, which is composed from the structural association of two fundamental axes that were established between the end of the 15th century and the beginning of the 16th century: a racial/ethnic classification of the population of the world and a system of material relations consistent with this classification. Walter Mignolo (2015) displaces the concept towards the philosophical universe and proposes the notions of coloniality of knowing, feeling and believing. Then it will be Nelson Maldonado Torres (2007) who works on the notion of coloniality of being.

3. Critique and unconscious

The aim is to reconsider the terms of these illusions and expose the risk they run of incurring what they intend to disable. I have chosen the figure of the boomerang to illustrate the path that the philosophical categories fundamentally linked to this program – flawed since its emergence – must follow, in regards to the asymmetric distribution of ontological status assignments. I am referring to the complicity of a sector of the academy with – I would say, its leading role in – the construction and conservation of what Rita Segato (2015) calls "colonial modernity". An almost unbearable tension can be diagnosed in these Eurocentric philosophical categories when it comes to describing and analyzing how, extrapolated to the colonies, they must preserve their epistemological privileges and their power to adjudicate the right to being or to subjectivity, as well as to his denial. Let us note, for example, the boomerang that is for Westernist philosophy the concept of transcendental subject or that of perpetual peace, to give the closest examples. The list would be endless. But, detecting this tension, this violence exerted by the self-preservation of the epistemological privilege of these categories, requires a special operation. It is necessary to carry out crosses with other writings, which leave open the possibility of an appropriation that assumes consequences that are otherwise overlooked. As if with a brush, which in this case could be the operation of reading in black, we were rubbing the silk against the grain[6].

It is interesting to attend to what happens when we apply these crosses to the unconscious. We know that regarding the "discovery" of this instance, the nickname of criticism corresponds to the operation consisting of facing the claims of a theory of the subject that, as I have just described, perceives itself as a subsidiary to a substantialist and universalist ontology. Until there, the deployment of the many philosophies that confronted the modern subject, appears as a gallery of colored mirrors. Philosophy had finally rebounded on a springboard that allowed it to leap into unusual lands fertile for desire, for the will to power, for the class struggle. He had left behind the reduction of the

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[6] In a recently published article, I make a counterpoint between Kant's and Foucault's answers to the question about what criticism is. What interests me in this task of investigating the articulations between criticism and the unconscious is how Kant's theorization about that natural power to use his own understanding to feed the progress that he awards to humanity, excludes the rude men of New Holland and Tierra del Fuego and that this paragraph has not attracted much attention throughout centuries of studies on the work of Kant. Regarding Foucault, I address how criticism is constituted, in the face of Kantian essentialism, in a practice of "transgression" posed as a genealogy that will not infer from the form of what we are, what it is impossible for us to be or know, as Kant, but will extract from the contingency that has made us what we are, the possibility of not being, of not doing, or of not being governed. I am interested in noting that up to this point, Foucauldian criticism would even be susceptible to being inscribed in the field of postcolonial studies. But then, I head towards a third critique that would emerge from the intervention of the Fanonian texts. A critique that is not reduced to detecting the regimes of truth in order to challenge them, but rather points to the regimes of the skin, as I have called it, which would be the dimension postponed in that fabric, or the substratum of modernity, no longer simply hidden , but that which must be kept hidden (Pósleman 2022: 15-49).

scope of the critique to the Kantian proclamation of "using one's own understanding" (Kant 1994: 7). A claim to carry out a critique of that critique arose from among the ranks of the philosophies that would definitively mark the century, as the century of desire, or of transgressions against the regimes of truth, or as the century of deconstruction of a decrepit *logos*.

Meanwhile, a psychiatrist trained at the Sorbonne, who in his clinical work faces circumstances other than those supposed to be linked to the categories he keeps in the *made in* Paris toolbox he carries, immerses himself in a writing focused on hacking those suspicions that white philosophy presumes. In this task, he recovers the testimonies of the militants, and dedicates his study to revealing the inconsistency of the modern program. He detects the double standard of colonial violence: the black neurosis of wanting to be white, as well as the white paranoia of losing ontological privilege.

4. Colonization carried out by other means

Research on the unconscious and its articulation within the framework of anti-colonialist approaches, has been considered for some decades. In the field of anthropology it is very thick. I highlight a chapter of a book by the aforementioned Rita Segato, dedicated in particular to what she calls Black Oedipus. She analyzes the white bourgeois family structure in Brazil and highlights the total silence, also academic, around the figure of the Afro-descendant nanny, speaking of a double foreclosure of the name of the poor and black nanny (2015).

The most powerful editorial offer on the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, was not far behind. There is a book of essays compiled by Simone Bignall and Paul Patton, from 2010, called *Deleuze and the Postcolonial*. In this compilation, the focus is placed on protecting Deleuzian Guattarinian thought from postcolonial criticism, such as that of Spivak or Whutnow, who, for the authors of the book, insist on inscribing it in the line of modern European, though, according to me, without sufficient evidence. This exchange deserves a separate presentation. I suggest going through the book. For his part, Patton, in his book *Deleuze and the Political*, incorporates the problem of colonialism as a topic in addition to devoting an entire chapter to it. He takes up the problem of indigenous land claims in Australia and identifies native title jurisprudence as a constitutional metamorphosis machine. But he does not touch the problem of coloniality, nor the production of Oedipus as an interior colony. In fact, he is another of those who does not take into account the incidence of Fanon (2013: 109-131).

Some essays admit the crossing between the theses of Deleuze and Guattari and those of Fanon when it comes to uncovering the operation of hyper-coding of subjectivity by the Oedipal triangle. These essays put the emphasis on two different ways in which one and the other carry out this discovery. Amber Musser (2012), for example, considers that

the affective flows that open between the unconscious and the collective are rooted in different spheres. While Fanon links these flows with the sphere of the social and historical, Deleuze and Guattari, according to their analysis, refer them to that of the sensational. I admit my closeness to Robert Young (2003), Dagmar Herzog (2016) and Guillaume Sibertin-Blanc (2015), because I agree that the way in which Deleuze and Guattari approach the transversal condition of desire is recurrently underestimated. It is precisely at the crossroads with Fanonian thought, as the named authors, and with whom I agree show, what nourishes the commitment to the hypothesis of the constitutivity of colonialism and racialization as the factors that explains the transversal condition between those spheres.

Deleuze and Guattari resort to Bergson and his "discreet revolution" (1998: 102)[7], to expose the risks of extrapolating approaches that assume the relationships between the microcosm and the macrocosm as two isolated spheres – one of which would be inscribed in the other and would be expressed in it –, to the dimensions of the familiar and the social. This discreet revolution would indicate the opening of these two wholes, the micro and the macro, which would entail crucial consequences regarding the relationships between the living and the world. They write that,

> If the living thing resembles the world, it is, on the contrary, to the extent that it opens onto the opening of the world; If it is a whole, it is to the extent that the whole, that of the world as well as that of the living, is always being made, produced or progressing, inscribing itself in an irreducible and non-closed temporal dimension (Deleuze; Guattari, 1998: 102).

And it is when it comes to replicating this Bergsonian revolution in an anti-oedipal way in the field of relations between the family and the social that they resort to the analysis of clinical files contributed by Fanon. They express their astonishment in this famous phrase that I reproduce in full:

> It is curious that it was necessary to wait for the dreams of the colonized to realize that, at the vertices of the pseudo-triangle, the mother danced with the missionary, the father got butt-fucked by the tax collectors, the self got hit by a white. It is precisely this coupling of the parental figures with agents of another nature, their embrace as fighters, that prevents the triangle from closing again, standing on its own and claiming to express or represent this other nature of the agents posed in the unconscious itself. (Ibid.: 102)

Fanon's accusation exposes the fact that the Oedipal structure does not come to a close, as the testimonies to which he resorts show, and therefore that its terms remain linked to

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[7] All the quotes from *Anti-Oedipus* correspond to one of the Spanish editions and the translation has been made by the author of the essay.

the agents of oppressive social reproduction. Deleuze and Guattari explain how colonization produces and processes the unconscious through the dissociation between the sphere of reproduction and that of production. And they present a magnificent explanation. They write:

> (the analysis) becomes, in part, under the effect of colonization. The colonizer says: your father is your father and nothing more than this, or the maternal grandfather, don't go taking them for bosses [...] you can make yourself triangular in your corner and place your house between those of the paternals and those of the maternal [...] your family is your family and nothing else, social reproduction no longer passes through it, even if your family is needed to provide a material that will be subjected to the new regime of production [...] So yes, an Oedipal framework is outlines for dispossessed savages: Oedipus of shantytowns (Ibid.: 175).

This is one of the analytical thresholds that we find in *The Anti-Oedipus*. The Fanonian reading contributes to the detection of an invisible factor in the theories about the oedipal triangle. Familiarism and its application to the social sphere shows the double standard of colonialist violence. I return once more to the Fanonian accusation of the trend that instills whitewashing values. But now, having analyzed the double tactic of applying the familial scheme to the social, and at the same time hiding this operation in order to exercise a submission that is directly inscribed in the subjectivities. It is this violence, ultimately, that constitutes the true content of the unconscious. Then, in addition, it makes the consistency of the Europeanization process itself to which we referred. It is in this sense that Deleuze and Guattari write "Oedipus is always the colonization carried out by other means, it is the internal colony and we will see that, even among us, Europeans, it is our intimate colonial formation" (1998: 177).

5. And meanwhile... *The Anti-Oedipus.*

We no longer just suspect. *Anti-Oedipus* undresses this intimate colonial formation configured through the reduction of the polyvocal real in favor of the application of the familial scheme to all social relations. The operating core of this application is the unconscious. For this reason, what matters, according to what we expect from an anti-oedipal critique, is to note that this biunivocality is put in check in this work, not only by admitting the separation between the two spheres, as can be pointed out by antipsychiatry, which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, would insist on hypostatize the family (1998: 330), but from the detection of coloniality as a condition. And I risk making a comparison between what the authors call oedipalization as colonization carried out by other means and the condition of coloniality.

The criticism understood in terms of the Freudian-Lacanian suspicion must be rectified. If Fanon warns of the impossibility that it implies for Algerians to deal in the clinic with the application of this colonial unconscious, Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, appropriate this thesis to put in tension the very metropolitan clinical and theoretical context. Something that evokes in a certain sense the appeal that Sartre makes in the prologue to *The Condemned...*, which he directs to the "Europeans" (Sartre 1965: 5-19). But, more than that, more than an appeal to pay attention to a bell of history that is ringing a mirror that shows a not very pleasant image, in the case of Deleuze and Guattari, it is a question of directly showing the complicity of philosophy and the psychoanalysis with the modern project and its constitutive segregative violence, in the very performativity of a theoretical unconscious that does nothing more than safeguard its privileges.

In the end, I would like to make explicit that I accept the insistence on the accusatory and, at times, vehement tone of the text. Including the biographical record in an academic text is a prohibition that I have been understanding, for some time, as a mark of coloniality and patriarchy in the academy. In the case of *Antiedipus*, I dare to say that this license that I give myself is the true tribute. It is also, modestly, a tribute to those who fight for the emancipation of desire.

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The Multiplicity of Marronage[1]

by JOHN PROTEVI

Abstract

I want to see what we can say, using Deleuze and Guattari's concept of a "regime of violence", about marronage, or flight from enslavement. I will concentrate on the plantation slavery system of the New World, though I believe what I say, insofar as I incorporate work by James C. Scott on Southeast Asia, will illuminate marronage in other circumstances. I will show in a materialist but not reductionist manner that the analysis of their regime of violence lets us see the social structure and geographical features of maroon communities through the lens of "marginality", that is, the search for a form of life that best enables, though of course it doesn't guarantee, the independence of maroons faced with the massive violence capacities of the plantocracy. I don't want to say my analysis is a total reduction, as I won't try to derive their art and music and religion and so on from their regime of violence, so I don't want to say the cultural life of maroons was nothing but preparation for war, but I certainly think war is a central factor in their form of life.

Outline of the multiplicity of marronage

> I may run, but all the time that I am, I'll be looking for a stick! A defensible position!
>
> George Jackson

I hope what I say here will interest those familiar with Deleuze and Guattari's thought, as I will show that "mastery" and "marronage" have to be added to the list of "regimes of violence" they enumerate, and, because of the particular nature of the violence that shapes their form of life, marronage is a form of occupying space and time that, while certainly not "striated" as is plantation society (in which each movement and behavior is tracked and accounted for), is not purely "smooth" or "nomadic" either, that is, solely and always

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dedicated to mobility tactics bent on destroying the plantation system. I also hope it will interest historians, anthropologists, political scientists, geographers, and others.

There is a large scholarly literature on marronage in the modern Atlantic system[2]; reading a selection from that literature along with James C Scott's work on non-state peoples in SE Asia, I propose the outlines of the multiplicity of marronage, a set of interlinking processes that triggers qualitative changes in the behavior of the concrete systems in which they are instantiated when thresholds in the relations of those processes are reached. This necessitates finding common structures motivating slave flight across different social forms, such as capitalist slavery (a form of chattel slavery, in which the slave's entire person becomes a commodity bought on a market and the products of their labor are sold on a market) and other forms of slavery (for instance, non-capitalist chattel slavery, as in ancient Rome, or communal slavery in imperial systems, what Marxists used to call the Asiatic mode of production).

The multiplicity of marronage has a focus: in their flight, enslaved people search for a position of marginality to the state plantation system, where best to establish a regime of violence that will manage their relation to the state of war that slavery constitutes. Here I use "war" in the sense of violence aiming at territorial control, population displacement, and enslavement, not in Deleuze and Guattari's specialized sense of the "war machine" as anti-state, or by extension, anti-regulatory, violence. Most maroons looked to be free from, but close to – marginal to – the slave system from which they escaped. Most maroon communities were not anti-state in the sense of Deleuze and Guattari's nomads, bent on destroying states, as they often interacted with states in a regime of violence that included raid, war, and treaty, as well as trade when in relative security against the colonial system.[3]

Marronage is itself multiple. I will follow Carolyn Fick's schema here (1992, 6-9). The classic sociological distinction, found in Debien 1976, is taken from planters' accounts, and is that between *petit marronage* (flight with short temporal extension, sometimes only a day or two) and *grand marronage* (flight with no intention to return). This sociological distinction is developed by Roberts (2105) in a political dimension, who distinguishes, within grand marronage, between sovereign marronage, which looks to establish a state by a lawgiver, and sociogenic marronage, which looks to establish a new

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2   I draw the portrait of the multiplicity of marronage from accounts of various instances of maroon communities in Surinam (Price 1976), Jamaica (Patterson 1979 [1970], Kopytoff 1978, Johnson 2020), Brazil (Kent 1965, Freitas 1990, Schwartz 1992, Anderson 1996, Thornton 2008, Krug 2018), Haiti (Fick 1990, Casimir 2020, Roberts 2015), and the USA (Aptheker 1979 [1939]). For treatments of general themes of marronage, I rely on the Introduction to Price 1979, as well as on Scott 2009 and 2016, Roberts 2015, and Bona 2016.

3   That's not to say that marronage wasn't an important factor in the Saint Domingue revolution (Fick 1990, 7), which did indeed seek to destroy the colonial slave state; the role of former maroons in the turbulence of post-revolutionary Haiti, the struggle between those who wanted was to replace the colonial state with another state or with a non-state "counter-plantation system" (Casimir 2020) is a matter of ongoing historical investigation, whose political economy dimensions are explored in Nesbitt 2022.

system where one finds "collective agency, non-sovereignty … cultivation of a community that aligns civil society with political society" (Roberts 2015, 11).

Debates over the psychological dimensions of marronage noted by Fick in her literature review concern motivation, with some claiming that escape from cruelty was more important than a desire for freedom in the 17th and 18th centuries. A further socio-psychological distinction noted by Fick is that between marronage that is "restorationist" (escape from slavery to return to "African" subsistence) and that which is revolutionary (destroy the slave system). In a very helpful methodological remark, Fick cites Leslie Manigat who distinguishes an empiricist descriptive stance, tending to dismiss the importance of marronage as a threat to the stability of the entire system (insofar as the system lasted hundreds of years), and a sociopolitical perspective that emphasizes the ongoing threat to the system represented by marronage (it motivated repeated expeditions, at considerable expense, on the part of planters against maroon communities).

A final distinction, which we could call geopolitical, in the multiplicity of marronage is that between wild and urban marronage. This distinction shows that maroon marginality is not solely geographical flight, but is a social relation, a becoming free from slavery. Urban marronage is hiding in plain sight by blending into crowds of freed people of color in the city, often with aid of forged papers (Price 1979, 24). Wild marronage entails finding – and improving (Stennet 2020) – a space outside state space, but nonetheless close enough to states for the major forms of interaction maroon communities have found with states: trade, raid, war, and treaty.

Rather than a typology, from a Deleuzoguattarian perspective we should see these distinctions as representing tendencies; any concrete act of marronage will be composite, though one tendency might predominate. A night-time escape might turn into grand marronage if the escapee meets the right companions. A grand marronage might dissolve into individual flights with quick return if conditions for sustained survival are not found. A flight from cruelty can turn revolutionary by circumstance, and so on.

Marronage is related to other social structures and movements. In Deleuze and Guattari's terms, as a pattern of a way of life (an "abstract machine" to use their technical term) the multiplicity of marronage forms connections with other multiplicities, other sets of processes with their own patterns and range of instantiation. Hence there are connections of modern Atlantic slavery to thermodynamics (global solar energy flows driving wind and ocean currents enabling the triangular trade system), to plant physiology (bio-available solar energy in sugar), to human physiology and the culturally-inflected cravings of humans (sugar and other New World consumables such as tobacco and coffee), to other slavery systems (racialization leading to intergenerational slavery was more intense in trans-Atlantic slavery reflected in lower rates of manumission and assimilation than those in other systems [Patterson 1989]), to other forms of flight (from peasantry, from genocides, from the drudgery of forced labor in general).

In examining marronage, we also find connections to other forms of resistance by enslaved peoples (slave ship rebellions, suicides, infanticide, killings, revolts, and revolutions). Revolts and revolutions that attack the slave system itself, will involve the geographical heart of the slave system, the plantations and cities, but Fick emphasizes the role of wild marronage in creating the basis for Mackandal's action in 1757 Saint Domingue. The events of 1791, Fick says, might have been called a maroon war elsewhere but in revolutionary Saint Domingue the process of maroons turning revolutionaries became "irreversible". Small groups of maroons met others; "at this conjuncture that slave deserters, who in ordinary times were called maroons or fugitives … become by the very nature of the circumstance, insurrectionaries, brigands, and rebels" (Fick, 107). Fick cites Patterson, who says one may suggest that "all sustained slave revolts must acquire a Maroon dimension" (Patterson 1979, 279).

Deleuze and Guattari on slavery and capitalism

Deleuze and Guattari don't say anything directly about marronage in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, although deterritorialization and the line of flight (each term is roughly akin to changing links of environmental features and habitual behaviors) are important concepts. They use the Black American radical George Jackson as a figure of the "regime of violence" often involved in a line of flight.[4]

What do Deleuze and Guattari say about slavery? They have both literal and figurative uses of the terms "slave" [*esclave*] and "slavery" [*esclavage*] in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. There's nothing too surprising about their figurative uses; it fits into what one might now consider an objectionable tradition of using a term whose primary extension for the past 500 years has been real African slavery to figure various other types of unfreedom. (There was real enslavement in the English workhouses used for vagabonds, as described by Marx in the primitive accumulation chapter of *Capital*, but I mean here the use of "slave" to figure European subjection to absolutism, as in Locke's *Second Treatise of Government*.) In Deleuze and Guattari's texts, we find *esclavage* as the self-subjugation of the bourgeoisie to capital (Deleuze; Guattari 1977: 254). We also see *esclavage* as voluntary servitude to fascism (Deleuze; Guattari 1977: 29) on Reich and Spinoza). And in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the term is used in discussing the self-command inherent in Kant's moral philosophy (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 130).[5]

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[4]   Deleuze and Guattari refer to Jackson's line from July 28, 1970, quoted as the epigraph to this essay, "Il se peut que je fuie, mais tout au long de ma fuite, je cherche une arme!" which is translated by Lane, Hurley, and Seem as "I may take flight, but all the while I am fleeing, I will be looking for a weapon" at Deleuze; Guattari 1977: 277. For commentary on the incorporation of Jackson's writings into Deleuze and Guattari's works, see Koerner 2011.

[5]   Some uses of "enslave" in the English version of *Anti-Oedipus* are translations of *asservissement* (Deleuze; Guattari 1977: 249, 365). Note also that "machinic enslavement" in the English version of *A Thousand Plateaus* is a translation of "l'asservissement machinique" (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 451; 456).

In the literal sense, many of their references are to "generalized slavery" in ancient empires (peasants subject to conscripted or *corvée* labor for *grands travaux* -- monumental or utilitarian projects such as irrigation and flood control (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 448ff; note at 569n43E; refers to Parain 1969; see also Bert 2013 and above all Badaire 2023)). Again, in relation to ancient empires, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the figure of the freed slave (*esclave affranchi*) in terms of "deterritorialization" or the setting loose of flows of people to move from their traditional homes (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 448). In their terms, "primitive" society was "territorial" (they mean this to include hunter-gatherers, but their analysis is heavily weighted to the ethnography of sedentary chiefdoms (e.g., Clastres 1989, 1994; see also Viveiros de Castro 2014, 2019)).

In Deleuze and Guattari's reading, primitive society initiation rites marked bodies of initiates in relation to the earth as source of all goods; such "coding" rendered their spatial location and their characteristic behaviors of transfer of goods ("mobile blocs of debt") predictable within the limits of their territories. Such coding was "overcoded" by imperial administrative mechanisms such as censuses and tax rolls, whereby people and their actions were inscribed in a centralized accounting system that transcends local codes. However, the calling up of a workforce to send to the sites of *grands travaux* would entail "deterritorialization" to allow loosening up of travel to the worksites and "decoding" to allow new behaviors (digging and hauling, let's say, as opposed to hunting, gathering, and craft work). And in a last reference to the ancient world, the figure of the slave appears in the discussion of the composition of the "nomad war machine", their name for anti-state forces in general, whose point of highest intensity, they claim, was the Steppe nomads (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 393).

In contrast to ancient slavery, trans-Atlantic slavery of Africans is noted by Deleuze and Guattari only rarely, in passing and by implication. It is implied in contradistinction to generalized slavery at Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 451 ("Even slavery changes; it no longer defines the public availability of the communal worker but rather private property as applied to individual workers" – this would hold for both Greek and Roman slavery as well as for trans-Atlantic slavery). It also appears in the discussion of the work model vs "free action" at Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 491 ("the Americans apparently imported so many blacks only because they could not use the Indians, who would rather die").

While Deleuze and Guattari don't say anything about marronage in general, and hence nothing about it in relation to Atlantic slavery in the early phase of global capitalism, they do have a theory of capitalism as such. For them, capitalism is built on the surplus value of flow, as opposed to surplus value of code for "primitive" societies and surplus value of overcoding for imperial systems. In a deliberatively provocative move, they will come up with a theory of machinic surplus value (as opposed to Marx's position that only human labor power produced surplus value) but that would be for them a much later

development, well after the abolition of gross forms of Atlantic chattel slavery. We can't pursue this in the present context but for further analysis, see Thoburn 2003.

The relation of slavery and capitalism is a highly technical and very much active debate. Recent works focus on surplus value. Foster et al 2020 claim Marx is best read as slaves producing surplus value. Nesbitt 2022, on the other hand, shows how scholars who concentrate on the way slaves produced commodities for a global market see slavery as an integral part of capitalism, while those who concentrate on a definition of capitalism centered on the extraction of surplus value from wage labor see slavery as an antiquated holdover. For Nesbitt, both sides neglect the Marxian analysis of capitalism as a "social form". There is such a thing as capitalist slavery for Nesbitt, but despite its horrors, it does not involve extraction of surplus value. Slaves cannot be the source of surplus value as they have no labor power that can be sold as a commodity; rather than purchase labor power as do owners who employ wage laborers, owners of operations using slave labor purchase the person, not their labor power. Hence slaves are treated as constant capital, as sources of motive power, rather than as variable capital.

On the other hand, slave labor does produce commodities that are sold on a global market, enabling slave owners to thereby capture a portion of the surplus value available in the global system, building up wealth for those owners. Nesbitt walks us through Marx's analyses in *Capital* volume 3 that show that the market price for commodities reflects an average rate of profit for the system as a whole, no matter the composition of capital in the production process for any one producer. (Although Nesbitt doesn't get into the details, Blackburn (1997) claims, in his support of Williams (1944), to be able to show that profits from West Indies slave labor plantations found their way into financial circuits in England, providing a catalytic effect in the form of easy credit for the burgeoning English industrial system.) Slavery gets squeezed out of the capitalist system by improvements to productivity of other forms of constant capital which along with wage labor produce surplus value that it alone is able to capture as market price of commodities fall. Nesbitt's case study is slave-produced cane sugar undercut by beet sugar produced by advanced machinery and proletarian wage labor.

Deleuze and Guattari are among those who see slavery as non-capitalist. By defining capitalism as the conjunction of flows of labor that is decoded (people able to learn new habits) and deterritorialized (people able to move in search of work) and flows of money that is decoded (fungible between merchants, industry, and finance) and deterritorialized (banking systems allowing investment and disinvestment on national and international scales) they see enslavement in terms of non-capitalist economies. Hence, they talk about the political economy of slave societies in distinction to capitalism in their "universal history" in *Anti-Oedipus*; in the case of Rome, "all the preconditions [of decoding] are present … without producing a capitalism properly speaking but rather a regime based on slavery [*régime esclavagiste*]" (Deleuze; Guattari 1977: 223). Rome had chattel slavery, but production was dedicated to amassing concrete wealth via the profitable sale of

commodities. Rich Romans pursued enjoyment from consumption of commodities; we do not see reinvestment, forced by competition in a market for the means of production, into accumulation of surplus value. In the Marxist formula, Roman production was commodity accumulation mediated by money (C-M-C) as opposed to money accumulation via commodity sale (M-C-M', the mature form of capitalism). A similar point is made in *A Thousand Plateaus* in discussing the conditions for capitalism: "the flow of labor must no longer be determined as slavery or serfdom [*l'esclavage ou le servage*] but must become naked and free" (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 452).

Although there is not too much on modern Atlantic slavery in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, a point of articulation to decolonial debates would be the references to Samir Amin in *Anti-Oedipus* 3 on the relation of periphery and center. For Deleuze and Guattari, although the tendency of the rate of profit to fall holds in the center (because of the replacement of variable capital by fixed capital via technologization of production), it is compensated for by continuing expansion of capitalism at the periphery (permanent primitive accumulation). Hence the periphery is not traditional or antiquated but is integrated into the global system. (See Weeks 2019 on DG as dependency theorists.)

General remarks on the notion of regimes of violence

Deleuze and Guattari write, "Violence is found everywhere, but under different regimes and economies" (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 425). A regime of violence would be the pattern of approved and disapproved violent and peaceful (violence-avoiding, conflict-resolving and mitigating) acts and responses characteristic of a particular social system. I'll exclude what Oksala (2012) calls "ontological violence" (that which chops up the world, taking this as that, the very form of discursive thought) and "instrumental violence" (the application of force after a political decision-making process, e.g., going to war after a debate). Regimes of violence, on the other hand, just are an aspect of social systems, intertwined with political (decision-making), cultural (sense-making), and productive / distributive ("economic") patterns.

Let us examine the regimes of violence we find in the relation of maroons and states in the Atlantic slave system. Here we are defining states as do Deleuze and Guattari; states arise with the imposition of "an apparatus of capture", which, in emphasizing the removal of independent access to the earth as means of production, widens the application of the Marxist notion of primitive accumulation (for discussion, see Sibertin-Blanc 2016, Alliez and Lazzarato 2016, Smith 2018, Protevi 2019, Badaire 2023).

> as a general rule, there is primitive accumulation whenever an apparatus of capture is mounted, with that very particular kind of violence that creates or contributes to the creation of that which it is directed against, and thus presupposes itself. The

problem then becomes one of distinguishing between regimes of violence. (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 447)

In their analysis of states as the institution of an apparatus of capture, Deleuze and Guattari see statification as political and economic. "Statification," in the sense of the putting into state-form of non-state societies, is a regime of violence. Some societies ward off the state through their economy of violence, as we know from the work of Clastres in political anthropology (1989; 1994). When it comes to statification, Deleuze and Guattari belong to those who see force rather than contract at the origin of historical states. There is a (political) "originary violence" to (economic) primitive accumulation; states create that which they capture. The violence of the apparatus of capture creates or contributes to the creation of that which it is directed against; such violence thus presupposes itself. This means that in statification non-state peoples must be conquered (primary violence) to turn them into the primary producers (whether taxed peasants, debt bondsman, or chattel slaves) whom the tax collection / army / security forces (secondary violence) can target as cheater, delinquent, criminal, heretic, runaway.

Such state force in imposing capture is rendered invisible; it seems as if in establishing itself the state is establishing peace in non-state life, which is, in the very act of statification, figured as a state of nature or state of war. Once established, the state figures the violence of its police as the use of legitimate force by crime fighters. On the economic side of things, capture presupposes the ability to make equivalences (what Scott [1998; 2009] calls "legibility") such that free activity is turned into comparable units of work enabling the extraction of profit; territories are turned into comparable units of land enabling the charging of rent; and exchange is turned into comparable units of money and the imposition of a currency and taxation system (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 437-448).

Deleuze and Guattari evade any question of a linear narrative of the "origin" of states. Rather, they talk about the conditions for the repeated genesis of concrete states as conforming to a pattern of capture. Scott (2017) nuances this, while staying in general agreement. In his analysis, there are multiple options for political economy regimes for the "domus" (the bringing together into a semi-permanent encampment of multiple species) in rich wetlands, but once the state assemblage can fasten upon the domus and convert much of it to solely grain agriculture, then its appropriation / specialization machine can work. Hence, as with Deleuze and Guattari's "Urstaat" thesis, Scott would say that while any one actual process of statification is contingent on ecological circumstance and geographical constriction, such that, as an actualization of the state diagram it might be chronologically short-lived, the diagram itself stays the same, awaiting in its virtuality further instantiations.

Let us reiterate that, like Scott (2019) and Clastres (1989; 1994), Deleuze and Guattari reject any notion that the state evolves peacefully or contractually from pre-state conditions; rather, they insist, states are born by capture, the violent imposition of the

state form (taxes, obligatory labor, and rent on land) on non-state peoples. The state is then one social form among others, not the telos of sociality. Such capture, however, provokes flight or marronage. The first maroon societies are thus contemporaneous with the first states; as soon as there were states, people "ran for the hills". However, those fleeing the state could rarely simply ignore states, and would sometimes wish to return either to settle down, or to trade with the state. In fact, non-state people came to be necessary to states as supplying both non-human (raw materials) and human (enslaved people) commodities.

Thus, flight, while it is in one sense a mere consequence of capture, is in another sense co-constitutive of states; without those who flee, the state would have no one to trade with and would have to attempt primary resource extraction from hills, mountains, swamps, on its own initiative and expense. But such extension would dangerously stretch the power of the state to extract taxes, labor, and rent in its core. Much better then to manage the margins of the state qua geographical border and deal with the outsiders as needed. At the same time as states dealt with those on their geographical borders, internal population management was instantly set up, as states were in constant need of importing new members whose differences in political status (free vs slave; urban vs rural; and so on) needed to be regulated.

Mastery and marronage as regimes of violence

Let us first consider Deleuze and Guattari's list of regimes of violence before adding "mastery" and "marronage." They write, "We can draw a distinction between struggle, war, crime and policing as so many regimes of violence" (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 447). Struggle [*lutte*] is the form of violence of primitive society, which Deleuze and Guattari gloss, in referring implicitly to Clastres, as coded, blow-by-blow violence: "a certain ritualization of violence".[6] As we noted above, in Deleuze and Guattari's specialized sense, "war" is the form of violence best exemplified in the steppe nomad "war machine" and its violence directed against the states they fell upon. Crime is relative to states; it is the violence of illegality or capture without "right". State policing or lawful violence is capture simultaneously constituting the right to capture. But the state's peace is a regime of violence that disavows itself, that structurally hides the primary violence of the capture that denies access to the earth to nonstate people, forcing them into peasantry or slavery, forms of life that secondary state violence is then used to reinforce.

At the limit, each New World plantation was a state in DG's sense, in both the political violence and economic capture sense. Capture is the imposition of a system of equivalence

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6   The regime of violence of nomadic foragers is detailed by Boehm (2012) as a "reverse dominance hierarchy" in which slackers and bullies are ridiculed, exiled, or killed.

measurement: labor discipline, bookkeeping practices (ability to measure individual productivity of workers), financial speculation (mortgages, credit, insurance), and so on (Thoburn 2003; Alliez and Lazzarato 2016; Weeks 2019). In its violence aspect, slavery is war, a system of terror. Mastery is the creation of a zone where lives can be taken or exposed to threat of torture and death with impunity.[7] It can be encapsulated in the notorious phrase of the *Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina* that "Every freeman of Carolina shall have absolute power and Authority over his Negro slaves".[8] There might be a slight ability for the metropolitan or colonial government to control the actions of planters (the LeJeune affair showed the inability of the Code Noir to be enforced [Fick 1990, 37-38]), but within each plantation the rule of the master was absolute, making "mastery" a regime of violence in DG's sense.

Hence, we can say that mastery is institutionalized terrorism; it is the ability to impose a regime of social death on people (Patterson 2018) – slaves are those who face utter insecurity about the present and future caused by a pattern of torture and killing at whim. Further, mastery's regime of violence, although produced locally and individually, could, when faced by resistance or revolt masters, call upon reinforcements from government and other slaveholders when needed. The structure of planter society was thus also a factor in the regime of violence of mastery. Patterson makes the point that absenteeism increased the probability of marronage and revolt. Slavery-based planter colonialism had a limit case in which it was not a state in the sense of living under a centralized authority but was rather pockets of absolute autocracy of masters who had only economic and social relations with neighbors with very little overall government; they were just living side-by-side. As Patterson put it in the case of Jamaica, whites were "transients" hoping to grab their riches and flee: "a brittle, fragile travesty of a society which lingered during these years constantly on the brink of upheaval and anarchy" (Patterson 1979, 251).

Marronage is its own regime of violence. Dimensions of the maroon regime of violence in its interactions with surrounding states are predatory raiding, defensive war in traditional sense of territorial control, and post-treaty capture and return of escaping slaves.[9] From the state perspective, maroon raiding is crime, though we can also see it as

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[7]   Compare the notion of necropolitics in Mbembe (2003).

[8]   John Locke was Secretary for the Lord Proprieters of Carolina when that phrase was penned. The debate over Locke's role in the trans-Atlantic slave system is quite large. Among other pieces, see Bernasconi and Mann 2005; Uzgalis 2017; and Brewer 2017.

[9]   Maroon raids terrorized white settlers. Aptheker reminds us of Hobbes when he cites an 1823 *Norfolk Herald* article claiming that whites "have for some time been kept in a state of mind peculiarly harassing and painful, from the too apparent fact that their lives are at the mercy of a band of lurking assassins, against whose fell designs neither the power of the law, or vigilance, or personal strength and intrepidity, can avail" (Aptheker 1979, 151). For Hobbes, the state of war is a length of time of uncertainty; it's the psychological stress of war that motivates desire to join social contract. Note also that whites have claimed "law" on their side (cf. Deleuze and Guattari's apparatus of capture analysis: the original violence of statification makes resistance into crime that law and police combat in secondary violence or lawful application of force). After the death of a white man, the *Norfolk Herald* article continues, "No individual after this can consider his life safe from the murdering aim of these monsters in human shape" (note

an alternate form of predation on primary producers as opposed to self-created "legitimate" state taxation. The political economy of maroon communities conformed to the regime of violence; hunting and swidden agriculture are adapted both to environment and to risk of attack (Price 1979, 10). All these relations are entangled and change with changing relations to the still-enslaved population and to autochthonous populations.

Relations with those who were still enslaved were often friendly and co-conspiratorial but could turn antagonistic as treaties of maroon communities with states often required the maroons to assist in pursuit, capture, and return of still-enslaved populations. (The Jamaican revolt known as Tacky's War was ended by maroon troops [Patterson 1979].) This created enmity between maroons and the enslaved (Price 1979, 22), though that is now finessed in creation of Queen Nanny as symbol of resistance.

Maintaining the social structure of maroon communities required an initiation ritual to finesse the situation of multiple African origins of their inhabitants (Price 1979, Johnson 2020). Ensuring loyalty was a constant preoccupation; deserters from a maroon community were executed (Thornton 780; Price 1979, 17). Maroons often distinguished captive slaves taken in raids from slaves who escaped and found them. The former were held in bondage for a time to ensure acculturation (Price 1979, 17; Johnson 2020). In her study of Jamaica's Windward Maroons, Johnson (2020) concluded that their form of servitude was not that of chattel slavery:

> Maroons navigated a middle ground between the traditions of their West African ancestors and the realities (and opportunities) of life on the sugar-producing island of Jamaica …. The relatively small size of the "slave" population, the stability of "slave" families, and the continuities in lines of ownership in Maroon towns intimate that masters saw their "slaves" as more than chattel. This was consistent with the types of bondage practiced in other kin-based communities during the pre- and early colonial period. (Johnson 2020)

Relations with autochthonous peoples were also multiple, ranging from alliance (Schwartz 1992, 1304), to neighboring coexistence, to mingling to form a new people, to war, either spontaneous or by being hired by states. Maroons and natives would also play off different European powers against each other in shifting alliances.

Social structures of maroon communities

There is a large and specialized scholarly literature on the social structure of maroon communities. Among the most interesting and well-developed debates is that over the

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here the Lockean animalizing language). The goal of the militia was to kill the maroons and "thus relieve the neighbouring inhabitants from a state of perpetual anxiety and apprehension". Needless to say, that's the intended state in which slaves were to be kept (Patterson 2018).

social structure of the 17ᵗʰ century Brazilian maroon community of Palmares, with Kent 1965, Schwartz 1992, Anderson 1996, and Thornton 2008 seeing it as a kingdom, and Freitas 1990 and Krug 2018 seeing it as a "republic", in Freitas's words, that is, decentralized and egalitarian, albeit with a centralized military defense system.

Let us see how Deleuze and Guattari's notion of a regime of violence can illuminate the question of social structure of maroon communities. As Deleuze and Guattari specify in *A Thousand Plateaus*, their work is not an analysis of mode of production, of infrastructure and superstructure, but an analysis of their "machinic processes".

> We define social formations by machinic processes and not by modes of production (these on the contrary depend on the processes). Thus primitive societies are defined by mechanisms of prevention-anticipation; State societies are defined by apparatuses of capture; urban societies, by instruments of polarization; nomadic societies, by war machines; and finally international, or rather ecumenical, organizations are defined by the encompassment of heterogeneous social formations. But precisely because these processes are variables of coexistence that are the object of a social topology, the various corresponding formations are coexistent. And they coexist in two fashions, extrinsically and intrinsically. (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 435)

"Social topology" means that machinic processes can interact, both in real world systems ("concrete assemblages"), and in being taken up in different proportions by systems other than those where they are the defining element. Assemblages are defined by what escape them, what flees from them. We should take that literally in thinking of marronage.

> It is wrongly said (in Marxism in particular) that a society is defined by its contradictions. That is true only on the larger scale of things. From the viewpoint of micropolitics, a society is defined by its lines of flight, which are molecular. There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine. (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 216)

Extrinsic coexistence means interactive existence side-by-side: "States cannot effect a capture unless what is captured coexists, resists in primitive societies, or escapes under new forms, as towns or war machines" (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 435) – or as maroon societies. Intrinsic coexistence means that machinic processes can work in social systems that are not those with which they are most associated. For instance, the "power of metamorphosis" of the war machine (its capacity to change habits, to make a habit of changing habits) can be tamed by its transformation into a state military apparatus, but it can also resist such taming and be reborn in other forms, perhaps as revolution (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 436)

I'm going to speculate here that concrete maroon societies had a number of these machinic processes at work: 1) prevention-anticipation of state forms -- to the extent that they were anti-hierarchical (again, that is a matter of debate with regard to Palmares); 2) war machines (power of metamorphosis) – though not nomadic, they did have to be able to organize to fight state invasion in mobile bands and to conduct raids without having predictable habits of fighting; 3) and perhaps ecumenical – they "encompassed heterogenous social formations" to achieve consistency, to have it all hang together for a time, in trading with the coastal settlements, in accepting people from all sorts of cultural backgrounds.

Geography of marronage

Geography, or more precisely, topographical features, plays a key role in the regime of violence established in wild marronage (for a literature review and original analysis, see Wright 2020). State space is a space of enforceable regularities; state agents look to detect irregularities from the expected position and behavior patterns of subjects. Spaces open to early statification are valleys and rivers allowing for military enforcement, administrative "visibility", and economic integration. Non-state spaces in Scott (2009) are mostly hills and mountains but include any region where state military reach is hampered, such as jungles, deserts, marshes, and so on (2009, 13). Deleuze and Guattari see the paradigmatic example of an anti-state war machine in the Steppe nomads. Classical maroon societies, by contrast, are found in hills and mountains (Jamaica, Saint Domingue), in swamps (the "Great Dismal Swamp" between North Carolina and Virginia), in littoral spaces (coves, offshore islands, and the like, as in coastal South Carolina).

Let us look more closely at the intersection of economies of violence with geographical features, specifically the "friction of terrain" that James C Scott thematizes (2009: 43, *et passim*; 2017: 116-149). Marronage is a spatializing practice, as maroons improve the hiding, ambush, booby-trap, and raiding aspects of their territories (Stennet 2020). The space of marronage differs from the "smooth space" of the nomadic war machine in its Steppe incarnation, in that it seeks to find and hold a space that is inaccessible to pursuing infantry but that allows multiple options for inter-relating with states: raids on people and trade routes at times, but also commercial exchanges when those are possible and desired.

Maroon attacks on pursuers are enabled by their choice of territory and the improvements they have made to it. Although the smooth vs striated distinction in *A Thousand Plateaus* 14 is too abstract to be useful in theorizing the space of marronage, even with the way Deleuze and Guattari say we should be thinking about differing geo-social tendencies rather than different actual or physical spaces (smoothing or striating as practices vs smooth or striated as a fixed space), Deleuze and Guattari do say there are

other spatial practices to consider. Nonetheless, despite its specific adaptation to their marginal geographic positions, maroon attacks have elements of "smooth space" – they don't follow predetermined lines, they are experienced by state troops as coming from everywhere and nowhere.

Choice of a wild marronage geographical situation – mountains, forests / jungles, swamps, coastal zones – looks to impose a high cost on pursuing state agents. Rough terrain imposes a cost in time and money and physical effort on pursuers. Biotic elements encountered by the pursuers can impose disease or predation costs. All that can lead to discipline problems among the pursuers and additional costs of re-imposing order (punishment is never cost free; it distracts from pursuit at a minimum but risks slacking, desertion, or even mutiny). Especially when pursuers relied on slaves as porters (Patterson 1979, 266). Then there are costs imposed by ambush, booby trap, and other forms of guerrilla warfare.

Contemporary dimensions of marronage

Marronage has become a generalized figure of resistance to the local and state power structures of global capitalism (Roberts 2015; Bledsoe 2017). Edouard Glissant uses the figure of the maroon extensively in his literary (*The Fourth Century* [2001]), and theoretical works (*Poetics of Relation* [1997]), where he also refers to Deleuze and Guattari's line of flight. Deleuze and Guattari mention African slaves as figure of affect in American literature of beat generation: "cornered between two nightmares, the genocide of the Indians and the slavery of the blacks, Americans constructed a psychically repressed image of the black as the force of affect, of the multiplication of affects" (Deleuze; Guattari 1987: 282-3). This could be brought to bear in discussion of the figure of the maroon as symbol of the resistance of African peoples to global white supremacy – in fact the resistance of all oppressed peoples.

Scott 1998 and 2009 analyzes contemporary state domination; despite failures of central planning, more modest administration can keep internal population management going very nicely in the core – going off the grid or creating police no-go zones in the cities notwithstanding. When we consider contemporary urban marronage, biopolitical and neoliberal state administration can keep internal population management going in the core: the middle and working classes that are registered, tracked, and managed, some with full disciplinary force, others with the more "dividualizing" practices of "control" via databases and so on (Deleuze 1992). non-documented people, or those dissatisfied citizens, go about trying to live as squatters, as inhabitants of "no go zones", as those who "go off the grid", and other forms of evading state rules within state territories.

In the periphery, surveillance with GIS and drones, force projection with helicopters, and brutality with automatic weapons can keep peasantry in line and keep nonstate

people confined to margins and ineffective in resisting resource extraction when desired. This is not to say that sheer force is confined to the periphery; what we see in so-called "no-go zones" is a sort of "shared sovereignty" between nonstate actors – in Scott's terms, "barbarian" gangs – and state police forces, who arrive in force when they want to and shoot first and ask questions later.

One last turn of the screw. Scott agrees with Deleuze and Guattari on the need to conceptually separate the primary or originary violence of statification as capture and enslavement of non-state peoples, and the ordinary, everyday, or secondary violence of policing, tax collection, and labor coercion, which repeat and reinforce the originary violence by which tax and labor become obligations and attempts to evade them and / or to appropriate surplus by private means become criminalized. Might it not be the case, however, that in "no-go zones" that non-state actors, often seen as "criminal gangs" by the state, engage in a sort of "shared sovereignty" by which they compete with states for appropriation of surplus ("protection" rather than taxes being a form of regularizing plunder, hence requiring punishment of those even gangs consider freelancers infringing on "their people") and, sometimes, for provision of services (food handouts, housing via squatting or camping, and so on) from the marginal populations that states show little interest in managing other than by intermittent raids for deportation and camp dismantling purposes?

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Micropolitical Challenges in the Face of the Sinister[1]
by SUELY ROLNIK

The colonial-racial-patriarchal-capitalist system, in its financialised and neoliberal strain, has colonized the whole planet. It now has the globalitarian[2] power to sweep away, with much more efficiency, everything that stands in the way of its free circulation. And a sinister scenario is being set up everywhere. We are witnessing the exponential escalation of extreme right-wing movements that deserve to be called fascist, keeping in mind the differences between these movements and the fascism of the inter-war period.

Faced with this scenario, we must make headways in our efforts to problematize fascist strategies deployed in the micropolitical sphere. What I have in mind here is the sphere of the regime of the unconscious, the factory of worlds responsible for the production and reproduction of a certain mode of subjectivation and for its formations in the social field.[3] The mode of subjectivation proper to the colonial-racial-patriarchal-capitalist regime of the unconscious produced fascism as the most extreme manifestation of the violence against life that characterizes this regime (a violence directed against life in general, not just human life). This violence is intrinsic to the factory of worlds under the management of this regime. The goal of this regime is to pimp life and its potency to produce forms of existence, all for the purpose of accumulating capital.

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[1] This essay resumes and develops a text originally published with this same title in the website CTXT Contexto y acción (number 292, Madrid: January 2023), published in a revised and expanded version in Portuguese in the blog Outras palavras, Jornalismo de profundidade e pós-capitalismo, on 20/01/2023 (accessible in https://outraspalavras.net/descolonizacoes/suelyrolnik-para-o-brasil-esconjurar-o-fascismo), as well as other blogs in Brazil, Argentina and Chile.

[2] The term "globalitarian" was proposed by the Brazilian geographer Milton Santos (1926-2001), author of more than forty books published in Brazil and abroad. "Globalitarianism", a fusion of globalization and totalitarianism, refers to a process of universal colonization operated by capitalism in its current form, which deepens the abyss between rich and poor, metropoles and colonies. In my use of this term, I add to the definition proposed by Santos the idea that this process of universal colonization involves modes of production of subjectivity, the micropolitical basis of the production and reproduction not only of the aforementioned deepening of the abyss in class and colonial relations, but also in the relations between supposed genders, races, ethnicities etc.

[3] I describe the cogs of the world factory under the management of the colonial-racial-patriarchal-capitalist unconscious regime in my book *Spheres of Insurrection. Notes on decolonizing the unconscious* (with prologue by Stefano Harney and cover text by Verónica Gago), also published in Spanish and Portuguese. I unfold the description of this machinery in a more recent essay, "The spiders, the Guarani and the Guattari. Why is it important to activate the micropolitical force of working with the unconscious?". In: *Psychoanalysis and Schizoanalysis: difference and composition*. Anderson Santos (org.), n-1 editions, 2022. A revised and expanded version of this essay will be published in book form, with the title "The spiders, the Guarani and some Europeans. Outras notas para uma vida não cafetinada", by the same publisher in 2023 and, simultaneously, in Spanish by the Argentine publisher Tinta Limón.

In historical as well as in contemporary fascism, this modality of capitalist power emerges as a response to certain kinds of emancipatory movements, which have previously erupted in the decades prior to the emergence of these forms of fascism (the 1920s and 2000s, respectively). Alongside movements in the macropolitical sphere (typical of a leftist tradition), a new type of movement arose in those decades, one characterized by an offensive on the micro-political sphere. The difference is that the offensive that has emerged in the micropolitical sphere during the last two of decades has gained a degree of precision and propagation incomparable to the degree achieved by the historical version of this offensive dating back to the 1930s. The current mass production of fascist subjectivity has become infinitely more powerful than what it was in the interwar period. It is also more powerful than the fascist surge of the 1960s and 70s, when the production of this kind of subjectivity also took place, as a reaction to movements that were active in the macropolitical sphere.

It is hardly surprising that the production of a subjectivity with fascist traits coincides with the neoliberal fold of capitalism. We need only remember that the laboratory where this fold was first tested was Chile, through a military coup that led to the Pinochet dictatorship, whose economic project fell in the hands of the so-called "Chicago boys." The Chicago Boys, of course, were young scholars from the Chilean elites who studied at the University of Chicago, the cradle of neoliberal theories. The production of a subjectivity with fascist features as a strategy of power is therefore intrinsic to neoliberalism from its very foundation. It gets reactivated whenever necessary, deploying new strategies of mass manipulation.

This is what happened in the 1990s, as a response to the emancipatory movements that erupted after the fall of the dictatorships in the 1980s in Latin America and in the Soviet Union (a fall that took place over the course of a decade; the last dictatorship to fall in this period was the Chilean one, in 1990). The return of fascism under neoliberalism, in the early days of neoliberalism in the mid 1970s, has traits in common with the return of fascism of the 1990s. Among these common traits are an ultranationalist populism, the presence of charismatic leaders, a cult of masculinity, a sense of anti-intellectualism, etc. What sets these two returns of fascism apart is, among other things, their respective forms of governability. A new modality of power now takes shape in the macropolitical sphere[4]: the traditional military coups that establish authoritarian, one-party systems are replaced by "soft coups disguised by a veil of legality," which follow one another over time and involve a strong investment in the micropolitical sphere.[5] Through this macropolitical

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[4]   The new strategy of power is discussed in detail in "The new modality of the coup", chapter 3 of *Spheres of Insurrection* (see note 3).

[5]   I take up here a footnote from the book *Spheres of Insurrection* that brings relevant data on the orchestration of this new modality of power. Its roadmap was sketched out in a series of three meetings between right-wing and centre-right politicians from various countries in Latin America that took place soon after left-wing candidates began to be elected to the presidency in some of these countries. The first two meetings took place, respectively, in Asunción in 2010 and Brasilia in 2011. But the decisive meeting was held in November 2012, in the North American city of Atlanta. This meeting was attended by a dozen

strategy, extreme right-wing populism, characteristic of fascism, gains a much more effective form of power. Its ability to mobilize the masses radically vanquishes the possibility of any identification with leftist ideas, and beyond that, it demolishes the ideas of democracy itself. This is an objective pursued by fascism in its various versions.

One way to produce a fascist subjectivity is to bring about semantic confusion, through narratives that distort reality and that keep subjects alienated from reality and captured in paranoid narratives that border on delirium. In the new mode of power, the gears that produce this form of subjectivity keep turning violently to the point where they produce a real cognitive collapse in subjects.[6] In this context, violence against life, intrinsic to capitalism, reaches levels that threaten life itself (not just human life) in its the insistence on persisting.

What speeds up the production of fascist subjectivity in the 1990s is, among other things, the advance of technologies of communication and artificial intelligence, which made the technological manipulation of subjectivity much more sophisticated and much more effective than in the 1930s and 1970s. Besides the changes in communication made possible by chatbots and technological innovations incorporated into social media, and aside from increasing the transmission of messages in real time, the algorithmic machine has infinitely increased the effectiveness of this manipulation, adapting messages to the specificities not only of each country under its domination, but also of the distinct groups that make up their respective societies. These technologies, in conjunction with other

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former presidents of the Americas and also by leaders from various sectors of politics, the economy, major media corporations and the judiciary. At the end of the meeting, the meeting was referred to as the First Summit of the Latin American Presidential Mission (LPM) and the "Atlanta Declaration" was drafted ". Its objective is evident in the ideia of a "Presidential Mission" and in two of the statements made at this meeting, which define its mission statement: "As we cannot win over these communists through elections, we will interrupt their mandates with a mask of legality". Such interruptions have been called "soft coups": the use of the plural and its qualification already indicate that this modality of coup consists of a sequence of operations that take place successively with a mask of legality, that is, without explicit violence. The supposed legality of such coups is based on misleading narratives that accumulate over time, aiming at the demonization of public figures of the left and their ideals. It is worth noting that, in the case of Brazil, one year after the return to democracy (which took place in 1985) and two decades before the three meetings mentioned above, generals of the armed forces evaluated that, after the defeat of the guerrillas, the strategy of the left to take power became focused on culture, with narratives about the Brazilian reality, as well as in the equipping of institutions. Faced with this, the military concluded that it was with this same weapon that the left should be combated. These generals then conceived a secret project in this direction (from 1985 to 1988), entitled Orvil (the word for "book" in Portuguese written backwards, a primitive form of cipher in cryptography). Parts of this project were divulged in internal reports of the Army Information Centre between 1989 and 1991. On this, see CASTRO ROCHA, João Cezar, *Guerra cultural e retórica do ódio: crônicas de um Brasil pós-politítico*. Rio de Janeiro: Editora Caminhos, 2021. I'll add that it was on the basis of this strategy that, in 2014 (the year Dilma Rousseff was reelected), military generals suggested Bolsonaro as a candidate for the 2018 presidential campaign. This is the year When Bolsonaro began to be build up as a presidential figure..

6   Among the most fanatical, one arrives at the conviction that the Earth is flat, and that the fact of having us believe that it is round would be part of "the conspiracy", which they insist on calling communist, generic name they give to their others, upon whom they project the figure of the enemy as the supposed cause of their uneasiness.

factors, created the conditions that made possible capitalism's seizure of globalitarian power in the 1990s.

The power of seduction needed to facilitate identification with narratives that distort reality (as deployed in the historical form of fascism of the interwar period, when these narratives were enunciated by the head of state and broadcast by radio and later by television to the whole nation as a homogeneous mass) cannot be compared to the power of seduction the same type of narrative has when broadcast incessantly by social media and by a multiplicity of actors. These narratives now multiply incessantly, adapted to different contexts, and this has been happening since the 1990s. Their ability to swiftly produce a subjectivity with fascist features is light years ahead of its previous versions from the 1930s in Europe and the 1970s in Latin America.

If Chile was the laboratory in which the neoliberal turn was first tested in the 1970s, installed by means of a military coup, Brazil was the laboratory of the new mode of power (especially in Latin America) that led to the election of Jair Bolsonaro. It is not a coincidence that Paulo Guedes, Brazil's Minister of the Economy during the four years of Bolsonaro's government, was also a "Chicago boy"; he graduated from UChicago, the same university where his Chilean colleagues were educated. I will dwell here on the new modality of power in its Brazilian laboratory.

Brazil: laboratory of the new power strategy

In Brazil, the recent seizure of power by the forces of this new right goes beyond the impeachment of President Dilma Roussef in 2016, which can only be read as "the coup" if it is considered exclusively from a macropolitical perspective The impeachment is only one of the aforementioned "soft coups masked under a veil of legality," which began much earlier, in 2004, with the so-called Mensalão,[7] a scandal that was made to look as if it only

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[7] "Mensalão" was the name given to the payment of "monthly fees" to federal deputies in center and right-wing parties that supported the government of Luiz Inácio da Silva (Lula) in exchange for votes for the agenda of the executive branch, which otherwise ran the serious risk of being defeated in Congress, especially in the area of social policy. It should be said in passing that this relationship between the executive and legislative powers accompanies the entire history of the Republic in the country, the origin of which will be discussed later in this essay; a solution to this dynamic, which will depend on the winning of broad support from society, is not yet in sight. The scheme came to light in 2004, making the headlines in the print press and on television, giving a start to the micropolitical use of it in order to prepare a soft coup masquerending as legal. This use consists in the demonization of then-president Lula and of the Workers' Party (PT), aiming to break the identification with such figures and, consequently, with PT's government as a whole, which at that time had reached 80% approval ratings. The fact that this strategy was put into practice in 2004 demonstrates that the architecture of the new modality of coup was conceived soon after the election of leftists governments in South and Central America, and years before the consolidation of this architecture in the meetings that resulted in the first Cúpula da Missão Presidencial Latino-americana. Three years later, in 2007, the scheme was forwarded to the highest court in Brazil, thus beginning a judicial process that would ultimately result in Lula's

took place under the government of Luiz Inácio da Silva (Lula). These coups continued with the election of Jair Bolsonaro to the Presidency of the Republic, and they are far from over.[8] Since this scenario began to establish itself, we've been trying to keep our balance while walking on a tightrope, running a constant risk of slipping and falling into the abyss.

First, we experienced terrible tension during the nine years since the Mensalão scandal, tension that worsened with Lula's imprisonment and with Jair Bolsonaro's election to the Presidency of the Republic in 2018. Then, relief came with Lula's latest electoral victory in 2022, a kind of collectively celebrated euphoria that remained in the air for a few days. But the joy was short-lived and was soon interrupted by the intensification of massive demonstrations by Bolsonaro supporters across the country, and by encampments in the vicinity of army barracks and other public institutions, encampments that had already plopped up during the election period. These demonstrations took on a more bellicose tone a month after the election, following the unsuccessful attempt to light a bomb outside the Brasilia airport.

Then came another moment of rejoicing, with the January 1, 2023 inauguration party to celebrate Lula and with the unusual passing of the presidential sash by representatives of social sectors that have always been excluded from the republican banquet. This was the response of the new government to Bolsonaro's silence following the election result, and his refusal to ceremonially pass the baton to the incoming president, cowardly fleeing to Florida (the favourite kitsch paradise of the nouveau rich in Latin America) two days before this republican ritual took place. The unusual scene at the inauguration ceremony powerfully illustrated the undeniable and much denied fact that, in the history of the Republic in Brazil, the president is elected to serve society, and this includes all segments of society. What we have here is a draft of an embryonic future, wherein the racial hierarchy and other hierarchies are dissolved, the hierarchies intrinsic to the imaginary that guides the production of worlds under the dominant regime of the unconscious (these are hierarchies that were especially naturalized in the ex-colonies). A week later, we witnessed a new interruption, with the bestial invasion of the Three Powers Plaza in Brasilia, headquarters of the Executive, Legislative and Judiciary powers of the Brazilian Republic. This invasion was followed by a quick reaction on the part of the government, which managed to disarm the insurgents swiftly and decisively. And things continue to develop along this tightrope, becoming more and more dangerous.

This situation involves more than a national scenario, since this scenario results from the aforementioned strategies of a new type, which are very well orchestrated, and which have considerable funding. These are the strategies introduced by the globalitarian power achieved by contemporary capitalism in its new fold. If the new mode of power is

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imprisonment. The Mensalão constructed the veil of legality for the impeachment of Dilma Rousseff, one of the "soft coups" that took place in Brazil thanks to the new modality of taking over power.

[8] The sequence of soft coups, in its Brazilian version, is amply described in "The new modality of coup", third chapter of *Spheres of Insurrection* (cf. note 3). Evidently, such coups have not stopped since 2018, the date of the book's publication, and continue to this day.

establishing itself everywhere, intensifying day by day, its laboratory in Brazil has been extended to other Latin American countries such as Chile, Argentina, and Paraguay, in a process facilitated by a particular characteristic of the continent's history. Brazil shares with other countries in the region the structural mark of the foundation of its existence as a nation originated by the colonial enterprise and by the violence intrinsic to it: the theft of land, the genocide of native peoples, the abduction of thousands of people from the African continent to be sold as slaves to the owners of usurped lands (Brazil, it bears repeating, was the country that received the largest contingent in the world of trafficked and enslaved Africans, 4.86 million people in total). However, the way in which this structural violence is actualized in each country of the continent throughout its history is unique.

Genealogy of structural violence in its Brazilian version

A summary of key moments in the actualization of this violence in our history could begin with the fact that we are the only country in the Americas in which independence was proclaimed by members of a European royal family. The Portuguese court had moved to Brazil fifteen years before the proclamation of independence, to safeguard itself from the invasion of Portugal by Napoleonic troops. During this period, to protect his reign, Dom João (who had become Prince Regent of Portugal and the Algarves when the queen, his mother, was declared mentally ill) changed the colony's legal status to United Kingdom with Portugal and the Algarves, which had been, until then, its sovereign metropole. In 1821, when Dom João (by then Dom João VI, King of Portugal) had to return to the metropole with the royal family, his son, Dom Pedro de Alcântara, became Prince Regent of the Kingdom of Brazil. Under his regency, between 1821 and 1822, the Council of Ministers was formed by large landowners and by the merchants responsible for the slave trade.

Although a strong independence movement had existed in Brazil, with different actors and moved by different ideas, the Declaration of Independence of 1822 took place following the initiative of the son of the King of Portugal himself, in response to threats to Brazil's political autonomy, which went against the interests of the "Brazilian" elite. The latter did not want to lose the autonomy they achieved with the arrival of the royal family. At the same time, they did not want to jeopardize the social order, based at the time on agricultural production made possible by slave labor. They also did not want to act against national unity. To this end, they deployed the figure of the Prince Regent – it embodied a sense of dynastic continuity - who was then proclaimed Pedro I, Emperor of Brazil. One important detail is that Brazil had to pay compensation to Portugal for its independence.[9]

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[9]   Brazil was one of the rare colonies that had to pay compensation for its independence. The idea was suggested to Portugal by England as a way to settle the former's debt with the English for the military

In short, not only was national Independence achieved by the son of the King of Portugal himself; Brazil also had to pay "reparations" to the metropole. Added to this is the fact that only the interests of the local elites with whom the Prince Regent was allied were taken into account in the declaration of independence; other actors were completely ignored. In contrast, it is worth remembering that not only did the first Declaration of Independence in South and Central America and in the Caribbean took place eighteen years before Brazil's, in 1804 in Haiti; it was also the result of an uprising of enslaved people against French colonial rule.

Brazil was the last country in the continent to abolish slavery, almost at the end of the 19th century, without any kind of support for the former slaves, who were thus abandoned to their own fate. In fact, in Brazil, the absolute precariousness of the conditions of existence of African descendants was never abolished, and remains in place to this day, generation after generation. The abolition of the Atlantic slave trade had been in place for seventy-three years, since 1815, since the Congress of Vienna (which took place after the end of the Napoleonic era) and before slavery was abolished in Brazil. After the Congress of Vienna, the first laws restricting the slave trade began to be enacted in different countries. This process, I should point out, came about thanks to pressure from the United Kingdom, whose interest was not even remotely in the abolition of slavery (the UK was after the South Atlantic trade route, controlled at the time by slave traders).

Portuguese and Brazilian merchants were the ones who held the greatest power in the slave trade, and this meant that the first law prohibiting slavery in Brazil was only promulgated in 1831. That did not prevent traffickers from continuing to practice their trade. It is estimated that 750,000 Africans were shipped to Brazil and sold there as slaves from 1831 to 1850, when the slave trade was definitively prohibited. Even after that, the trade continued illegally for another six years (I should mention that the payment Brazil made to Portugal as "reparation" for its independence was partially funded by the slave trade).[10] Throughout that period, one of the most debated questions was how to financially compensate the slave owners who incurred economic losses with the abolition of the slave trade. This discussion continued for decades, and when abolition took place, it began to include a demand for compensation for the economic losses suffered by slaveowners after the emancipation of slaves. And while compensation for slaveowners

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cost of expelling Napoleonic troops from its lands. To do this, Brazil had to take out a loan from English bankers, the Rothschilds. See interview with Luiz Felipe de Alencastro, "Brazil's Observer in the South Atlantic. In: Pesquisa FAPESP, issue 188, October 2011. Online: https://revistapesquisa.fapesp.br/luiz-felipe-de-alencastro-o-observador-do-brasil-no-atlantico-sul/

[10] It was, therefore, at the expense of enslaving 750,000 Africans (after the official prohibition of traffic) that Brazil paid off part of its debt to the Rothschilds, contracted to pay compensation for the independence. In short, the illegal traffic served to pay off English bankers and England which, paradoxically, had been the country responsible for the pact that prohibited slave traffic (see note 9).

was being debated, no one ever considered compensating the former slaves, the very rare exception being the few abolitionists who brought this issue up for debate.[11]

In 1889, a year after the end of slavery was decreed, the Proclamation of the Republic of Brazil took place, the result of a military coup supported by the same agrarian elites affected by the end of the slave trade and the abolition of slavery. About five years of military governments later, the command passed into the hands of these large landowning families, mainly coffee growers from São Paulo. It is worth noting that while former slaves continued to be ignored, receiving no support from the government, this same government financed the immigration of five million Europeans, mainly Italians and Germans from rural areas impoverished by industrialization and by an economic crisis. They were offered land, equipment, seed, and other resources to facilitate their arrival and their economic development, as part of a project by the ruling elite to "whiten" Brazilian society.

Later, in the 20th century, a series of dictatorships came into power. Every time one of these dictatorships came to an end, those responsible for the atrocities committed by these regimes were always given amnesty – a perverse pact disguised under the mask of cordiality that supposedly characterizes Brazilians (this is not what happened, for instance, in Argentina, where those responsible for the frighteningly perverse violence committed by the military dictatorship in that country during the same decades were tried and sentenced to prison[12]). Accountability for the atrocities committed during dictatorships in Brazil would have meant submitting the Armed Forces to civilian power, an unprecedented fact in the history of Brazil, one of the only countries in which the existence of this violence, repeated since the colonial foundation of so-called "America," has never been thoroughly acknowledged nor properly addressed.

The colonial-slavocrat trauma and its returns

Because this sequence of violence went unpunished, the traumas that it caused and continues to cause have never been collectively elaborated. The consequence of this is that these infinite wounds remain open, encapsulated in the memory of the body of Brazilians.

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[11] If indemnity for Independence from the colonizing metropolis, as occurred in Brazil, was a rare case in the Americas, compensation claimed by landowners for the abolition of slavery was not exclusive to Brazil. In the former colonies of the Caribbean islands, for example, with the exception of Haiti, not only did the landowners succeed in this claim, but the rights to the cultivation of land by freed slaves were subject to serious limitations.

[12] In this regard, it is worth watching the film *Argentina 1985*, directed by Santiago Mitre, which shows how public prosecutors managed to judge and imprison those responsible for the atrocities committed by the military dictatorship in that country in the same period. We see in the film how this process was widely followed by society; however, by emphasizing the figure of the prosecutors (whom the film treats as heroes), we do not learn about the vigorous social movement that preceded the trial, without which the prosecutors probably would not have succeeded in convicting the military.

These wounds get reinfected during crisis situations, such as the one that has been happening in recent times, mobilizing the same reactive responses given to the founding trauma. These are responses built on inadequate ideas regarding the cause of violence, the result of projections made to make sense of this violence, the result of the impossibility of confronting this trauma, which remains suppressed. This trauma makes its return from time to time, triggering mass bursts of reactivity. For this reason, we are much more vulnerable to the new mode of power of the capitalist system, which has improved its machinery for the production of subjectivity. If we can call its extreme manifestation fascist, this is because of the type of gears that characterize it, even if its technologies are different now, as are the forms of governability that accompany this machinery in the macropolitical sphere, as I already pointed out.

With respect to this denial of violence, it is worth noting that, for the first time in history, there are signs that this is now being addressed. What I have in mind is the slogan "No amnesty," the rallying call of a mass campaign unleashed in social media immediately after Lula's inauguration, which grew in intensity after the criminal takeover of the headquarters of the three branches of government in Brasília. An outline seems to emerge at last, an outline for a response from society to the pact of impunity that runs through the country's history: the first step in the process of healing the open wounds that make us so vulnerable to violence. In line with this popular demand, the recently sworn-in government has taken several initiatives to investigate and arrest those responsible for the vandalism unleashed in the buildings that house the seats of Brazilian republican power.[13]

When this hostility emerged, we were already in a complex and highly tense situation and we knew that it would be very difficult for the Lula government to handle it. At the national level, he would have to circumvent the maneuvers of antagonistic political adversaries (in Congress, in the Armed Forces, in the Federal Police and the Judiciary, and elsewhere in the State), adversaries hostile to his projects. These adversaries are historical allies of a significant segment of the national business class, especially the agrobusiness owners who have been in power since the Proclamation of Independence. This is the reason why Lula had to establish a policy of broad alliances, which included historical adversaries. As was to be expected, these adversaries began to show their true colors from

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[13]   In the Federal Police's crackdown on the acts of vandalism in Brasília, 2,090 extremists of the new ultra-right were arrested – of which 54 had run for office in the previous elections – and warrants of arrest are still being carried out at the time of writing. Soon after the acts were stopped, the governor of the Federal District was removed from office for 66 days, and his Public Safety Secretary had to return from Miami (to where he had gone to meet the former president two days before the invasion to answer to an enquiry, having remained three months in preventive detention, followed by house arrest, which continues to this day. The government then opened criminal investigations and issued warrants for the search, seizure and arrest of those suspected of responsibility for the acts, such as their financial backers, who had part of their assets blocked. The army commander was exonerated, as well as military personnel who worked in the coordination of the security of government buildings, and 38 military personnel who worked in the Institutional Security Cabinet of the Presidency were dismissed. On top of this, a series of reshuffles in the Federal Police and the Federal Highway Police took place in several states.

the beginning of his government, rolling up their sleeves and launching endless attacks through neoliberal mouthpieces who defended the financial markets. At the international level, even if Lula now counts with the support of governments not aligned with the neoliberal ultra-right, the internal forces working against him rely on the support of this same, reactionary part of the political spectrum. This a globally organized and increasingly powerful right wing that will certainly support building up a candidate for the next presidential elections in 2026, one with great chances of winning.

It was written in the stars of this dreary scenario that the support of such adversaries for Lula's candidacy for the 2022 elections was a purely strategic decision. The reason for this support is that, despite Bolsonaro having been chosen by these same forces in 2018 as the candidate to play the role of populist leader (an important element of the micropolitical strategies of the new modality of power), the rough and unpredictable character he showed during his mandate was not the right one for the role. It was therefore necessary to prevent him from being re-elected in 2022. In the face of this, these forces began to sharpen their narratives – in social media and newspapers and on TV screens – on the figure of Bolsonaro, aiming to destroy his legitimacy. Simultaneously, they insisted on building up another candidate capable of mobilizing the masses, one more suited to the neoliberal agenda, with the power to defeat Bolsonaro in the ballot box. This effort failed, and Lula thus became the only alternative available for the neoliberal ultra-right to succeed in their project to discard Bolsonaro. This is likely the main reason why Lula was released from prison.

That said, it is not surprising that these forces withdrew their support for Lula the day after his inauguration, unleashing instead a micropolitical strategy to destroy his image and undermine every leftist idea. This kind of destruction is proper to the new modality of power. Insistent attacks against Lula's character and against leftist ideas once again circulated on social media, reappearing in the daily headlines of the print and television news outlets of large media corporations. All the while, attacks against Bolsonaro continued to circulate. In this aftermath, Lula and his government were no longer accused of corruption; rather, they were faulted for grave mistakes in their approach to government, especially as it relates to social and economic policy. We can already see that the attack on Lula and on the left will become more and more ferocious, vicious enough to sweep him and the left away from the political scene once and for all, to clear the ground for the victory of a new right-wing populist candidate yet to be anointed.[14]

Considering this, it seems evident that the challenge this government faces is not just to confront these antagonistic forces in the macropolitical sphere. Its challenge involves more than dealing with their soft coups: it includes confronting the strategies that sustain these coups in the micropolitical sphere. In this sphere, this government will also have to

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[14] Clearing of the ground for the next presidential elections includes the legal proceedings against Bolsonaro, now making their way through the highest court in Brazil. These proceedings will likely make him ineligible for public office for a period of eight years.

deal with the rise of fascism in Brazilian society, the result of the new strategy of power in this sphere, which reached uncontrollable levels during the government of Bolsonaro. Getting rid of fascist subjectivity, which already affects almost half of Brazilian society, is not something that must obviously get done. So much is clear in the results that emerged from the ballot box after the last elections: only a small margin of difference separated voters who favored Lula from those who favored Bolsonaro, and the segment of society affected by fascist subjectivity still managed to elect a majority of governors, senators and deputies.

It is true that not all those who voted for Bolsonaro in 2022 identify with the repeated terrorist acts that have taken place recently and that culminated in the invasion of Brasilia on January 08, 2023. It is also true that not all of them have been overwhelmed by cognitive collapse. That said, whether or not they identify with this extremism, their subjectivity remains gripped by narratives that distort reality, typical of the colonial-racial-patriarchal-capitalist regime of the unconscious, and they will certainly continue to demonize the left and support governments marked by right-wing populism, proper to neoliberalism.

How to confront, micropolitically, this sinister scenario?

An offensive strategy in this sphere consists in occupying the factory of worlds, taking over its management from the hands of the dominant regime of the unconscious. To accomplish this task is not in the least obvious, for it requires complex and subtle work that involves, first and foremost, freeing our own subjectivity from the power of the regime that produces it. One of the characteristic traits of the subject produced by this regime of the unconscious is a narcissistic shielding against the other: we convert the other into a projection screen for our representations. This shield is produced by one of the main components in the machinery of this regime.

The representations we project on the other are what guide our actions, instead of being guided by the effects on our bodies of the forces that – in various and varying relations – make up the environmental, social, and mental ecosystem of which we are a part; that is, the effects of the living presence of the (not only human) other on our body. This presence introduces a difference in our vital state: a seed of becoming. When taken into consideration, this future in gestation mobilizes a process of creation that can bring this future into existence, which transfigures subjectivity and its relations field, a transfiguration that impacts the forms of the subject and the current forms of society. This is the ethical destiny of the vital movement which needs new forms of existence to be created in order to persist, every time something else is coming, destabilizing the forms of the present where life can no longer be embodied. To act in this direction is our ethical responsibility: a responsibility towards that which life demands from us.

In order to meet this demand, in order to rise to this challenge, we must connect with this embryonic future, and we must listen to what it says to us. This requires desire to embark on the process of creation needed to give this embryonic future a body to incarnate in the present. Desire must be guided in this enterprise by whatever the embryonic future communicates to us. But these actions are blocked by the machinery cited above, by the machinery of the colonial-racial-patriarchal-capitalist regime of the unconscious, which takes away from us our access to these embryonic futures and to the effects of the living presence of the other on our bodies. Burdened with this blockage, the presence of the other instead destabilizes us, and this leads us to project on it the representations of our imaginary, in hopes of producing a meaning that can soothe us. What results from these actions, which are guided by our representations, is the reproduction of the status quo. The gestation of latent futures is thus interrupted.

The imaginary in question here is supposedly composed of universal representations grounded on the perverse idea that the human species follows a single, universal evolutionary line (hence the notion of progress that is proudly displayed on the Brazilian flag). This inadequate idea was established at the end of the 15th century, together with the application of the notion of race to the human species, a notion that is based on markers not only of skin colour, ethnic origin and economic condition, but also of so-called "gender" (another toxic notion invented in this same period). To this, class markers were added in the 19th century, markers conceived on the basis of the experience of the industrial revolution that began a century prior to that. At the top of this supposed hierarchy is the mode of existence of the white European male of the metropolitan elites (the elites now formed by the financial markets), whose world, not by chance, we call the "developed world". The degree of proximity to this model is the yardstick used to measure the value of different human groups and of their modes of existence.

This racial hierarchy used fake news to naturalize and (micropolitically) justify the enslavement of Africans and the genocide of indigenous peoples. It also guided the tracing of the social cartography of the world established with colonization of the macropolitical sphere, a cartography that, in different guises, is still in force today. This cartography is organised according to inequality in the distribution of the right to access material and non-material goods, an inequality the pushes the very limits of the right to exist. This, in turn, implies the exploitation of all those placed in the lower echelons of the supposed hierarchy. This hierarchy also provides the micropolitical grounds for the figure of the enemy outlined above, which is projected on the other in the fascist version of this regime.

It is fundamental to fight this hierarchy in the macropolitical sphere, a fight carried on by the left. It is equally fundamental to include a micropolitical dimension in this fight, without which everything returns to the same place, in other guises. In this sphere, it does not matter whether such supposedly universal representations are either right-wing or left-wing. Both emanate from the projection of representations proper to the ideology that guides the management of the dominant regime of the unconscious. The difference

between these two types of representation of the other is limited to a mere inversion of signs in this supposed hierarchy – an inversion that only reproduces it.

There is a wealth of offensive experience in the macropolitical sphere. Micropolitical activism, on the other hand, is relatively recent in the history of the modern West, which makes the task of taking the offensive in this sphere even more challenging. The good news is that, today, certain social movements, especially in Latin America, are increasingly acting in this sphere, in addition to raising their voices in the public sphere around the indispensable struggle against the unequal distribution of rights (this is the macropolitical militancy of social movements). What I have in mind here are one of the vectors in the debates within Black, indigenous, environmentalist and feminist movements, as well as within movements pushed forward by gender dissidents and by those who dissent from heterocisnormative practices (these movements have, in recent decades, grown exponentially across the continent). In Brazil, this trend is equally present in the Landless Rural Workers' Movement (MST) and the Homeless Workers' Movement (MTST).

The micropolitical offensive of Black and indigenous movements has relied on an update to the politics governing the mode of production of worlds common to their distinctive ancestries, a politics which is exercised singularly in each of these cultures. These worlds move according to what life demands to be created, to materialize the effect of the living presence of the (not only human) other in our body (access to this presence is much less obstructed in these movements). It is in this sense that their diverse modes of being share a similar ontological politics. It has nothing to do with identitarian essentialism (a cultural form that is supposed to characterize each people according to its supposed essence), and it has even less to do with multicuturalism (the aggregation of the alleged, essentialized, cultural identities of different peoples). Such essentialism reproduces the racial hierarchy wherein each person has a marked place in which they recognize themselves and where each is recognized by the other, leading them to act reactively based on inadequate ideas, thus reproducing the prevailing form of existence. In the unconscious regime proper to this ancestral ontological politics, on the other hand, it is from the encounter with the other that forms of existence arise, in a continuous process of creation that is guided by an active micropolitics. The movements in question seek to exercise this micropolitics in their lives, which includes their mode of presence in the public arena. This tends to dismiss the authority of the modern Western ontological politics that commands the management of the production of worlds under the regime of the unconscious that corresponds to it, and this, in turn, reduces its power over subjects. This tendency is strengthened in the micropolitical activism of the other social movements mentioned above, which in turn intensifies its power of contagion in the social body.

What is at stake here is a clinical-political treatment of the dominant mode of subjectivation. What's at stake, then, is confronting what takes away our access to the sensations of the effects of the forces that make up the environmental, social and mental

ecosystem with which we interact.[15] The possibility of a collective construction of worlds adequate to the demands of life – our ethical responsibility – depends on reconquering this access, a condition we must meet before we can evaluate the aforementioned effects from the point of view of what life demands from us to keep the rhythm in its flux.[16] It also depends on our commitment to bring into existence what this demand indicates to us, without which the process is not complete; this necessarily takes place in a relational field. Shielding ourselves from the other makes us deaf to such demands, which creates conditions for life to be derailed from its ethical destiny to be pimped out for the purpose of accumulating capital: not just economic and political capital, but also and inextricably social and narcissistic capital. Accumulating this latter form of capital is the goal imposed by the toxic invention of a racial hierarchy. This clinical-political treatment of the dominant mode of subjectivity opens the possibility for an effective change, one that will take decades, maybe centuries, because curing it is nothing less than healing the trauma of colonial violence that constitutes us, which, in turn, is a process needed before we can come up with adequate responses geared towards an effective transfiguration of our socio-cultural and political reality.

Back to the Brazilian case of the "soft coups veiled with a mask of legality"

On January 11, 2023, there was a new moment of joy in the tightrope we've been walking. Two new ministries were inaugurated in the Lula government, which represent a very important milestone in our history: the Ministry of Racial Equality and the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples. Both are led by women, by respected thinkers and activists: Anielle Franco (a Black woman, the sister of activist and Rio de Janeiro city councilor Marielle Franco, murdered in 2018); and Sônia Bone de Sousa Silva Santos (known as Sônia Guajajara, after the Indigenous people to which she belongs). Not coincidentally, the vandalism that took place in January occurred on the eve of the ceremony planned for the inauguration of the two new ministers in the Planalto Palace, which meant that it had to be postponed for two days while the spaces in the building were recomposed (this was done in record time). This made the ceremony even more exciting.

Nonetheless, as predicted, soft coups have not stopped happening since then. Two of the most serious, which occurred in the fourth month of Lula's term in office, were a bill to restructure the ministries and the so-called "Temporal Framework", both approved by Congress. Some of the main changes involved the Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change, which lost control over the National Policy on Water Resources and the

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[15] In the essay "The spiders, the Guarani and the Guattari. Why does it matter to activate the micropolitical force of working with the unconscious?" I designate such sensations by "affection", invoking Spinoza.

[16] In the essay cited in the preceding footnote, I use the term "affect" to designate this evaluation, invoking Spinoza again. In my own words, affect is the active exercise of the spirit, our potency of thinking.

management of the Rural Environmental Registry (CAR). Preventing the destruction of the ecosystem and addressing climate change was a priority for this ministry, led by Marina Silva, who was appointed by Lula to that ministerial post.[17] But the bill to restructure the ministries gave power back to agrobusiness, back to those long sanctioned to freely pimp the ecosystem, destroying it in the process. The Temporal Framework, in turn, determined that Indigenous peoples will only have the right to occupy the lands that they occupied or were already disputing in 1988, the year when the new Constitution was approved. The restructuring bill also took away from the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples the power to fulfill one of its main mandates: the demarcation of all lands originally belonging to Indigenous people, one of Lula's election campaign promises.

This shows that advances in the fight against racism in the macropolitical sphere, such as the creation of the two ministries mentioned above, can be quickly undone if they are not accompanied by advances in the micropolitical sphere. As Sandra Benites (activist and curator of Guarani origin) says, "there are two walls that have to be torn down".[18] The macropolitical wall has been slowly demolished. Proof of this is the creation of those ministries, the result of actions taken by the Indigenous and Black movements, especially the women involved in these movements (who add a feminist perspective to their activism in this field). Despite these setbacks, the fight against racism will not stop, and it will only keep expanding. The demolition of the micropolitical wall, on the other hand, is just starting. Potentializing this work depends on a wider pollination of Brazilian society by the ontological politics that governs these movements.

There is something irreversible in the air

There are many of us in Central and South America that are now focused on this task. Though we come from different social positions, what unites us is this micropolitical offensive. We go on this offensive with different experiences and different languages (not without friction and thanks to the confrontation friction brings with it). This has been generating transmutations in our respective existences, above all in our ways of relating to the other or, more precisely, to the forces that compose the life of the ecosystem and its variations. This is what has allowed many of us not to succumb to the disaster we are living through, staying active.

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[17] Marina Silva is a Brazilian historian, teacher, psychopedagogue, environmentalist and politician. Black and born in a rubber plantation in Acre, she is currently affiliated to the Rede Sustentabilidade (Sustainability Network) party. Between 2003 and 2008, Silva served as Minister of the Environment in Lula's government. She was a senator for Acre between 1995 and 2011 and a defeated candidate for the Presidency of the Republic in the 2010 and 2014 elections (in which Dilma Roussef of the Workers' Party was victorious) and again defeated in 2018 (when Bolsonaro won).

[18] Idea shared by Sandra Benites in an informal conversation we had at the time when the Ministry of Indigenous Peoples was being conceived.

My intuition is that this micropolitical turn that is in process will provide the basis – in the long term, or rather, in the very long term – for a new politics of unconscious formations in the subjective and social fields. In other words, it will lead to a regime of the unconscious managed by a new ontological politics. This ultimately entails the creation of new forms of governability, grounded in a continuous process of collective creation, in place of the so-called "social pact" that originated our social structures. This is a pact that, as we know, rests on the consensus of the elites, which not only disregard the interests of other social segments in the macropolitical sphere, but also block the processes of creation in the micropolitical sphere, suffocating everything that escapes it.

In other words, my intuition is that, parallel to the macabre landscape we are living through, the reforestation of the subjective and social fields is in progress. In this operation, little by little, the monoculture that has imposed itself on these fields since the colonial foundation of Brazil, subjugating life in order to place it at the service of capital, is being replaced. If it is true that this task has faced many barriers – and no doubt will continue to do so for a long time, with different degrees of violence up to extermination – , what has allowed us to stand on the tightrope and keep our spirits lifted is the fact that everything indicates that there seems to be something irreversible in the air.

P.S: The reader will certainly be wondering what all this has to do with a celebration of the fiftieth anniversary of the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*, given that the work in question is not even cited in this essay. My answer is that the value of a work that deserves to be celebrated is not measured by the mere reproduction of the concepts it offers us, but by its potency, which is evident in the distinct updates it can undergo over time, according to the problems that present themselves to our thought in every context. In other words, their value lies in their ethical-political potency. Among the vast array of concepts by Guattari and Deleuze that carry this power (concepts discussed in their first collaboration and in other joint works), this essay privileges the concept of micropolitics, which has germinated in different ways around the world over the half century that separates us from its conception. Such a concept emerges as a powerful instrument to face the impasses into which life is thrown now. It is this instrument that this essay wishes to honour, bringing it up to date to confront the deadly landscape in which we are immersed today all throughout the planet, and which the authors of *The Anti-Oedipus* had the merit of glimpsing when it was just beginning to take shape.

Desiring Machines and the Sex of Plants[1]

by CÍNTIA VIEIRA DA SILVA

Abstract

This paper connects the concept of desiring machines, as it appears in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti- Oedipus*, to the sex of plants, which Deleuze had already used on *Proust and Signs*, to relate his philosophy to Guattari's concept of transversality. In this context, this text argues with Preciado's understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's molar homosexuality, stating that this concept points toward trans and countersexuality, more than to the bipolarity between hetero and homosexuality.

The pragmatic revolution promoted by *The Anti-Oedipus*, at once a conceptual and ethical-political one, has as its most important feature the conception of desire as production. If psychoanalysis already attributed a certain productivity to the unconscious, Deleuze and Guattari's contribution consists of underlining the real and purely affirmative character of such production, breaking the links of desire with phantasmic or imaginary production - in a word, with representation - and with the negativity of an original lack. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari:

> If desire produces, it produces the real. If desire is producer, it can only be so in reality, and of reality. Desire is that set of passive syntheses that frames partial objects, flows, and bodies, and that function as units of production. The real follows from this, it is the result of the passive syntheses of desire as self-production of the unconscious. Nothing is lacking in desire, it does not lack its object. It is the subject, above all, that is lacking in desire, or it is desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is only a subject fixed by repression. Desire and its object constitute one and the same thing: the machine, as machine of machine. Desire is a machine, the object of desire is also a connected machine, so that the product is extracted from the producing and something is detached from the producing by passing to the product and giving a rest to the nomadic and wandering subject. The objective being of desire is the Real in itself (Deleuze; Guattari, 2010: 83).

The operative syntheses of desire are said to be passive because they do not depend on the articulating consciousness of a thinking self, but are individuating and individuated

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[1] All the quotations were translated by me from the Brazilian version of the books.

instances without the form of the self. And if desire is not intrinsically linked to a fixed, sedentary subject, which is only produced as a residue in a repressed functioning of the desiring machines, one can suppose that the individuation produced in the desiring process is not confined to the binarism of what Preciado, from a Foucaltian inspiration, will call the sex-gender system.

The concept of desiring machine contemplates two requirements: that of affirming the productive character of desire and that of refusing "the anthropomorphic representation of sex" (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 388). Through an alliance between Spinoza and Marx, the authors consider production as generating the whole real and, at the same time, as being both desiring and social. This formulation not only intends to mark a simultaneity, but also a horizontality or absence of hierarchy. There is not one mode of production more important than another, or first in relation to another.

It seems to me that the non-human sexuality of desiring machines, with their n sexes, instead of only two, can be understood with reference to the sex of plants. To deal with the connective synthesis of production in its legitimate use, Deleuze and Guattari refer to Proust, a thinker who returns incessantly in their writings as a duo, or signed by only one of them. Deleuze quotes an article by Guattari in *Proust and Signs* to introduce the concept of transversality; Guattari, in turn, makes incursions into Proust's work both in *The Machinic Unconscious* and in *Chaosmosis*. In *The Anti-Oedipus*, this common ally is evoked to make visible the construction of a narrative and narrator body without organs, which puts into play a sexuality based on the "radical innocence of flowers" (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 95). The flowers are configured as intensive images of a hermaphroditism that, more than a modality of homosexuality, constitutes a transsexuality moved by a transversal vector. I note in passing that our authors recurrently mobilize literary texts as cases of desiring production, a production that is not limited to the imaginary or symbolic, and is taken as real production and production of real.

Returning to the plants, in the words of Deleuze and Guattari:

> The plant theme, the innocence of flowers, brings us yet another message and another code: each one is bisexual, each one has both sexes, but compartmentalized, incommunicating: the man is only the one in which the masculine part dominates statistically, and the woman, the one in which the feminine part dominates statistically. And so, at the level of elementary combinations, at least two men and two women must intervene to constitute the multiplicity in which transversal communications, connections of partial objects and fluxes are established: the masculine part of a man can communicate with the feminine part of a woman, but also with the masculine part of a woman, or with the feminine part of another man, or with the masculine part of another man, etc. (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 97)

Deleuze already underlined this transversalizing homosexuality in the second part of *Proust and Signs*, added in the second edition of the book, in 1970, later, therefore, to the

first contacts with Guattari and his writings. The two sexes are present in the same individual, but without communicating, in the manner of the boxes or closed vessels that characterize so many dimensions of Proust's work and give name to one of the chapters of the second part of *Proust and Signs*. For Deleuze, it is in this separation "that the vegetable theme acquires its full meaning, by opposition to a great Living Logos: hermaphroditism is not the property of an animal totality now lost, but the actual separation of the two sexes in the same plant: 'the male organ is separated by a partition from the female organ'" (Deleuze 1996: 163) .

The emphasis on the vegetal theme makes it possible to understand the apparent contradictions surrounding homosexuality in the *Recherche*, showing that there are two series or levels of sexuality at play in the text: one global and specific, the other, local and non-specific. These terms will appear again in The Anti-Oedipus, referring not only to the Proustian narrative, but to distinctive workings of the desiring machines. Moreover, the plant expresses how a living totality distinct from the animal organism, which Deleuze considers logocentric, can function.

The logos is a great Animal whose parts gather into a whole and are unified under a principle or a guiding idea; but the *pathos* is a vegetable made of separate parts, which only communicate indirectly in a part set apart, to infinity, although no totalization, no unification can bring together this world whose ultimate pieces lack nothing. (Deleuze 1996: 210)

This fragmentation is called schizoid by Deleuze and constitutes the lesson of Baron de Charlus about the "world of sex". At the same time, this fragmentation refers to the Proustian style, built by transversality among elements, in principle, not in communication, since, for Deleuze, "the vegetable model in Proust replaced that of the animal totality, both for art and for sexuality" (Deleuze 1996: 139). The absence of communication does not amount to the impossibility of connections, since an agent with no relation of similarity establishes "aberrant relations between closed vessels; wasp that makes flowers communicate, and that loses its proper animal value, to be in relation to them only a composite piece apart, a nonsensical element in a plant reproduction apparatus." (Deleuze 1996: 211)

This world of vegetal-inspired sex constitutes transsexuality because sexual relations connect sexes that do not identify with a gender eventually assumed in identity registration and also because these relations depend on the circulation or transport performed by a disparate element. Deleuze insists on the trans character of a dimension of Proustian reality, coupling life and work in the same movement:

if one understands the meaning of this transsexuality as the last level of Proustian theory, and its relation to the practice of separations, not only does the vegetal metaphor become clearer, but it becomes indeed grotesque to wonder about the degree of 'transposition' that Proust had to operate, as it is supposed, to transform an Albert into

Albertine; even more grotesque to present as a revelation the discovery that Proust must have had some amorous relations with women. (Deleuze 1996: 166)

The passage through Proust, in *The Anti-Oedipus*, gives occasion to the elaboration of a formula that synthesizes the conception of non-identitarian, in becoming sexualities: "we are heterosexual statistically or molarly, but homosexual personally, whether we know it or not, and finally, transsexual elementally, molecularly" (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 97).

This formula, which seems to me to have so much affinity with the conceptual, and vital, environment of Preciadian contrassexuality, is read by Preciado in a somewhat critical way in an appendix to the *Contrassexual Manifesto* entitled: "From philosophy as a superior mode of giving ass: Deleuze and the 'molecular homosexuality'". If, initially, the formula gives rise to an investigation that searches for the physical operations that would correspond to the logical concepts of *The Anti-Oedipus*, according to a principle placed in the book itself by Deleuze and Guattari, it closes with an inversion of the problem, stating that the question to be answered is that of the reasons that would have prevented Deleuze and Guattari from coming out of the closet as heterosexuals in the 1970s (Preciado 2014: 193).

Preciado's interpretation of the formulation that states "we are homosexuals personally" suffers from an excess of literalness that seems to me far from benevolent. What immediately strikes me is that the first person plural employed there by Deleuze and Guattari is not meant to designate just the two of them, but all of us. And even when quoting the whole formula, Preciado writes all the time about a molecular homosexuality, without mentioning molecular transsexuality at any point, which seems to be precisely the figure that comes closest to counter-sexuality. Nevertheless, his interpretation of Deleuze and Guattari's position regarding homosexuality as "a superior form of knowledge" seems interesting to me.

From the Deleuzian presentation of the Proustian character of the Baron of Charlus, Preciado states that what interests Deleuze in this enigmatic emitter of signs is its power to dissolve "all the contradictions of Western metaphysics" (Preciado 2014: 189). From this point of view, molecular homosexuality is seen as an activity of fecundation, paradoxically sterile, capable, however, of connecting thinkers engendering the history of philosophy. In this way, Preciado links the conception of sexuality in *The Anti-Oedipus*, including the Proustian aspects found in the text, to the celebrated Deleuzian presentation of the history of philosophy as enrapture and immaculate conception. These expressions, incidentally, have fallen into the taste of many Deleuze and Guattari scholars, at least in Brazil, and I have often witnessed evocations of this formulation, as if it were still capable of shocking anyone. For my part, I prefer to return to the idea of exercises in the history of philosophy as portrait art, an effort to master the colors and techniques of other thinkers and make them our own. Perhaps the most successful image bothers me because I understand it molarly, in which case the history of philosophy would be seen as connections only between men.

Returning to *The Anti-Oedipus*, the concept of desire elaborated there is inserted in the field inaugurated by psychoanalysis, insofar as it maintains the relation between desire and the unconscious. However, the unconscious drawn in the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* does not refer the affective intensities to images or representations. Such remission or rebinding may occur - as, in fact, it does in capitalist societies where the nuclear family and individualism predominate - but the circumscription of the production of desire to the limits defined by the phantom of castration and to oedipal narratives, however frequent it may be, is not the only mode of functioning of the production of desire, nor even the one that is most proper to it.

Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the standardization of desire production, its submission to a model or ideal, is not limited to the refusal of Oedipal borders, but to the assumption of an unique model for sexuality[2]. In the wake of Marx, the authors advocate for a non-human sexuality. The authors understand this sexuality that escapes the framework of the human not in terms of an animal sexuality, but a machinic one, which is constituted as a mode of production, among other possible modes. This non-human sexuality has nothing to do with the device of sexuality, as conceptualized by Foucault, or with the sexotechnique, as defined by Preciado. The fact is that sexuality, in *The Anti-Oedipus*, comprises what the authors call two faces: it can designate, on the one hand, the anthropomorphic representation of sex (pole of human sex), that is, the submission of the machines of desire to the social and organic machines; on the other hand, the machinic sexuality as the desiring production itself that escapes representations and totalizations (pole of non-human sex). For Deleuze and Guattari,

sexuality is strictly the same thing as the desiring machines as present and active in the social machines, in their field, their formation, their functioning. Non-human sex is the desiring machines, the molecular machinic elements, their agency and their syntheses, without which there would be neither human sex specified in the large sets, nor human sexuality capable of investing these sets (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 388).

In other terms, non-human sexuality encompasses the set of desiring productivity, all the possibilities of connection between desiring machines, of circulation of intensities as degrees of multiple and distinct affections. It is not a relationship between individuals, subjects or objects, of different genders or of the same gender, but an individuating force, producer of individuations that only crystallize into identity positions through disciplinary and control devices, variable according to the social formations in play. In this sense, the minimal elements that enter into the composition of desiring machines are called partial objects, a concept borrowed from Melanie Klein. However, the partiality of these objects, their unstable character, not identical to themselves, not totalizable under an identity, is not thought of in *The Anti-Oedipus* as a stage to be overcome in favor of the unification or totalization of an integral object that would constitute the ideal object of

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[2] In this part, I resume some elements from the paper we published with Letícia Decarli (Vieira da Silva; Decarli 2022).

desire in a psychic functioning that is considered healthy. They are more partial things, parts of machines, than objects, and can be constantly connected and disconnected to a plurality of distinct machines. These minimal, molecular elements, however, connect directly to a social field, to the open whole of production. For the authors,

> Sexuality is no longer considered as a specific energy that unites persons derived from the large sets, but as the molecular energy that connects partial molecules-objects (libido), that organizes inclusive disjunctions on the giant molecule of the body without organs (numen) and distributes states according to domains of presence or zones of intensity (voluptas). It is because the desiring machines are exactly this: the microphysics of the unconscious, the elements of the microinconscious. But as such, they never exist independently of the historical molar sets, of the macroscopic social formations that they statistically constitute. It is in this sense that there is only desire and the social (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 242-3).

The desiring machines, with their molecular functioning, continue to produce within the social machines, according to a regime of their own. If the unconscious assumes a certain figure within a given social formation, a figure that shapes the production of desire, co-opting it, this does not mean that the possibilities of desire are limited to this figure, or complex of figures. The enclosure of desire within the family and the position of the paternal and maternal figures as role models for the desiring investment are verifiable occurrences in capitalist social formations. This particular configuration of sociability and the production of desire, however, does not eliminate the vectors of deterritorialization of desire, to use the vocabulary of *One Thousand Plateaus*. The channeling of the desirous flow to constitute a libidinal investment in persons, entities endowed with identity, does not prevent the subterranean course of non-identitarian individuations, of affective intensities not shapeable according to the form of an entity endowed with personal identity, including the definition of gender. Deleuze and Guattari write:

> Beneath the conscious investments of economic, political, religious, etc. formations, there are unconscious sexual investments, micro-investments that bear witness to the way in which desire is present in a social field and the way in which it associates this field with itself as the statistically determined domain that is attached to it. The desiring machines function in the social machines, as if they maintained their own regime in the molar whole that they form, on the other hand, on the level of large numbers. A symbol, a fetish, are manifestations of a desiring machine. In no way is sexuality a molar determination representable in a family set, but it is rather the molecular underdetermination that functions in the social and, secondarily, family sets, which trace the field of presence and production of desire: a whole non-Oedipal unconscious, which will only produce Oedipus as one of its secondary statistical formations ("complexes"), as the result of a history that puts into play the becoming

of the social machines and their regime in comparison with that of the desiring machines (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 243).

Both what Deleuze and Guattari call machinic sexuality, in *The Anti-Oedipus*, and what Preciado names *potentia gaudendi* in his *Testo Junkie*, that is, "the (present or virtual) potency of (total) arousal of a body" (Preciado 2018: 44), despite their conceptual differences, are connection-producing forces and power-enhancing affects that are never entirely moldable by categories determinable from bi-univocal contrapositions, such as man/woman, natural/artificial or machinic, or even, in Preciado's terms, prosthetic, human/animal, and so on. The standardization devices of desire, subjectivity, sociability, however effective, do not prevent the subsistence of flows that escape modelization. Although the authors criticize psychoanalysis for acting as one of these devices, what seems to me is that, on this point, psychoanalytic theories - and, to a large extent, the various clinical approaches - merely follow the dominant tone of the social formations in which they arise and develop. Not only "Freudism is traversed by this strange idea that, after all, there is only one sex, the masculine" (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 388), but such an assumption presides over subjectivations, the multiple interactions between subjects, such as affective relationships, work relationships, and so on. The frustration about a theory of the unconscious and a clinic of desire that does not act to free them from binarisms and submission to any and all models is understandable, and echoed in Preciado's recent speech at the Journey of the School of the Freudian Cause in Paris. However, psychoanalysis, or "Freudism," as the authors say, is not the founder of the welding of desire to an original lack - an operation present in Western thought at least since Platonism, nor by the position of man as a model in the sex-gender system. Let us emphasize that, as Deleuze and Guattari show, there is no male privilege when it comes to the splitting of desire by lack. The female identity is defined by a lack in relation to the male model, but men do not reach the model either, being equally marked by castration. To the extent that, from a molecular point of view, the unconscious is populated by, and produces, pre-inidividual singularities - which are called, in *The Anti-Oedipus*, partial objects, its productivity is entirely affirmative and is not intended to fill any lack. The production of desiring machines, in molecular regime, allows us to experiment individuations that go beyond the dualisms of sexotechnics and cross n non-human sexes, or n modalities of desiring machines.

The anthropomorphic molar representation culminates in what underlies it, the ideology of lack. On the contrary, the molecular unconscious ignores castration, because nothing is lacking in the partial objects that, as such, form free multiplicities; because the multiple cuts do not stop producing flows, instead of repressing them in one and the same cut capable of stopping them; because the syntheses constitute local and non-specific connections, inclusive disjunctions, nomadic conjunctions: a microscopic transsexuality everywhere, which makes woman contain as many men as man, and man, women, capable of entering, with each other, with each other, into relations of desire production that

subvert the statistical order of the sexes. To make love is not to make just one, or two, but a hundred thousand. This is what the desiring machines or the non-human sex are: not one, not even two, but n sexes (Deleuze; Guattari 2010: 389-90).

In this way, contrary to the conceptual divergence that the terminological difference between counter-sexuality and machinic sexuality suggests, we can observe that both are constituted as an effort to construct new sexual platforms that break with the sexual difference or anthropomorphic representation of sex. Insofar as counter-sexuality is an effort to denaturalize what we understand as sexuality or sex, we can also see that Deleuze and Guattari strive to place social and desiring production on the same plane, so that sexuality is not an individual or natural field, but coextensive with the social - one and the same economy. Faced with non-human sex or *potentia gaudendi*, the challenge is then to experiment with liberating forms of desire and a kind of proliferation of practices and forms of life against the devices of sexual difference. "Revolution (...) is always a becoming-trans: mobilizing an existing state of things to another that only desire knows" (Preciado 2019: 213).

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On Anti-Oedipus*: Deleuze and Guattari's Spinozism*

by Daniela Voss

Abstract

One of the main themes in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) is their criticism of a psychoanalytic conception of the unconscious, characterised as either a personal imaginary or a symbolic structure. What they put forward instead is the hypothesis of an unconscious whose desiring processes are coextensive with social, political and economic production. In fact, there is no dualism here but rather an imbrication of psychic and social reality which both make up the 'Real in itself', determined under different (molecular or molar) relations. Deleuze finds this univocity of the Real in Spinoza and suggests 'a sort of Spinozism of the unconscious' as an alternative to a psychoanalytic model.

This essay traces the Spinozist elements in *Anti-Oedipus*, which can be detected in three characteristics of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the unconscious: (1) its immanence in nature as production, (2) the engineering or 'machination' of desiring processes, and (3) the mutual presupposition of production and anti-production.

1. Introduction

This essay proposes a somewhat unconventional and creative reading of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* alongside Spinoza – unconventional because the book is commonly read in the light of a break with Freudianism and Marxism and in connection with Nietzsche. And rightly so, since these are the main reference points in *Anti-Oedipus*. Yet there is a gust of wind coming from Deleuze's intense engagement with Spinoza, entering the flow of thought that makes up the book. It's also a creative reading because not only is *Anti-Oedipus* cast in a new light in this way, but perhaps to an extent Spinoza too.

The point of departure is the question that Deleuze and Guattari raise in *Anti-Oedipus*, which is discussed by Wilhelm Reich and was posed for the first time in Spinoza's *Theological-Political Treatise*: why do people desire their own repression? Deleuze and Guattari call it the "fundamental problem of political philosophy [...] precisely the one that Spinoza saw so clearly" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 29). Let us look more closely at Spinoza's words, because they can easily lead to a different direction, a route taken by many Spinoza scholars, for instance Balibar (Balibar 1997).

> The greatest secret of the monarchic rule, and its main interest, is to keep men deceived, and to cloak in the specious name of Religion the fear by which they must be checked, so that they will fight for slavery as they would for their survival, and will think it not shameful, but a most honorable achievement, to give their life and blood that one man may have a ground for boasting. (Spinoza 2016a: *TTP* Pref 68-9)

Spinoza's criticism is directed against those authorities (the State, the Church) who under the pretext of religion abuse their power over people in order to subsume them into the assemblage of the pursuit of their own interests. According to Spinoza, the masses are deceived and held in check by fear. What would Deleuze and Guattari say? Thinking of the organised masses under National Socialism as a paradigmatic case, they claim that it is a simplistic and incorrect understanding to say that the masses have been fooled: desire desired its own repression. They also assert that "desire cannot be deceived. Interests can be deceived, unrecognized, or betrayed, but not desire" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 257). Desire belongs to a molecular, intensive and unconscious order that is free of specious, deceptive images and preconscious interests. Only in certain assemblages, as part of the molar infrastructure, can it be perverted, captured by images and invested in goals that run counter to one's interests. Everything depends on the kind of organization into which desire enters.

What Deleuze and Guattari first and foremost reject is the concept of *ideology*, which "hides the real problems, which are always of an organizational nature" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 344). The concept of ideology presupposes a separation of the objective and the subjective, the real and the imaginary, the socio-economic, material base and the superstructure, the rational and the irrational, science and religion – in their terms, a duality of economic and libidinal production. For Deleuze and Guattari, however, "libidinal economy is no less objective than political economy, and the political no less subjective than the libidinal" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 345). The decisive difference is not between objective and subjective, but between two different modes of investment: unconscious libidinal investment and preconscious investment of interest. Both are investments in the same social reality. The question why people desire their own repression is a problem of desire, of reactionary unconscious investments (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 257) and not of preconsciously invested interests. No deception and no failure of recognition play into this problem. Instead of maintaining the duality between the objective and the subjective, Deleuze and Guattari speak of desire as "the real in itself" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 379). Desire is invested everywhere in the social infrastructure and cannot be separated from socio-economic production.

When Wilhelm Reich posed the question why the masses desired fascism, he realized that one cannot isolate forms of psychic repression from the social infrastructure. Psychic repression depended on social repression, or as Deleuze and Guattari put it more sharply, "psychic repression is a means in the service of social repression"

(Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 119). While Deleuze and Guattari credit Reich for posing the problem in terms of desire and recognizing the relationship between desire and the social field, they also think that "he had not sufficiently formulated the concept of desiring-production, he did not succeed in determining the insertion of desire into the economic infrastructure itself, the insertion of drives into social production" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 118-19). According to Deleuze and Guattari, Reich remained tied to the duality of the objective and the subjective. He distinguished

> Between rationality as it is or ought to be in the process of social production, and the irrational element in desire, and by regarding only this latter as a suitable subject for psychoanalytic investigation. [...] He therefore necessarily returns to a dualism between the real object rationally produced on the one hand, and irrational, fantasizing production on the other. He gives up trying to discover the *common denominator or the coextension of the social field and desire*. In order to establish the basis for a genuinely materialistic psychiatry, there was a category that Reich was sorely in need of: that of desiring-production, which would apply to the real in both its so-called rational and irrational forms. (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 29-30)

In the place of psychoanalysis focusing on familial images, fantasies and inhibitions, Deleuze and Guattari propose a "materialist psychiatry" or "schizoanalysis" that deals directly with desiring-production, the unconscious workings of desiring-machines and their dispersion in the social field.

2. The molecular unconscious

In a 1988 interview with Raymond Bellour and François Ewald, Deleuze says that "*Anti-Oedipus* was about the univocity of the real, a sort of Spinozism of the unconscious" (Deleuze 1995b: 144). Spinoza never used the term 'unconscious,' but he plays a role here because of the alternative that he provides in opposition to the psychoanalytic notion of the unconscious that Deleuze and Guattari attack: the one that reduces the unconscious to a personal imaginary, where desire is triangulated by parental images. It is no use replacing this with a structural notion of the unconscious, substituting maternal and paternal symbolic functions that the Signifier distributes. As Deleuze and Guattari state: "we don't quite see what there is to gain by this, except for the founding of the universality of Oedipus beyond the variability of images; the fusing of desire even more strongly to law and prohibitions; and the pushing of the process of oedipalization of the unconscious to its limits." (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 82) The notion of the unconscious that Deleuze and Guattari put forward is neither imaginary, nor symbolic; it is "the Real in itself" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 53) and its production.

In what follows I will highlight three characteristics of their notion of the

unconscious: (1) a naturalist hypothesis of the unconscious, (2) the thesis of an engineering, or 'machination' of desire, and (3) the thesis of the pairing of production and anti-production. In all of these there are Spinozist elements.

2.1. A naturalism of the unconscious.

The first important point is that psychic reality cannot be separated from a field that is social, economic, political, cultural, historical. The unconscious is coextensive with the history of social formations. Deleuze and Guattari refer to psychotic processes as the site where the social libidinal investments in peoples, classes, names of history, continents, and kingdoms return or emerge. "Delirium is the general matrix of every unconscious social investment" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 277), which oscillates between two poles: a paranoiac investment in molar structures, forms of power and gregariousness, the other a molecular schizophrenic line of escape. Each society constructs its own unconscious delirium at the heart of its functioning. The *same* delirious processes operate on a molecular scale in psychic and social reality, though under a different régime. This is why Deleuze and Guattari do not speak of a simple parallelism but of *a single basis for production* that is at once psychic and social.

Desire is the immanent principle of this production in general (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 5). – Considered as such, it is inevitable that the notion of desire becomes a metaphysical and genetic principle: "It is indeed true that the social and the metaphysical arrive at the same time, in accordance with the two simultaneous meanings of *process*, as the historical process of social production and as the metaphysical process of desiring-production" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 358). This ambivalence in meaning is a Spinozist thread. Deleuze and Guattari say that they "make no distinction between man and nature" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 4); they deal with the unconscious as an immanent plane of nature: "the schizo as *Homo natura*" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 5). The schizo experiences nature as a process of production that directly connects with his own unconscious processes. As an example, they refer to Georg Büchner's literary figure Lenz:

> Lenz has projected himself back to a time before the man-nature dichotomy, before all the co-ordinates based on this fundamental dichotomy have been laid down. He does not live nature as nature, but as a process of production. There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species of life. (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 2)

With his formula *Deus sive natura*, Spinoza has famously conceived nature as a plane

of immanence. He does not treat the human mind, its ideas and affects, as something outside nature but, on the contrary, as identical with the common power of nature:

> For nature is always the same, and its virtue and power of acting are everywhere one and the same, i.e., the laws and rules of nature, according to which all things happen, and change from one form to another, are always and everywhere the same. So the way of understanding the nature of anything, of whatever kind, must also be the same, viz. through the universal laws and rules of nature. The Affects, therefore, of hate, anger, envy, etc., considered in themselves, follow from the same necessity and force of nature as the other singular things. (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, Pref 492)

Spinoza rejects not only the man-nature dichotomy: by refusing "to conceive man in nature as a dominion within a dominion" (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, Pref 491), he also argues against a dualism of nature and culture, or nature and social formations. Everything is nature, or to put it differently, there is only one God or substance. Deleuze and Guattari, instead of referring to a monism of substance, multiply the unconscious to a universal scale. As David Lapoujade puts it, "substance no longer merges with the unlimited whole of Nature (*Deus sive natura*); it is the schizophrenic who becomes *man-nature*, and the new axiom of Spinozism is now: *schizo sive natura*. Schizo is the unconscious of man-nature." (Lapoujade 2017: 164) The reference here is not to the clinical subject but to schizophrenic *process* as such (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 379), unconscious desiring-production.

Perhaps there is even a Bergsonian influence noticeable at this point. In a letter from 1905, Bergson confesses to his friend William James that he does not agree with James' notion of the unconscious.

> I cannot help but provide a large place for the unconscious, not only in psychological life, but also in the universe in general, as the existence of unperceived matter seems to me to be something of the same kind as that of a non-conscious psychological state. This existence of some reality outside of all actual consciousness is no doubt not the existence in itself spoken of by the old substantialism; and yet it is not part of what is actually presented to a consciousness, it is something between the two, always on the point of becoming or re-becoming conscious, something intimately mingled with conscious life, interwoven with it, and not underlying it, as substantialism would have it. (Bergson 2002b: 359)

Unperceived matter, which includes the room next door as well as distant continents, are as much part of the unconscious, for Bergson, as the whole of the past. Consciousness would just be the tip of a huge cone; and since minds can share the same experiences they would all participate in one universal unconscious that expands beyond any personal entity to become collective. Of course, Bergson does not call it a 'universal unconscious' but 'duration', a single, universal and impersonal time (Bergson

2002a: 206). As Deleuze summarizes Bergson's hypothesis: "There is only a single time, a single duration, in which everything would participate, including our consciousnesses, including living beings, including the whole material world." (Deleuze 1991: 78) No doubt these ideas feed into Deleuze and Guattari's concept of universal history. The history of social formations that they present as a universal history in *Anti-Oedipus* is at the same time a history of the unconscious, because – as we have seen – social formations not only produce their own deliria but are also the historically determined product of desire. The schizophrenic unconscious is not only *Homo natura* but also *Homo historia* (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 21, 33).

The confusing aspect in this naturalism of the unconscious is an oscillation between a perfectly empirical plane and a metaphysical plane. To the empirical plane correspond, on the one hand, the experiences of the schizo, like the visions granted to the residual subjects of Nietzsche or Hölderlin, on the other hand, the schizophrenic processes and flows that circulate on the social body. The metaphysical plane would be *the common denominator, the common part* of libidinal and social production, that is, desiring-production in general. Only with the assumption of this metaphysical principle can Deleuze claim that "*Anti-Oedipus* was about the univocity of the real" (Deleuze 1995b: 144).

In Spinoza, the univocity of the real is maintained by defining the essences of modes as degrees of power, intensive degrees that participate in the infinite power of God. On the one hand, this means that modal essences are immanent in God. Deleuze and Guattari praise Spinoza as the philosopher of immanence "who drew up, and thought the 'best' plane of immanence – that is, the purest, the one that does not hand itself over to the transcendent or restore any transcendent" (Deleuze; Guattari 1994: 60). On the other hand, it means that the being of modal essences is univocal. Being is said of each mode in a single and same sense, which is to say that each mode is as perfect as it can be according to its degree of power. There is no deficiency or lack, and therefore no rank among them. As Deleuze puts it in one of his seminars: "All beings are the same [*se valent*]. The stone, the insane, the reasonable, the animal, from a certain point of view, from the point of view of Being [*être*], they are the same." (Deleuze 1980: 16 Dec)

Besides this metaphysical dimension of modal essences, or degrees of power immanent in God, the modal universe also has an empirical reality. Modes exist in duration, in space and time equally. Existing modes are composed of extensive parts that are related to one another in a determinate ratio of movement and rest. This is to say that we are bodies composed of a great number of other bodies that operate together under the form of an organism. This is the kinetic aspect of our being, but we also have a dynamic nature, a power of action: as the empirical beings that we are we strive to persevere in Being, to maintain the characteristic relation of our bodily parts and preserve and extend the body's capacity to be affected in a large number of ways. Spinoza calls this dynamic nature 'conatus'; in those cases in which we consciously

experience this striving, he uses the more common term 'desire'. In fact, Spinoza uses a couple of terms: 'will' when the striving refers to the mind, 'appetite' when it refers to body and mind equally, and 'desire' finally as "*appetite together with consciousness of the appetite*" (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, P9S): "Between appetite and desire there is no difference, except that desire is generally related to men insofar as they are conscious of their appetite" (ibid.). The term 'conatus' is certainly the most general notion as it refers to this striving indiscriminately. For our purposes, however, it is interesting to see that Spinoza has no qualms about using the term 'desire' to characterise this striving which is the most fundamental aspect of our nature insofar as we exist. "But desire is the very nature, or essence, of each [individual]" (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, P57Pr).

This may also sound confusing: did Spinoza not define the essence of each mode as a degree of God's infinite power? This is certainly so. However, Spinoza speaks of desire as a mode's essence, *insofar as the mode actually exists*, in other words, as its body endures. Deleuze emphasizes this point in his book *Expressionism in Philosophy*: "A *conatus* is indeed a mode's essence (or degree of power) *once the mode has begun to exist*." (Deleuze 1992: 230) Spinoza's modal universe is maintained by desire, it runs on desire – and as we will see in the next section, these flows of desire vary depending on the assemblage in which they are organized. Spinoza's *Ethics* is an introduction into the art of organizing flows of desire.

2.2. "Machination" of desire.

For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is neither given as a spontaneous force, originating in the interiority of a subject, nor is it a desire *for* something, an object that is lacking.

> Desire is a set of *passive syntheses* that engineer partial objects, flows, and bodies, and that function as units of production. The real is the end product, the result of the passive syntheses of desire as autoproduction of the unconscious. Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is rather, the *subject* that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression. (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 26)

In defining desire as a set of passive syntheses, what comes to mind is the first synthesis of time in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. What happens in the first synthesis is the intensive contraction of present moments of time that envelop virtual events in the biopsychical condition of 'habit.' It is through habit that partial, larval subjects or local egos are formed (Deleuze 1994: 97), the products of particular narcissistic satisfactions or bindings.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, there are desiring-machines instead of larval selves. Desiring-machines connect with other machines that emit flows, form transient associations, or

cut flows and cause breakages and failures: eyes and the sun, a mouth and stones, a baby and a breast, a hand and Claire's knee. The crucial questions for Deleuze and Guattari are "*How does it work?* How do these machines, these desiring-machines, work – yours and mine? With what sort of breakdowns as a part of their functioning? How do they pass from one body to another? How are they attached to the body without organs? What occurs when their mode of operation confronts the social machines?" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 109)

The unconscious coupling of desiring-machines has no meaning; the unconscious is not expressive but productive. This is why Deleuze and Guattari characterize it as a factory rather than a theatre of images. The unconscious has to be thought of as a machine, rather than a structure, least of all a linguistic structure. An essential aspect of this unconscious machine and even a condition of its functioning are the breakdowns, blockages of flows and forms of anti-production. This aspect will be further examined in the third section. Let us for now ask what determines the flows of desire that are engineered by desiring-machines? According to Deleuze and Guattari, there are "myriad little connections, disjunctions, and conjunctions by which every machine produces a flow in relation to another that breaks it, and breaks a flow that another produces." (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 315)

The three unconscious syntheses of connection, disjunction and conjunction show that desire is not simply a natural, spontaneous flow. It is "machined" or engineered through the linkages and breaks between desiring-machines. The first synthesis of connection produces the body without organs, that is, pure intensive matter that fills space. The second synthesis of disjunction records the flows of desire on the body without organs and creates a memory. The third synthesis of conjunction produces a residual subject alongside the desiring-machines, to the exclusion of all other possible conjunctions of flows. The machination of desire distinguishes the nature of this subject from one of internal drives or instincts. As Deleuze says in *Dialogues*: "*desire only exists when assembled or machined.* [...] *It is constructivist, not at all spontaneist*" (Deleuze; Parnet 2002: 96). Desire is not a natural and spontaneous reality, rooted in the original interiority of a subject: it is "the Outside where all desires come from." (Deleuze; Parnet 2002: 97)

The term 'outside' does not mean anything transcendent but refers to the extrinsic relations between desiring-machines, working under determinate conditions. "These determinate conditions are [...] the forms of gregariousness as a socius or full body, under whose effect the molecular formations constitute molar aggregates." (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 343) Deleuze and Guattari distinguish three basic types of socius: the body of the earth lived by "primitive" societies; the body of the despot in imperial regimes; and the body of capital-money generated by global capitalism. While in the first two types of social formation, desire is contained through coding and overcoding, it is in capitalism that flows of desire are decoded and deterritorialized. In a simple sense this

means that in capitalism, everything is exchangeable and can become commodity; nothing is sacred or intrinsically meaningful. There is also no external limit to capitalism, only an internal limit that is pushed further and further ahead. According to Deleuze and Guattari, there is no deterritorialization without reterritorialization. Thus under the capitalist regime we still find codes and images: remnants of former beliefs, of the great objective representations or grand narratives (myth, tragedy). Nothing is left of the objective representations other than infinite subjective representations (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 307-8): the various familial images of Oedipus and pure signifiers that capture desire in an interminable psychoanalytic "cure".

When desire is trapped by images, such as the familial Oedipal triangle, it exists in its most perverted form, alienated from its revolutionary nature. It has become arrested or fixated; it is cut off from the variety of social investments. The political and ethical question that arises at this point for Deleuze and Guattari is: what are the assemblages in which a desiring-production becomes possible again, "gets moving and declares itself. […] Oral, anal, genital, etc.: we ask each time into which assemblages these components enter, not to which drives they correspond, not to which memories or fixations they owe their importance, nor to which incidents they refer, but with which extrinsic elements they combine to create a desire, to create desire." (Deleuze; Parnet 2002: 97)

It is perhaps at this point that we can see why Foucault called *Anti-Oedipus* "a book of ethics" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: xiii) – one that counters all forms of fascism, including "the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us" (ibid.). It is also here that we can see the parallels to Spinoza's project, since the whole of Book IV of the *Ethics* develops first and foremost the idea of two polar modes of existence: the "free man" versus the slave/the impotent (Deleuze 1980: 9 Dec). These modes of existence do not refer to a particular social status – in fact, the tyrant himself is rather a slave: he lives on sad passions because he fears his own subjects who need to be kept in collective sadness. The book rather treats these modes of existence as ways of life that can only be judged by immanent criteria. 'Good' and 'bad' are not transcendent values, preceding our existence, but values that result from the machination of our desires: "it is clear that we neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it." (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, P9S)

Desire, for Spinoza – as for Deleuze and Guattari – is without an object; it is *not* the striving for a particular object judged to be intrinsically good and which is lacking. Desire is rather this generic force of striving, which under certain conditions is made to desire certain things. The heteronomy of desire is not to be confused with the notion of a desire that lacks something, a desire born through scarcity and negation.

How does the heteronomy, or 'machination', of desire operate for Spinoza? The 'conatus' is first and foremost determined by affections of the body, that is, encounters

with external bodies. From these impacts, resulting in determinate bodily states, follow affects (feelings) and their corresponding ideas. These affects directly influence desire. As Spinoza puts it: "Joy and sadness are the desire, or appetite, itself insofar as it is increased or diminished, aided or restrained, by external causes." (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, P57Pr) More precisely, the heteronomy of desire can be explained as follows: encounters, for instance, with poisonous food, are detrimental to the particular relation of bodily parts that an individual is composed of. These bad encounters are linked with sad affects and diminish our power of action. According to Spinoza, the wise man seeks to organize good encounters of all varieties – pleasant food and drink, music, sports and theatre, and so on – because the great many parts of the human body "constantly require new and varied nourishment, so that the whole Body may be equally capable of all the things which can follow from its nature, and hence, so that the Mind also may be equally capable of understanding many things". (Spinoza 1985: *E* IV, P45S) Good encounters increase our power of action and also enable the mind to a better understanding of efficient causes. Through heteronomy of desire, our power of action is exercised, to be sure, only by passions, yet joyful passions can serve as a kind of springboard to form adequate ideas, the true understanding of causes.

From this very brief sketch of the machination of desire one may have the impression that Spinoza's ethics is individualist or even bourgeois. But this is not at all the case. The art of organizing good encounters culminates in the guidance of the mind by reason (i.e., the insight into true causes). In fact, according to Deleuze in a seminar on *Anti-Oedipus*, Spinoza "creates a whole theory of reason subordinated to a composition of powers of action. And that's what will not escape Nietzsche when Nietzsche, in *The Will to Power*, recognizes that the only one that preceded him was Spinoza. Reason becomes a calculation of powers of action, an art of avoiding bad encounters, of provoking good encounters." (Deleuze 2017: 23)

For Spinoza, reason is not an *a priori* faculty that can be exercised at will. A child is not born reasonable; it has to become so through learning. Experience and apprenticeship are indispensable. What is more, reason is always collective. For instance, in the *Political Treatise* Spinoza argues that the number of those participating in government affairs should be as large as possible and increase in proportion to the growth of those who are governed. When only the few decide on the common good, they decide everything in conformity with their own passions. A large number, on the contrary, will be able to discover what they all approve – "by consulting, listening, and debating" (Spinoza 2016b: *TP* 9/14). In fact, radical democracy – or what Spinoza calls "perfectly absolute dominion" (Spinoza 2016b: *TP* 11/1) – is the best possible political formation. Under this condition, the multitude is the collective bearer of power (*potentia*) and reason, warding off any régime guided by the destructive passions of a single individual or small group of individuals. The way Spinoza uses the concept of the multitude in the *Political Treatise* casts off its traditionally pejorative sense of the vulgar (*vulgus*), the

superstitious and savage crowd that is fearsome if it is not made to fear. Instead, Spinoza considers the multitude as a real power in politics, whose power in the state needs to be restored. Perhaps he intuits that liberation from servitude will be collective or will not be. However, Spinoza's work on the *Political Treatise* was interrupted by his premature death, and the book ends with the incomplete eleventh chapter on democracy. Thus it remains to some extent moot whether he would have formulated a revolutionary theory of the power of the masses. Deleuze and Guattari, however, refer to Spinoza in *Anti-Oedipus* as "the true visionary […] in the garb of a Neapolitan revolutionary" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 28).

2.3. The pairing of production and anti-production.

The main point of critique here is the Freudian assumption that unconscious phenomena could be understood through opposition and conflict. Deleuze and Guattari reject the conflictual model of drives, the dualism of life and death. There is no abstract principle such as the death drive. According to their own conception of the unconscious there is something they call the 'model' and 'experience' of death in the unconscious. The latter refers to an experience of disindividuation, a steep fall of intensity to such a degree that it shatters any fixation or identity (intensity = 0). The underlying cause is a machinic dysfunctioning, the breakdown of an ensemble of desiring-machines. This is what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'model' of death, immanent in life: anti-production. It manifests itself as the interruption of a process: this can be the explosion of pleasure that ends the process of desire, or it can be the repulsion of organ-machines by the paranoiac who no longer tolerates their functioning. On the social scale, it manifests itself in feasts of anti-production, like capitalism's expenditure on bureaucracy, militarisation and war. According to Deleuze and Guattari,

> it is *in order to function* that a social machine must *not function well*. […] Here it becomes apparent that the social machine is identical with the desiring-machine. The social machine's limit is not attrition, but rather its misfirings; it can operate only by fits and start, by grinding and breaking down, in spasms of minor explosions. The dysfunctions are an essential element of its very ability to function. (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 151)

Likewise, the dysfunctioning of the desiring-machines is a necessary condition for their functioning: there first needs to be a cut or break, a return to a zero degree of intensity, in order for a passage or becoming to be possible. Under this condition, the body without organs can again exercise its forces of attraction and desiring-machines can enter into new assemblages. Repulsion and attraction are two complementary forces, only apparently opposed, that act within the unconscious: "the return to

repulsion will condition other attractions, other functionings, the setting in motion of other working parts on the body without organs" (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 331).

Deleuze and Guattari distinguish this model and experience of death in the unconscious from death that always comes from outside. The latter amounts to an impersonal event that has no relation to 'me'; it occurs in the form of 'one dies,' not in the form of 'I die.' It is not part of life, and there cannot be any striving in life for death.

There is an interesting parallel here to Spinoza. Spinoza is very explicit that "*no thing can be destroyed except through an external cause.*" (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, P4) This must be the case: every mode is a degree of power and strives to persevere in its being. It cannot contain anything that is contrary to its existence. This follows from Spinoza's definition of a mode's essence, a degree of power as "*quantum in se est*" (Spinoza 1985: *E* III, P6) – a quantity of "being in itself", which is actually the technical phrase defining the being of substance. But the essences of modes are part of divine substance; they are a quantity of God's infinite power. As such they cannot be destroyed or contain anything negating their existence. Only as existing modes, endowed with bodies that endure, can they be destroyed. But this destruction always comes from outside, through external causes. The phenomenon of suicide cannot disprove Spinoza's argument:

> No one, therefore, unless he is defeated by causes external, and contrary, to his nature, neglects to seek his own advantage, or to preserve his being. No one, I say, avoids food or kills himself from the necessity of his own nature. Those who do such things are compelled by external causes, which can happen in many ways. Someone may kill himself because he is compelled by another, who twists his right hand (which happened to hold a sword) and forces him to direct the sword against his heart; or because he is forced by the command of a Tyrant (as Seneca was) to open his veins, i.e., he desires to avoid the greater evil by [submitting to] a lesser; or finally because hidden external causes so dispose his imagination, and so affect his Body, that it takes on another nature, contrary to the former, a nature of which there cannot be an idea in the Mind (by IIIP10). But that a man should, from the necessity of his own nature, strive not to exist, or to be changed into another form, is as impossible as that something should come from nothing. Anyone who gives this a little thought will see it. (Spinoza 1985: *E* IV, P20S)

The last case is the most interesting: it is possible that external causes influence a being in such a way that it takes on another nature, incompatible with the former. This can only be explained by Spinoza's conception of an individual as always composed of other bodies. The characteristic form of relation among the body's parts defines the individual. However, this relation proves to have a certain tolerance for variations. As Deleuze puts it:

> Spinoza suggests, in fact, that the relation that characterizes an existing mode as a whole is endowed with a kind of elasticity. What is more, its composition, as also its

decomposition, passes through so many stages that one may almost say that a mode changes its body or relation in leaving behind childhood, or on entering old age. Growth, aging, illness: we can hardly recognize the same individual. (Deleuze 1992: 222)

The important point here is that every transformation requires a decomposition of relations to a certain extent. What is more, the decomposition need not be clearly visible at a molar scale. The body can still endure but the nature of the individual can have changed entirely. As Spinoza says: "I dare not deny that—even though the circulation of the blood is maintained, as well as the other [signs] on account of which the body is thought to be alive—the human body can nevertheless be changed into another nature entirely different from its own. For no reason compels me to maintain that the body does not die unless it is changed into a corpse." (Spinoza 1985: *E* IV, P39S) At the limit, this change in nature may reach such an extreme that the resulting body actually opposes the former one – a body without organs repelling the organ-machines.

Spinoza's conception of composition and decomposition of relations, defining an individual body, allows for a model and experience of death immanent to life. In this Spinozist vein, Deleuze and Guattari can attack fascism as a cult of death as well as all other suicidal undertakings and affirm the identity of process and life. In a seminar on *Anti-Oedipus* from May 1980 Deleuze explains that their common interest in psychosis is rooted in understanding schizophrenia as a process of desiring-production. Schizophrenic lines of flight have to trace new paths of life and not end in a pure line of death. Then Deleuze quietly passes over to Spinoza and asks: "what does it mean today to be Spinozist? There is no universal answer. But I feel, I really feel Spinozist, in 1980 [...] Well, that means being ready to admire, to endorse if I could, the phrase: 'death always comes from outside'." (Deleuze 2017: 17)

3. Conclusion

Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the unconscious in its three major aspects exhibit clear influences from Spinozism. Spinoza inspires one of the main problems in *Anti-Oedipus* – as Guattari puts it in a round-table discussion in 1972: "Under certain conditions, the desire of the masses can turn against their own interest. What are those conditions? That is the question." (Deleuze 2004: 217).

There cannot be any revolutionary movement that serves the interests of the oppressed classes as long as it remains unconsciously complicit with repressive structures. This is why schizoanalysis as a practice is necessary: "In contrast to psychoanalysis, which itself falls into the trap while causing the unconscious to fall into its trap, schizoanalysis follows the lines of escape and the machinic indices all the way to the desiring-machines." (Deleuze; Guattari 1983: 339) According to Guattari, referring to

his own group practice as psychiatrist and political activist, the ideal starting-point for schizoanalysis are groups (cf. Deleuze 1995a: 19). The question has to be how individuals connect their desire with other individuals so as to produce a more powerful group-individual – or, in Spinoza's terms, a multitude. Of course, the main inspiration for Guattari is arguably Sartre, more so than Spinoza, as he creates his fundamental concepts of the subjugated group and the subject-group with recourse to Sartre's notions of seriality and group-in-fusion (cf. Donzelot 2001: 638-9). A subjugated group is one that, even if it seizes power, serves only its preconscious interests and continues to block desiring-production. Like Sartre's serial gatherings it remains a molar assemblage, invested in forms of power and gregariousness. Subject-groups, on the contrary, invest in a molecular multiplicity of desiring-machines and succeed in mobilising flows of desire by breaking up repressive social structures. Under certain conditions, the masses should be capable of releasing a revolutionary desire that clears away obstacles and opens up new horizons.

Let's conclude with the words of Guattari, who says in the 1988 interview with Raymond Bellour and François Ewald on *Anti-Oedipus*:

> We set against this fascism of power active, positive lines of flight, because these lines open up desire, desire's machines, and the organization of a social field of desire: it's not a matter of escaping 'personally', from oneself, but of allowing something to escape, like bursting a pipe or a boil. Opening up flows beneath the social codes that seek to channel and block them. Desire never resists oppression, however local and tiny the resistance, without the challenge being communicated to the capitalist system as a whole, and playing its part in bursting it open. (Deleuze 1995a: 19)

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