

# **The Pragmatic Constructions of Deleuze, Guattari and**

**Miles Davis**

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**Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of PhD.**

**The University of Leeds, School of Fine Art, History of Art and Cultural Studies.  
October 2002**

**The candidate confirms that the work submitted is his own and that appropriate credit has been given where reference has been made to the work of others.**

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## Acknowledgements

Firstly, a big thank you to my longstanding friends in Birmingham: to Justin Eades, Richard and Barry Cartmell, Dean Deavall and Andy Vine. Many thanks also to the sedentary inhabitants of Leamington Spa: Nick Coonan, Simon Scott, Lisa Powell and Luther Howard, and to those presently located in London and *environs*: to Robert Clough, Lee Matthews, Fleur Darkin, Oliver Pinel, Janie Atkins, Susan Kelly, Matt Rawle and Melanie Johnson. Extra special thanks go to Jemma Byrne and Simon O' Sullivan. I would also like to express my appreciation for the friendship and support I have received both professionally and personally at Leeds: to my *Parallax* colleagues, Joanne Crawford, Cylena Simonds, and especially to Lynn Turner, for her inspiring commitment and her rigour, and to Paul Bowman, for his infectious humour and for his intellectual 'sobriety'. Thank you also to David Fox, Kevin Vaughan, Ola Stahl, Ika Willis, Nick Chare, Shelley Budgeon, Alistair Rider, Katrin Kivimaa, Karima Laachir, Tom Tyler, Henry Fisher, Chris Emmett and Ken Hay. Further afield, many thanks to Elena di Giovanni and Janna Graham.

I would like to offer my deepest gratitude to Tom Syson for reminding me I had a life outside of University, to Kurt Hirtler, whose kindness, generosity and support - both personally and intellectually - has been beyond measure, and to Barbara Engh, for standing by me through everything and for having had faith in my abilities that on many occasions surpassed my own.

Lastly, I want to thank Monica and Joseph Swiboda. I dedicate this project to them.

## **Abstract**

The aim of the following investigation is two-fold. Firstly, the project takes as its focus the growing corpus of secondary literature written on the work of the French philosophers and theorists Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose work has generated a great deal of interest in recent years and a proportionate amount of controversy. Much of this controversy can be attributed to simplifications and misunderstandings on the part of commentators who have in some instances neglected to approach Deleuze and Guattari with sufficient rigour and care, resulting in the perpetuation of so many misunderstandings regarding their work.

Secondly, the project will seek to redress some of these misunderstandings by recourse to a pragmatic embodiment of Deleuze and Guattari's concepts and ideas through a case-study based on the life and work of the African-American jazz musician Miles Davis. In attempting to provide a new and challenging case as the basis for this investigation, the overriding aim is to assess the pragmatic remit of Deleuze and Guattari's thought, in terms of aesthetics, ethics and politics, whilst remaining sensitive to the potential limitations and dangers of their project.

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## Introduction

### A Conspiracy of Imitators? Re-assessing Deleuze and Guattari's Reception.

*XXIII: Emulation is a desire for a thing which is generated in us because we imagine that others have the same desire.*

*Exp.: If someone flees because he sees others flee, or is timid because he sees others timid, or because he sees that someone else has burned his hand, withdraws his own hand and moves his body as if his hand were burned, we shall say that he imitates the other's affect, but not that he emulates it - not because we know that emulation has one cause and imitation another, but because it had come about by usage that we call emulous only one who imitates what we judge to be honorable, useful or pleasant.*  
Benedict de Spinoza<sup>1</sup>

*It is not by means of an exegetical exercise that one could hope to keep alive the thought of a great thinker who has passed away. Rather, such a thought can only be kept alive through its renewal, by putting it back into action [...]*  
Félix Guattari<sup>2</sup>

There is something quite telling about the fact that, after a belated and lengthy initial period of gradual filtration into the realm of Anglophone theory, the work of Deleuze and Guattari has over approximately the last ten years acquired and continues to acquire a growing following in contemporary philosophical and cultural theoretical circles, albeit one that is far from unequivocal in its response to the work.<sup>3</sup> What makes this telling is the way that the work of these authors has generated a 'burgeoning field'<sup>4</sup> of secondary works that

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<sup>1</sup> Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, III, 'Of the Affects' Def. XXXIII, cited in Edwin Curley [ed.], *A Spinoza Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.194.

<sup>2</sup> Cited in Charles J. Stivale, *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari: Intersections and Animations* (New York: Guildford Press, 1998), p.1.

<sup>3</sup> In an incisive and important essay on the translation and reception of Deleuze in the English-speaking world, Barbara Godard demonstrates in some detail reasons why the establishment of the work of Deleuze was such a long time in coming, when compared to that of some of his more recognized contemporaries: 'Deleuze has made his way across the linguistic borders independently. Most obviously, the difference may be observed in the lack of personal involvement in the process. In contrast to Derrida and Foucault, translation of Deleuze's texts has not followed upon lectures or teaching in North America which contributed to the dissemination of their ideas and aroused a demand for translations. Nor has Deleuze involved himself as directly in the translation process as has Derrida, for instance, both in the selection of translators and the active intervention in relation to copyrights', cf., Barbara Godard, 'Deleuze and Translation', in *Parallax* 6:1: 2000, pp.69-70. Other differences between Deleuze and Derrida will be drawn on briefly in chapter 1.

<sup>4</sup> The 'burgeoning field of Deleuze-Guattari studies' is an expression coined by Charles J. Stivale in his appraisal of a recent collection of essays on their work, cf., Brian Massumi [ed.], *A Shock to Thought: Expression after Deleuze and Guattari* (London and New York: Routledge, 2002). This book contains some

continually grow in number, taking up ever more shelf-space in the philosophy and cultural studies sections of academic bookstores, and in recent times this has often taken place by the month. Given that Deleuze and Guattari were striving to promote a creative and critical approach to their work, one that challenges the hegemonic levelling of heterogeneity and diversity, the exponential growth in secondary texts is perhaps telling more for negative reasons than positive ones. Deleuze himself might have called it 'the conspiracy of imitators'<sup>5</sup>, a phenomenon unfortunately liable to be accelerated by the audit culture of contemporary academic study in the arts and humanities, in Britain at least, and one which - in the language of Deleuze - serves to engender a *repetition of the same rather than one of difference*.<sup>6</sup>

Given the specific orientations of the single- and jointly-authored works of Deleuze and Guattari as attempts to survey<sup>7</sup> the 'immanent' and 'materialist' complexes they find in

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very interesting and important work by Massumi and other contributors, but will not be used to any extent here on account of having been published during the final stages of this project's completion.

<sup>5</sup> This expression provides the subtitle to one of the sections from Deleuze's essay 'Mediators', in which he begins with the question '[H]ow can we define the crisis in contemporary literature?', to which he provides the following response: '[M]any bookshops are already becoming like the record shops that only stock things that make it into the charts. Fast turnover necessarily means selling people what they expect: even what's "daring, "scandalous", strange, and so on falls into the market's predictable form', cf., Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p.128. It would seem that one of the dangers effecting the intellectual, ethical and political value of Deleuze-Guattari scholarship, and more generally in this area of study, is that it follows the same predictable form. This trend points to one of a number of more ubiquitous dangers effecting contemporary culture and the theoretical diagnosis of its ills that Deleuze and Guattari themselves attempted to produce, a problem whose gravity will warrant it considerable attention here.

<sup>6</sup> Once again it is worth citing Barbara Godard to shed a little light on this matter, cf., Godard, 'Deleuze and Translation', pp.74-5: '[I]n the absence of any systematic project of translating Deleuze along the lines of Strachey re-writing Freud where the translator-function consistently doubles the author-function, Deleuze's body of work has been subject to the volatile forces of the market place and of disciplinary norms [...] [C]irculating widely in many different intellectual and social domains, their writing through translation now constitutes part of the 'cultural capital' of the academy'. 'The play of repetition and difference, crucial to Deleuze's philosophy and to Deleuze and Guattari's elaboration of the 'refrain', will be discussed in chapter 1, whilst a detailing of the refrain will take place in chapter 2.

<sup>7</sup> The term survey is a very useful one for dealing with the complex task of thinking about the plane of immanence in relation to the act of its inscription, especially where it pertains to the question of desire, subjectivity and investment. For its use within their work, cf., Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is*



their own respective ways in their individual writings and also in the ‘pick-up’<sup>8</sup> constitutive of their joint efforts, the very status of secondary attempts to explain their work is always already contentious. One might go so far as to ask the question: why write on Deleuze and Guattari at all? Suffice to say that this is not a question that exclusively applies to the works indexed to these particular proper names and rather perhaps points towards the need for vigilant reflexivity on the part of any philosopher or theorist’s interlocutors capable of fulfilling one of philosophy’s more fundamental aims, that is, an effective minimization of presuppositions, a task rendered all the more difficult by the more constraining aspects of the academic *dispositif*.<sup>9</sup> The question of *how* we should read their work, the one asked much less frequently of *why we should*, and the concept of the *dispositif* will constitute a key conjuncture in this project.

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*Philosophy?*, trans. Graham Burchell and Hugh Tomlinson (London and New York: Verso Books, 1994), pp.21-2. It is a term that they themselves derived from the work of Raymond Ruyer and has been perhaps best described by Massumi, cf., ‘The Bleed: Where the Body Meets Image’, in the revised version of this thesis recently published in Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2002), p.264n.4: ‘Raymond Ruyer calls [this] “*survol asbolu*”. There is no adequate translation of the term [...] Ruyer defines it as “existence-together as primary form” of consciousness, at a lived point of indistinction with sensation and perception’. The term captures something of the Bergsonian conception of consciousness and of Deleuze’s deployment of Bergson’s notion of difference, which shall be discussed briefly during the course of the project. Again, Massumi’s book has been published too recently to have been afforded a proper investigation.

<sup>8</sup> Cf., Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone, 1987), p.18, where Deleuze describes his approach to collaboration: ‘This is a pick-up method. No, ‘method’ is a bad word. But pick-up as procedure is Fanny’s [Deleuze’s wife’s] word. Pick-up is a stammering. It is only valid in opposition to Burroughs’s cut-up: there is no cutting, folding and turning down, but multiplications according to growing dimensions’. Comparisons to Burroughs’ cut-up and the fold in music will be made later, and the idea of ‘double-theft’ that Deleuze here attributes to this approach will also be dealt with in chapter 2. In keeping with this description, the word method has here been avoided as much as possible and procedure used in its place.

<sup>9</sup> This term - notoriously difficult to translate into English though usually rendered as ‘apparatus’ - has been used variously by - amongst others - Althusser, Foucault, Lyotard and Deleuze. Foucault’s work inspired Deleuze to write a short essay entitled ‘What is a *dispositif*?’. A somewhat neglected piece of writing, this thesis provides a summary of some of the key themes of Deleuze’s extended essay on Foucault, the ones he also explored in his work on ‘micropolitics’, alone and with Guattari. The essay and more generally the notion of *dispositif* is quite significant for the work undertaken here, in particular when Deleuze’s work is read alongside that of Lyotard’s ‘libidinal’ writings of the early-to-mid-1970s; cf., Gilles Deleuze, ‘What is a *dispositif*?’, in *Michel Foucault Philosopher*, trans. Timothy Armstrong (Brighton: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1992), Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Athlone Press, 1994),



Given this rather general observation regarding what are doubtless some of the pitfalls threatening any attempt to contribute anything pragmatic, transformative or new to knowledge production in philosophy or cultural studies, it is clear that the structures or processes of the 'outside'<sup>10</sup> symptomatizing<sup>11</sup> the 'segmental' and 'linear'<sup>12</sup> relations constituting an interlocutor's 'life' and 'work'<sup>13</sup> are not things that can or should be taken

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p.x; Louis Althusser, 'The Only Materialist Tradition: Part 1, Spinoza' in *The New Spinoza*, Warren Montag and Ted Solze (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp.3-20.

<sup>10</sup> The notion of the 'outside' as it appears here and throughout the chapter is derived from Deleuze's reading of Foucault who in turn derives his conception of the outside from the work of Maurice Blanchot, in which he states that '[T]he outside is not a fixed limit but moving matter animated by peristaltic movements, folds and foldings that together make up an inside: they are not something other than the outside, but precisely the inside of the outside', cf., Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (London: Athlone, 1986), pp.96-7. The folding of 'inside' and 'outside' therefore does not make of an outside a transcendent, transcendental or absolute exteriority but rather in the very processes of its folding generates a virtual, *crystalline* relationship between 'inside' and 'outside', cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (London: Athlone Press, 1988), p.49, where they state that '[F]or example, on a crystalline stratum, the amorphous milieu, or medium, is exterior to the seed before the crystal has formed; the crystal forms by interiorizing and incorporating masses of amorphous material. Conversely, the interiority of the seed of the crystal must move out to the system's exterior, where the amorphous medium can crystallize [...]'. For Foucault's own account of the 'outside' in his reading of Blanchot, cf., Foucault's essay 'The Thought from Outside' in Michel Foucault and Maurice Blanchot, *Foucault/Blanchot*, trans. Jeffrey Mehlman and Brian Massumi (New York Zone Books, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> The conception of symptomatology at work here is the one derived from Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche and developed in his 'critical and clinical' work, as described in Daniel Smith's outstanding introduction to this area and Deleuze's philosophy more generally, cf., Daniel W. Smith, "'A Life of Pure Immanence": Deleuze's "Critique et Clinique Project"', in Gilles Deleuze: *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London and New York: Verso, 1998), pp.xvi-xx. In his work on Nietzsche, Deleuze provides a crucial in-road into the materialist semiotics he would develop later, especially in the collaborations with Guattari, in that it is here that he describes the 'sign' as follows: '[A] phenomenon is not an appearance or even an apparition but a sign, a symptom which finds its meaning in an existing force', cf., Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (London: Athlone Press, 1996), p.3. For Deleuze, Nietzsche's 'diagnostic' method operates through this conception of the sign and this is why for him Nietzsche's philosophy is so eminently capable of connecting with the forces constituting a field of exteriority.

<sup>12</sup> The immanent rendering of social/subjective constitution in terms of the 'linear' and the 'segmental' is key to much of the work done in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in particular, cf., '1933: Micropolitics and Segmentarity', pp.208-31. This micropolitical dimension of their work will be used extensively in this project.

<sup>13</sup> What I have discerned to be the absolutely crucial Spinozist question of how many bodies - human, non-human, institutional, technological, musical - and by what means, are required to attain *and maintain* affirmative proximity in line with the *conatus*, or the affective 'striving' inherent in *all* relational interactions constituting the world, in order for sustainable ethical, ethico-aesthetic and (micro)political to take place, is one that will form something of a reprise as we proceed. It is also worth noting that the relationship between 'life' and 'thought' was something of a pre-occupation, particularly in his later work. See for example his recorded conversation with Didier Eribon called 'Life as a Work of Art', in Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, pp.94-101, and his last translated essay, 'Immanence: A Life' in Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on*



for granted. If one is to continue to work with such approaches as part of an *academic* intellectual project - there is an imperative, or 'order-word'<sup>14</sup> that requires the author of such a project attain a degree of exegetical coherence and clarity, a good signal-to-noise ratio, a good part of which involves interpretation, the very approach that Deleuze and Guattari playfully posit as how *not* to read their work.

However, if one is to take them at their word here it should be with a number of provisos. Firstly, their work can and should be read across multiple registers and - conceptually speaking - this is testified to by the interaction of the 'molar' and 'molecular' in their writing, as well as the play of 'relative' and 'absolute' deterritorialization.<sup>15</sup> This is particularly the case in *A Thousand Plateaus*. This amounts to a strategic approach that enables the reader and the work to maintain a relation to the dominant modes of language and thought whilst at the same time providing the potential for critique (*Anti-Oedipus*) and for pragmatic transformation (*A Thousand Plateaus*). This way of approaching their work

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*A Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), pp.25-33. For an account of the affective striving of the *conatus*, cf., Benedict de Spinoza, Ethics, IV, P38, in trans. Edwin Curley [ed.], *A Spinoza Reader* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p.221. For Deleuze's account of *conatus*, cf., Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* (New York: City Lights, 1988), p.99.

<sup>14</sup> The 'order-word' or - in French - *mot d'ordre*, is the fundamental function attributed to language at the level of the 'molar' in Deleuze and Guattari. This function is ultimately one of reduction, where a given problem incorporates a given solution or set of solutions which serve to make each articulation an ostensible repetition of sameness, masking a highly circumscribed and limited repetition of difference. As such, the order-word stands as a barrier or obstacle to the affirmation of an ontological difference and ethical activation. For the most thoroughly embodied articulation of the 'order-word' assemblage, cf., Deleuze and Guattari, 'November 20, 1932: Postulates of Linguistics', in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.75-6.

<sup>15</sup> The 'molar' describes the statistical aggregation of processes and machinic interactions at the level of their capture, overcoding and redundancy, as in when the subject assumes the status of a 'person' or an 'individual' as part of a liberal democratic society or *socius* (see chapter 1). The 'molecular' describes these processes in terms of 'deterritorializations' or 'becomings' between and across the 'molar' statistical aggregates, and in some cases sweep these aggregates along with them. However, what is important to remember is that 'molar' should not be equated with 'bad' whilst molecular is deemed 'good', as the two are always present in mixtures, including in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, hence why it is necessary to adopt a strategic relation to the molar. The same goes for 'relative' and absolute 'deterritorialization', which both have their dangers and limitations as well as their potential for productive transformation, cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.227-231, 174-175.

however has generated its fair share of disagreement and controversy in its reception, yet for all that it is not without its supporters. Despite the inevitably crucial problems that this disagreement has brought to light, the negotiation between molar and molecular, majoritarian and minor, relative and absolute deterritorialization, or any other strategic ‘dualism’<sup>16</sup> we might select, is not something that one can afford to neglect when it comes to writing an ‘academic’ account of their work. Furthermore, if one is to approach this work in full recognition of the undeniable Spinozist inspiration that both explicitly and implicitly informs it by variation and degree in both the authors’ individual and combined efforts, as is being done here, then the *strategic*<sup>17</sup> importance of the molar is compounded. In unfolding the Spinozist dimension some of the reasons why this is the case should become all the more apparent.

Let us attempt to clarify this multivalent approach to Deleuze and Guattari’s work. One of the primary focuses of contention in the work’s reception is the authors’ seemingly arrogant and highly rash attempts to dispense with notions such as ‘ideology’ or ‘interpretation’, but whilst there is doubtless a reticence and even violent dismissiveness implied in such claims, again one has to be sensitive to their underlying strategic attenuation.<sup>18</sup> In the case of ‘ideology’, what is at stake is a rather polemical claim whose force is capable of jolting the

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<sup>16</sup> The use of the term ‘dualism’ here is highly specific in that it does not describe what is conventionally understood by the term but rather ‘a composite [...] divided according to its natural articulations, that is, into elements that differ in kind’, cf., Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (New York: Zone, 1988), p.22. This use of ‘dualisms’ is directly taken from Bergson as is the idea of distinguishing in composites according to how they ‘differ in kind’. An example of this is the distinction Bergson makes between ‘perception’ and ‘memory’ to which we will return.

<sup>17</sup> The term ‘strategic’ should be taken in this instance and throughout the course of this project in the sense given to it by Deleuze in his book on Foucault, cf., Deleuze, *Foucault*, pp.70-93, indexed very closely to the understanding of ‘strata’ in this work and in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

<sup>18</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.4.



reader into a state of perplexity, shorting the action-reaction circuits<sup>19</sup> that can be found to condition the response of any person conversant with the place of 'ideology' in contemporary theory, a strategy deployed in the hope of generating a 'counter-actualization'<sup>20</sup> that - in considering why and how Deleuze and Guattari might be warranted in making such a claim - might lead to the realization that it is not a question of whether 'ideology' exists as a 'thing' so much as what a theory of ideology has to undergo to become *immanent to material and semiotic processes*. This reading of the strategy is reinforced by the appearance of Althusser's theory of 'interpellation' later in the work, rendered in terms of *machinic* assemblages of bodies and collective assemblages of enunciation.<sup>21</sup> In the case of interpretation, and the demand to 'never interpret!' once again one has to be aware that such a demand - perceived as an unconditional imperative - is

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<sup>19</sup> This idea connects heavily with the work of Deleuze and Bergson on the sensory-motor-system or schema and shall be put to work in chapter 3.

<sup>20</sup> The important idea of 'counter-actualization' is developed in Deleuze's book *The Logic of Sense*. Whilst the virtual is most usually juxtaposed to the actual in their work and its reception, this term is useful for the purposes of demonstrating that actualization is a process that has to be suspended and challenged, cf., Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, Constantin V. Boundas [ed.] (London: Athlone Press, 1990), p.178-9 and *passim*: 'Counter-actualizing each event, the actor-dancer extracts the pure event which communicates with all the others and returns to itself through all the others, and with all the others'. This concept of the event is important in Deleuze and will be discussed in its connection with 'incorporeal transformation' at various junctures to follow. The actor-dancer example is also illustrative of the way this is to be investigated in the case-study of the project, in particular in chapter 3 when the problem of 'attitude' will be examined along such lines. Furthermore, the event and its extraction through counter-actualization is bound up with the notion of passive synthesis, ubiquitous in Deleuze's work and therefore due some consideration of its own.

<sup>21</sup> This very point is made in a brilliant and sadly overlooked piece of writing by Meaghan Morris called 'Crazy talk is not enough', Morris debunks some of the more 'hasty' readings of Deleuze and Guattari, in particular the 'hippy' and 'gothic' renderings which as we shall see further on have been in no small measure responsible for an overly dismissive rejection of the authors' work. This point is made very forcefully by Morris, and in drawing our attention to the need to read across the 'plateaus' of *A Thousand Plateaus* to get a sense of the rigour and value of the book, she shows how easy it is to gloss in a way that misses the point. Her chosen example of reading *a deux* '1227: Treatise on Nomadology: The War Machine' and 'Of the Refrain' she shows that the former is as much if not more about 'home-making' as it is the nomadic voyage of the Steppe, before proceeding to show how this impacts on the potential value of Deleuze and Guattari's work for contemporary feminism, cf., Meaghan Morris, 'Crazy talk is not enough', *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 14: 1996, pp.386-7: "'Of the refrain" does not have to be read before "Nomadology", although the connections between them in a book "composed ... of plateaus that communicate with one another across microfissures, as in a brain" [...] are very clear: *both* are about "home-making", if we can allow variability, as well as an ambiguity for feminism, to this term's potentials of capture *and* escape, danger

potentially tantamount to the re-imposition of an order-word, the very reductive use of language that the work is supposed to be challenging. Deleuze and Guattari have to run the risk of laying down the law that they so despise to effect such jolts or affective ruptures between text and reader to ameliorate chances of a pragmatic connection to the 'outside'.<sup>22</sup>

The emphasis that has been placed on such claims as these by both 'pro-' and 'anti-' camps in the reception of Deleuze and Guattari has served to entrench them in their respective positions, with the 'pro-' parties using these claims to justify an outright dismissiveness of *any* approach to theory that does immediately declare the primacy of immanence, processuality or materiality, whilst 'anti-' parties are given to respond to such dismissals highly defensively and see them as evidence that the work of Deleuze and Guattari is nothing but hostile to any approach that isn't their own or one beholden to their repeatedly acknowledged precursors. What makes this *stratification* of the work problematic is that, firstly, once again the respective positions adopted reduce the potential for pragmatic deployment of the work by locking the participants into a closed system of entropic debate, and secondly, that it misses the extent to which the series of proper names which connect with those of 'Deleuze' and 'Guattari' proliferate far beyond the confines of their recognized precursors, or more accurately Deleuze's precursors (Lucretius, Spinoza, Hume, Nietzsche and Bergson), to make connections with a great many other names including

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*and* security, subjection *and* empowerment, work *and* song [...]. This emphasis of the 'and' is not without its own significance, which will be made clear later.

<sup>22</sup> Michel Foucault characterizes this approach in terms of 'humour', cf., Michel Foucault, 'Preface', in Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem and Helen R. Lane (London: Athlone Press, 1984), p.xiv: '[T]he traps of *Anti-Oedipus* are those of humour: so many invitations to let oneself be put out, to take one's leave of the text and slam the door shut'.



those of Lacan, Lévi-Strauss and Althusser.<sup>23</sup> This is important to the extent that - if one is to attempt to enter the machinic register and partake of any encounter with immanence - such an attempt should not proceed at all in terms of the work of an individual author *qua* closed system, but should instead read such work diagnostically in re-connecting it with the movements of immanence whereby the proper name becomes a *function or effect* of the work rather than a *proprium*.<sup>24</sup> Whilst doubtless some proper names and the works to which they are indexed will lend themselves more readily to the task if for no other reason than it is one that Deleuze and Guattari set themselves, as would certainly be the case with philosophers such as Spinoza, Nietzsche or Bergson, this does not change the fact that any proper name can ultimately be mapped in accordance with the movements of immanence marking its passages: Spinoza clearly showed in the very first book of the *Ethics*, crudely

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<sup>23</sup> It would seem that the separation of post-War French thought into 'structuralist' and 'post-structuralist' moments in the Anglophone world has itself contributed to the kind of hostile parochialism in question here. A distinction not recognized as such in France, it has certainly served to exaggerate the division between the work of different authors and has doubtless led to the unproductive gloss on Deleuze and Guattari that Meaghan Morris diagnosed. Again, another neglected text shows unequivocally that this is the case, this time Deleuze's own 'How Do We Recognize Structuralism', printed in Stivale, *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari*, p.282.: '[B]ooks against structuralism (or those against the "New Novel" are strictly without importance; they cannot prevent structuralism from exerting a productivity that is of our era. No book *against* anything ever has any importance; all that counts are books that are *for* something, and that know how to produce it'. This dashes the idea that there is ever any *absolute* rejection of any given thinker or their work in Deleuze and Guattari and greatly supports the claim for a *strategic* rather than imperative demand aimed at the reader, and - following the work of Massumi in chapter 1 this will connect with the ethical question of 'process lines', leading in chapter 2 to an endeavour to promote a more ethical form of 'apprenticeship' in philosophy and non-philosophy (see next section). The term 'strategic' also has a very specific use in the work of Deleuze which will become of great importance later in the current essay, primarily in its relation to the problem of strata, de-stratification and stratigraphic inscription, and which finds its most exemplary elaboration in the book on Foucault, cf., Deleuze, *Foucault*, p.120-1.

<sup>24</sup> One of a number of terms that have been lifted from Spinoza's philosophy to provide us with our ethical trajectory, '*propria*' describe the way immanent expression is thwarted in the attribution of properties or characteristics to beings that cuts them off from their capacity to act and as such should be distinguished from 'attributes' in the strictly Spinozist sense of the attributes of God-substance-nature, namely extension and thought, cf., Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone Books, 1990), p.50: '*[P]ropria* are not properly speaking attributes, precisely because they are not expressive. Rather are they like "impressed notions", like characters imprinted, either in all attributes, or in some one or other of them. The opposition of attribute and *proprium* turns then on two points. Attributes are Words expressing substantial essences or qualities, while *propria* are only adjectives indicating a modality of those essences or qualities.



summarized here by reference to Axiom 2 to the Definitions of God: 'What cannot be conceived through another, must be conceived through itself'.<sup>25</sup>

Moreover, because immanence must also be responsible for producing transcendence, one must - in principle at least - be able to map the transcendences of the most immanence-ignorant of works to discern how they constitute inscriptions on a plane of immanence. Deleuze and Guattari often do this, using traits derived from the very works and authors that they elsewhere seem to unequivocally decry. The procedure by which this takes place is no more clearly or explicitly demonstrated than in their last collaborative work, *What is Philosophy?*, in particular with the innovation of the 'machinic portrait'.<sup>26</sup> Whilst one might be forgiven for thinking that the likes of Hegel are 'too despicable to merit even a mutant offspring'<sup>27</sup>, the project of 'geo-philosophy' outlined in *What is Philosophy?* has recently been put to work in an attempt that in some ways approximates such an endeavour.<sup>28</sup>

To continue for just a little longer on this important point let us examine another of the hot-spots dividing the aforementioned camps: the claim for a literal 'machinic' philosophy. The use of the word 'machine' in Deleuze and Guattari's thought embodies one of the most

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<sup>25</sup> Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, I, 'Of God', A2, p.86. This conception of immanent causality is important in the same way that the 'symptomalogical' sign is, in that signs hereby become expressive of bodies, action, movement, sensation and thought, in a way that these signs are themselves effects inhering in their immanent causes. Cf., Gilles Deleuze, 'The Three Ethics', in Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, pp.140-1: '[E]ffects or signs are shadows that play on the surface of bodies, always between two bodies [...] Signs are *effects of light* in a space filled with things colliding with each other at random'.

<sup>26</sup> Cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, with a machinic portrait given for both Descartes' Cogito and Kant's Transcendental Subject, pp.25, 56. The idea for the machinic portrait is attributed to Tinguely, cf., p.55.

<sup>27</sup> Brian Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword', in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.x.

<sup>28</sup> Cf., Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p.82.

effective ways of articulating a bottom-up, non-hylomorphic,<sup>29</sup> pragmatic and rigorous philosophical account of the ‘unconscious’, yet there is no absolute necessity attached to the use of the word ‘machine’ in the elaboration of such a notion of distributed, positive desire. One only need read Spinoza’s *Ethics* to witness this, and not a ‘machine’, nor even ‘an’ ‘unconscious’ anywhere to be found! This can be viewed as a peculiar characteristic of immanent thinking and the intensive status that language may acquire when approached in terms of immanence. If one requires further evidence in support of this approach, one might do well to consult Althusser:

“[T]he more power the body has, the more freedom the mind has” (Spinoza). It is here that one could bring together Spinoza with Freud: for this *conatus*, torn between sadness and joy, what is it therefore by anticipation if not the libido torn between the instincts of death and life, between the sadness of Thanatos and the joy of Eros?.<sup>30</sup>

Whilst Freud, for his part will articulate his concept of the unconscious in terms of the conflicting libidinal tendencies marking Eros and Thanatos<sup>31</sup>, Spinoza had already in some ways done in very different circumstances, using different methods towards different ends. Most importantly, the language he used was very different, yet in terms of the processes that Spinozist thought came to embody it undeniably produced a means to articulate a relation to what only much later with Freud would be termed the ‘unconscious’.

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<sup>29</sup> On the critique of hylomorphism in Deleuze’s philosophy, cf., John Protevi, *Political Physics* (London: Athlone, 2001), pp.8: ‘Hylopmorphism is [...] the doctrine that production is the result of an (architectural) imposition of a transcendent form on a chaotic and/or passive matter.’ Protevi - following Deleuze and Guattari - opposes to this an immanent, material ‘self-ordering’, cf., pp.9-11.

<sup>30</sup> Louis Althusser, ‘The Only Materialist Tradition’, pp.18-19.

<sup>31</sup> With regard to immanent causality, both Deleuze and Guattari (but far more so the latter) take inspiration from Freud’s materialist, immanent conception of the libido and the drives, but would both ultimately part company with his ‘triangulation’ of desire on the grounds that the Oedipal ‘theatre’ of the unconscious subordinates them to a structure that can be found to operate transitively rather than immanently. On Deleuze’s reworking of Freud’s notions of Eros and Thanatos, see chapter 1.



For Althusser, this outcome is a product of Spinoza's rediscovery of a '*factual nominalism*'.<sup>32</sup> This connects Althusser's and Deleuze's Spinozism in that they both take up the distinction between an 'idea' and its corresponding '*ideatum*' in order to introduce difference into the concept and at the same to re-orient the concept towards ethics, both pursuing Spinoza's ethical trajectory between the first and third kinds of knowledge. In *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, Deleuze posits this trajectory as one between a 'moral' and 'ethical' 'vision of the world'.<sup>33</sup> In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, by way of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the indexing of ethics to ontology takes the more explicit form of an 'ethology',<sup>34</sup> in which 'ideality' becomes a dimension of matter'.<sup>35</sup>

Before we do this, it seems pertinent to re-iterate and in so doing summarize the foregoing regarding the task of 'reading' Deleuze and Guattari. We have seen that proclamations to the effect of barring particular approaches to their philosophy are put to work to try and keep things in the strategic zone so as to ward off the restrictions of movement that can accompany structuralist-ideological or theological-interpretative strata.<sup>36</sup> What is emerging

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<sup>32</sup> Louis Althusser, 'The Only Materialist Tradition', p.12.

<sup>33</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, pp.255-272: '[O]ne recalls Plato saying that materialists, if at all intelligent, should speak of power rather than of bodies. But it is true conversely, that intelligent dynamists must first speak of bodies, in order to "think" power. The theory of power according to which actions and passions of the body accompany actions and passions of the soul amounts to an ethical vision of the world. The substitution of ethics for morality is a consequence of parallelism, and shows its true significance'. Immanent materialism as such, is what conjoins ontology to ethics in the work of Deleuze (and Guattari) and the Spinozist parallelism between extension and thought is very useful in thinking the relations between philosophy, language and action, and thereby points to the pragmatic dimension of these authors' works, the work of some secondary writers on Deleuze and Guattari, and also the thesis under way here.

<sup>34</sup> The more specific disciplinary and scientific concerns of ethology will warrant further brief mention, if only to signpost its potential and potential limitations in its deployment in the work of Deleuze and Guattari.

<sup>35</sup> Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect', in Paul Patton [ed.], *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Cambridge MA and Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), p.229: 'Deleuze dispenses with [Spinoza's conception of] God, but retains the notion that 'ideality is a dimension of matter (also understood as encompassing the human, the artificial, and the invented)'.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>36</sup> Rather than reject Althusser's thought, Deleuze and Guattari make extensive use of it in both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. However, in doing so they attempt to restore movement and process into the proceedings, for example, by re-situating interpellation according to non-localizable assemblages instead of a

here is the sense in which it is insufficient to claim when engaging with philosophical writing that attempts to make ‘immanence immanent to itself’ that there are many or even infinite interpretations that we can put forward, and that it is necessary to go further and assert that we must claim a plurality of ways of reading which do not limit themselves exclusively to an interpretative register, but which at the same time recognize that any one given way of reading is not without its limitations, including the ‘extra-textual’<sup>37</sup> procedures of Deleuze and Guattari. To try and conceive ways in which this might be achieved will be one of key tasks of this project, to be explored at some length in chapter 1 and which shall continue to inform the project throughout.

### **Apprenticeship in (Non-)Philosophy: Making Do With Deleuze and Guattari**

*A new Meno would say: it is knowledge that is nothing more than an empirical figure, a simple result which continually falls back into experience; whereas learning is the true transcendental structure which unites difference to difference, dissimilarity to dissimilarity, without mediating between them; and introduces time into thought - not in the form of a mythical past or former present, but in the pure form of an empty time in general.*  
Gilles Deleuze<sup>38</sup>

*Here we knock, deeply moved, at the gates of present and future: will this “turning” lead to ever-new configurations of genius and especially of the Socrates who practices music? Will*

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structured ‘subject’. The ‘theological-interpretative’ strata might in one instance involve the capture of ‘faciality’ epitomized by the image of Christ-on-the-Cross in the plateau ‘Year Zero: Faciality’, cf Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.167-91, or the interpretative tendencies in psychoanalysis, at least where they lead to the ‘Holy Family’ of the Oedipus Complex, cf., Deleuze and Guattari, ‘Psychoanalysis and Familialism: The Holy Family’, in *Anti-Oedipus*, pp.51-138, and in particular p.52: ‘[S]tructural interpretation makes Oedipus into a kind of universal Catholic symbol, beyond all the imaginary modalities. It makes Oedipus into a referential axis not only for the pre-oedipal phases, but also for the para-oedipal varieties, and the exo-oedipal phenomena’. Once again, this is not a wholesale rejection of psychoanalysis so much as a strategic attempt to diagnose its ‘illegitimate’ usages. Whilst the problems of Oedipalization are crucial to the collaborative work of Deleuze and Guattari, and Guattari’s own writing, it will not be explicitly discussed in detail in this project, but will appear in the guise of the Spinozist concept of ‘privation’ and in the stratoanalytical critique of Deleuze and Guattari’s thinking of the problem of becoming. The consequences of the ‘abstract machine’ of faciality for a theory of constitutive subjectivity, especially as it pertains to the problems of race and racism, will warrant further discussion in chapters 2, 3 and in the ‘Coda’ preceding the Conclusion.

<sup>37</sup> See chapter 2.

<sup>38</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), pp.166-7.



*the net of art, even if it is called religion or science, that is spread over existence be woven more tightly and delicately, or is it destined to be torn to shreds in the restless, barbarous, chaotic whirl that now calls itself the present?*  
Friedrich Nietzsche<sup>39</sup>

In his dialogue entitled *Meno*, Plato famously expounds the pedagogical, epistemological and ethical principle of *anamnesis*, or innate knowledge borne of recollection.<sup>40</sup> Socrates's pupil and interlocutor is Meno, of the title to the dialogue, and by recourse to what might now be called a principle of deductive reasoning, Socrates claims to demonstrate that knowledge is something that anyone can come to possess by participating in the dialectic:

[A]ll nature is akin, and the soul has learned everything, so that when a man has recalled a single piece of knowledge - *learned* it, in ordinary language - there is no reason why he should not find out all the rest, if he keeps a stout heart and does not grow weary of the search; for seeking and learning are in fact nothing but recollection.<sup>41</sup>

For Deleuze, this 'image of thought' is fundamentally dogmatic. A major part of Deleuze's project across the course of his writings, both alone and with Guattari, is to expound a new 'image of thought'.<sup>42</sup> As such, he imagines how a latter-day Meno would respond to Socrates's line of questioning, in a way that would not leave thought confined to the 'arborescent' schema of an order-word assemblage, and would instead seek to promote an alternative conception of 'apprenticeship' which foregrounds difference *in itself*.

The alternative image of thought that corresponds to this epistemological procedure - as is well known, perhaps too well-known - is the 'rhizome' or 'vegetal' image of thought, and

<sup>39</sup> Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Birth of Tragedy and The Case of Wagner*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1967), p.98.

<sup>40</sup> It is arguably also a metaphysical principle, but - going along with the Aristotelian response to the 'Socratic question' - it would seem that this aspect would emerge in later dialogues as an innovation regarded as Platonic rather than Socratic, cf., W.K.C Guthrie, 'Introduction' in Plato, *The Protagoras and Meno*, trans. W.K.C. Guthrie (London and New York: Penguin Classics, 1956), p.16.

<sup>41</sup> Plato, *Meno*, p.130.



its inspiration stems from the 'alternative' lineage of philosophers listed above.<sup>43</sup> This inspiration is fundamental both to Deleuze's writing as early as the 1950s and therefore shall be accorded a proportionate degree of consideration in this project. Perhaps the most important, challenging and outstandingly problematic fall-out from this approach to philosophy concerns, somewhat paradoxially, the problem of its relation to 'non-philosophy', a term that functions as something of a penumbra under which one might on different occasions and sometimes in mixtures locate biology, physics, chemistry, film, painting, politics, quilt-making(!) and - most importantly here - music. This is not to say that these terms are categorically contained under the heading of non-philosophy, but rather the capacities, functions and effects of each of these areas or 'disciplines' are such that their creativity modulates their respective emphases according the different ways that they are perceived to relate to immanence, to materiality and to 'ideality'.

As such, philosophy can be said to have non-philosophical roles to play, that in its designated task of 'creating concepts' it also creates 'affects' and 'percepts'<sup>44</sup>, just as non-philosophy may possibly accede to conceptual creation. Where it pertains specifically to

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<sup>42</sup> For the most extensive account of the dogmatic image of thought, cf., Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp.129-68, from which this account of *Meno* is taken.

<sup>43</sup> Perhaps the most oft-cited of Deleuze's neologisms is that of the 'rhizome' which - despite its endless invocation - - needs to be thought through more carefully as an image of thought. For an embodied account of this image, and that of 'arborescence' cf., Deleuze and Guattari, 'Introduction: Rhizome', in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.3-26; for its description as a 'vegetal' image of thought, cf., Deleuze's preface to the English translation of *Difference and Repetition*, p.xvii. It is very important to bear in mind that the term image is definitively not that of a representation, which is one of the main targets of this book, but rather needs to be conceived along the same lines as Henri Bergson's 'image', for example his 'perception-image'. For a description of this conception of images see chapters 2 and 3. From the outset, this thesis was conceived in a way that strategically held the concepts of concepts such as 'rhizome' and 'becoming' in a degree of suspicion, on account of the amount of baggage they seem to have acquired through the course of their establishment at the core of the secondary literature. It will be interesting to note as the thesis proceeds what effect this strategy has on the status and value of these terms.

<sup>44</sup> Also largely adapted from Bergson's work on the 'image' these terms and their relations to one another shall be explored in passing in chapter 3.

philosophy, this claim is exemplified by the 'Pop'<sup>45</sup> ambitions that Deleuze and Guattari have for philosophy, that is a philosophy which is not precious in its (self-)exemplification, on account of the complexity of the world in its immanent *processuality*. For this reason, a case-study has been selected which has not been explored in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, and in some ways goes against the grain of their own unacknowledged tendencies to molarize, as shall be shown in due course.<sup>46</sup> The case that has been chosen, as the title of the thesis no doubt indicates, is the 'life' and 'work' of the African-American jazz musician, Miles Davis. There are a number of reasons why Miles Davis was the final choice. Certainly, in some ways it represents a choice that is far from exemplary, in that musicology, jazz criticism and celebrity biography to some extent must be negotiated, and as such constitute an archive that constantly forces and reinforces the demands of interpretation, of judgements based on taste, and ultimately of 'opinion', to which Deleuze and Guattari were so heavily opposed as a by-product of a dogmatic image of thought. In short, a case-study based on Miles Davis makes a number of demands which ally it potentially far more closely to such an image of thought rather than a more creative, rhizomatic one. However, in a way, this makes it even more appropriate to the project than one that would lend itself more readily to a Deleuze-Guattarian analysis/synthesis, because - given that one of the key aims of this thesis is to explore what I have chosen to call the pragmatic remit of their conceptual innovations and procedures - the decision to use Miles Davis poses a great challenge to this work, for the reasons given above, but also because it

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<sup>45</sup> This is a description that Deleuze (and Guattari) give to their work on a couple of occasions, but the particular use of it that here springs to mind is the one given in a 'Nietzschean' reading of *Anti-Oedipus*, cf., Mark Seem, 'Introduction', in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. xxi.: '[S]toned thinking based on intensely lived experiences: Pop Philosophy'. This introduction symptomatizes the more 'anarchic' end of Deleuze-Guattari reception, to which we shall return in the first chapter.

<sup>46</sup> See in particular chapter 2.



enables the project to bring together a significant number of ‘tools’<sup>47</sup> from the inventory of Deleuze and Guattari and re-combine them in a way that hopefully extends their own philosophical ‘*bricolage*’<sup>48</sup> at the same time as drawing attention not only its potential, but also its potential limitations. The question of ‘why’ accompanying the ‘how’ inflects the influence of cultural studies on the more ‘straight-ahead’ philosophical renderings of their work that informed the writing of what follows. To the extent that this makes the project a pragmatic one, it is hoped that it will be on the order of a pragmatics capable of connecting with the ‘outside’.<sup>49</sup> It is along such lines that the case of Miles Davis will be explored, by surveying out from the complexity, ambiguity and ambivalence of the many different aspects making up ‘his’ life.

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<sup>47</sup> Another oft-quoted example of Deleuze’s procedure is that of the conceptual ‘tool-box’, for example, cf., Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, ‘Intellectuals and Power’ in Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard [ed.] and Sherry Simon (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977), p.208: ‘[A] theory is exactly like a box of tools. It has nothing to do with the signifier. It must be useful. It must function’.

<sup>48</sup> Deleuze and Guattari continue with the do-it-yourself theme by invoking the term ‘*bricolage*’ from the work of Claude Lévi-Strauss, the ‘making-do’ of the title of this section of the introduction and to be found referenced first-hand in Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.7: ‘[W]hen Claude Lévi-Strauss defines *bricolage*, he does so in terms of a set of closely related characteristics: the possession of a stock of materials or of rules of thumb that are fairly extensive, though more or less a hodgepodge [...]. A translator’s footnote accompanies the definition, describing *bricolage* thus: ‘[T]he tinkering about of the *bricoleur*, or amateur handyman. The art of making to with what is at hand’. Whilst in many ways this approach is embodied in the thesis, it is with considerable reservation that this procedure is ultimately to be embraced. Thought of from the perspective of the ‘amateur’ apprentice, the risks are clearly indicated by the philosopher Michel Serres, when he states that ‘*art brut* [...] is confined to the psychopathology or to fashion: an ephemeral bubble worthy of the stage of buffoons’, cf., Michel Serres, *The Troubadour of Knowledge*, trans. Sheila Faria Glasier with William Paulson (Ann Arbor: Michigan University Press, 2000), pp.90-1.

<sup>49</sup> Some of the best work done to date on philosophical pragmatism and the work of Deleuze can be found in Cary Wolfe’s book *Critical Environments*, which takes up the relations between the more recognized protagonists of pragmatism, including William James, C.S. Peirce, Walter Benn Michaels and Richard Rorty, and compares the ‘pragmatics’ of the ‘outside’ of Foucault and Deleuze, cf., Cary Wolfe, *Critical Environments: Postmodern Theory and the Pragmatics of the “Outside”* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp.87-128 and *passim*. To the extent that the current project is bound up with philosophical pragmatism it is through the connection between Deleuze, Guattari and C.S. Peirce. The ‘pragmatics’ of the thesis title, however, refers more to the term as used by Deleuze and Guattari, including its seriations and proliferations. For a description of these see chapter 1. The issue of the ‘outside’ as has already been indicated will itself be of marked importance at certain points in the project.

Other reasons for why the case goes against the grain of Deleuze and Guattari's work include the question of investment (*cathexis* in German, *l'investissement* in French, and in both languages connoting libidinal desire *and* economics), by which is meant the question of how a 'subject' or an 'individual' can get beyond their specific investment or perhaps even their fetish for a given 'object', in this case constituted by the music of Miles Davis in order to simultaneously survey its social and/or institutional set-up or *dispositif* and effect an ethical and possibly even political *dis*-positioning of the said investment or fetish. This question is a vast and complex one, but one that is urgently in need of renewed address if any claim for the value and status of *both* popular cultural forms of production *and* more categorically 'serious' or 'artistic' forms is to be taken seriously and not just presupposed.<sup>50</sup> This question is also important because it impacts heavily upon the kinds of investment that constitutes the lines of force and subjectivity as part of a theoretical, critical, philosophical or academic *dispositif*, and again the potential for its ethical or political *dis*-positioning. This task is a vast and perhaps even ultimately thankless one, given that it runs the gauntlet of not only the order-words of academia, but also of the capture of investment and the systematic production of redundant subjectivities as part of an advanced capitalist mode of production that are expanding ever-faster on a planetary scale. Nevertheless, this is as much a threat to the tasks of other thinkers and writers in academia and ignoring it is not a realist option, postmodern platitudes to the contrary notwithstanding. On a brighter note, whilst the stakes remain high, if one is to write and think in accordance with the affirmative dimension of Deleuze and Guattari's work one might at least continue to strive for affective increase, even if this ultimately ends up being somewhat banal, and promote such increase

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<sup>50</sup> On the tenuousness of the distinction and the need to re-think it beyond the simplistic postmodernist attempts to level it, see chapter 2.



as widely as circumstances might permit. However, attention needs to be drawn to what potentially remains an abyssal gap between banal increase of a moderately ethical order to wide-scale ethical or political transformation, despite the ease with which Guattari declares the commencement of ‘molecular revolution’.<sup>51</sup> Still, there remains perhaps, against the grain of the debilitating effects of capitalism and the ‘archaisms’ that give the lie to their former power but increasingly enter into the service of capitalism, a transformative potential that remains ‘all too tangible’.<sup>52</sup>

Furthermore, this problem is one that makes its own demands of the theory of Deleuze and Guattari, but more particularly the hitherto neglected contributions of Guattari in his own work as well as that of the collaborations with Deleuze, notably his project of transversality<sup>53</sup> and his materialist semiotics, in addition to the fact that his own concept creation was mediated through his non-academic work in ‘anti-psychiatry’ and radical politics. The question of the value of Guattari’s work will be taken up towards the end of chapter 1 and carried over into the investigation of the case to follow in chapters 2 and 3, with an attempt made to transversalize theory between and across ostensibly very different

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<sup>51</sup> This expression of Guattari’s describes the non-localizable relation between desire and the social which is meant to render a macro/micro distinction in politics somewhat obsolete. Guattari’s first full-length collection of essays to be published in English translation carries the expression as its title and the essays contained within deal with this issue in a lot of detail that makes this rather crude summary of the problem a bit oversimplistic. Guattari was a life-long political activist involved in a great many ‘grass-roots’ struggles and it therefore hardly be said that he had no time for politics proper, cf., Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, with an Introduction by David Cooper (London and New York: Penguin, 1984). Published in English around the same time as *Anti-Oedipus* and prior to most of Deleuze and Guattari’s other work, the translation misses the nuances of his machinic thought. Despite the schematic account of Guattari’s politics given above, the problem of how ethics and politics connect as part of a ‘rhizomatic’ non-localized field of distributed desire remains a major problem.

<sup>52</sup> Further evidence of a more nuanced relation between subjectivity and the social is put forward by Guattari at the end of his last book, cf., Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Sydney: Power Press, 1995), p.135, where he states that, despite the ‘subjective implosion and chaomic spasms looming on the horizon’ there remains the prospect of ‘riches and unforeseen pleasures, the promises of which, despite everything, are all too tangible’.



thinkers, in a 'pick-up' or 'double-theft'<sup>54</sup> of theirs and Deleuze and Guattari's ideas. This will primarily take Theodor W. Adorno and his work on popular music as its mainstay, with the work of other writers such as Walter Benjamin and Bertolt Brecht providing the occasional 'soundboard'.<sup>55</sup>

In setting up the case, extensive use will also be made of the procedures associated with 'synthesis' in Deleuze and Guattari's work, and perhaps most aptly, the claim that they make for conceiving of philosophy as a 'thought-synthesizer'<sup>56</sup> which contributes fundamentally to their attempt to overturn the dogmatic image of thought, in addition to the deterritorialized re-working of Kant's *a priori synthetic judgement* that leads to this conception, but also a wider conception of philosophical synthesis that is very useful for exploring the extent to which philosophy can be said to have a pragmatic value that crosses over into non-philosophy.<sup>57</sup> These aspects will primarily be explored throughout the first two chapters.

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<sup>53</sup> Guattari adapted transversality from the analytic transference and gradually adapted it into a full-blown ontology. For a more detailed description see chapter 1.

<sup>54</sup> This second expression for describing the procedure of Deleuze's philosophy has considerable ramifications for his conception of the 'war machine' and the problems of a philosophy of becoming. See chapter 3.

<sup>55</sup> I am indebted to Barbara Engh for introducing me to this highly useful device of (auditory and theoretical) amplification.

<sup>56</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.343.

<sup>57</sup> Another book that has recently entered the burgeoning field of Deleuze-Guattari studies is Gregg Lambert's *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, which looks to be a very scholarly and detailed investigation of how non-philosophy, and in particular literature, film, painting and sculpture, in some measure provide the conditions of existence of his philosophical work. Unfortunately, yet again, the book was published too recently to be granted a proper investigation, and though there are doubtless likely to be parallels, it furthermore seems that Lambert has not extended his investigation to look at music in any detail, cf., Gregg Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze* (London and New York: Continuum Press, 2002).

This project, in all of its aims, will constitute an attempt to comprise analytic and synthetic procedures insofar as the remit of a PhD. thesis will permit such an enterprise to comprise its contribution to academic knowledge. Whilst there are doubtless more thoroughgoing examples of this approach to be found in the work of more established academics and writers (Deleuze and Guattari amongst them), it is hoped that this thesis can contribute something to the ongoing debates staged around their work in a way that seeks to emulate it in a way that goes beyond mere imitation.



## Chapter 1: Making the Case for Deleuze and Guattari

Before it is possible to proceed towards the case-study that will for the most part constitute chapters 2 and 3, it is first necessary to lay a theoretical or conceptual groundwork which attempts to navigate a path between the numerous possible approaches to Deleuze and Guattari's work as suggested in the introduction, in such a way as to try and avoid the pitfalls that emerge when attempting to make productive use of their work, pitfalls that are in some instances symptomized by existing attempts to deal with their ideas. This task will initially lead the project to embark on an investigation of some of the roles played by synthesis in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, with a mind to emphasizing their pragmatic potential, and will then move on to consider how a 'synthetic' procedure effects a shift in the philosophical conception of subjectivity that re-orientates it along different ethical lines. An attempt to demonstrate how this shift develops through Deleuze's work shall be made by taking key aspects of some of his earlier projects to explore how they unfold through the collaborations with Guattari, with a somewhat cursory but hopefully illustrative and pragmatic demonstration of how the development of these aspects proceeds from Deleuze's earlier work towards the 'machinic' embodiments to be found in *Anti-Oedipus*, to be taken up again in chapter 2 when exploring the 'assemblage' of the 'thought-synthesizer'.

Following upon this first stage of the chapter, there will be something of a detour taking place through the problem of investment, which will draw upon the notion of the *dispositif* and the prospect of its ethical *dis*-positioning. In doing so, this section will take up the problem of trying to produce an immanent, constitutive account of subjectivity *qua* process, drawing on Deleuze's essay 'What is a *dispositif*?', which provides something of an overview of his

work on Foucault, and lends an additional perspective on the problem of the 'outside' which will be of considerable value as this project proceeds. The 'libidinal' work of Lyotard will also be introduced as providing one of a number of theoretical and philosophical soundboards to be deployed at various stages during the course of the present undertaking. Overall, the material explored in this section will come into its own when attempting to discern the potential strengths and limitations of a Deleuze-Guattarian approach to ethical and political problems, and the risks involved in any undertaking that mobilizes their conceptual innovations. Additionally, it will provide a means by which to better assess the role that their work might play in cultural studies.

Having made the initial case for synthesis in Deleuze and Guattari, the chapter will then go on to examine how other writers using their work have made the case, not just in the juridical sense of the word, but also in the sense of attempting to produce their own embodiments of the Deleuze-Guattarian procedure, a *re-synthesis*, if you will, of their philosophical constructions, with the focus on some of the 'exemplary' instances of Brian Massumi. The issue of limitations in the corpus of Deleuze and Guattari will be signalled during this part of the chapter, through the fascinating and highly pertinent objections levelled at the 'case' of the concept by the French philosopher Alain Badiou.

Finally, the foregoing themes and problems will all undergo something of a reprise in the last section which will make the case for Guattari, whose thought in its own right has until recently largely been neglected, a case which will make the controversial claim for thinking his contributions to the collaborations as to some extent being separate from those of



Deleuze, but only with a mind to promoting a more rigorous and more productive approach to pragmatic embodiments of their work.

### Synthetic Trajectories of Thought

*Your synthesis of disparate elements will be all the stronger if you proceed with a sober gesture, and act of consistency, capture, or extraction [...]*  
Deleuze and Guattari<sup>1</sup>

*Difference and Repetition* - published in French in 1968 - along with *The Logic of Sense*, which came out within a year of the former work, arguably contribute the most out of all of Deleuze's solo-signed works to the 'schizoanalysis' that he would produce in conjunction with Guattari over the course of the subsequent decade. When considered from the perspective of its academic and intellectual context, as is well documented, these books embody one of the main pre-occupations of the period in their attempts to challenge the pre-eminence of identitarian thinking within the Western philosophical tradition by recourse to a complex notion of radical *difference*. Despite the similarities that Deleuze's take on this problem has to the work of others during this period, perhaps most recognizably that of Derrida, where Deleuze departs from Derrida and other protagonists of difference is in his emphasis on the 'extra-textual'<sup>2</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.344-5.

<sup>2</sup> In explicitly distinguishing his own philosophical endeavour from that of Derrida, Deleuze apparently remarked that it was ultimately a question of the 'extra-textual', cf., Daniel W. Smith, *Gilles Deleuze: Essays Critical and Clinical*, pp.xv-xvi: "As for the method of deconstruction of texts", Deleuze once remarked, "I see clearly what it is, I admire it a lot, but it has nothing to do with my own method. I do not present myself as a commentator on texts. For me, a text is merely a small cog in an extra-textual practice. It is not a question of commenting on the text by a method of deconstruction, or by a method of textual practice, or by other methods; it is a question of seeing what use it has in the extra-textual practice that prolongs the text". It is worth pointing out however that in the corresponding footnote to this quote, Smith advises a degree of caution in making an absolute distinction, cf., p.177 n.24: 'Deleuze nonetheless cites Derrida on numerous occasions, and the many lines of convergence between their respective works remain to be explored'. John Protevi attempts this exploration and takes the problem up in terms of Guattari's notion of 'transversality' between

In the chapter of *Difference and Repetition* entitled 'Ideas and the Synthesis of Difference', Deleuze proceeds along the lines suggested in the introduction, here strategically deploying, and 'synthesizing' a re-worked version of Kant's 'Ideas' of the Understanding in a way that seeks to substitute for the residuum of identity that he locates in Kant's conception of the transcendental apperceiving subject a differential, relational conception of the Idea that rides the play of difference and repetition, through a philosophical rendering of difference and differentiation<sup>3</sup> borrowed from differential calculus. The *modus operandum* here is highly complex and a detailed analysis beyond the scope of the present project, but nevertheless it is worth granting it a cursory exploration as it provides some useful insights into the pragmatic 'constructivism'<sup>4</sup> of Deleuze and Guattari's procedures.

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Derrida and Deleuze, cf., John Protevi, *Political Physics* (London and New York: Continuum Press, 2002), *passim*.

<sup>3</sup> Cf., Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.207: '[T]he negative appears neither in the process of differentiation nor in the process of differentiation [...] [T]he first process is identical with the description of a pure positivity, in the form of a problem and to which are assigned relations and points, places and functions, positions and differential thresholds which exclude all negative determination and find their source in the genetic or productive elements of affirmation. The other process is identical with the production of finite engendered affirmations which bear upon the actual terms which occupy these places and these functions'. The complementarity of differentiation and differentiation as such is one of the many instances in which Deleuze seeks to produce the One-multiple of production and affirmation, as when he says of Spinoza that his 'monism' becomes a monism of multiplicity in accordance with the relation between substance and the modes of being that embody its attributes, cf., Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p.198-9: '[T]hese intrinsic modes, contained together as a whole in an attribute, are the intensive parts of God's power, within the attribute that contains them. It is in this sense [...] that modes of a divine attribute [extension or thought as those infinite attributes of God-substance expressed by finite beings] necessarily participate in God's power: their essence is itself part of God's power, is an intensive part, or a degree of that power'. The Spinozist rendering of the problem serves to highlight how it is one both of 'intensity' and capacity, that is the capacity to 'participate' in immanent substance, which lends *difference-in-itself* and its repetitions an ethical trajectory. The relation between intensity *qua* 'degree' and quality *qua* 'kind' in relation to difference as it is taken up in both of these works is in many ways the problem with which Deleuze begins in 1956 with his early reading of Bergson.

<sup>4</sup> Cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.7: '[C]onstructivism requires every creation to be a construction on a plane that gives it an autonomous existence'. This conception of concept creation and its non-philosophical correlates will be explored in some detail in chapter 3, and its invocation of 'making' returns us to the idea of *bricolage* as a procedure, at the same time resonating with the 'constructions' of the thesis's title.



So why synthesize a bastard<sup>5</sup> use of Kantian transcendental philosophy with the mathematics of differential calculus? This question can in part be answered by recognizing that differential calculus - whether one has a thoroughgoing understand of it or not - is bound up with a notion of difference and different/ciation, whereby what is at stake is its placement in the service of a thinking of affirmative and irreducible difference that sidesteps conceptual identity. It should be made clear here that whilst - as Deleuze shows - the calculus can be explored in terms of numerous different philosophers, what is at stake in using the calculus for philosophical ends is not the attempt to supply a scientific account of their work, but to use calculus to produce a *processual* logic of difference that sheds light on the workings of philosophy and provides a means for counteracting the tendency towards identitarian thinking.

A Leibniz, a Kant and a Plato of the calculus: the many philosophical riches to be found here must not be sacrificed to modern scientific technique. The principle of a general differential philosophy must be the object of a *rigorous* exposition [...]<sup>6</sup>

The emphasis on rigour<sup>7</sup> is important and - for Deleuze - it is a factor that he was keen to re-emphasize at later stages in his career. Its importance for us will emerge shortly when we

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<sup>5</sup> The term 'bastard' is to be understood here in the sense given used by Brian Massumi when - in paraphrasing Deleuze's own account of his work as a form of *encoulage*, or buggery - he describes the work of Deleuze and his precursors as constituting philosophy '[o]f a bastard line', cf., Brian Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword' to Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.ix. Another one of the much vaunted claims to be fetishized, this description of Deleuzian approach to philosophy is not without its problems, especially when read in the light of work being done in queer theory and in particular the work taking place around the question of to what extent theory impinges upon the act of 'having sex' and vice versa, all the more so when the trope of gay male sex is used to legitimate a philosophical approach expounded by a heterosexual male, in this case Deleuze. For a recent account of the relationship between gay male intercourse and its theorization in the work of male heterosexual writers, cf., Calvin Thomas, 'Must Desire Be Taken Literally?' in *Parallax* 8:4 (forthcoming, 2002). In asking the question 'must desire be taken literally?' of Deleuze and Guattari's writing the answer has to be 'yes', but again there are highly specific reasons for this that a 'hasty' reading is destined to gloss. The question of the potential dangers and limitations of Deleuze and Guattari's thought in relation to problems of gender, sexuality and appropriation will be discussed in chapter 3.

consider further some problems of Deleuzian and Deleuze-Guattarian reception, in terms of the somewhat uncritical and occasionally non-rigorous endorsements by some of their works' advocates that have become the grist on the proverbial mill of some of their detractors. By looking at this passage in a little more detail we can see how it is that rigour is important for Deleuze. By deploying numerous functions from modern calculus he carefully unfolds the constitutive interactions *between* them that show how relationality can be articulated. Here, the differential operator  $d$  is considered according to the operations,  $dx, dy$  and  $dx/dy$ . The aim is to free the differential operation of  $dx$  from any actual or principle determination for value  $x$ , such that the need for the Kantian Idea to proceed by *qualitative* or *quantitative* determination is side-stepped in order to re-direct the Idea of the 'understanding' back upon itself so that the differential becomes its 'object':

[I]n this sense the Idea has the differential relation as its object: it then integrates variation, not as a variable determination of a supposedly constant relation ('variability') but, on the contrary, as a degree of variation of the relation itself ('variety') [...] [I]f the idea eliminates variability, this is in favour of what must be called variety or multiplicity. The Idea as concrete universal stands opposed to concepts of the understanding, and possesses a comprehension all the more vast as its extension is great. This is what defines the universal synthesis of the Idea (Idea of the Idea, etc.): the reciprocal dependence of the degrees of the relation, and ultimately the reciprocal dependence of the relations themselves.<sup>8</sup>

Moreover, differential calculus here involves the play of two orders of difference:

differences of 'degree' and differences in 'kind' that - for Deleuze at least - are crucial to an

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<sup>6</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, pp.171-72. Emphasis added.

<sup>7</sup> One of the easiest things to overlook about Deleuze and Guattari's work is the extent to which it is rigorous. Their procedures of writing testify to a highly systematic philosophical approach, so long as one thinks of a system as being open rather than closed. Meaghan Morris has made this important point in 'Crazy talk is not enough': how we might think in more detail the paradoxical problem of being rigorous without being method(ological) is another problem to unfold as the thesis proceeds.

<sup>8</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.173.



affirmative conception of difference.<sup>9</sup> As such, then, differential calculus enables Deleuze to take the bits of Kant's philosophy that will fit his conception of philosophical difference by taking the Ideas of the Understanding and positing the 'universal synthesis of the Idea (Idea of the Idea, etc.)' in terms of the 'reciprocal dependence of the degrees of the relation, and ultimately the reciprocal dependence of the relations themselves', or else 'differences of degree' and 'differences in kind', or 'of nature':

[W]hat Bergson essentially reproaches in his predecessors is not having seen the true differences of nature. The constancy of such a critique signals to us at the same time the importance of the theme in Bergson. Where there were differences of nature, we have retained only differences of degree.<sup>10</sup>

In his exploration of the philosophical uses of the calculus Deleuze is employing it as what he will later call the 'deterritorialized term', in a way that is 'inexact, yet completely rigorous'.<sup>11</sup> The term is deterritorialized because it has been placed at a partial remove from

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<sup>9</sup> Cf., Deleuze, 'Bergson's Conception of Difference', trans. Melissa McMahon, in John Mullarkey [ed.], *The New Bergson* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1999), pp.42-65. Alain Badiou is not wrong in emphasizing that the importance of Bergson for Deleuze cannot be underestimated, whilst his contention that Bergson is the *ur*-philosopher for Deleuze is arguable. In this essay Deleuze discerns in Bergson the ideas that he will develop in his subsequent work on the philosopher as well as most of his own work with Guattari and alone: intuition as method, the relational difference between differences of degree (intensity) and differences in kind, which leads to the distinction between 'badly analyzed composites' based on a dualistic distinction between the possible and the real and the apprehension of the virtual through intuition, that is - what is real without being actual - the very immanent conditions of 'real' experience and thought, cf., Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.27 and *passim*. Here we find a very useful illustration of the task of this kind of philosophical enterprise, which is "to seek experience at its source, or rather above that decisive *turn*, where taking a bias in the direction of our utility, it becomes properly *human* experience". This in another context might be thought of in terms of the immanent survey, and therefore bears no less on the ethical trajectory of Deleuze's thought than does the conception of difference outlined in *Spinoza* or in *Difference and Repetition*.

<sup>10</sup> Deleuze, 'Bergson's Conception of Difference', p.42; cf., Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, p.21. It is actually 'beneath' differences that we must find differences in kind and this is the purpose of the 'dualism' in Bergson in general, to which the 'dualism' difference of degree-difference in kind proves no exception. This strategic use of the dualism to 'go above that decisive turn' is one that will be adopted in much of what is to follow.

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze explains his use of deterritorialized terms in his conversation with Christian Deschamps, Didier Eribon and Robert Maggiori entitled 'On A Thousand Plateaus', cf. Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, p.29: 'There are notions that are exact in nature, quantitative, defined by equations, and whose very meaning lies in their exactness: a philosopher or writer can use these only metaphorically, and that's quite wrong, because they belong to exact science. But there are also essentially inexact yet completely rigorous notions that scientists can't do without, which belong equally to scientists, philosopher and artists'. Rather than attempt to think the logic of immanence in terms of the dichotomy exactitude-inexactitude, one might deploy the notion of 'anexactitude' as a term potentially capable of expressing the logical operations informing immanent

the territory and milieus that - under certain circumstances - constitute the discipline 'mathematics' as distinct from philosophy. In this case those circumstances might be termed as those of the Kantian 'Copernican Revolution', when this relation changed considerably, and yet for Deleuze the task remains one of challenging the subjectivist and Idealist aspects of Kant by going beyond synthetic *a priori* judgement towards a different conception of the 'passive' syntheses of the subject.<sup>12</sup>

In disarticulating difference of a necessary link to identity and its inventory of Manichean oppositions<sup>13</sup>, Deleuze has also made of the differential calculus an 'abstract machine', which is another highly important reason why it should not be perceived as being limited to the disciplines of science and mathematics.<sup>14</sup> This concept of concepts can be found implicitly at work in the above example from *Difference and Repetition*, with the calculus as an operation of difference that is incarnated or embodied across a multiplicity of conceivable instances. Another example is its re-deployment in *Anti-Oedipus* to describe

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processes without thought becoming vicarious, random, or 'esoteric', cf. Michel Serres, *The Birth of Physics*, trans. Jack Hawkes, David Webb [ed.] (Manchester: Clinamen Press, 2001), p.19. Furthermore, rigorous anexactitude is the definition given by Deleuze and Guattari to non-metric mathematical multiplicities cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.483.

<sup>12</sup> The 'passive' syntheses will be discussed shortly and the 'thought-synthesizer' will be examined in chapter 2.

<sup>13</sup> An expression coined by Guattari to describe the more categorical dualistic distinctions which, from a Bergsonian perspective, we might say actually serve to disguise differences in kind, cf., Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p.12.

<sup>14</sup> A crucial innovation in the work of Deleuze and Guattari is the 'abstract machine', or the 'diagram', exemplified by the panopticon of Bentham and Foucault, whereby surveillance comes to be embodied as part of so many difference assemblages on the order of a reciprocal relation between 'visibility' and 'statements', yet from which the abstract machine can be discerned independently as that which enables these to function across assemblages that include not just the prison, but the factory, the school, etc. The key significance of the abstract machine is to enable processual difference to be considered as it functions across an array of 'assemblages' and as such has an ethical correspondence with Spinoza's 'common-notion' which seeks to extract from modes of substance their expressive heterogeneity as part of immanent God-substance-nature, cf., Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, p.150: ' [...] [W]e will see that this "common notion" is itself necessarily adequate: it belongs to the idea of our body as to that of the external body; it is then in us as it is in God; it expressed God and is explained by our power of thinking'. The different 'images of thought'



capitalist production a process of immanent capture that proceeds through an ‘axiomatic’, which is then used to re-construct Marx’s labour-commodity nexus in a way that restores it to the immanence of social and desiring production.<sup>15</sup> That different more or less concrete, articulated relational networks of composition and interaction whether social, political, artistic, economic, etc., and invariably a combination of some or all of these ‘assemblages’, can be diagrammed to the point where one is able to posit their ‘abstract machine’ is fundamental to the project of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, and this is partly why the only rule regarding the order in which *A Thousand Plateaus* should be read is that ‘Concrete Rules and Abstract Machines’ be read last.

To provide an example of how differential calculus can be made to function as a deterritorialized abstract machine whose assemblages are not simply those of mathematics or philosophy but are actually more diverse, it is worth considering that in *Anti-Oedipus* the conception of capitalism’s ‘machinic’ functioning distinguishes it from ‘earlier’ modes of production because it operates along the lines of an ‘axiomatic’, which is to say a differential relationality that converts a ‘surplus value of code’ into a ‘surplus value of flux’, the key operation of capitalism in its ‘decoding’ and ‘deterritorialization’ that makes it operate within limits in accordance with immanent processuality:

This age of cynicism is that of the accumulation of capital - an age that implies a period of time, precisely for the conjunction of all the decoded and deterritorialized flows [...] [W]e are no longer in the domain of the quantum or of the *quantitas*, but in that of the differential relation as a conjunction that defines the immanent social field particular to capitalism, and confers on the abstraction as such its effectively concrete value, its tendency towards concretization [...] [T]he abstract itself posits the more complex relation within which it will develop “like” something concrete. This is the

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distinguished by Deleuze might also be considered as examples of abstract machines. We shall encounter further this complex yet highly useful innovation as we proceed.

<sup>15</sup> On the ‘machinic’ conception of desire and the ‘*socius*’, see below.

differential relation  $Dy/Dx$ , where  $Dy$  derives from labor power and constitutes the fluctuation of variable capital, and where  $Dx$  derives from capital itself [...] [T]he differential relation expresses the fundamental capitalist phenomenon of *the transformation of the surplus value of code into a surplus value of flux*.<sup>16</sup>

There are a number of interesting things about the passage between the differential relation as it appears in *Difference and Repetition* and its abstract machinic use in *Anti-Oedipus*<sup>17</sup>. Firstly, in illustrating this passage, one witnesses how its thinking undergoes the very process of deterritorialization that it comes to embody in each given instance. This is a curious characteristic of immanent thinking, which is what makes the repetition of difference an *active* repetition and not just a speculative one, a repetition of difference that does not just state what something is but actually embodies it. This is perhaps what is most powerful and productive in Deleuze and Guattari's work taken collectively, and it again serves to emphasize the crucial role played by Spinoza as the precursor who in discerning the attributes of 'extension' and 'thought' to be expressions of substance and the expressed of modes did not just make a philosophical abstraction, but in the very act of its articulation increased an invested body's capacity to act. This also points to a key characteristic of the abstract machine, which is that philosophical abstraction is 'not abstract enough', because it cannot go above the turn where difference is freed up from its concretizations, for example when in thought cannot get beyond an identitarian relation to the concept or the Idea. All this very interestingly also leads to an idea that Deleuze and Guattari will develop in their last co-authored book which will bring together the abstract machine of thought with the

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<sup>16</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp.227-9.

<sup>17</sup> The shift between *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus* is also marked by the further materialization of immanence where the differential function is performed by the 'break-flows' of what now becomes termed the 'machine'. The 'break-flow' is the 'operator' here, termed 'machinic' in accordance with Franz Reuleaux's definition of a machine as 'the combination of solid elements, each having its specialized function [...] operating in order to transmit a movement and perform a task', cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.141.



decoding tendencies of capital, as philosophy becomes ‘reterritorialized’ on modern democracy: ‘[M]odern philosophy’s link with capitalism, therefore, is of the same kind as that of ancient philosophy with Greece: *the connection of an absolute plane of immanence with a relative social milieu that also functions through immanence*’.<sup>18</sup> As we shall come on to see much later, this is what connects philosophy to politics during the Modern period, just as it shall be made clear that non-philosophy will seek to do likewise in its immanent capture of matter-force, pitted against those instantiated via capitalism and its axiomatic. In summary then, philosophy according to Deleuze and Guattari does not just have an ethical dimension to it, but it also has a political one, and in its relation to non-philosophy it will be shown also to have an aesthetic aspect which contributes greatly to its constructivist description.

The ‘three syntheses of the unconscious’ in *Anti-Oedipus* both extend and develop the notion of synthesis as used in *Difference and Repetition* and the *Logic of Sense*. In all three of these works, the problem of the passive syntheses of subjectivity is explored with a mind to restoring them to immanence in a way that goes beyond the transcendental *a priori* conditions of possibility of experience towards what the immanent conditions of real experience. In each instance, the vocabulary used is somewhat different. For example, in *Difference and Repetition*, the three syntheses articulated by Kant as ‘apprehension’, ‘reproduction’ and ‘recognition’ respectively undergo modification such that they are now described in terms of ‘habitus’, the ‘Eros-Mnemosyne’ and the ‘Thanatos’.<sup>19</sup> The *habitus*

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<sup>18</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.98.

<sup>19</sup> Kant’s original account of the three syntheses is to be found in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The first synthesis of apprehension proceeds through intuition, such that a ‘manifold’ is synthesized into a representation that is given *a priori* through the pure forms of space and time; the second synthesis of

is a synthesis of ‘contemplation-contraction’ or ‘binding’ in the Freudian sense of the binding of investment. However, what Deleuze does that takes this first passive synthesis beyond Freud and Kant to extend it into non-human ‘contractions-contemplations’, such as those of plants, of water, or of light: ‘[T]he eye binds light and is itself a bound light’.<sup>20</sup>

As was suggested previously, the unity of Kant’s apperceiving subject is challenged by Deleuze, and here this takes place by removing the subject as a foundational unit by substituting distributed difference *qua* a biological principle of *repetition*, not repetition by a ‘subject’ so much as repetition *different/cially constituting subjectivity*. As such, the binding that takes place is one that extends beyond the libidinal constitution of a temporal ‘living present’ as lived by a human subject and ‘*the Id*’<sup>21</sup>, towards a more distributed, open conception of Freud’s drives both of which will find their more powerful articulation in *Anti-Oedipus*, in the conception of the machinic unconscious. The emphasis on investment in the synthesis of *habitus*, and in particular the rescinding of a purely passive relation of the synthesis towards an ‘active’ one will be of considerable importance for this project, though again more in the terms outlined in *Anti-Oedipus*, where ‘passive’ synthesis becomes ‘legitimate synthesis’ of (desiring-)production set against its ‘active’<sup>22</sup> or

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reproduction takes place in the imagination and acts upon the appearances constituting experience *a priori* such that the modifications generated in the first synthesis are granted order; the third synthesis of ‘recognition’ takes place to ally the ordered appearances produced in the first two syntheses to a (self-identical) concept of Understanding, cf. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (London: MacMillan, 1993), pp.131-4. It is with this latter that Deleuze takes issue in the foregoing discussion of concept and Idea and is what leads to the strategic mobilization of the differential calculus.

<sup>20</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.96.

<sup>21</sup> Cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.1: ‘[I]t is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breaths, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said *the id*’.

<sup>22</sup> It is perhaps anomalous that the word ‘active’ is used here to mark an illegitimate synthesis given how the term has been used hitherto here and how it is used affirmatively by Deleuze in his work on Nietzsche and Spinoza. It would seem that the use taking place in *Difference and Repetition* indicates the active



‘illegitimate use’ in the production of global objects or persons (the same will go for the other two syntheses respectively). The second synthesis, ‘Eros-Mnemosyne’, ‘posits repetition as *displacement* and *disguise*’.<sup>23</sup> Again, both Kant’s and Freud’s conception of the subject/psyche are in play, and this time repetition is installed as primary in relation to difference, in that the repetition of displacement and disguise is what constitutes the ‘pleasure principle’ of desire, a reproduction that indexes repetition to enjoyment in a way that founds a ‘past’ and assigns it an Ego, with Mnemosyne thereby marking a mnemonic function of repetition, whilst Eros marks ‘erotic repetition’.<sup>24</sup> To the extent that this synthesis can become ‘active’ it is in line with a ‘reality’ principle of self-preservation as well as the sexualization of the drives.<sup>25</sup> Finally, there is the passive synthesis of Thanatos, which turns out to provide the ‘groundlessness’ underlying the ‘ground’ of the first two syntheses as that which repeats the difference ultimately constitutive of *habitus*, Mnemosyne, Id and Ego. Again, Freud is invoked but in a way that re-thinks the ‘death instinct’ as a the principle, *par excellence* of differenc/tiation, which - in its passive use - and again, invoking Kant, is capable of sweeping up past, present and future, ‘played out as pure form’<sup>26</sup>, which will lead Deleuze back to Bergson and also Proust. In as much as it is actively deployed this synthesis pertains to the ‘future’ whose topographical correlate is the ‘super-Ego’ which ‘announces the destruction of Id and Ego’.<sup>27</sup>

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manipulation of passive synthesis by a ‘subject’ that is ‘apperceiving’ to the extent that it perceives and imagines itself to be self-identical (see below).

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., p.108.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p.109.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p.115.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

This is, admittedly, something of an over-simplification of what remains perhaps Deleuze's most demanding work and the ultimate solo embodiment of his philosophical enterprise, but it is hoped that it illustrates, not just how Deleuze attempts to immanentize Kant but also Freud, in re-thinking his structural topography in a way that takes it 'above that decisive turn' towards the intuition of differences in kind as distinct from differences of degree or intensity, a conception of Kantian intuition subject to revision by Bergson and then, using Bergson, by Deleuze, which moves everything away from the *propria* and propositions of a dogmatic image of thought in its transformation of its 'problem' that takes it away from identity, generality, quality and quantity, the ' $x = x$  not  $y$ ', its 'more like...' and its 'less like...'.<sup>28</sup> It also demonstrates the role played by repetition.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> For Deleuze, the Bergsonian method of intuition is rigorous, in the way it attempts to distinguish differences in kind between different 'images', and thereby engenders an intensification, or difference in degree in the very act of intuition, an affective dimension of thought which leads Deleuze to describe the method as one of '*jouissance*', cf., Deleuze, 'Bergson's Conception of Difference', p.43 '[I]ntuition is the *jouissance* of difference'.

<sup>29</sup> As was said before, the problem is addressed in the *Logic of Sense*. Here it is taken up in relation to language and the play of 'sense' and 'nonsense' where the latter is in many ways constitutive of the former. In both *Difference and Repetition* and the *Logic of Sense*, this is in part done through the 'esoteric word[s]', which are 'properly linguistic cases of the object= $x$ , while the object= $x$  structures psychic experience like a language on condition that the perpetual, invisible and silent displacement of linguistic sense is taken into account', cf., Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.123. This is where the relationship between language and the unconscious differs from that of Lacan, because the esoteric word rides the surfaces, depths and heights of an immanent, materialist psyche, topologically rather than topographically constituted in relation to an 'outside'. For an account of the object= $x$  in relation to structuralist psychoanalysis, cf., Deleuze's 1967 essay, 'How Do We Recognize Structuralism?', which not only contextualizes Deleuze's work in its relation to structuralism, but also introduces some of the key ideas that would appear in next two years, including the role of differential calculus in a philosophy of difference, presented here in relation to the structuralist psychoanalytic 'symbolic'. This conception of language and the unconscious is taken up independently by Guattari (see below), and the two authors bring their respective approaches together in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Interestingly, in outlining this idea, Deleuze describes it in as a 'refrain', cf., *Difference and Repetition*, p.123. The embodiment of the processual conception of subjectivity as outlined here will be developed extensively using this musical concept and will provide the groundwork for this project's case early in chapter 2. Unfortunately there is not sufficient scope here for exploring the syntheses as developed in the *Logic of Sense*, which provide something of a bridge between *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*, being somewhat closer to the latter than the former. Very interestingly, the syntheses are taken up again in *The Fold*, where the 'event', another of Deleuze's most common 'refrains' is read through Whitehead and Leibniz in terms of 'extension', 'intrinsic qualities' and the 'individual' conceived as



As we witnessed earlier with example of the differential calculus in *Difference and Repetition*,  $dx$  was ultimately divested of its necessary relation to a given value for  $x$  on the order of identity, quality and quantity, thus enabling the Idea to take itself as its own 'object' in the survey of its immanence. Now, in *Anti-Oedipus* the same process is in play although - whilst the calculus is used in the immanent rendering of capitalism and its 'axiomatics' - the synthetic operations are largely described through literature, and - in particular - the literary deployment of language to be found in the work of a number of different authors, with a particular emphasis on the work of Samuel Beckett.<sup>30</sup> The first synthesis is here one of 'connection', that takes place on the order of an 'and...' and Beckett's literary characters and devices - in this case taken from his novel *Molloy* - are brought in to introduce the machinic interaction between flows and 'partial objects'.<sup>31</sup>

[Beckett's characters] various gaits and methods of self-locomotion constitute, in and of themselves, a finely tuned machine.<sup>32</sup>

It is the connection of these partial-objects, derived and adapted to immanent ends from the work of Melanie Klein that constitute the concretized 'breaks-flows' that comprise the 'difference in itself' of the machine. The connective synthesis as the first synthesis in the production of desire is bound up with the 'production of production' *qua* process and only produces products as residual effects of the process. It is enters changes from a 'legitimate'

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'prehension', cf., Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), pp.77-80.

<sup>30</sup> Beckett's prose, for Deleuze, comprised one of more outstanding examples of 'schizophrenic' use of language, cf., Gilles Deleuze, 'The Exhausted' in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, pp.152-175.

<sup>31</sup> Deleuze made much of the Kleinian theory of the 'partial-object' in the *Logic of Sense* and it assumes a more primary position in *Anti-Oedipus* in order to prevent the syntheses installing a global 'object', tantamount to an 'overcoding' of difference that would be 'illegitimate'.

<sup>32</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.2.

to an 'illegitimate'<sup>33</sup> usage when the breaks-flows constituting the partial objects are rendered as 'global' objects.

The serial proliferation of connections between the partial-objects adjacently perform disjunctive syntheses of 'recording', whereby part of their energy is transformed into a 'recording surface' that presents itself to the partial-objects as a Body with Organs which 'falls back on' (*se rabat sur*) the connective synthesis enabling intensification and de-intensification of their connections, old connections to be broken and new connections to be made. The recordings that take place are to be thought of as no less literal or material than the 'break-flow' of the machine, and this is made clear by the fascinating use of the word *enregistrement* in the original French version, a word which has several meanings ranging from 'the process of making a recording to be played back by a mechanical device (for example, a phonograph), the recording so made ( a phonographic record or a magnetic tape, compact disc, etc.), and the entering of births, deaths, deeds, marriages, and so on, in an official register.'<sup>34</sup> This process of *enregistrement*, as well as being crucial to the three syntheses in *Anti-Oedipus*, will become highly important in *A Thousand Plateaus*, notably in the neglected notion of 'stratoanalysis'.

We can once again appeal to the writing style of Samuel Beckett in order to illustrate how the second synthesis is expressed in terms of an 'either...or...or' operation, whereby an illegitimate synthesis of 'exclusive disjunction' that returns everything to a fixed, categorical or transcendental distinction on the order of an either/or is replaced by a mobile,

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<sup>33</sup> Another distinction derived from Kant which is one between immanent (legitimate) and 'metaphysical' (illegitimate) syntheses, cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp.75-6.



immanent synthesis of ‘inclusive disjunction’ that resists the lure of any set of fixed presuppositions:

[T]his is the meaning of the disjunctions where Beckett records his characters and the events that befall them; everything divides, but into itself. Even the distances are positive, at same time as the included disjunctions.<sup>35</sup>

As such, inclusive disjunction should be distinguished from exclusive disjunction:

[W]hereas the “either/or” claims to mark decisive choices between immutable terms (the alternative: either this or that), the schizophrenic “either...or...or” refers to the system of possible permutations between differences that always amount to the same as they shift and slide about.<sup>36</sup>

Thirdly there is the synthesis of ‘consumption-consummation’ whereby part-objects become indexed to the production of subjectivity. In the network of desiring-machines another conversion takes place adjacent to the other two syntheses whose operation in language now takes the form of ‘so that’s what it was!’.<sup>37</sup> Here the breaks-flows of connection, their disjunctive interactions as recorded on the Body without Organs<sup>38</sup> and the accompanying intensifications and de-intensifications produce a residual subjectivity

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., p.4., Translator’s note.

<sup>35</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.76.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p.12.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p.20.

<sup>38</sup> The undifferentiated surface that presents itself to the synthesis of production as a surface of inscription is described as a Body without Organs, a material surface whose avatars in ‘history’ are: the Body of the Earth, s part of a ‘primitive territorial machine’ of ‘coding’, or the marking of bodies that makes them so many milieu components that coalesce to produce terrestrial inscriptions, or territories; the Body of the Despot, which ‘overcodes’ territorial inscriptions of the Earth that abrogates them according a rule of law or governance effected as part of a state apparatus which extracts from territories statistical equivalences which subject their codings to the transcendent redundancies of *signifiance*; finally, there is the Body of Capital which, as has already been shown, functions through a *de-coding* or deterritorialization on the order of an immanent relational capture. All of these Bodies provide undifferentiated surfaces that fall back on (*se rabat sur*) production, and at their limit is the Body without Organs as immanent condition of existence. Cf., *ibid.*, pp.9-16 and Chapter 3, *passim*. The regulation of coding and de-coding through inscription is in each instance effected by an organizing ‘*socius*’, a term used in place of ‘society’ in order to avoid the suggestion of transcendence or fixed transcendental structure of organization implicit in the latter, cf., *ibid.*, p.139.

whereby the modulations taking place can be ‘felt’ by a body, thereby producing an ‘orphan’ subject.

This subject itself is not at the centre, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever decentered, defined by the states through which it passes.<sup>39</sup>

Staying with the literary example of Beckett, here ‘characters’ and ‘authors’ shed their status as individual subjects to *become subject-states*, their names becoming tensors marking or ‘describing’ in that specifically Lyotardian sense of the word, the process of synthesis that produces their sense of being and the corresponding intensities that are recorded on the Body without Organs:

[T]his subject itself is not at the center, which is occupied by the machine, but on the periphery, with no fixed identity, forever de-centred, defined by the states through which it passes. Thus the circles traced by Beckett’s Un-nameable: “a succession of irregular loops, now sharp and short as in the waltz, now of a parabolic sweep”, with Murphy, Watt, Mercier, etc., as states [...].<sup>40</sup>

However, the danger of this ‘subject’ mistaking ‘itself’ for a self-identical being is where the shift from a legitimate to an illegitimate synthesis resides. The orphan subject of ‘enjoyment’ produced in this third synthesis more than usually instantly betrays the movement of immanence in converting the ‘legitimate’ third synthesis with an ‘illegitimate’ synthesis that molarizes the relation between the partial-objects by allowing them to be overcoded in terms of statistical aggregates of global objects or, more accurately in this case, global ‘persons’.

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.



Eugene Holland succinctly describes this molarization as the ‘metaphysics of sovereign subjectivity’<sup>41</sup>, in which ‘so that’s what it was’, becomes ‘[I]t’s me, and so it’s mine’, and it is here where the Oedipalizing tendency comes to the fore.<sup>42</sup> The opening towards the ‘outside’ of the residual ‘subject’ to the processes that synthesize ‘it’ in such instances begins to close off within the triangulation of Oedipal familialism. Breaks-flows have given way to *propria* in an ‘enclosure act’ of subjective privation<sup>43</sup>, and the likelihood of an *ethical* relation to the world becomes severely reduced. Again, despite scant reference to his work in this text, Spinoza’s influence is very much in evidence in the way in which the syntheses become performed in the very act of their articulation, substituting for his ‘parallelism’ between ‘extension’ and ‘thought’ turning on the modifications of a single, univocal ‘substance’, a ‘machinism’ of relational interactions between breaks and flows, the partial-objects and connections, disjunctions and conjunctions, their intensifications and de-intensifications on the Body without Organs. The *conatus* plainly informs the notion of desire that is at work here as well in that the syntheses tend towards complexification and self-organization in their immanent relationality, an increase in the ‘capacity to affect’ and ‘be affected’ counteracted by the tendency towards aggregation and ossification which

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<sup>41</sup> Cf., Eugene Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari’s Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999), p.34: [H]ere the subject in fact only arises in the consuming appropriation and consummating recognition of the results of desiring-production, yet it tends to construe itself as an autonomous entity capable of taking possession of the products of the processes that in fact constitute it’.

<sup>42</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.16.

<sup>43</sup> Eugene Holland in his essay ‘Schizoanalysis and Baudelaire: Some Illustrations of Decoding at Work’ uses the example of the Enclosure Acts in 18<sup>th</sup> Century England to illustrate how ‘territorialization’ has been adapted in Deleuze and Guattari’s work from that of Lacan to make psychic production immanent to social production by way of the processes of ‘deterritorialization’ and ‘reterritorialization’, cf., Paul Patton [ed.], *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), p.242: ‘[I]n Deleuze’s usage these originally psychological terms *also* operate in the social register, where they designate a crucial dynamic of the capitalist market: the disconnection and reconnection of working bodies and environments - for example, the disconnection of peasants from grazing land by the Enclosure Acts in England, and their reterritorialization onto textile looms as wage-labour in the nascent garment industry’. The example as used here takes what was originally the expression for a social-political-economic development as a tool for

result in a reduction in this two-fold capacity. It is here that the important question of investment re-emerges and the accompanying need to specify the conception of 'desire' that is at stake. As has already been made clear, whatever this notion of 'desire' it is not subjectivist, or else there would not have been a need to change the vocabulary to avoid 'misunderstandings'. Where it concerns the work of Spinoza, the conception of desire is allied closely to the *conatus* and therefore is a non-anthropomorphic desire that is present in any composition of bodies to the extent that these bodies seek out potential connections that increase their capacity to act.

### **Dispositions of Investment 1: Dis-positif**

*We must first grasp this: signs are not only terms, stages, set in relation and made explicit in a trail of conquest; they can also be, indissociably, singular and vain intensities in exodus*  
 Jean-François Lyotard<sup>44</sup>

The concept of investment is not a new one in either philosophy or cultural studies, the latter of which seems particularly keen to recognize its ongoing relevance to interdisciplinary studies, to political theory, aesthetic theory, and so on, no doubt largely a result of the pre-eminence that psychoanalysis has within the field. The Freudian concept of *cathexis* obviously has something of a history and a pedigree that makes it invaluable for asking questions regarding the constitution of investment. Another reason why investment is important to consider is that it not only provides the means for thinking about the constitution of subjectivity at the level of the psyche but also at the level of political-economy. Indeed, it is in the theories of Lyotard and the Deleuze and Guattari of *Anti-*

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diagramming the passage towards subjective rather than social privation, although the two are never really distinct and the former is invariably in the service of the latter.



*Oedipus* that we find the immanent critique of psychic interiority that absolutely insists on recognizing that a political-economy and a psychic or nervous economy, before they can actually be separated out from one another, are reciprocally constituted as *a libidinal-economy*. Needless to say that it is this latter approach that we must pursue here. However, in doing so, it seems pertinent to attempt a pragmatic synthesis or construction that brings together some key concepts from Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Spinoza, Lyotard and others in order to re-assess the status and value of such an approach at the same time as extending its scope and being mindful of its potential limitations. Furthermore, it allows us to consider how the reflexivity of cultural studies can be put to work productively in dealing with these problems and in so doing expose further some of the existing fundamental limitations in the investments constituted around the names of ‘Deleuze’ and ‘Guattari’.

So how do we effectively combine these various conceptual ‘tools’ in constructing a pragmatic relation to the academic *dispositif* and its relation to the ‘outside’? Firstly, using the Foucauldian conception of the term as developed by Deleuze in ‘What is a *dispositif*?’, we notice that in attempting to answer the question of his title, Deleuze begins by dividing the *dispositif* into four dimensions: making up the first two dimension is the classic Foucauldian coupling of ‘curves of visibility’ and ‘curves of enunciation’. The immanent materialist relationality that Foucault finds between these two dimensions in much of his work provides the means for examining quite concretely (a strength of Foucault’s ‘historical’ works that it must be said is slightly lacking in the more ‘incorporeal’ efforts of Deleuze and Guattari, a problem pertaining to the Deleuze-Guattarian ‘case’ to which we

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<sup>44</sup> Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, p.50.

shall return in due course) the material and spatial constitution of a given apparatus, its emergence or transformation over time, and the accompanying enunciations that are directly indexed to such emergence and transformation, with such that ‘what is seen’ and ‘what is said’ constitute an ‘evaporative surface effect’<sup>45</sup> of the play of visibility and invisibility and enunciation curving through the development and transformation of institutional apparatuses in relation to one another. These ‘regimes of light’ and ‘regimes of enunciation’ determine the ‘*énoncés*’ which - according to Deleuze - are ‘affirmations’ that ‘in turn can be traced back to lines of enunciation over which the differential positions of their elements are distributed’. If *énoncés* are affirmations it is because we can actually perform this ‘tracing back’ which takes us beyond any asserted primacy of the relationship between ‘subject’ and ‘object’ towards a recognition of their actual secondarity and in going ‘above that decisive turn’ it becomes possible to *survey* the interrelating curves of light, enunciation and the *énoncés* in terms of their ‘drifting, transformations and mutations’. In thinking of Foucault’s work as philosophy, we can see this as another example of a ‘survey’ of the pre-philosophical plane of immanence, one which in Spinozist terms challenges the *propria* of privation and provides an instance of a ‘common notion’ that increases the relational capacity of composite bodies in the very act of tracing back. What we have here is a way of thinking about investment in terms of discerning the immanent constitution of subjectivity by means of the process of survey or cycling outwards to connect with the ‘outside’. The conception of enunciation and ‘*énoncés*’ as developed here and elsewhere in the work of Foucault and Deleuze is taken up along

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<sup>45</sup> Cf., Massumi, *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), p.21. See also the remarks concerning the ‘event’ below.



slightly modified lines by Guattari, whose own rendering of these linguistic operators will be put to work in chapter 2.

The other two dimensions of the *dispositif* for Deleuze are made up by 'lines of force' and 'lines of subjectification'. The strange, unorthodox 'linearity' of that Deleuze and Guattari use in so much of their work is invoked here. Another example of a common notion, 'everything is made up of lines' this 'linearity' provides further evidence that one need not necessarily get hung up on the 'machine' every time, even if it is a question of desire that is at stake, which is the case here as we shall soon see. Lines of force as the third dimension inevitably takes up the Nietzschean problem of force when considered from the perspective of a play of forces (*puissance*) which become aggregated into relations of power (*pouvoir*). This is what leads Deleuze to call it the 'dimension of power'. The final dimension, 'lines of subjectification', implicitly dealing with the later work of Foucault on sexuality, finds the primacy of a 'self' being challenged to the extent that it is always secondarily constituted out of processes of subjectification, and - as such - 'it is a process of individuation which bears on groups and on people, and is subtracted from the power relations which are established as constituting forms of knowledge'. The significance of the group is most extensively dealt with in the solo writings of Guattari, the idea of 'individuation' is one that Deleuze developed in *Difference and Repetition*, borrowing the term from the biological philosophy of Gilbert Simondon.<sup>46</sup> This is only mentioned to once again show what Deleuze and Guattari are describing when they state 'each of us was already several', further indication of the *bricolage*, or synthetic construction that is

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<sup>46</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.246: '[I]ndividuation is what responds to the question 'Who?', just as the Idea responds to the question 'How much?' and 'How?'. 'Who?' is always an intensity'.

operating here as elsewhere. It is in taking our impetus from this approach that we take leave of Deleuze's essay in order to bring in some 'machine parts' of our own, in bring this conception of the *dispositif* into a connection with that of Lyotard. In Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy*, the *dispositif* becomes the *dis-positif*, which - as Iain Hamilton Grant explains in his glossary to the work - is simultaneously - the *dispositif* of the social or institutional apparatus as we have seen from Deleuze's account of Foucault, with the hyphen serving to describe the two-fold tendential capacity of the apparatus both towards stabilization, regulation and order, but also towards *dissimulation*, or the proliferation of tensor-signs.<sup>47</sup>

Deleuze's description of the 'drifting character' of the *dipositif* approximates this dissimulation if one considers it from the perspective of Lyotard's, or even that of the Situationist '*dérive*'<sup>48</sup> from which the former arguably takes its main inspiration. Whilst it is much more difficult to argue an 'ethics' on the part of *Libidinal Economy*, given the extremes to which it resists critique as a method all together in its wanton proliferation of tensor-signs, than it is for *Anti-Oedipus*, the most 'Nietzschean' of the Deleuze and Guattari books yet one that still plays host to critique, there is no reason to necessarily accord with such wantonness in invoking the dissimulating tendencies of the *dis-positif* or the 'drift' of

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<sup>47</sup> For a general definition of 'tensor' cf. Iain Hamilton Grant's 'Glossary' in Jean-François Lyotard, *Libidinal Economy*, trans. Iain Hamilton Grant (London: Athlone Press, 1993), pp.xiii-xiv, in which - directly linked to the *dispositif* as 'the organization of the possibility of signs' - the tensor-sign both marks an attempt to 'remain faithful to the impossible intensities informing and exceeding the sign' and to provide a 'description of this attempt'. Cf., the section of the book dedicated to fleshing out the tensor, pp.43-94; For Deleuze and Guattari's account of the tensor cf. 'November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics', from Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.97, 99: 'All languages [...] are in immanent continuous variation: neither synchrony nor diachrony, but asynchrony, chromaticism as a variable and continuous state of language'. The notion of chromaticism resonates widely with music and will therefore, along with the descriptive tensor-sign figure extensively in what in the next two chapters.

<sup>48</sup> Cf., Sadie Plant, *The Most Radical Gesture: The Situationist International in a Postmodern Age* (London and New York, Routledge, 1992), p.58: '[O]ne of psychogeography's principle means was the *dérive*. Long a favourite practice of the dadaists, who organised a variety of expeditions, and the surrealists, for whom the geographical form of automatism was an instructive pleasure, the *dérive*, or drift, was defined by the situationists as the "technique of locomotion without a goal"'; Also, cf., Félix Guattari, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. Ian Pindar and Paul Sutton (London: Athlone Press, 2000), pp.90-1n.51: 'Guattari and Deleuze's idea



Lyotard, despite the contempt with which the libidinal Lyotard would greet such a suggestion. However, once again, we will save further consideration of this idea for the case-study, although once again it suffices to say for now that it is the ubiquitous presence of Spinoza in this project that will provide the means by which to bring this suggestion to the table. It is by emphasizing the Spinozan aspects of libidinal philosophy over the Nietzschean ones that usually take primacy whilst at the same time not neglecting the pivotal place of Nietzsche's work, that enables such an attempt.

The *conatus* of Spinoza is what marks this striving in both human and non-human bodies and as such it is the name this project gives to 'desire' if it has to give it a name. By survey, by constructing common-notions, by relating to the *dispositif* in this way, we begin to produce pragmatic constructions that enable us better to sound out the remit of immanent thinking and its ethical trajectory within the confines of a given institutional framework and thereby how effectively it might be possible to connect with the 'outside'. The invocation of Spinoza here serves to challenge the view that libidinal philosophy *necessarily* does away with all criteria by which it would be possible to judge anything in the name of an unequivocal Nietzschean affirmation, as it is plain to see that for all the lofty declarations 'to have done with judgement' and just say 'Yes!' that we read in *Anti-Oedipus* and the libidinal writings of Lyotard during the same period, we can say - at least when it comes to *Anti-Oedipus* if not *Libidinal Economy* - that it is possible to read this book ethically without falling into a postmodern 'impasse'<sup>49</sup>, and that Foucault's observation to this effect

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of the 'schizo stroll' [...] is a variation of the *dérive*, and the introduced it into the domain of theory with their concept of nomadic thought'.

<sup>49</sup> The tragedy of the 'hasty' readings of Deleuze and Guattari is that their work - in particular - *A Thousand Plateaus* has been equated with the postmodernism of its time, which entirely misses both the rigour and

in the preface becomes all the more persuasive when one considers the implication of Spinoza in this work. That said, the problem of going ‘a synthesis too far’ is one that is very much liable to persist.<sup>50</sup> Whilst this claim is problematic in the light of certain readings of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, as we have seen, it is not without sympathetic voices. Indeed, in many ways it is such a Spinozist approach to their work more generally that will inform what is to follow, in briefly examining an exemplary ‘case’ of investment: the work of Brian Massumi.

### **Making the Case: The Exemplary Embodiments of Brian Massumi**

*I asked the question - the words that had been haunting me for so many weeks -  
‘Where’s the rest of me?’”*  
Ronald Reagan<sup>51</sup>

From his translation of and foreword to *A Thousand Plateaus*, through his 1992 book *A User’s Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Deviations from Deleuze and Guattari*, through numerous short yet highly dense articles to the introduction to his most recent edited collection *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*, Brian Massumi has produced some of the most fascinating and pragmatic responses to Deleuze and Guattari’s work. He has gone as far as to cultivate a very particular style which - whilst undoubtedly inspired by the work he translated - remains somewhat different and quite singular. What makes his work for the most part exemplary is how he proceeds by way of synthesis,

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ethics informing this work. Furthermore, Guattari went out of his way both in his writing and in public to distance himself and his work from postmodernism on account of its ‘ethical abdication’, cf., Félix Guattari, ‘The Postmodern Impasse’, in Gary Genosko [ed.], *The Guattari Reader* (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1996), pp.109-114.

<sup>50</sup> This describes the perennial problem of where ‘one’ is when one ‘affirms’ and that so long as ‘one’ remains outside of the critique being performed or the residua of transcendence, or ‘Reason’ persist in playing a part, one forfeits the very claim to having embodied immanent processuality, cf., Iain Hamilton Grant, ‘Book Review: Manuel De Landa, *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History*’, in *Parallax* 5:1: 1999, p.127.



immanently engendering the processual logic he finds in the concepts and ideas providing the basis for his 'deviations' in the moment of its articulation, not positing this as transcendental *a priori* given once and for all, nor as a structure that has any independence from its working illustrations or descriptions. Rather, he mobilizes carefully and rigorously a variety of concepts from Deleuze and Guattari by way of his chosen cases which - arguably even more than those of Deleuze and Guattari themselves - attain a degree of concreteness and corporeality that goes some way to addressing the criticism of their work expounded by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri that their work remains somewhat too 'angelic'.<sup>52</sup> These cases are sometimes rather strange and seemingly irreverent, as in the two instances where he makes playful use of the 'crumbings' of former actor and US President Ronald Reagan, but which usually serve as highly pertinent soundboards for his 'deviations'.

In addition to the synthetic 'deviations', the relatively concrete 'case', and the rigorous and careful unpacking of the 'stories' using Deleuze-Guattarian innovations towards a survey of the wider philosophical and political concerns, we might add a considerable number of reasons as to why Massumi's work - for the most part - is exemplary. The 'stories' that go to make up the cases in much of his work, and the ways in which he uses these as points of departure in terms of both analysis and conceptual synthesis provide us with a means of exploring any number of other cases where ambiguity and ambivalence are in play, which is something we will notice in abundance in the case of Miles Davis. In 'The Bleed: Where Body Meets Image', the Reagan example is derived from his own auto-biographical

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<sup>51</sup> Brian Massumi, 'The Bleed: Where Body Meets Image', in John C. Welchman [ed.], *Re-Thinking Borders* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp.24-5.

account of his dramatic ineptitude coupled with an abject experience he had during the filming of a scene from *King's Row*, in which he is once again 'rigged', but this time in order to make him both look and seem to be an amputee.

'Wan and worn' from a sleepless night, a despairing Reagan stumbled into the studio for the shoot.

"I found the prop men had arranged a neat deception. Under the gay patchwork quilt, they had cut a hole in the mattress and put a supporting box beneath. I stared at it for a minute. Then, obeying an overpowering impulse, I climbed into the rig. I spend almost that whole hour in stiff confinement, contemplating my torso and the smooth undisturbed flat of the covers where my legs should have been. Gradually, the affair began to terrify me. In some weird way, I felt something horrible had happened to my body [...] I heard [the director's] low voice call 'Action!' [...] I opened my eyes dazedly, looked around, slowly let my gaze travel downward. I can't describe even now my feeling as I tried to reach for where my legs should be [...] I asked the question - the words that had been haunting me for so many weeks - 'Where's the rest of me?'"<sup>53</sup>

Taking this account as a point of departure, Massumi brings together a revised Bergsonian conception of the image, with developments in the science of human physiology and Deleuze's own work using Bergson in the *Cinema* books, he shows how it becomes possible to make effective use of (auto-)biographical data in a way that not only does not revert to a personological or subjectivist rendering of this date, but actually moves away from such a rendering towards recognizing - following Deleuze's last published work, the 'immanence' that makes up 'a life'. To illustrate this point it seems pertinent once again to quote somewhat at length from the essay, at the point at which Massumi begins to unfold the significance of Reagan's attempt to account for his experience:

Reagan must embody the scene of a man recognizing himself as irretrievably changed, as having been transported in total darkness and unbeknown to himself from one perspective on life to another that is irreconcilably different from it. The actor's labor is not one of the intellect: the act of recognition is the end result, not the means by which the scene's reality is produced. Acting is a labor of feeling, but not only

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<sup>52</sup> Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), p.28.

<sup>53</sup> Brian Massumi, 'The Bleed: Where Body Meets Image', pp.24-5.



that: the feeling is inseparable from motility. Reagan becomes a travelling rehearsal. He moves from one place to another, repeating the culminating phrase, 'Where's the rest of me?' He starts from a difference between two unbridgeable perspectives which in their disjunction encompass an entire life, as telescoped into the absolute distance between being able to walk and being a cripple.<sup>54</sup>

In unpacking this further, Massumi divides the story into three phases in order to develop his analysis/synthesis. There is not scope here to explore his use of all three phases, but observations made regarding the third phase alone should suffice to demonstrate what is at stake here:

[P]hase three. The suspension of the suspense by the director's signal transports him across a blackout of vision into the space of transformation. The feeling that was welling inside his body bursts forth in a gesture and a phrase. He bolts up, crying his line [...] An actual event really did occur [...] The event he recreated has bled into his everyday life, colouring it for ever. Reagan laments that he has become a 'semi-automaton' and will remain one as long as he is just an actor. The autonomic repetition into which he collapses during the preparatory phase leading up to the even has carried over into his everyday life. He can't go on that way. He resolves to find the rest of him. He will look for it in conservative politics.<sup>55</sup>

Okay, so here we have a deployment of the Deleuzian concept of the 'event', elaborated most extensively in the *Logic of Sense*, to account for the way in which Reagan's rigging precipitates a real event that makes of 'his' life, 'a' life, whereby the horror of his 'experience' is something that he feels he must in some way account for and overcome. He comes to *mis*-recognize himself as being a 'semi-automaton' whereby he is overwhelmed by a sense of not being able to control his actions and reactions. The trajectory that Reagan ultimately pursues in order to achieve some kind of overcoming is - for Massumi - one of becoming a complete automaton:

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<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p.25.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid., pp.26-7.

[I]f the event was in a sense real, and if it made him a semi-automaton, does that mean that finding the rest of him entails becoming a *complete* automaton? The answer is obvious to anyone familiar with his subsequent career.<sup>56</sup>

So here we have something of a refrain indexed to the proper names 'Reagan' and 'Massumi', explored in terms of the Deleuzian 'event'<sup>57</sup> with a mind to demonstrating once again that the 'rigging' of the body is bound up with the autonomy of affect, with the ambivalence and uncertainty that this brings with it, and for all of the strangeness and horror that such an 'experience' might entail, it does at least mean - for both Reagan and Massumi - that a problem has presented itself and that by attempting to produce a 'diagram'<sup>58</sup> of the problem we can move towards a constitutive conception of subjectivity that pursues a path of 'identity-undifferentiation' that at once activates the potential for *ethical* transformation at the same time as a 'participatory critique of capital'.<sup>59</sup> Surveying

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.27.

<sup>57</sup> The 'event' as already suggested is of major importance for Deleuze, figuring not only in *The Fold*, but also in *The Logic of Sense* where it undergoes its most rigorous elaboration. Pitting it against a Platonic conception of the 'simulacra', Deleuze here draws on the work of the Stoics to show how language plays at the surface of bodies - not coming from them - but nevertheless giving them their 'sense' and opening them up to the possibility of an 'incorporeal transformation', cf., Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pp.4-11 and *passim*. This idea connects with the attempt to draw a diagram of immanent processuality, or to survey towards an abstract machine, and it is the incorporeal transformation that transforms a body's relation(ality) with other bodies.

<sup>58</sup> The diagram as a tool for surveying immanence occurs frequently in the collaborative works and is deterritorialized from its use in the pragmatics and semiotics of C.S.Peirce. The term will be explored through Guattari's 'mixed semiotics' in chapter 2.

<sup>59</sup> The procedure of diagramming outlined here is taken up by Massumi in his book *A User's Guide*, using what once again seems like a silly story but one which serves clearly to show the Spinozist ethical dimension of this approach. It is the 'case' of the man that tries and fails to diagram his relational proximity to a 'dog' in his attempt to overcome hunger by going on all fours. The example further illustrates the danger inherent in overly-localized attempts at 'becoming' which result in the worst kinds of re-territorialization and re-Oedipalization, a danger that confronts not only the man's failed becoming in the story, but any attempt to work ethically with such concepts and approaches as we are here within the confines of the academic *dispositif*; Like Guattari, Massumi recognizes also that such diagrammatic procedures as those to which he draws our attention must also ultimately be considered - not only in relation to the ethical task of becoming - but also the ways in which such a task has to run the gauntlet of the dominant mode of social production, ie. Capitalism. For Massumian attempts at this, cf., 'Requiem for Our Prospective Dead: Towards a Participatory Critique of Capitalist Power', in Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller, *New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy and Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp.40-64, and also the final chapter of the *User's Guide*. The immanent critique of Capitalism developed in the last chapter of *Anti-Oedipus* remains one of the most controversial aspects of Deleuze and Guattari's work and not without justification, given that it makes the claim that Capitalism in its absolute decoding and deterritorialization -



outwards from a point of investment and attempting to pursue it 'above that decisive turn' in experience in such ways as this demonstrates a fidelity - not so much to the names 'Deleuze' and 'Guattari' - but rather to the project of an ongoing and forever self-renewing transcendental empiricism that does not content itself with the well-trodden path of the cases explored by Deleuze and Guattari in their own works.

Massumi therefore brings together all of the most pragmatic and workable aspects of Deleuze-Guattarian philosophy that we have encountered in this chapter, negotiating a complex of levels from the ostensibly-if-not-ultimately trite to the deadly serious.

Diagramming Reagan diagramming his loss of self, Massumi brings a great many resources to the task of producing a detailed and rigorous analysis of 'a' life, a close reading that does not necessarily entail what we would be given to understand a 'hermeneutic' or even a 'textual' reading, because it accedes to the extra-textual in the very process of simultaneously embodying and tracing back the diagram of affective constitutivity.

### **Dispositions of Investment 2, Or Whatever Floats Your (Processual) Boat: Massumi and Cultural Studies**

*There is only one general principle in ethics: no process line has the God-given "right" to tell another to "wink out"*  
 Brian Massumi<sup>60</sup>

In an essay called 'Too-Blue: Color-Patch for an Expanded Empiricism', published in the journal *Cultural Studies*, Brian Massumi has brought together all of the elements of his

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like the unconscious - 'knows no negativity'. However, it should be made clear that to understand this as a form of postmodern resignation is to miss the point, given that Capitalism remains ultimately bad to the extent that it always re-territorializes on 'archaic' territories: Oedipus, the nuclear family, the school, etc. The

exemplary approach to the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari as outlined in the previous section to further explore the uses of philosophy for connecting with the 'outside', this time put forward according to the idea of an 'expanded empiricism' of the title of the piece.

However, what singles out this thesis from the others is that it adopts a reflexivity with regard to the attempt to embody processuality from the perspective of what - for want of a better term - we might call 'inter-disciplinarity', or perhaps even 'intra-disciplinarity'.<sup>61</sup>

Using the case of the 'color-patch' and the 'missing shade of blue' derived from an empirical study by David Katz and the 'radical empiricism' of the pragmatist philosopher William James as his point of departure, Massumi cycles outwards towards a diagramming of tendencies within different disciplines including those we might describe as the 'hard' sciences as well as the arts and humanities in terms of their different *modus operandi* and the tendencies of their respective 'process lines' towards convergence, in particular in the work of cultural studies. There is not sufficient space here to explore the given 'case', but as we have already examined two examples of this aspect of Massumi's procedure, we shall this time instead focus on the place of cultural studies in relation to the processuality of an 'expanded empiricism', which ultimately is a development and extension of Deleuze's notion of a 'transcendental empiricism'.<sup>62</sup> In building his argument towards the

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uncertainty at work in this conception of Capitalism needs to be explored in more detail, as does the fundamental question to which it is allied: 'is it possible to make the selection?', cf., chapter 3.

<sup>60</sup> Brian Massumi, 'Too-Blue: Color-Patch for an Expanded Empiricism', *Cultural Studies* 14:2: 2000, p.216.

<sup>61</sup> See section on Guattari below.

<sup>62</sup> The paradoxical description of Deleuze's philosophical enterprise as a 'transcendental empiricism' goes back to his early book on the philosopher Hume and it should be emphasized that the 'transcendental' aspects of this philosophy are those that were shown to have derived from Kant's Critical project, but only to the extent that they are rendered immanent. Deleuze rejects the traditional definition of 'empiricism' and suggests that it be replaced by a relational one in which knowledge is not derived from experience so much as relationally embodied in or enacted through it, cf. Constantin V. Boundas, 'Translator's Introduction' in Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), p.6: '[A] more helpful definition of empiricism,



consideration of cultural studies relation to processuality, Massumi discusses how science, art and philosophy - following the distinction made by Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?* - come to embody process lines according to their respective embodiments of disciplinarity within the institutional *dispositif*. When it comes to cultural studies, however, Massumi makes a case for the claim that cultural studies might have taken a specific process line *itself* as its *raison d'être*.

A process line of this kind [...] might [...] be in a position to draw political effectiveness from its movements, perhaps serving in some way as an arbiter in the mutual interferences, battles and negotiations between philosophy, science and art. It would distinguish itself from both art and philosophy by taking their political middle as its eventual terminus [...] What would distinguish it from other political movements would be its base in cultural institutions such as the university, museum/gallery, think tank, and research centre.<sup>63</sup>

Whilst the argument that Massumi puts forward in this essay is about as complex and synthetically wrought as any that he has produced, the gist of his observations regarding cultural studies are not too difficult to summarize, given what we have laid out so far in terms of the uses of Deleuze and Guattari in this chapter. Effectively, Massumi is stating that cultural studies, rather than take anything as its 'object', might rather object to such an approach by instead pursuing a project of diagramming in which those Manichean dichotomies or oppositions that we encountered earlier would be challenged in terms of their hegemonic status and immanently re-connected to the process-lines that expose their status as primary as a fallacious one and - in so doing - re-connect an 'expanded-empiricism' of cultural studies to an ethical trajectory, which substitutes the need for any

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in Deleuze's estimate, must respect the irreducible dualism that exists between things and relations, atoms and structure, perceptions and their causes, *and also* relations and their causes'. Deleuze sees this definition operating in the 'associationism' of Hume's philosophy.

<sup>63</sup> Massumi, 'Too-Blue', p.214.

object as such. However, Massumi claims that cultural studies may have had *and lost* its chance to do this,

[T]his process line could well be cultural studies. But it isn't. Cultural studies has missed its processual boat [...] As it is widely practised, cultural studies falls short of singularity at both limits because it clings to the notion that *expression is of a particularity*. It realizes that expression is always collective. But it takes the collectivity as already-constituted: as a determinate set of actually existing persons (in common parlance, a constituency).<sup>64</sup>

Massumi's argument here is that cultural studies has missed the opportunity to short-circuit its categorical relation to the particularity of (liberal democratic) constituency in the promotion of a more immanent constitutivity. Whilst Massumi might appear to many working in the field of cultural studies as somewhat jaded in his pretensions and even blatantly wrong - given that many people working in cultural studies are working to develop conceptions of the political that are far removed from a liberal democratic one - the pertinence of his point actually resides in the *way* in which he conceives of an alternative approach, which we can summarize by saying that in all of the examples that we have encountered so far from his work, what is most fundamentally at stake is a fidelity to *process-in-itself*, and the claim he makes for cultural studies is that - in attempting to re-conceptualize its relation(ity) in terms of 'inter-disciplinarity' - it can come to embody the very procedure of an ethical diagrammaticism, an ethics along Spinozist lines which is constituted anew in each instance of its articulation whilst mapping immanence according to traits that cross each such instance (abstract machine).

Now, what we encounter here is a claim for cultural studies that is not likely to be shared by all or even most of its practitioners. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, for many



this piece might represent what Meaghan Morris describes as a ‘hippy’ approach to cultural studies, and certainly, at the points in the essay when Massumi appeals to notions of ‘belonging’ and ‘togetherness’, points at which he probably does himself few favours by selecting a vocabulary that is more readily associated with tree-huggers than rhizome-makers.<sup>65</sup> However, one more familiar with his work will more likely note that the rigour with which he deploys his Deleuze-Guattari-inspired approach merits a reading that goes against the grain of such esoteric baggage.

The question of how to read such work as this returns us to the problem of investment, to the extent that it is a question of the orientation of a given investment and whether - in the case of Deleuze and Guattari’s work - such an investment be oriented towards the promotion of their status or their names, in terms of what Rosi Braidotti calls a hysterical attachment to dead masters,<sup>66</sup> or whether - to follow both Braidotti and Morris - the investment should be oriented towards the survey of its own immanent constitutivity, a ‘nomadism’ which does not place its faith in a ‘romanticized’ conception of dispossession, migration or diaspora, but rather the promotion of irreducible, complex distribution of bodies and thought in a more empowering relation to the *dispositif* that more usually serves to confine. It is only by remaining sensitive to the problem of investment and its orientation that one can begin to avoid a dilettantish or vicarious relation to the kind of philosophy produced by Deleuze and Guattari in which the danger is always that one lumps things together in a way that permits a non-rigorous approach whereby anything goes and all that

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<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Thanks to Kurt Hirtler for inspiring this particular rendering of Morris’s observation.

<sup>66</sup> Cf., Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002), p.92.

is needed by way of legitimation is the idea that *bricolage* is about just going with the flow and following 'whatever floats your (processual) boat'. As we have been attempting to show, however, throughout this chapter, is that such an approach does a tremendous disservice to a body of work that has so much more to offer than this. One final observation from Massumi's essay however, might serve to illustrate a means by which cultural studies might proceed against the grain of a parochial attachment to names and methods, in accordance with a highly useful notion developed in the work of Guattari, both alone and with Deleuze, the notion of *transversality*.

There is only one general principle in ethics: no process line has the God-given "right" to tell another to "wink out".<sup>67</sup>

Here is an example of an ostensibly rather 'hippy' proclamation which should be read against the esoteric grain to the extent that it embodies a Spinozist appeal to the *conatus*. More importantly, it promotes a relation(ality) between different approaches to cultural studies such that - whatever approach constitutes a given investment and in spite of any antagonisms - there might be a mutual recognition that between these approaches is likely to be a shared 'knowledge-practice' whereby such traits can be explored across these different approaches: can rather than must, given the imperative not to 'wink out' different process lines. As we mentioned earlier, work is being done in this area by John Protevi in his exploration of the *transversal* connections between Deleuze and Derrida. We shall attempt to produce a similar transversal cross-cutting of approaches, between Deleuze, Guattari and Adorno, in the next chapter. Firstly, it remains for us to consider one more approach to the work of Deleuze (though not Guattari) that we cannot afford to overlook

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<sup>67</sup> Massumi, 'Too-Blue', p.216.



and whose implications for the 'case' are potentially far-reaching, the work of Alain Badiou.

### **Taking Exception to the Case: Alain Badiou**

*[A]ll those who have taken Deleuze to be the apostle of desire, flux, and animal anarchy will have apoplexy reading this book.*

Wlad Godzich, on Alain Badiou's *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*<sup>68</sup>

Alain Badiou's book *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, published in English translation in 2000 definitely deserves to be numbered amongst the more outstanding encounters with the work of Deleuze to have so far appeared in the language. A profoundly challenging and philosophical engagement, *Deleuze* really does cut to the chase in attempting to assess the value and status of its namesake's work by pursuing its claims right back to its overriding desire to 'overturn Platonism', a desire not entirely shared by Badiou himself. In doing so it makes a number of equally fascinating and far-reaching statements to the effect that Deleuze - for all he professed to the contrary - was not ever a thinker of multiplicity, but rather one of Univocal Being, of the One, that he was never an 'apostle of desire' but rather an ascetic aristocrat and that his Bergsonian leanings towards a 'vitalist' philosophy of the 'virtual' is fundamentally flawed due to an impossibility of accessing this latter by recourse to his, Deleuze's, purportedly ill-founded appeal to multiplicity.

These remarkable objections - for all of their value in forcing a far more rigorous engagement with Deleuze's work - remain in some instances highly problematic and belie a form of tactical manoeuvring on the part of Badiou that challenges the extent to which his

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<sup>68</sup> Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Back cover.

arguments apply. One only need consult the list of texts he uses - none of which are any of the texts co-authored with Guattari - a somewhat mysterious omission given that *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* is his main target of criticism. This is not to say that the claims are wrong. Certainly, the image of 'animal anarchy' dear to some readers is problematic, as are the ways in which postmodern 'proliferating rhizomes' are often misguided.<sup>69</sup> Certainly, the idea that Deleuze was something of an ascetic aristocrat also has some mileage. This is an area that certainly needs to be investigated further, as - in terms of the kind of ethics proposed here - the perpetually renewed appeal to affirmation, openness and the 'outside' might actually disguise an underlying asceticism that - when one takes up the gauntlet of Deleuze's 'experiments' in 'life' - might ultimately doom any such endeavour to fulfilling its opposite and coming to embody all that this entails, whether figured in terms of Oedipus, neurosis, subjectivation, or even fascistic, 'cancerous' Bodies without Organs.<sup>70</sup> In short, it is a problem that cuts to the core of Deleuze's philosophy and may show that its commitment to a false conception of the 'multiple' might leave it prey to the very fears and dangers that Deleuze and Guattari warn us about throughout all of their work together.

For all of the gravity of these objections, it is the connected problem of the 'case' that is perhaps most fascinating and, in terms of this thesis, the most pressing. We have already witnessed the value of the case in Massumi's work, a fact not without direct Deleuze-Guattarian inspiration. Largely through a reading of the *Cinema* books, Badiou brings together his armoury of highly explosive philosophical charges in attempting to show that

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<sup>69</sup> Cf., Peter Dews, 'Uncategorical Imperatives: Adorno, Badiou and the Ethical Turn', in *Radical Philosophy* 111: 2001, p.33.



this perennial appeal to the case is flawed and that it ultimately serves to make of the repetition of difference only the repetition of Deleuze's difference, one that hands the concept back over to identity, the very place from which it was supposed at all costs to avoid. The claims do not only have potentially severe import for *Cinema 1* and *2* but for the whole enterprise undertaken in *A Thousand Plateaus*, a profoundly case-based book, and therefore highly notable by its absence from *Deleuze*. As the next two chapters will attempt to produce a kind of 'diagram' of the pragmatic efficacy of Deleuze and Guattari's work as it pertains to the 'non-philosophy' of music and will take the form of a 'case', that of Miles Davis, it only seems pertinent to dwell a little longer on what Badiou might possibly mean by the case, why it might or may not be problematic, and how it actually figures within these works.

Towards the beginning of his essay, and with the quite remarkable lucidity and erudition characteristic of this work generally gets right to the philosophical heart of the matter in singling out the 'case' as the prerequisite locus of mediation between a concept and the world and therefore, *a priori*, a condition of possibility of Deleuze's philosophy of difference.

It is always a question of indicating particular cases of a concept. If you do not first start with a particular case, you are claiming to go from the concept to the variety that it subsumes. In this way, you reestablish the Platonic transcendence of the Idea, and you show yourself to be unfaithful the Nietzschean program that, constantly evoked by Deleuze, designates the "overturning of Platonism" as the contemporary philosophical task. *Immanence requires that you place yourself where thought has already started, as close as possible to singular case and the movement of thought.*<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>70</sup> On the 'empty' Body without Organs, cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.163.

<sup>71</sup> Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchell (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), p.14. Emphasis added.

Here again, Badiou parts company with Deleuze, this time on his formulation of the 'contemporary philosophical task', which Badiou holds to be flawed in that in trying too hard to get away from Plato Deleuze ends up doing the opposite. Also, that Badiou's net of philosophical entrapment is indeed intricately woven is something in evidence here, with the relationship between philosophy and non-philosophy, the question of ethics and affirmation, the efficacy of the 'image of thought' and the appeal to a notion of the virtual, all up for grabs.

What we saw in *Difference and Repetition* (incidentally, but certainly not co-incidentally the main target of Badiou's own 'overturning' endeavour), is that Deleuze attempted to counteract the tendency in much philosophy to maintain that there is a fundamental relation between the concept and identity. In sidestepping the general-particular dyad by way of the 'concrete universal', one can avoid positing transcendence or 'illegitimate' transcendental conditions by enabling an encounter with irreducible, complex, constitutive difference in a rigorous, immanent, 'synthetic' fleshing out of its dynamism. What Badiou claims here is that in order to have any plausibility such a move must always proceed by way of the case and that a failure to do so would engender the re-instatement of the relation between concept and 'variety' and all that goes with it (quality-quantity, generality-particularity, etc.) on the rocky road back to identity. In claiming this role for the case, Badiou is saying that an omission of this essential mediating move will lead back to a 'Platonic transcendence of the Idea' and away from the Nietzschean project of activation and affirmation.



So what might be an example of the case? Well, for Badiou a number of Deleuze's own books constitute cases.

Certainly, the starting point required by Deleuze's method is always a concrete case. This is what explains that there is no significant difference for him, between what is, in appearance, a "dogmatic" treatise (*Difference and Repetition*, for example), a text falling within the domain of the history of classical philosophy (*Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*), the dialogue with a great contemporary (*Foucault*), a general survey of a particular art (*Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*), or a meditation on a writer (*Proust and Signs*).<sup>72</sup>

I believe that in a good deal of the foregoing we have accounted quite extensively for the elliptical openness and interaction between the 'dogmatic' and 'historical' texts of Deleuze.

What now remains to be done is to introduce a more expressly 'non-philosophical' instance. Badiou points us in the direction of perhaps the most obvious and exemplary instance of such works: the two books on *Cinema*. To focus on this example and the accompanying observations of Badiou, one can begin to witness the import of his globally applied argument unfold.

In effect, Deleuze in no way considers his exposure to cases-of-thought related to the cinema (however thorough this exposure may be) as being equivalent to producing a theory of cinema. The end of *Cinema 2* makes it absolutely clear that his entire enterprise is proposing a creative repetition of concepts and not an apprehension of the cinematic art as such: "The theory of cinema does not bear on the cinema, but on the concepts of the cinema" (*Cinema 2*, p. 280).<sup>73</sup>

Reading Deleuze to the letter here, Badiou shows that the aim of Deleuze's writings on cinema, as an instance of his entire *oeuvre*, are bound up with conceptual creation, transcendental empiricism and immanence. Film is a material apparatus, it is - if you will -

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid. Badiou is not strictly correct when he describes the case as 'concrete', given that the concrete is always parallel to the incorporeal or 'ideal' dimension of immanent processuality, which is why the expression 'more-or-less' has been used in this thesis. Brian Massumi characteristically appeals to paradox to express this in the title of the introduction to his most recent book, cf., 'Introduction: Concrete is as Concrete Doesn't', in Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual*, pp.1-22. This resonates with Badiou's attempt to disavow Deleuze's philosophy of its claim to virtuality, a claim challenged in the current project through the systematic attempts to survey the abstract machines of the chosen case in chapters 2 and 3.

a *dispositif*, with its curvatures of visibility and enunciation, its lines of force and subjectivation, just as philosophy within its respective milieu of institutional academia. This begs the question, if philosophy has its concepts, and yet forms no more or less of an ‘assemblage’ than does cinema, sharing material, ideal, semiotic traits all interacting in their occupation of a mutually shared pre-philosophical plane of immanence, then surely cinema must be capable of producing its own concepts?

Deleuze’s answer to this question is quite obviously, yes, cinema does have its own concepts. And yet there is a question that follows off from the previous one which still needs to be answered. If cinema’s concepts are ‘its’ own, autonomous from those of philosophy, then why don’t philosophers stick to their own and leave cinema to carry on its inventions independently of the intervention or mediation of philosophy? This question is profoundly more difficult to answer, and, according to Badiou, Deleuze’s answer gives the lie to his shortcomings.

[B]ecause “cinema’s concepts are not given in cinema”, “philosophy must produce the theory [of cinema] as conceptual practice” [...] <sup>74</sup>

So philosophy *must* intervene by producing a theory to show that cinema has concepts that are its own. This problem - for the work on cinema, and for the whole of Deleuze’s own pragmatics of non-philosophy - remains fundamental, and needs to be considered far more extensively than it has been so far. According to Badiou, the case ultimately fails, because of the intervening gesture of philosophy and the fact that this gesture belies an inability to demonstrate cinema’s immanent embodiment of material, ideal and semiotic difference

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<sup>73</sup> Badiou, *Deleuze*, p.16.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.



without always already making it the subject of philosophy. Had Badiou sought to make use of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, he might have heightened the apoplexy of affirmation-happy Deleuzians by calling this ‘capture’.

Everything that is wrong with this case is also what Badiou finds wrong with all of Deleuze’s work where it cannot be extricated from his conception of the multiple: virtuality can never be surveyed because it is always-already actual; the simulacrum does not bring us closer to the One-all but leaves us perpetually tied to its arbitrariness; the image of thought as a virtual image can never be intuited. The last of these objections is most resonant here, as the pre- or non-philosophical ‘image of thought’ is what might enable a workable pragmatic connection between cinema, or music, or painting, or literature, and conceptual innovation and thought, but how can we even begin to do this when the philosophy that claims to be able to is built around such a *pre- or non-* philosophical ‘image of thought’ that it is supposedly incapable of intuiting?

Let us understand that, under the constraint of the case of cinema, it is once again, and always (Deleuze’s) philosophy that begins anew and that accuses cinema to be *there where it cannot, of itself, be.*<sup>75</sup>

As always, Badiou is more than happy to give credit where he considers it due, portraying Deleuze in a way that reminds one of Deleuze’s own portrait of Kant, an ‘affectionate’ one of an ‘enemy’.<sup>76</sup> In making a positive claim regarding Deleuze’s concept creation as follows:

[W]hat counts is the impersonal power of the concepts themselves that, in their content, never deal with a “given” concrete instance, but *with other concepts*: “A theory of cinema is not ‘about’ cinema, but about the concepts that it generates” [...]

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Massumi, ‘Translator’s Foreword’, in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.x.

The entire interest of these cases lies in this generation, but *what* is generated bears no resemblance to the generating power.<sup>77</sup>

Badiou does not therefore deem the enterprise of the cinema studies to be without merit, in that he concedes that cinema has the power to generate concepts but that these concepts remain wholly in the province of philosophy, or the movement of the concepts pertaining to philosophical thought and it is the interrelation between the concepts themselves that Badiou views positively. So one can embark from cinematic concepts to produce connections with other concepts, and this would be the limit of the case's function.

Ultimately, concepts, which are never "concepts-of", are only attached to the initial concrete case in their movement and not in what they give to be thought. This is why, in the volumes about the cinema, what one learns concerns the Deleuzian theory of movement and time, and the cinema gradually becomes neutralized and forgotten.<sup>78</sup>

In summary, Badiou's argument here is that the 'repetition of difference' of Deleuze is not a ubiquitous, immanent, multiplicitious repetition of difference independent of being indexed to a proper name, but - on the contrary - that in the case of cinema it is simply the repetition of Deleuze's difference, *his* concepts and their perpetually re-worked, re-constructed interactions in the course of *his* work. The case is never concrete, but rather serves as a much more limited motor for proliferating abstractions, from which the case is not independent or autonomous. Furthermore, this philosophy is - according to Badiou - not schizophrenic, but systematic. This abstraction and systematization must be distinguished from the generality of subsumed variation in the concept, but nevertheless this does not prevent the concept - via the case - from returning to itself.

Care must be taken not to forget that what is submitted to this trial by the adventitious multiple of cases never stops experiencing itself as self-identical. For it is the fact that a concept, traversing the illimited determination of cases, reunites with itself and that

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<sup>77</sup> Badiou, *Deleuze*, p.16.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*



it supplely resists the variation of that which calls upon it to return, that constituted the only possible protocol of validation for this concept.<sup>79</sup>

So, it would seem, the concept does not escape identity, but nevertheless retains a thoroughly philosophical value and status in terms of the inter-relation between different concepts. It is this alternative path towards a Deleuzian philosophy of univocity that Badiou follows, and it is his view that in doing so, unlike Deleuze's more *acephalic* disciples, is remaining faithful to the true philosophical value of Deleuze's work. We have covered the basic ground which constitutes the fabric of Badiou's arguments to come, and he himself summarizes according to three principles.

1. This philosophy is organized around a metaphysics of the One.
2. It proposes an ethics of thought that requires dispossession and asceticism.
3. It is systematic and abstract.<sup>80</sup>

It is clear that *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being* is a highly valuable and enormously important work, a work that forces many presumptions to be carefully reconsidered, that throws the gauntlet down to the 'animal anarchists'. Badiou views Deleuze's enterprise as generating a supreme philosophy of univocity rather than multiplicity, which doubtless opens up some very exciting possibilities for future uses of his thought. However, as we suggested at the beginning of this engagement, Badiou does play a little freely in what he accepts and what he rejects, certainly if one reads his work in the wider context of the collaborations with Guattari, which, not only not necessarily an appeal to animal anarchy, provide the means by which Badiou's objections force a re-consideration of the multiple in Deleuze and Guattari's works, collectively and individually, whereby their philosophy of One-all is not

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

simply 'adventitious', but workable, philosophically amenable, pragmatic and affirmative in a way that is perhaps more sober yet more nuanced than an impatient declaration of 'yes' is likely to bring to anyone's attention.

The partial fulfilment of this task will form the primary objective of the remaining two chapters. Furthermore, taking something of an impetus from Badiou in actually taking the trouble to problematize rather than presuppose the self-evident validity of a case, we will attempt to address his objections and at the same time engender something of an analytic-synthetic re-rendering of some key innovations of Deleuze and Guattari that will aim to put them to work in useful ways and simultaneously shed some light on the extent of their pragmatic remit.

### **None, One or Several Guattaris?: The Pragmatic Constructions of 'the Other Guy'<sup>81</sup>**

*What was reality for Félix? [...] [B]etween production of subjectivity and machinic heterogeneity, in his chaosmosis universe ... I've never experienced such a full immersion in the real as when I gave myself over to Félix's neologismatic madness.*  
Antonio Negri<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.17. The issue of the One-multiple is a very complex one that runs to the very core of the debate between Badiou and Deleuze, and though it will figure to some extent in the elaboration of the case of Miles Davis, what will ultimately transpire to be of more import here will be the other two points.

<sup>81</sup> Gregg Lambert's recent book makes a reference to Guattari as the 'other guy' which the author qualifies by saying that 'there has been a tendency in the French reception of Deleuze's work, to present a clean and shaven portrait of the philosopher [Deleuze] which has amounted to extracting a purely philosophical Deleuze from its admixture with the presence of Guattari', cf., Gregg Lambert, *The Non-Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*, p.x. and p.159n1. This argument is not however restricted to the French reception of Guattari, as more often than not his own contributions to the collaborations are not distinguished from those of Deleuze whose solo imprint *almost always* finds its way into the proceedings. Having made this observation he goes on to criticize Badiou for his neglect of the collaborative works in his dismissal of Deleuze's animal anarchy, but it seems that Lambert is himself perpetuating the clean-shaven image of Deleuze on occasions by not given Guattari due consideration, even when discussing the collaborative works. For example, cf., *ibid.*, p.140-1, when - in discussing their work on Kafka - Lambert refers to Deleuze *alone*. The only writers who seems to have taken the cause of Guattari up to any extent so far are Charles Stivale and Gary Gensoko. Incidentally, Stivale's work in *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari* seems to most closely resemble that undertaken in this project, although Stivale seems a little reluctant to explore the limitations of Deleuze and Guattari's own,



In describing the key innovations of 'Deleuze' and 'Guattari', it has become increasingly pressing to place a renewed emphasis on the contributions of allied to the name of the latter. As we saw earlier, in the 'humour' of the Deleuze and Guattari of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* it became necessary to run the gauntlet of the dangers and limitations that the project was in many ways designed to expose and overcome to strategically open the reader to an alternative register in which approaches based on more established regimes could simultaneously be challenged and subject to critical and pragmatic investigation. Now, we ourselves are forced to do like by running the gauntlet of everything that has so far been said regarding the problem of putting too much faith in the proper name, by attempting to redress a profound imbalance in the reception of Guattari's solo writing as compared to that of Deleuze. Furthermore, it is necessary to raise the stakes even further by challenging the claim that - in dealing with the collaborative works it is both futile and entirely unfaithful to the project to attempt a separation between the bits attributable to Deleuze and those of Guattari. Such a precarious task must necessarily be undertaken and with great precaution, because it is not so much an attempt to discern who did which bits and thereby perform a personological enclosure that falls foul of the *propria* of 'sovereign subjectivity' so much as to *further* index investment to process by shedding more light on the 'pick-up' of ideas and concepts that constitute the collaborative works.

The overriding problem with the existing secondary work on Deleuze and Guattari is that - whether discussing the individual or collective efforts - it is nearly always the name of Deleuze that takes primacy, not just in order of appearance, but, much more importantly, in

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not pushing the question of 'why use their work' to a sufficient remove. Gensosko's work shall be discussed briefly below.

that far more energy and thought has been devoted to the innovations that we know to be those of Deleuze and - in the worst instances - the name of Guattari is completely absented and - at best - the bits one is not sure were actually done by Deleuze are described as being done by 'Deleuze and Guattari'. There are a good many reasons why this is highly unfortunate and actually unfaithful to the primacy of processuality in their work, some of which we have already encountered and others that need to be elucidated. Firstly, we know that a proper name, along the lines of the philosophy that is at work here, can either function as a tensor-sign or mark a global person with fixed, discernible attributes and characteristics. One must also remember that this disjunction can be both exclusive (either/or) and inclusive (either...or...or) and - given that the dual perspectives of the molar and molecular are constantly in play in relation to one another - inclusion and exclusion can simultaneously both be in play. For all that has been said and said again regarding the ethical or etho(nto)logical orientation of this philosophy and what it makes of the 'individual', the 'subject', the 'author', the 'proper name', etc., it is remarkable how in repeatedly advocating this line the name of Deleuze is perennially invoked. It must be admitted, certainly when the aim is a re-assessment along the lines of the one being attempted here - that this is something of an occupational hazard. However, what seems harder to accept is the extent to which this capture has been effected *specifically* with regard to 'Deleuze' and - until very recently - has almost always subordinated the name 'Guattari'. The suggestion being made here is that the name of Deleuze has been lauded to a far greater extent than that of Guattari, and that this symptomatizes the capture that has taken place, making of Deleuze a statistical aggregate and at the same time an 'object' of

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<sup>82</sup> Cited in Stivale, *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari*, p.289.



fetishistic investment. This is the first reason why the overemphasis on 'Deleuze' is problematic.

The second reason why this is so is that the cult of Deleuze has intensely overshadowed the tremendously complex and prolific work that Guattari did which - despite the fact that he was never an 'academic' intellectual as such - was ultimately no less philosophical or pragmatic than the work that Deleuze produced on his own. In glossing between the names when discussing the joint works it is this complexity and density that largely gets lost or overlooked. Amongst the many innovations that are to be found when Guattari is writing alone are the following: the re-orientation of the psychoanalytic 'transference' along the 'transversal' lines of the group-subject, the ethico-aesthetic paradigm, the re-articulation of subjectivity and subjectification along processual lines by creating a new conception of the 'machine', the concept of 'faciality', the immanent critique of the place of the signifier in the psychoanalytic institution and more generally a longstanding commitment to the overturning of the 'despotic sign' by adapting Hjelmslevian glossematics.. There are many more that could be added to the list, however to do so would entail the risk of a 'redemptive' assessment of Guattari's work that would leave us firmly in the register of an exclusive disjunction and the 'metaphysics of sovereign subjectivity'. If it is necessary to list these developments it is only to demonstrate that so many of the pragmatic possibilities that are in place for the extension and development of this kind of philosophy come from somewhere other than the work of Deleuze, and in addition to the value of the 'machine' which we have already encountered, we should consider what the other Guattarian innovations might contribute to addressing the problems and objections that have been

raised here as well as those of Badiou, to the turns that this thought has hitherto taken, in particular Guattari's emphasis on immanent linguistics and the highly valuable concepts of 'transversality' and of 'faciality'. It is worthwhile to examine some of these aspects in more detail, in part by recourse to the work of Gary Genosko.

In an excellent section from his recently published and timely book, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction*, entitled 'Deleterious Deleuziana' Genosko makes the point very pronouncedly that Guattari has almost always been confined to the margins of Deleuze-Guattari reception, despite so many 'synthetic' contrivances that profess to redress the imbalance:

Deleuze and Guattari. D+G. D/G. D-G. D&G. DaG. Deleuzo-Guattarian. Philosopher and psychoanalyst/activist. No matter how creative the combination, no matter how wily or woolly the disjunction, conjunction or connection, none adequately evoke the remarkable accomplishments of Deleuze and Guattari's collective projects and all beg the question of how they worked together, apart [...] [T]he very proliferation of these shorthand designations across the secondary and tertiary literatures suggests the search for a means to express a creative collaboration, what Deleuze referred to as an "assembling [a work] between us, neither union nor juxtaposition", whose present fate has been in too many instances to render the 'co-' of co-authorship inoperative.<sup>83</sup>

Genosko views this marginalization as an instantiation of the order-word assemblage at the heart of Deleuze and Guattari reception and is perhaps the first commentator to go so far as declaring that their collaborative efforts should indeed be considered in terms of individual contributions to the pick-up of ideas, a view shared here.

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<sup>83</sup> Gary Genosko, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction* (London and New York: Continuum Press, 2002), p.41. Yet another in one of the many recent contributions to the burgeoning field of Deleuze-Guattari studies, this book also came out during the writing of this project and therefore has not received the attention it undoubtedly warrants as what seems to be one of the most pertinent commentaries to have come out in quite some time.



Perhaps the first thing to point out is that, alongside the synthetic procedures that doubtless derived from Deleuze's earlier monographs, the most ubiquitous procedural aspect of *A Thousand Plateaus* alongside the attempt at an embodiment of the syntheses of connection, disjunction and conjunction, is the use of a revised Hjelmslevian glossematics, developed primarily in the solo work of Guattari as part of his materialist semiotics, and whose ubiquity will make its mark on the forthcoming case-study at numerous critical junctures. Genosko, along with one other commentator, Bruno Bosteels, has provided the most incisive and succinct account of how this adapted glossematics works.

What is most important about the choice of Hjelmslev, as opposed say to that of Saussure, is that it provides the scope for re-integrating the operations of language back into a materialist framework, which serves to limit signification to a relatively narrow field of operation as part of a wider network of systemic interactions. To quote Genosko,

For Hjelmslev, there is an unformed "thought-mass" common to all languages called purport (matter) [...] [P]urport is like sand, Hjelmslev suggests [...], formed in different ways in different moulds [...] [P]urport is formed into substance.<sup>84</sup>

Language is therefore bound up with the formation of material substance, and in fact, it is only in the *process* of ordering matter that matter can be called substance.

Hjelmslev remarks in one of his most famous examples - which Guattari also quotes [...] - [that] form is "projected on to the purport, just as an open net casts its shadow down on an undivided surface" [...] [F]orm is not concrete - the net - but abstract - its shadow.<sup>85</sup>

This non-hylomorphic formation of matter into meta-stable substance is crucial to '10,000B.C.: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)', the plateau of *A*

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<sup>84</sup> Gary Genosko, *Undisciplined Theory* (London: Sage, 1998), p.122.

*Thousand Plateaus* that makes most explicit and extensive use of the Hjelmslevian schema in the elaboration of their stratoanalysis, and the process of ‘double-articulation’.<sup>86</sup>

As Genosko makes clear, the notion of double-articulation draws directly upon Hjelmslev’s ‘net’, and in so doing, brings into play the other aspects of his glossematics:

Deleuze and Guattari [...] play on the ‘net’ motif in suggesting that Hjelmslev wove one out of the strata of expression, content, matter, substance and form.<sup>87</sup>

The formation of purport or matter into substance is not abstract in the sense in which Badiou speaks of the term (an example of Guattari’s contribution to the collaborations serving to contest Badiou’s criticism of Deleuze), in that the word ‘abstract’ does not here describe a stable system of categorical determinations but rather a logic of immanent processuality in which a complex of heterogeneous aspects function in reciprocal presupposition (as with the three syntheses) which will manifest at the level of language or enunciation with the latter operating once again as an effect at the surface of processual interactions. The aspects described here are the ones to which Genosko refers in addition to the ones already discussed: expression, and content.

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<sup>85</sup> Ibid.

<sup>86</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.40: ‘[A]rticulate twice, B-A, BA. This is not at all to say that the strata speak or are language based. Double articulation is so extremely variable that we cannot begin with a general model, only a relatively simple case. The first articulation chooses or deducts, form unstable particles-flows, metastable molecular or quasi-molecular units (*substances*) upon which it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (*forms*). The second articulation establishes functional, compact, stable structures (*forms*), and constructs the molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized (*substances*) [...] [S]ubstances are nothing other than formed matters’. This shows a number of things in addition to illustrating the stratoanalytic rendering of the form-substance relation. Firstly, it shows how the molar/molecular relation is articulated, where the term ‘articulated’ becomes both linguistic *and* processual, therefore it becomes ‘strategic’ in the sense of the term deployed in this project, that is - pertaining to the strata and the processes of (de-)stratification. Secondly, it shows that the language of geology has a high co-efficient of deterritorialization that makes it amenable to a theory of ‘morals’ as well as a materialist semiotics, via geology’s own vocabulary for analyzing process and immanent materialist inscription on the order of strata (extension) and de-stratification (*in-tension* or thought).

<sup>87</sup> Genosko, *Undisciplined Theory*, p.122.



The schema is greatly nuanced by the incorporation of expression and content, because the formation of matter into substance proceeds tendentially or dynamically between two abstract planes, a plane of content and a plane of expression, where the forms coalesce and coagulate in their double-pincer movement of stratification. This complex two-fold formation of substance is once again most incisively captured by Genosko, in his invocation of Jürgen Trabant's representation of the schema [see fig. 1]:

[T]he unilateral arrows on both the expression and content sides represent the formation of purport into substance. The bi-directional arrows in the centre between expression form and content form show that the sign-function is de-materialized into pure form.<sup>88</sup>

This description of the sign-function doubtless recalls that of Saussure's signifier-signified dyad, a connection that not lost on Hjelmslev. As such, whilst it introduces matter into the sign it does so in a way that effectively enforces the two abstract planes of expression and content of being separable from one another, and therefore, again recalling Spinoza's own definition of substance, betraying the movement of immanence because a univocal substance cannot be limited by something outside of itself, otherwise it is not univocal.<sup>89</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Cf., Spinoza, *Ethics*, I, 'Of God', D3: '[B]y substance I understand what is in itself and is conceived through itself, that is, that whose concept does not require the concept of another thing, from which it must be formed'.



Fig 1.

*The Place of the Signifier in the Institution*

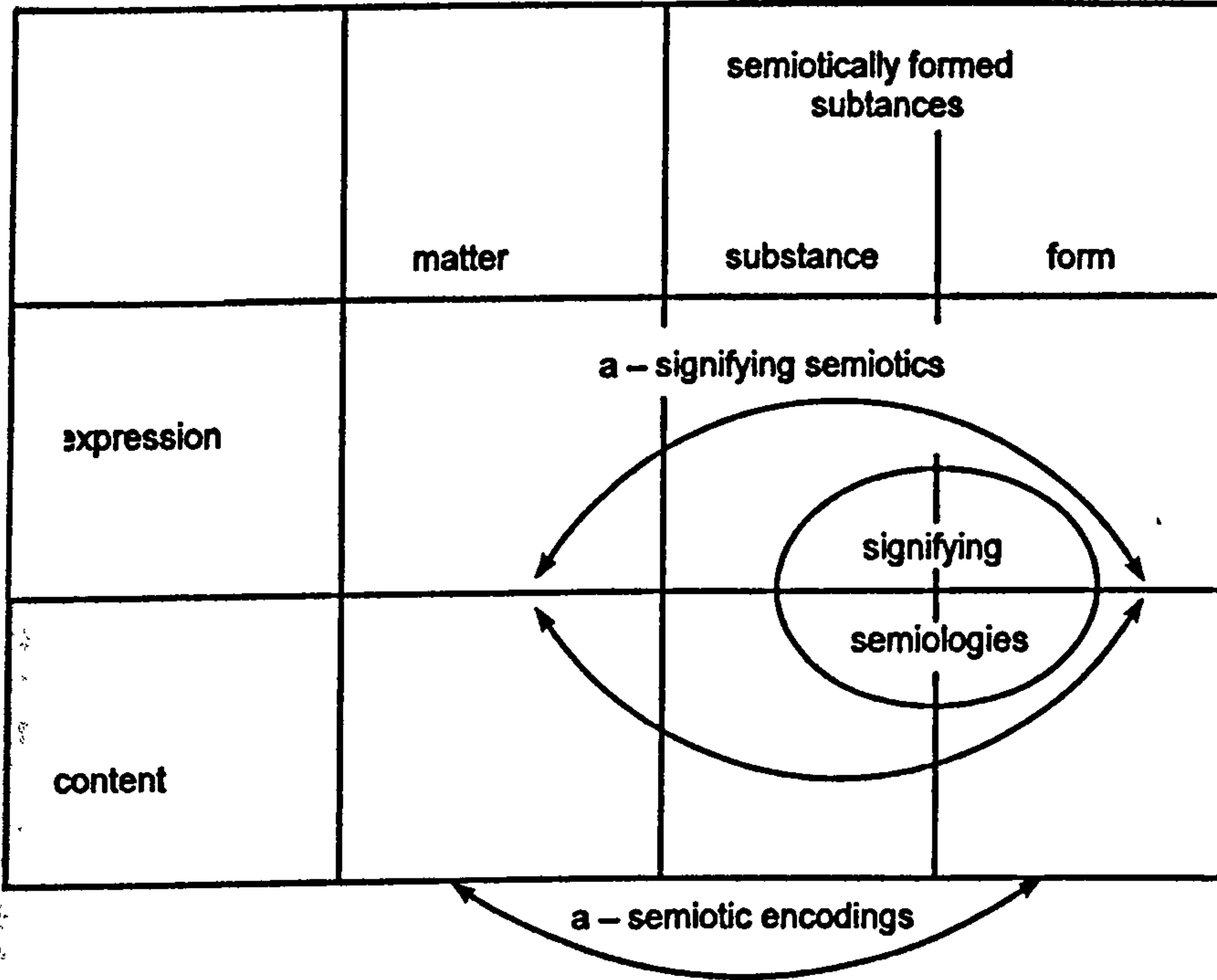


Fig 2.

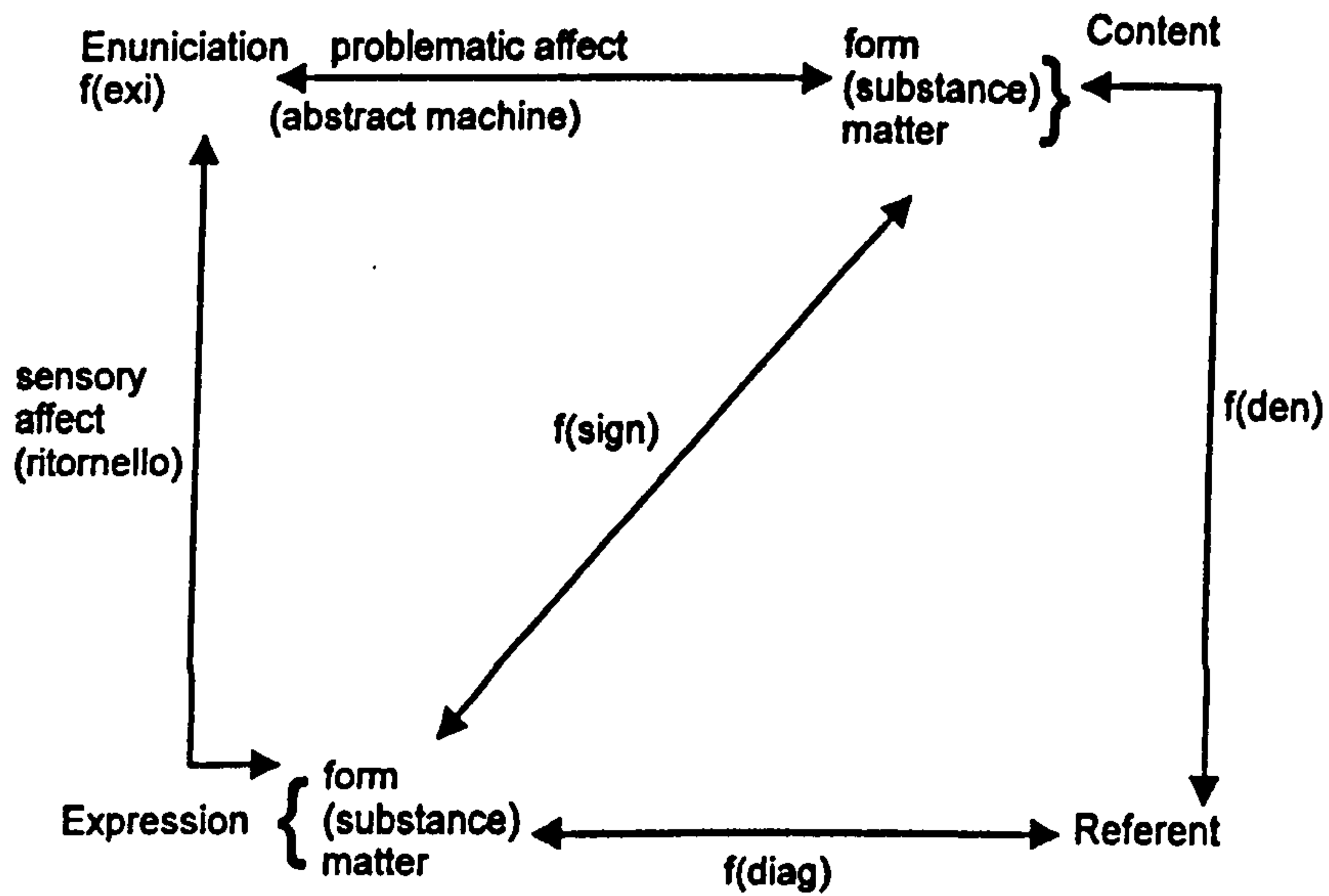


Fig 3.



This is where Guattari's innovation comes in: he realizes the potential in Hjelmslev's schema that makes the relation between the planes *reversible* so that the matter that is articulated in the formation of content in a given more-or-less concrete instance is from another perspective constitutive of a formation of expression and vice versa:

I believe I've found a valid alternative to the structuralism inspired by Saussure, one that relies on the Expression/Content distinction formulated by Hjelmslev, that is to say, based precisely on the potential reversibility of Expression and Content. Going beyond Hjelmslev, I intend to consider a multiplicity of expressive instances, whether they be of the order of Expression and Content. Rather than playing on the Expression/Content opposition which, with Hjelmslev, still repeats Saussure's signifier/signified couplet, this would involve putting a multiplicity of components of Expression, or substances of Expression in parallel, in polyphony.<sup>90</sup>

Having made this innovation, Guattari - as with so many of his ideas - will subject it to continual complexification and refinement, and the sheer extent of this complexity is immediately apparent from even a cursory examination of Genosko's recent book, in particular, when examining the myriad diagrams of the 'four functorial domains'.<sup>91</sup>

Cutting through this complexity, two diagrams have been incorporated into the illustrations of this project just to give an idea of how all of this is perceived to work. Firstly, in the

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<sup>90</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p.23. The conception of polyphony at work here derives from Bakhtin and is one of a number of music-derived terms that Guattari, alone and with Deleuze will mobilize for their high co-efficients of deterritorialization or *transversality*, which can now be more concretely specified as describing the potential for cutting across the planes of content and expression as so many ordinates of deterritorialization. There will plenty of occasions to witness this in the next two chapters, and in chapter 3 a considerably more detailed embodiment of Guattari's adapted glossematics will be put forward.

<sup>91</sup> Genosko, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction*, pp.194-227. Deleuze and Guattari have variously deployed rectilinear schemata for the operations of language, space-time, memory, and also music. This represents a strategic attempt to open the triangle of bi-univocal relations, the arborescent schema or dogmatic image of thought, to the outside (thought), via the subtractive operation of *n-1* dimensions, whereby the fourth 'corner' of the rectangle is a point that extends into a line that deterritorializes the rectangle, a line that plots an abstract, intensive diagonal that de-stratifies whatever has been doubly-articulated in any given more-or-less concrete instance. This is the pragmatic value of the diagram, that it enables an initial schematization of relational interaction (of language, thought, matter, etc.) to be refined, an operation that proceeds along similar lines to the 'dualism' of Bergson, in order to 'go above that decisive turn'.

diagram accompanying the essay entitled ‘The Place of the Signifier in the Institution’<sup>92</sup> it becomes immediately clear how the adapted glossematics relativizes the role played by signification and how its remit does not extend into the domains of material processuality, rendered in this instance according to Guattari’s distinction between ‘signifying semiologies’, ‘a-semiotic encodings’ and ‘asignifying semiotics’ [see fig.2]<sup>93</sup> What is of primary interest here is that, by marginalizing the role played by signifying semiologies, Guattari has provided a way of diagramming the way materialist semiotics actually function as part of the (psychiatric) institution. Research needs to be done to see how this plays out at a more deterritorialized level in relation to non-psychiatric institutions, such as academia, a far cry from the aristocratic asceticism that Badiou ascribes to Deleuze. Such a project might take as its point of departure Guattari’s idea of ‘*intra-disciplinarity*’.

I am interested in an “intradisciplinarity” that is capable of traversing heterogeneous fields and carrying the strongest charges of “transversality”.<sup>94</sup>

A third diagram illustrates how the relations between formed content and expression relate to the functions of denotation and referentiality relative to the diagram, abstract machine, affect and of particular importance, the function of enunciation and - to invoke another deterritorialized musical term the ‘ritornello’ [see fig. 3], this latter significant not only for

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<sup>92</sup> Félix Guattari, ‘The Place of the Signifier in the Institution’, in Genosko [ed.], *The Guattari Reader*, pp.148-57.

<sup>93</sup> Bruno Bosteels has summarized this complex distinction quite beautifully in his excellent essay ‘From Text to Territory: Félix Guattari’s Cartographies of the Unconscious’, in Kaufman and Heller [eds.], *New Mappings*, pp.145-74, cf., p.162: ‘1. *A-semiotic encoding* functions without constituting an autonomous and translatable, semiotically formed substance, and thus operates outside of the strata of glossematics [...] 2. *Semiologies of signification* operate with systems of signs ordered into semiotically formed substances along the two planes of content and expression. 3. *A-signifying, diagrammatic semiotics* exceed the double-articulation of already semiotically formed substances into content and expression: they work flush with the real, beneath the representational functions of signification and designation, and they have direct purchase on the continuum of material flows in the purport (for example, *musical transcriptions*, technological planes, scientific descriptions, to which Guattari in his last book adds the example of hypertexts)’. Emphasis added.

<sup>94</sup> Cited in Stivale, *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari*, p.289. This idea will be put to the test when Deleuze and Guattari are brought into conjunction with Adorno in the next chapter.



this reason but also because the way it nuances the conception of affect in a way that will be crucial to the case of Miles Davis (see chapter 2).<sup>95</sup>

Bruno Bosteels points us in the direction of a no less crucial aspect of the rectilinear diagramming of semantic, signifying, semiological, a-semiotic and asignifying operations, and it is what legitimates the description of deterritorialization or transversality as the plotting of a 'diagonal': the vertical and horizontal axes of a punctual system:

[S]ignifying semiologies primarily concatenate a chain of actually formed substances, of either content or expression, along the horizontal syntagmatic axis, to which only secondarily corresponds a virtual set of formed substances along the vertical paradigmatic axis. Signification and interpretation along these two axes, moreover, go hand in hand with an individuation of subjectivity, divided into the subject of enunciation (*je*) and the subject of the enunciated (*moi*), both of which are subjugated to the signifying chain.<sup>96</sup>

This 'regime' of signification effects its redundant levelling of subjective individuation by excluding affect from its remit, arguably the very thing which enables a singularization, or immanent individuation to take place. The other functions of Guattari's schizoanalytic pragmatics, namely diagram, abstract machine, affect, refrain and also enunciation as shall eventually be shown, are the ones that have the greatest potential for deterritorializing a set of formed content/expression relations, and in doing so they plot a diagonal or transversal line across the vertical and horizontal axes. In many ways, this is the 'meaning' or sense of the term transversality, the process that this descriptive tensor-sign marks, and it is this that must be briefly outlined further.

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<sup>95</sup> Bosteels, *From Text to Territory*, pp.162-3.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.*

The notion of transversality has a complex and rather vague history that goes back to the work of Jean-Paul Sartre, credited with having explored this notion prior to Guattari.<sup>97</sup> This concept of Guattarian concepts begins as a slow and careful re-figuring of psychoanalytic transference which both re-orientates it along group lines, where the bi-univocity of analyst-analysand is gradually substituted by a collective group subject and incorporates non-human ‘machines’ into the process as sites of transference-transversality. For example, to take another of Guattari’s key conceptual innovations, that of the abstract machine of ‘faciality’, he posits the potential for art-works to deterritorialize the features of the face, such that a ‘transference of enunciation’ takes place, so the signifying redundancies outlined above and the subjectivating resonances (see chapter 3) both of which cut subjectivity off from material process, can be transversalized in a way that makes enunciation the engine for an ethical activation of subjectivity.<sup>98</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid., p.156: ‘[F]irst imported into the philosophical domain by Jean-Paul Sartre in a critique of Husserlian phenomenology, the idea of transversality is the mainspring of Guattari’s prolific conceptual machine, and it offers a tool to understand his whole thinking, including the theory of cartographic practice, in answer to the question of articulation.

<sup>98</sup> It is with particular reference to the work of the Japanese celebrity portrait artist, Keiichi Tahara, that Guattari posits this idea, cf. Genosko, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction*, p.150: ‘[F]or Guattari, the “unleashing of this existential transference of enunciation, this capture of the look of the portrait” emanates from the core of the image, the Barthesian punctum, and pierces the onlooker. But Guattari rejected both the backward-looking orientation of Barthes towards what has been and his perpetuation of a memory of his mother for the sake of a new orientation presented by Tahara’s photographs away from the identities of his subjects and allusions to them [...] Barthes’s choice of a private photograph of his mother contained what Guattari elsewhere called a syntax of faciality (in this case familial) and severely circumscribed its sense (loss, death, memory). Despite the public character of the faces of Tahara’s portraits which slide perilously toward a homogenous identification that wraps itself around a “supreme iconic marker” - these are portraits of great celebrity artists after all - Guattari argued that “here, the manifest faciality no longer totalizes the faciality traits which, on the contrary, begin to interfere with the contextual traits. It brings into play deterritorialized Universes of existential reference [...]: The proper names that Keiichi Tahara leads us to apprehend under a new angle, become the notes of a musicality that exceeds them in every way”. The abstract machine of the face as conceived by Guattari is described by Deleuze in terms of the pick-up procedure as follows: ‘Félix was working on black-holes; this astronomical idea fascinated him. The black hole is what captures you and does not let you out. I was working, rather, on a white wall: what is a white wall, a screen, how do you plane down the wall and make a line of flight pass? We had not brought the two ideas together, but we noticed that each was tending of its own accord towards the other, to produce something which, indeed, was neither in the one nor the other. For black holes on a white wall are in fact a face [...] [S]uddenly the problem bounces back and it is political: what are the societies, the civilizations which need to make this machine work, that is, to produce, to ‘overcode’ the whole body and head with a



Starting out as an institutional concern, transversality operates as follows:

[T]he official hierarchy and structural distribution of roles among doctors, nurses, administrative staff, and patients define the institution's manifest coefficient of transversality [...] [T]he analytic practice then tries to change the various coefficients of transversality at the different levels of an institution.<sup>99</sup>

According to Genosko, in the later Guattari transversality accedes to a full-blown ontology in which

[T]ransdisciplinarity must explore its transversality, initiating new connections between science-society-ethics-aesthetics-politics, while struggling against reductive academic versions of this process that have become increasingly pegged on profit (corporate campuses) or accepting of multidisciplinary fuzziness without real institutional commitments [...]<sup>100</sup>

Rather than embark on a more detailed account of transversality, it seems ultimately more pragmatic to try and embody the process such that - at the risk of banality - the process can be ethically set in motion in an academic project such as this. Doubtless, this will be extremely limited, but nevertheless it seems as though it might ultimately be a step in the right direction to try and overcome parochial theoretical affiliations in the promotion of transversal alliances that don't 'wink out' anyone's process lines. We shall return to this in chapter 2

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face, and to what end?', cf., Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, pp.17-8. The abstract machine will indeed 'bounce back' politically in chapter 3 and in the Coda preceding the conclusion with an all-too-brief embodiment of faciality in Abdul Mati Klarwein's sleeve images for Miles Davis. The 'Universe of existential reference will also be musically embodied in chapter 3.

<sup>99</sup> Bosteels, *From Text to Territory*, p.157.

<sup>100</sup> Genosko, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction.*, p.200

## Chapter 2 - The Refrains of Deleuze, Guattari and Miles Davis

In opening this chapter, it is necessary to lay some more general ground regarding the relationship between the numerous characteristics of an immanent, ethical project of the kind outlined in the first chapter and to develop the specific contributions that music- and sound-based ideas, concepts and figures might make to such a project, whereupon it can proceed to relate the outcome of this initial investigation to the question of why and how one might make a case of the life and work of Miles Davis.

### **‘Deterritorializing the Refrain’: Words and Music by Deleuze and Guattari**

*Like Bakhtin, I would say that the refrain is not based on elements of form, material or ordinary signification, but on the detachment of an existential “motif” (or leitmotiv) which installs itself like an “attractor” within a sensible and significational chaos.*  
Félix Guattari<sup>1</sup>

*Tra la la.*  
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari<sup>2</sup>

Straight away we can field a number of observations established in the previous chapter that will be of fundamental importance in establishing the potential role of music and sound in thinking and activating immanence. Firstly, it should be pointed out that music figures in the work of Deleuze and Guattari in ways that strongly accord with their philosophical approach of taking terms from different disciplines and applying them philosophically in a way that is not random but selective, that is to say, that only terms with a ‘high co-efficient of deterritorialization’ will be used and that such a use should be deployed in a way that is ‘anexact yet rigorous’. As a result, despite an inevitable

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<sup>1</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, p.17.

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.299.



degree of hat-tipping towards the work of musicologists and classically-oriented composers and performers, this approach is one that we shall come on to see is not without its limitations with regard to the potential contributions of music and sound to a philosophy of immanence and that furthermore reverts to an 'archaic' conception of the division between 'serious' and 'classical' music. Before dealing with these limitations, however, we should elaborate in some detail how it is that music and sound are put to work in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari in ways that contribute positively to their enterprise and it is primarily in *A Thousand Plateaus* where we will find the main examples.

To provide an exhaustive account of the appearances of the manifold figures of music and sound in this book would require a much greater word-count than can be granted here. As in the instances where such a difficulty presented itself in chapter 1, we shall attempt to draw out some of the more fundamental traits, orientations and features of these aspects. The most obvious place to commence is with the plateau entitled '1837: Of the Refrain', which of all the plateaus constituting the work is most specifically oriented towards a sustained and rigorous yet highly deterritorialized deployment of musical and sonorous examples, and as the title of this section indicates, it is the musically-derived notion of the refrain that provides the point of departure. That is not however to say that the section solely makes use of the refrain, but that it weaves a great number of music- and sound-based illustrations into its conceptual and pragmatic fabric. What needs to be pointed out, following the observations made with regard to the contributions of Guattari disclosed at the end of the previous chapter, is that music and

sound - as with most of the concepts in the book - function according to the adapted Hjelmslevian glossematic schema of 'planes of content' and 'planes of expression'. As a result of this attempt to instigate a thoroughgoing materialist semiotics, the terms that are lifted out of the disciplinary confines of institutional milieus and territories constituting the academic production of music- and sound-based knowledge, are those which more readily lend themselves to this approach in that they respect the reversibility of content and expression. From the perspective of materialist semiotics, this would amount to selecting those with the highest co-efficient of deterritorialization. The refrain is the literal point of departure in the plateau to which it lends its name, in that the relational embodiment of the production of subjectivity that opens the plateau is diagrammed using this notion. However - at this early stage in the plateau - it is barely recognizable as an analysis of the refrain as it would ever be found to function in music, because the example that has been chosen only to a very limited extent fixes the refrain as a form of Content: the song.

I. A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself within his song as best as he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing [...] centre at the heart of chaos [...]

II. Now we are at home. But home does not preexist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space [...]. Sonorous or vocal components are very important: a wall of sound, or at least a wall with some sonic bricks in it. A child hums to summon the strength for the schoolwork she has to hand in [...]. One draws a circle, or better yet walks in a circle as in a children's dance, combining rhythmic vowels and consonants that correspond to the interior forces of creation as to the differentiated parts of an organism.

III. Finally, one opens a circle in the crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in, calls someone in, or else goes out oneself, launches forth. This time, it is norder to join with the forces of the future, cosmic forces. One launches forth, hazards an improvisation. But to improvise it to join with the World [...]. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.231-2.



The example, that of the child singing to itself in the dark, the making of a home and the opening of this domiciliary 'circle' to the forces of the 'Cosmos' and the future, at the level of content is one in a number of instances in which Deleuze and Guattari elaborate the idea of the 'chaos-cosmos' or what is elsewhere described in terms of 'chaoids', or the 'chaosmos'.<sup>4</sup> To the extent that it involves singing, dancing and a tune, the refrain has a musical form of content, but as we shall see this is only part of the story.<sup>5</sup>

If the attempt to provide different examples of the production of a chaos-cosmos are deployed on the plane of content, in order to respect the immanence and processuality informing these respective examples it is necessary to deploy the appropriate concepts on the plane of expression, which - as we have said - are those with a suitably wide coefficient of deterritorialization. This is where the refrain in this instance becomes of importance. Whilst it will characteristically tip over onto the plane of content at various moments in the section, most notably in the instances where the work of a number of composers is being discussed, whatever the given concrete examples dealt with, which are many, what underpins their relationality and their interactions is the concept of the refrain as it functions at the level of Expression, but not simply at the level of

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<sup>4</sup> For the most detailed account of these terms and their inter-relation, see Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, 'Conclusion: From Chaos to the Brain', pp. 204, 208, where they explore the chaos-cosmos dyad along similar lines to 'Of the Refrain', but in a more explanatory way. 'Chaoids' are the names given to the three intersecting planes of Art, Science and Philosophy, and 'Chaosmos' describes their composition, illustrated in the case of the plane of Art by the way in which a novel such as James Joyce's *Ulysses* is constructed, 'neither foreseen nor preconceived'. On the relation between these various planes, see Chapter 3.

<sup>5</sup> Other non-musical forms of Content explored in the elaboration of this idea include painting, and more specifically the work of Wassily Kandinsky and Paul Klee, cf., *What is Philosophy?*, p.180-3. These artists are briefly discussed in relation to the refrain, cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.347. Whilst the relation between music and painting is one that is actually addressed in this plateau, it remains more

expression. What makes the concept particularly useful for the purposes of this plateau and the book more generally is that it marks and is marked by movement, by variation, but also by the *repetition of difference*. According to Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the term then, the refrain functions by fixing a point in chaos, a point fixed in relation to movement proximal to the point and that both point and movement become capable of opening up to the forces of an 'outside'. The child's song that quells the abyssal terror of the darkness is the fixing of such a point but is also itself a 'skip'<sup>6</sup>, that is - a movement out of chaos into a primitively ordered relational interaction, the simultaneous fixing of a point in chaos and move towards order out of chaos in the establishment of a territorial space encircling the point that is capable of opening up to the wider set of forces that constitutes this interaction.

Now perhaps there are any number of terms to be lifted from no less a number of disciplines that could do the job of describing, marking or diagramming such a process, some perhaps even better suited to the task than the 'refrain'. Doubtless this is not the only term that is actually used when dealing with the task of surveying processuality in the work of these authors. However, its usefulness is indicated by the fact that its definition involves the interaction of lines and their recurrence. As we discovered in Chapter 1 when looking at Deleuze's work on Foucault and the *dispositif*, linearity is of crucial importance in Deleuze's own work understood not in terms of a horizontal, punctual conception of linearity, but rather a 'super-linear', diagonal one where the task is to find ways of surveying the interactions of multiple lines and their aggregation into

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important for our present purposes to continue drawing on the complex interplay informing the planar interactions between expression and content.



segments in a way that affirms their constitutive difference rather than reducing it. As we also learned, it is the ideas of linearity and segmentarity that make up the primary focus of '1933: Micropolitics and Segmentarity', to which we shall have further recourse in chapter 3. In the plateau that we are currently dealing with, it is the refrain that facilitates the survey of such linear interactions that not only functions at both on the planes of content and expression, but that provides the 'diagram' for these interactions. It is a result of its high co-efficient of deterritorialization that it is capable of straddling both planes, respecting their reversibility and thereby having a sufficiently high level of abstraction to function diagrammatically. As with the examples of differential calculus in *Difference and Repetition*, and the machine in *Anti-Oedipus*, the refrain simultaneously provides the means for taking a suitable case, exploring its relation to immanence relatively concretely, and the surveying of its relationality at the level of constitutive difference. This is at one and the same time why the use of terms like 'machine' or the 'refrain' is as viable as it is inessential. So, to summarize this rather complex use of the term, we should just re-emphasize that we can take it at the level of content, whether this be the refrain as it is put to work in specific musical examples, for instance in the work of Schumann, Debussy or Ravel, or whether the example be that of the immanent constitution of subjectivity as in the example of the child in the dark, or whether one examines the appearance of a refrain in a poem or - to take an instance used on a number of occasions by Deleuze and Guattari both together and individually - in the prose work of Proust. However, the refrain also enables us to examine how the repetition of a given 'phrase', for example, whether this be in a poem, a song, or 'Venteuil's little phrase', provides a means for diagramming the expressive

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<sup>6</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.311.

aspects of constitutive difference, in the fixing of a point in and out of chaos, in setting a 'pace' of movement and in connecting to the forces of the outside.

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari see the phrase as being one amongst numerous refrains in Proust's work.<sup>7</sup> The fact that the content can be so variable, combining and crossing any number assemblages, testifies to the Deleuzian 'transcendental empiricist' inspiration of the work to the extent that - in principle - any number of examples derived from literature, art, music, philosophy and everyday life could be explored at the level of their expressive traits, the constitutive difference underlying these traits, and also - very importantly - the repetition of this difference. Where it concerns art, the traits that cut across the different planes but which remain singular to aesthetic production are 'sonorous and visual', and it is in describing them as such that Deleuze and Guattari seek to ward off any generic hierarchization.

There is surely no question here of declaring a given art supreme on the basis of a formal hierarchy of absolute criteria. Our problem is more modest: comparing the powers or co-efficients of deterritorialization of sonorous and visual components.<sup>8</sup>

So why is the refrain a repetition of difference? The refrain always involves a return, or a movement tending towards or away from a 'point' whereby the processes at work are at once embodied through a given example in terms of their content and activated at the level of expression. If chaos can give way to immanent ordering such that it is either conceivable or worthwhile to diagram this immanent ordering, it has to be because there are traits that cut across each and every instance, and when they come to attain a given

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid., p.347: 'Taking Proust's examples [of the refrain]: Does Vermeer's little span of yellow wall, or a painter's flowers, Elstir's roses, constitute less of a refrain than Venteuil's little phrase?'. The question - as all too often in their work - is rhetorical.



level of consistency in the survey of constitutive difference, it is because these traits can enter into relations that are repeated. However, what is at stake in this claim is the idea that the repetition of a musical phrase, or poetic or painterly lines, always has underlying it a constitutive repetition of difference and not the *repetition of the same*. This is why - in the example at the beginning of '1833: Of the Refrain' - Deleuze and Guattari state that the emergence of a fixed point out of chaos, or the tendential 'skip', along with the encircling of space in the creation of a domicile or territory and the opening of this space or territory in its movement towards the outside, its deterritorialization, 'are not three successive moments in an evolution', but rather 'three aspects of a single thing, the Refrain (*ritournelle*)'. The word 'refrain' can therefore be seen to function on the order of a descriptive tensor-sign whereby it marks the emergence of and piecemeal consolidation of order in the production of a territory and its capacity for deterritorialization. The fact that this proceeds by way of three 'aspects' of the refrain in a non-linear way is the main indication as to why the word is used in this particular example, that is to say, to demonstrate that the ordering of chaos is not subordinated to a *telos*, but rather proceeds as a bottom-up, non-hylomorphic ordering, positing the 'subjectivity' of the child as the aggregation of these processes in the production of a meta-stable territory, secondary rather than primary, nothing but the residuum of the processes themselves. In the movement towards the outside, the capacity for deterritorialization is another way of positing what - in chapter 1 - we described in terms of the 'ethical' trajectory of immanence, and this particular configuration viewed in terms of the refrain will provide us with a means to explore key aspects of the pending case.

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<sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.347.

It is perhaps worth noting in passing as well that the capital 'R' as used in the above quote, is not to suggest a transcendent 'Refrain' that provides the essence of each individual 'refrain', but rather - as with the relation between the Body without Organs and 'bodies without organs' - when considered on the level of expression suggests that there are relatively localized instances of counter-actualization which can be diagrammed in terms of the refrain, but that there is an abstract machine that provides the immobile motor of any such instance and this is the 'Refrain'. Hence, in the refrains of art, literature, philosophy and so on, there is an embodiment of the Refrain, which in their appeals to the work of the Danish biologist Jakob von Uexsküll Deleuze and Guattari call '[N]ature as music'<sup>9</sup>. Again, taking the risk of further reinforcing their 'hippy' image, the authors leave their work readily open to an overly-simplistic reading which should be avoided. In their writing, 'nature' upholds the materialism underscoring the philosophy and - along with 'culture' - forms another heuristic 'dualism', 'nature-culture', which should again be used to push 'beyond that decisive turn' from differences of degree to differences in kind. Massumi has clarified this neglected point in 'The Autonomy of Affect'.

Theoretical moves aimed at ending Man end up making human culture the measure and meaning of all things, in a kind of unfettered anthropomorphism precluding - to take on example - articulations of cultural theory and ecology. It is meaningless to interrogate the relations of the human to the nonhuman if the nonhuman is only a construct of human culture, or inertness.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p.314. Jakob von Uexsküll is used here largely on the basis of his research as documented in 'A Stroll Through the Worlds of Animals and Men: A Picture Book of Invisible Worlds', published in the journal *Semiotica* 89:4, pp. 319-391. What seems most interesting about this work is that it is based on musical counterpoint, as a means to producing a non-hylomorphic conception of evolutionary biology and - in the work of Deleuze and Guattari - an ethology. However, ethology does number amongst the approaches to 'becoming' that need considerably more investigation, for which there will only be the most limited scope here.

<sup>10</sup> Brian Massumi, 'The Autonomy of Affect', in Paul Patton [ed.], *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, p.233.



One of the important ramifications of this approach is - returning to the previous issue of reifying art-forms - is that for Deleuze and Guattari it provides a way of avoiding the reification of Art as a general category of human creativity and achievement by attempting to show how the milieus, territories, deterritorializations, expression-content relations, refrains and so, can be found to function entirely independently of human intervention: bird-song.<sup>11</sup> This is also an outstanding example of Spinoza's influence on this work, in his conception of *Deus sive natura*, God, that is Nature, and life's partaking of Nature as monist substance under the parallel attributes of extension and thought constituting 'modes' of this single substance, a conception which provides a sophisticated and highly effective way of by-passing the Manichean dichotomy or opposition of nature and culture.

In addition to the refrain's 'artistic' constructions on the order of the visible and the audible or sonorous one must consider its important connection to affect. This requires a thinking of sonority in a way that foregrounds the refrain's ethical character at the same time as enabling a clearer sense of its contribution to auditory participation and its relationship to language. This leads us to posit a few more characteristics of the refrain or '*ritournelle*', though this time as expounded by Guattari. In an essay entitled 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects'<sup>12</sup> Guattari clarifies the role of diagram and abstract machine in the constitution of a 'ritornello', giving its English formulation as it appears in this piece. In addition, he brings his own theoretical concerns to bear in his

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<sup>11</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.316-7.

<sup>12</sup> Félix Guattari, 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', in Genosko [ed.], *The Guattari Reader*, pp.158-172.

formulation of the ritornello in terms of the discursive, enunciative and affective characteristics that he considers fundamental to an understanding of the term, not to mention the adapted Hjelmslevian glossematics.

To some extent, Guattari does provide an account of how the ritornello comes to embody a variety of 'formed substance', effectuated reciprocally between the plane constituting the 'forms of Content' and the plane of 'forms of Expression'. Examples again include a number derived from the work of Proust - doubtless inspired by the work done on Proust by Deleuze in the early 1970s and that produced for the collaborations prior to the composition of this particular essay - including the recurring example of the 'bit of phrase' of Venteuil, but also of the relationship between the constantly returning phrase and the image of Odette's face. Furthermore, as we have seen with the work done in *A Thousand Plateaus*, there are many conceivable examples of what can constitute the refrain's form of content.

Under the generic term ritornello, I would place re-iterative discursive sequences that are closed in upon themselves and whose function is an extrinsic catalysing of existential affects. [R]itornellos can find substance in rhythmic and plastic forms, in prosodic segments, in facial traits, in the emblems of recognition, in leitmotifs, signatures, proper names or their invocational equivalents [...].<sup>13</sup>

What Guattari brings to his solo rendering of the ritornello, in addition to a complex, materialist semiotic elaboration of the term's potential use, is a no less complex qualification of affect, which he divides into 'sensory affect' and 'problematic affect'. If the 'bit of phrase' of Venteuil is an example of sensory affect then Odette's face is one of problematic affect, and the face is tremendously important in the work of Guattari in

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p.162.



this instance as in others because, marking all formed substances that we can call 'faces' there is an abstract machine of 'faciality'.

In 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects' Guattari elucidates four semiotic functions which attempt to "frame" [...] signification relation' in terms of the 'reciprocal presupposition, or of solidarity, according to Hjelmslev's terminology, between the form of an Expression and the form of its Content' [see fig. 3]. These are as follows:

1. a denotative function:  $f(\text{den})$ , corresponding to the relations between the form of Content and the Referent;
2. a diagrammatic function:  $f(\text{diag})$ , corresponding to the relations between the matter of the Expression and the Referent;
3. a function of sensory affect (ritornello), corresponding to the relations between Enunciation and the forms of the Expression;
4. a function of problematic affect (abstract machine), corresponding to the relations between Enunciation and the form of the Content.<sup>14</sup>

It is possible to see from these four functions something of the character of Guattari's mixed semiotics, in that he is combining the approach derived from Hjelmslev with ideas developed in other areas of linguistic and semiotic theory, taking up the notion of Enunciation and providing a place for denotative and referential functions. Despite the difficulty, a degree of sustained investigation should reveal something of the four functions' applicability, with particular emphasis on the last two: of the refrain/ritornello and of affect.

For Guattari, the four functions - like the formed matters (substance) of content and expression - should be understood as sharing a high degree of reciprocity. The first function, the 'denotative function', shows how denotation is framed within the adapted

glossematics in terms of the relation between the form of content and the 'Referent', Content embodied at the molecular level and the referent fulfilling the task of representation at the molar level. The second function returns us to the procedure of diagramming, however here it proceeds from fixed forms of Content (molecular) and a rigidly-designating Referent (molar) towards the 'matter of Expression', taking the unformed matter (purport) of processuality as being autonomous from any given concrete formation. It is the third and fourth functions that introduce affect into the frame, with the third one bringing us back to the ritornello as marking a 'function of sensory affect', which becomes characterized here in terms of the relationship between 'Enunciation' and the formed matters of Expression, whereby the former term is to be understood along the lines of Bakhtin's work on the theory of the novel, a pervasive influence on Guattari if not on Deleuze, along the following lines:

[I]n [...] drawing affect towards the aesthetic object (which is what I wish to underscore), Bakhtin in no way turns affect into the passive correlative of Enunciation, but into its engine, a bit paradoxically it is true, since affect is non-discursive and entails no expense of energy - which is what has led us elsewhere to characterize it as a deterritorialized machine.<sup>15</sup>

The paradox that is in play here results from the complex relation between the incorporeality and 'non-discursivity' of affect, that is its pre-personal, pre-individual status as heterogeneous processes out of which the subject-object binary can make its cut but only at the cost of compromising their heterogeneous quality, and the discursive domains in which the enunciation ostensibly comes to be formed. As a result, affect relates to enunciation on the order of a Spinozist parallelism, similar to the one we encountered between 'extension' and 'thought', whereby the two domains interact in

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<sup>14</sup> Félix Guattari, 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', in Genosko [ed.], *A Guattari Reader*, pp.162-3.



such a way that they do not cause one another but actually result as immanent effects of other causes, in this instance the processes of subjectification themselves. This is because affect is a mark of so many relational interactions constituting subjectivity in any instance, for Guattari it is the intensive dimension of the production of 'existential territories', an example of which we encountered above from '1833: Of the Refrain'. Parallel to the production of these territories and the affective dimension of their production is enunciation, which becomes - on the one hand - an evaporative surface effect of existential territorializations and deterritorializations, but - on the other hand - can also serve to effect such territorializations and deterritorializations themselves. This is at least one way of formulating the paradox, and as such the 'passive' and 'active' aspects of enunciation that are simultaneously in play mark its relation to affect: in the case of the first aspect, enunciation is a procedure resulting from an affective intensification or de-intensification, as with the third synthesis of the machinic unconscious, 'so that's what it was!', and also therefore engenders subjectification, whereby affective intensity is given a proper-name which tends either towards the establishment and proliferation of transformative effects or reproduces a sovereign subject (subjection). I have chosen to call this aspect 'passive' in that the affective modulations are marked or indicated by the enunciation, whereas under the second aspect the enunciation actively partakes of the affective modulation and may even engender it. Usefully, Guattari chooses to use a music-based example to illustrate this nuanced conception of enunciation and it is an example that has had much made of it in different ways by a number of writers, as we shall come on to see in Chapter 3: it is that of the conductor and 'his' orchestra:

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<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

[E]nunciation is like an orchestra conductor who on occasion accepts a loss of control over the musicians: at certain moments, it is articulatory pleasure or rhythm, or it is an inflated style that begins to play a solo and to impose it upon the others. Let us underscore that if an enunciative lay-out can entail multiple social voices, it also engages pre-personal voices susceptible of inducing an aesthetic ecstasy, a mystical effusion, or an ethological panic [...] as well as an ethical imperative. A good conductor does not strive despotically to overcode the ensemble of these components but attends to the collective crossing of the aesthetic object's completion threshold as designated by the proper name.<sup>16</sup>

So Guattari paints quite an endearing portrait of the orchestra conductor (later we will encounter some slightly less positive examples) in which - if he is doing his job properly will allow his beating out of measures, tempi, dynamics and mood to subside as the motoricity of his body, his gesticulations and his relation to the orchestra to enter a different register in which the affective character of Enunciation will sweep the assemblage up and take it across an 'unforeseen and unforeseeable' threshold: chaosmosis, or - to use another word - *improvisation*. When this term is called upon to capture something of Guattari's conception of affect and enunciation, we can see why it is that his chosen example might be problematic: for most of the history of orchestral composition and performance in the occidental tradition, there has been little latitude for improvisation, and - even where the music permits this - one must still ask the question of whether there is a residuum of (social, cultural and political) hierarchization that is embodied in the figure of the conductor. This - as with the examples making up the content-forms of '1833: Of the Refrain' - testifies to the limitation of Deleuze and Guattari's investments in music to largely canonical Classical examples. This is where they subject their own thinking to the molarizing, binarizing limitations that they spend

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<sup>16</sup> Guattari, 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', p.165.



most of their work attempting to stake out. Again, as something of a refrain in the current project, this problem is yet another to be encountered further on.

So - to re-iterate - the enunciation marks and is marked by (passive, active) affective modulations, and this is one way in which the paradox that Guattari discerns when he derives his conception of enunciation from Bakhtin can be made productive: affect does not cause enunciation so much as it is, on the one hand, dissipated through affective modification and, on the other hand, itself sinks back into affective modifications to partake of a positive feed-back loop. In accordance with Guattari's Bakhtinian inspiration, affective transformations of the kind outlined must be re-connected with a conception of ethics:

[A]n affect is therefore not, as the 'shrinks' commonly wish to represent it, a passively endured state. It is a complex, subjective territoriality of proto-Enunciation, the site of a work, of a potential praxis [...] <sup>17</sup>

It now remains for us to consider affect under its own two aspects: refrain and abstract machine.

The ritornello of the third function marks the relation between the formed matters of expression and enunciation pertaining to any given 'existential territory'. It is also the instance of sensory affect, which means that the intensive dimension of such a territory in terms of the relation between forms of expression and enunciation register at the level of the corporeal, by way of sensation. In the case of the last function, the relationship to be accounted for is that between forms of content and enunciation, and - at the level of

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<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p.167.

intensity - it is an instance of problematic affect. What becomes very important here is the role played by the 'abstract machine', which becomes the correlate of problematic affect.

If we look back to the account of enunciation that Guattari has derived from Bakhtin, we can see that - if enunciation is capable of providing a means of access to the processes of expressive material formations and deformations, it also must be accounted for in its relation to forms of content, and it is here that its ethical efficacy comes to be re-inforced, because in the instance of an assemblage intensively engendering a problematic affect, this is where an enunciation 'externally encompasses the content' of its 'value bearing'. I want to argue here that - if the forms of content marking a given assemblage carry a value, it is initially as *quasi*-objects catalysing an affective fluctuation on the part of the bodies composing the territory which - in principle - enable a surveying outwards from any investment mistakenly perceived as being the property of a subject towards an encounter with the pre-individual singularities that can be found to constitute 'it'. The 'abstract machine' as the 'engine' or 'immobile motor' of a given array of assemblages then, pushes furthest in the direction of a pure virtuality, as that which can be extracted from the most diverse array of assemblages, or - in the language of Guattari's materialist semiotics - from the interactions between planes of content and expression.

Given their mutual sharing of affect, functions 3 and 4 encompass what Guattari calls a 'ritornello-abstract machine' dyad. It is in describing this that the practical orientation



of Guattari's thought and its indebtedness towards the work of Bakhtin find perhaps their clearest expression in this essay.

What can one expect from our ritornello-abstract machine dyad? Essentially a pinpointing and a deciphering of the practical existential operators installed at the intersection of Expression and Content. An intersection where, I insist, nothing is ever played out within a perfect structuralist synchrony, where everything is always an affair of contingent lay-outs, of heterogenesis, of irreversibility, of singularization. With Hjelmslev, we learned that the fundamental reversibility between the form of the Expression and the form of the Content arches over the heterogeneity of the substances and matters which are its support. But, with Bakhtin, we learned to read the foliatedness of Enunciation, its polyphony and its multi-centredness.<sup>18</sup>

It is worth noting here that we find in the work of Bakhtin the term 'polyphony' which has what Deleuze and Guattari would call a high co-efficient of deterritorialization, to the extent that it can be used to develop a nuanced theory of enunciation which, as with the refrain, provides a means for avoiding a punctual, linear-teleological, horizontal-vertical approach and enables a complex, heterogeneous, diagonal approach. It is for this reason that it takes on importance for Guattari, and it is once again why those who fetishize or over-invest the vocabulary of Deleuze and Guattari by ascribing a necessary, *a priori*, pre-ordained role to any given term and using it as a form of nomenclature have added to the criticisms of this kind of work at the same time as adding to the shop-worn productions of trendy or post-modern cultural theory more generally.

So, to summarize our digression through Guattari, the cycling outwards from the 'intersection of Expression and Content' towards the apprehension of their underlying complexity, their reversibility and their transversality across a diverse range of

assemblages is the ethical trajectory pursued in the attempt to counter-actualize the 'abstract machine'. One can proceed by means of the ritornello of a given intersection of content/expression relations, the production of a refrain constituting in part sensory affect and the accompanying array of potential enunciations. Problematic affect as an instantiation of an abstract machine is problematic because it seeks in Enunciation the possibility of generating new enunciations to accompany the affective intensifications, what Guattari calls in *Chaosmosis*, the production of new 'incorporeal universes of reference'. This - in terms of the refrain - is its relative deterritorialization and its absolute deterritorialization (Refrain), the move away from the well-worn phrases of a circumscribed and largely territorialized use of the refrain, towards the recognition in such phrases (musical, poetic, prosodic, etc.) that they bear affective and enunciative possibilities that enable not only an ethical or ethico-aesthetic transformation, but also a political one. This is why the Refrain of the plateau we have been considering finds its absolute limit in a 'Cosmic' deterritorialization, for which 'the people are missing' or 'yet to come'. In the collaborative works, this aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's writing remains possibly their profoundest and yet most problematic statement with regard to the political. The question of absolute deterritorialization, strategically and micropolitically figured in terms of the 'line of flight' or 'line of abolition' and the Cosmic Refrain and its relation to the political problematic of the 'people yet to come' shall be returned to in the final chapter.

There are at least a couple of other fundamental observations to be made regarding the place of music and sound in the work undertaken in *A Thousand Plateaus* before

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p.164.



moving on, but before we deal with these a few more things need to be clarified with specific reference to the refrain. Firstly, and of considerable importance for thinking about jazz and the figure of Miles Davis, we must return to the question of improvisation. Concerning the third aspect of the composition of an elementary chaos-cosmos in the 'becoming-music' of the child that we previously encountered, it is said by Deleuze and Guattari that '[O]ne launches forth, hazards an improvisation'. In opening a fissure or crack in the domiciliary circle onto the outside, one enters into an unpredictable relation to this outside. The bodies, enunciations, particles-signs to which the circle and the bodies oriented within the circle open up unforeseen interactions that place all the components in a relation of variation. Again, a musically-derived notion, this time improvisation, is introduced to announce the meta-stability of the refrain and the production of subjectivity taking place in the example of the 'becoming-music of the child'. A non-hylomorphic elementary organization out-of-chaos is well served by this notion, given that within the more ostensibly concrete musical assemblages where improvisation is a feature one finds that the key themes, motifs, refrains, melodic and chordal passages (all here to be considered as forms of content) provide a more-or-less flexible platform from which to 'launch forth' on an improvisation. We will come on to see this far more clearly when we look at some of the innovations introduced into jazz by Miles Davis and some of his contemporaries. In the section of 'Of the Refrain' that we have returned to, improvisation has again been selected at least in part on account of its high co-efficient of deterritorialization, and its capacity to mark the intersection between forms of content and forms of expression. This is indicated by its use in the

present example where even the most simple everyday (non-musical) activities can be explored in terms of musically-derived concepts.

So what does one open oneself up to when one ‘hazards an improvisation’?

[O]ne opens the circle a crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in, calls someone, or else goes out oneself [...]<sup>19</sup>

All of this talk of letting someone in, calling someone, is suggestive of a notion of ‘hospitality’ in which one opens up unconditionally to an Other. However, it really needs to be specified that the ‘one’ that does all this, does so by counter-actualizing its ‘self’, by opening up simultaneously to the outside and the inside of its own intangibility. A statement made in Deleuze’s *Foucault* suggests something of this intangibility and its connection to improvisation.

[T]he place of the fissure [...] is like a pineal gland, constantly reconstituting itself by changing direction, tracing an inside space but coextensive with the whole line of the outside. The most distant point becomes interior, by being converted into the nearest: *life within the folds*.<sup>20</sup>

The domiciliary space, the circle, the act of letting someone in or calling someone do not establish a relationship between an apperceiving Self and another person, or even between a Self and an unknown, unknowable Other of radical alterity. Rather it these

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<sup>19</sup> Ibid., p.311.

<sup>20</sup> Deleuze, *Foucault*, p.123. The constitution of selfhood and otherness as secondary is elaborated in a different yet complementary way by recourse to Leibniz’s notion of the ‘possible world’, cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.17:

Let us proceed in a summary fashion: we will consider a field of experience taken as a real world no longer in relation to a self by to a simple ‘there is’. There is, at some moment, a calm and restful world. Suddenly a frightened face looms up that looks at something out of the field. The other person appears here as neither subject nor object but as something that is very different: a possible world, the possibility of a frightening world. The possible world is not real, or not yet, but it exists nonetheless: it is an expressed that exists only in its expression - the face, or an equivalent of the face [...] [W]hen the expressing speaks and says, “I am frightened”, even if its words are not truthful, this is enough for reality to be given to the possible as such. This is the only meaning of ‘I’ as a linguistic index.



are acts that open the elementary organized territory towards potential passages of deterritorialization which are 'hazardous' because they are unpredictable and because what is beyond prediction are the molecular fluctuations of subjectification that result from such an improvisation. Given that the inside and the outside are constituted as 'folds' of one another, in opening up (the circle) to the World, the 'one' that launches forth is constituted in the very act of its launching as a folding of the outside. The improvisation is not performed by a pre-determined person or Self, but rather by a composition of bodies constituted as capacities and relations which are forced to change and fluctuate by constantly de- and re-composing anew. When 'one' opens the front door to an 'other' 'it' runs the gauntlet of different regimes of signs, of processes of subjectivation-subjection, of lines of flight and passage, through which - even if it is only at the most molecular, imperceptible level, lost in the redundancies of the molar - is still constitutive of this 'one'. Diagrammed philosophically in terms of the refrain and improvisation, such launching forth can perhaps be best described as a 'becoming-music'.<sup>21</sup>

On the plane of content, the launching forth can also be musical, as when 'One' ventures from 'home on the thread of a tune'. However, in singing as one leaves home and moves out onto the street, the tune becomes a component of passage that contributes to the fending off of the chaos from which the first 'aspect' of the refrain set out, the consolidation of a territorial relation constituted through the second 'aspect' and

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<sup>21</sup> This expression provides the title of the last section of '1730: Becoming Intense, Becoming Animal, Becoming Imperceptible', Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp 299-309. The themes in play here pre-empt much of what follows in '1833: Of the Refrain', but provides some additional material that will become of use later.

the opening up of this relation to the outside. The fabric then, of which the tune is a 'thread' is itself the refrain on the plane of expression, maintaining the components of expression in a mutually reciprocal relation of determination and the Refrain, understood as marking the intersection of the planes of expression and content, as the abstract machine of the production of subjectivity.

Shifting register slightly and returning to the linear/segmental take on immanence, Deleuze and Guattari say in a little more detail on what one is venturing forth. One does so '[A]long sonorous, gestural, motor lines that mark the customary path of a child and graft themselves onto or begin to bud "*lines of drift*" with different loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures, and sonorities'.<sup>22</sup>

Loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures and sonorities are not here simply referenced in order to mask the vagueness of such a theory or to deliberately obfuscate the reader with ill-conceived rhetorical sleights-of-hand. What they all have in common that is of positive philosophical value is that they are relational, terms chosen to mark the *between-ness* through which the various lines interact without transcendence or reduction, in a way that attempts to ward off the illegitimate fixed Self or Subject challenged by this rendering of processual subjectivity. The role of motor-function, sonority and gesture, or more accurately a conception of the '*gestus*'<sup>23</sup>, and their contribution to a slightly less straightforwardly 'incorporeal' conception of relationality

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.312. Emphasis added.

<sup>23</sup> See chapter 3.



and its ethico-aesthetic and political ramifications will be crucial to the consideration of Miles Davis's 'life' and 'work', to which we shall shortly turn.

Before we do, as we said a little earlier, there are a couple of other music- and sound-based contributions to *A Thousand Plateaus* that should not be overlooked. Firstly, Brian Massumi in his 'Translator's Foreword' makes a very interesting and crucial claim for the relationship between philosophy and music which sheds some light on the relationship between philosophy and 'non-philosophy'. Firstly, he sets apart music - along with mathematics - from other 'media' as 'on a strictly formal level' being the ones that 'create the smoothest of smooth spaces'.<sup>24</sup> The claim is highly resonant with a number of aspects of the way music functions in the book, including the ways we have already encountered. The word 'formal' first of all should be 'strictly' understood in terms of the glossematic approach that has been discussed above, which means it is not to be thought in terms of a Manichean dichotomy or opposition between 'form' and 'content' as more conventionally understood, but rather in the sense that music and mathematics are constituted out of formations of the matters of expression and content specific to their own concerns and as such are capable of producing the 'smoothest of smooth spaces', that is to say their processual element is usually more foregrounded than that of film or painting.

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<sup>24</sup> Brian Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword', in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.xiii. That mathematics is placed alongside music is testimony to the intrinsic connections between music, mathematics and philosophy outlined in the Introduction and mentioned briefly in chapter 1 and the idea of mathematics as a formal 'smooth space' is drawn from Deleuze's Riemannian inspiration - key to his conception of multiplicity - and Deleuze and Guattari's interest in fractal geometry.

The second important observation to make is with regard to the smooth spaces themselves. What are they? Well, the dyad smooth-striated is explicitly derived from the work of the composer/conductor Pierre Boulez who developed these terms to facilitate a more feasible and accurate way of conceptualizing musical space in accordance with the distinction between pulsed and non-pulsed time. To quote Deleuze and Guattari on Boulez:

Boulez says that in a smooth space-time one occupies without counting, whereas in a striated space-time one counts in order to occupy. He makes palpable or perceptible the difference between nonmetric and metric multiplicities, directional and dimensional spaces. He renders them sonorous or musical.<sup>25</sup>

The terms 'smooth' and 'striated' function in a number of ways across a number of the plateaus in *A Thousand Plateaus*, their function in this instance to illustrate the way that music produces smooth and striated spaces, specifically within its own area of activity, in that music is supposedly capable of 'rendering sonorous' multiplicities.

In using them as deterritorialized terms that enable a move from the specifically musical examples towards other purported inscriptions of the multiple, Deleuze and Guattari make of the 'smooth-space' a tensor-sign for the nomadic distributions constitutive of the relational interactions between extension and thought in the instances of passage or 'drift', and of 'striated space' they make a tensor-sign for the tendency towards 'overcoding' whereby a more conventional, horizontal linearity is introduced, metricized, reduced to fix measure or discrete intervals. Where the nomad-*nomos* tips

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<sup>25</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.477.



over into an act of enclosure is, for example, where one might expect to find a shift away from a smooth space towards a striated space.<sup>26</sup>

This borrowing of terms and lifting them from their specific ‘disciplinary’ territories and milieus, is - as we have seen - a common feature of Deleuze and Guattari’s work. The smooth/striated dyad is not the only music example of this, either. In further describing the character of the Refrain, for instance, they bring together the ideas of ‘melodic landscapes’ and ‘rhythmic *personnages*’ from the work of Olivier Messiaen. The latter of these will become of crucial importance in *What is Philosophy?* when its philosophical potential is most fully explored in its re-incarnation as ‘conceptual personae’. All of this in some measure doubtless leads Massumi to follow up his claim for music and mathematics with the following related one:

In fact, Deleuze and Guattari would probably be more inclined to call philosophy music with content than music a rarefied form of philosophy.<sup>27</sup>

If the smooth/striated dyad gives an indication of the ‘formal’ character of music it is not simply in the instance of Boulez’s innovations, but more generally according to features that underpin musical and sonorous production and reception in any instance.

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<sup>26</sup> The ‘nomad-*nomos*’ is given what is perhaps its most extensive description in *Difference and Repetition*, one which at once demonstrates the philosophical rigour that has often been neglected in dealing with the ‘nomad’ question at the same time as indicating how such hasty readings might emerge, cf., Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.36: ‘[T]here is a [...] distribution [...] must be called nomadic, a nomad *nomos*, without property, enclosure or measure. Here, there is no longer a division of that which is distributed but rather a division among those who distribute *themselves* in an open space - a space which is unlimited, or at least without precise limits. Nothing pertains or belongs to any person, but all persons are arrayed here and there in such a manner as to cover the largest possible space’. This individuated distribution makes of the nomad *nomos* a ‘smooth space’. It is my contention that this conception of the ‘nomad’ should be conceived along the lines of a conceptual persona and that the specific case of nomadology should be approached with caution, a contention which ostensibly bears out Badiou’s claim that the concept only relates to other concepts, although the conceptual persona should be held in distinction from concepts as such. On nomadology and conceptual personae, see chapter 3.

<sup>27</sup> Brian Massumi, ‘Translator’s Foreword’, p.xiii.

Independently of genre, style, subject-matter, time and place of production and reception, historical, cultural or social context, there remains some key facets of music that we can posit as underpinning any given instance. Firstly, sounds are made and sounds are heard, or received by a listening body or bodies. Secondly, at the level of production, material implements are used to generate the sounds to be heard, whether by beating, blowing, scraping, rubbing, or another means of converting kinetic energy into sound. Thirdly, at the level of reception, the body responds to vibrations that are processed by the brain and recognized as music, sound or noise, which are all to be cognized as physiological phenomena (though it needs to be pointed out that the vibrations received and cognized are ascribed these names differently according to the location of production and reception as part of different cultural-historical formations, at least where it pertains to music made by humans). Fourthly, the auditory field is always characterized by immersion, in that sound is never actually here or there, nor is it everywhere, but it is all around us in that sound-producing and receiving bodies are immersed in this field. In short, to provide a locus or frame for the production and reception of sound at the level of its experience prior to any attempt to translate or analyze its characteristics is tremendously difficult if not impossible. Perhaps more than other media, music draw our attention to the empirical observation of the philosopher Hume, which doubtless influenced Deleuze if not Guattari when - in the opening passage of 'Introduction: Rhizome', from *A Thousand Plateaus*, they say that 'it's nice to talk like everybody else, to say the sun rises, when everybody knows it's only a matter of speaking'.<sup>28</sup> We know that when we say that a film is on the screen or the painting is on the wall, we are being somewhat reductive, paying insufficient attention

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<sup>28</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.1.



to the inadequacy of our language to capture the complexities of the medium, but when somebody says the sound or the music is 'on' the radio, the stereo, the Walkman, etc., this is not simply reductive but - beyond the mere communicational value of such a proposition, ie. I listened to x on ... - they are entering into the realm of nonsense.<sup>29</sup> Music thereby lends itself quite readily to the label 'rhizome' at least in terms of fulfilling the principles connection and heterogeneity, in that it is composed of heterogeneous parts: body+instrument/implement+air+ear+brain, in which it is impossible to localize the sound or the music, yet there is doubtless an ordered process occurring in any instance of production and audition. However, simply tagging music with 'rhizome' is - as we have pointed out - insufficient. As a result of all this it is not necessarily just the highly sophisticated and often technologically enhanced sonic productions of a musician like Boulez that is capable of producing the two space-times that he discerns, because the fabric of any sonorous or auditory space-time is necessarily woven from a complex of qualities that make the measures of striation insufficient to the task of qualifying a deterritorialized refrain or smooth space-time. For example, how far can we go in delineating the space of listening before we find that it is more than just a question of physical space? Likewise, how much can we say about musical temporality before we realize that its invocation of perception, memory, recollection or affection forces us to ask questions of the relation between past, present and future? These all remain problems to be addressed in more detail.

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<sup>29</sup> This takes us back to the 'esoteric word' of seriation and synthesis from chapter 1, nonsense as constitutive of sense, cf., Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense, passim*.

Returning to Massumi's claim, music proves an exemplary formal instance of aesthetic production when it comes to smooth space, but music on this definition has only components of its own production and reception for content, that is to say that it is primarily sound and music that convey affect, sensation and Enunciation between and across the planes of Expression and Content when music is being made. To claim that philosophy can be called 'music with content' is what we have already witnessed with the examples of 'Of the Refrain' and the ritornello of Guattari, because as we have seen the actual content in any particular Expression-Content relation is not really of importance, but rather how we can proceed towards a counter-actualization of its *quasi-objectivity* and a survey of the processes engendering heterogeneous expression-content interactions: refrain, diagram, affect, enunciation, abstract machine, etc.

This finally leads us on to the last highly pertinent claim made for the place of sound in philosophy. We say 'sound' in this instance without its accompanying term 'music' not in order to suggest that we can ever readily distinguish one from the other but because the contribution in question specifically concerns the idea that philosophy can be conceptualized as a 'thought-synthesizer'. Again, Deleuze and Guattari are not making life easier for themselves by introducing another machine into the fundamentals of their thinking, not where their detractors are concerned anyway. Furthermore, for techno-fetishists the synthesizer likely proves a frequent *quasi-object* of investment. So once again it is our task to remain sober in ascertaining more carefully the role of the synthesizer in Deleuze and Guattari's work and attempting to avoid glossy superficialities.



If we return to the idea of 'chaos-cosmos' underpinning '1833: Of the Refrain', we can see that as Deleuze and Guattari proceed from the tentative beginnings of the 'becoming-music' of child, the production of territory/domicile and its opening onto the forces of the outside, they develop the idea according to a 'historico-materialist' conception, whereby the three 'aspects' - whilst respecting the inevitable reciprocity and admixture that prevents them from being 'moments' - each become foregrounded or take the lead within the process of constructing and deterritorializing the refrain at different stages in the development of aesthetic modernity: Classical, Romantic and Modern. The complexity of this admixture has been helpfully schematized by Gary Genosko in his book *Undisciplined Theory* [see fig. 4].<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Cf., Genosko, *Undisciplined Theory*, p.89. The idea that Guattari and Deleuze's materialist semiotics are actually *historico-materialist* is expressed by Eugene Holland, cf., *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, p.39: 'schizoanalysis is not just a materialist semiotics: it is an historical-materialist semiotics'. In the case of *Anti-Oedipus* this is exemplified by the three different 'historical' inscriptions of the *socius*, as were briefly considered in chapter 1. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, this carries over into the 'regimes of signs', but also the three 'aspects' of the refrain. In all of these instances one aspect is always on the *virtual* horizon of the others, for example, capitalist decoding on the horizon of the primitive and despotic machines, or Modernism on the horizon of Romanticism, deterritorialization on the horizon of milieus and territories, etc. If this is a conception of history, it is there for a non-linear, virtual one.

*Proliferation, Openness, and the Between*

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<b>Ages:</b>	<b>Classical</b>	<b>Romantic</b>	<b>Modern</b>
<b>Figure of the artist</b>	God	Hero	Artisan
<b>Forces:</b>	Chaos	Earth	Cosmos
<b>Activity:</b>	Create	Found	Capture
<b>Relations:</b>	Form-matter-substance (formed matter)	Form (continuous development) - matter (continuous variation)	Material-force
<b>Operations:</b>	Impose, subjugate, organize	Gather forces (form); matter of expression (variation, disjunction, dissonance)	Molecularize (material); cosmicize (render forces consistent)
<b>Refrain:</b>	Milieu	Natal (territorial)	Cosmic
<b>Population:</b>	Universal	One-alone to one-crowd	Depopulation

Fig 4.



Again, whilst exploring these developments across different media, they take music as the primary example, with the refrain tendentially oscillating between planes of expression and content, diagram and abstract machine, but with most of the illustrations provided focusing on music as it is more conventionally understood. Hence, with the examination of Classical aesthetics there is an emphasis on the music of Mozart, and 'his' refrains; with Romanticism, Schumann becomes the mainstay as an exemplar of more extreme sonorous and musical deterritorializations; perhaps somewhat contentiously, at least concerning the canon of Western music and its categories, the transition between the stage of Romanticism and Modernism is marked by the names of Wagner and Berg, with Modernism being exemplified by Debussy, Varèse and Berio, amongst others.

What Deleuze and Guattari use these names to mark in terms of the passages between chaos-cosmos, are the three aspects as they come to the fore. Classicism, then, marks the moment of initial organization, or the 'point' of initial ordering of the refrain; Romanticism, the territorialization of the refrain; and - most interesting for our purposes - Modernism embodies the deterritorialization of the refrain towards the Cosmos. There are crossovers, as the categories - for Deleuze and Guattari - are not ground in stone but function like the 'dualisms' of Bergson, as heuristic devices for discovering the more nuanced processual interactions underlying the movements of (aesthetic) history. Hence, Schumann - despite predating the Modernist moment - marks profound deterritorializations. In qualifying the distinction more rigorously, Deleuze and Guattari

find in each of the aspects a relation to milieu, territory-Earth and Cosmos, respectively. In terms of the glossematic schema, Classical music is primarily bound up with the forming of matter into relations of expression and content and proceeds by means of an 'overcoding' that seeks to subjugate and regulate sonorous production and reception, at the same time universalizing production and reception in a system of redundancies; Romanticism places the expression/content relations into continuous variation and in doing so, opens them out into a territorial complex that seeks to inscribe the Body of the Earth; finally, Modernism, is bound up with the 'capture' of material force independently of the formations of expression/content and their placing in variation, hence the opening out of the territories of music to the 'rendering sonorous' of the forces of the Cosmos, whereby the territorialization of the Earth and the *natal* gives way to the deterritorialization of the Earth and its 'de-population'. The transitions between these various aspects of the Refrain in their foregrounding and their relations to the micropolitical and 'minor' aspects of Deleuze and Guattari's work will be considered in chapter 3. The relevance of this elaboration of the refrain here, however, is that it has led us to the point where the refrain attains the maximal positive redundancy of the abstract machine, where - under its third aspect - it attains the capacity to 'render sonorous' matter and place it in continuous variation independently of expression/content formations. It is this that leads Deleuze and Guattari to describe the synthesizer as the best way of conceiving of philosophy as an assemblage, because it is the synthesizer *qua* assemblage that best places material elements and forces in continuous variation, the most nuanced assemblage that perpetually patches and re-patches its connection to produce an infinite variety of effects and an irreducible



modulation of auditory materiality. It is this connection between the synthesizer and philosophy that perhaps provides the most striking instance of the relation between non-philosophy and philosophy, but also facilitates the crucial connections drawn between philosophy and politics in *What is Philosophy?*, with the Cosmic Refrain being the aim of philosophy, the positive potential of (audio) technology, and the political potential for the counter-actualization of the present and ‘the people yet to come’<sup>31</sup>. Whether we consider its political import (which we shall) or whether we take things at the level of ‘pure philosophy’, the synthesizer contributes greatly to a new image of thought in which the Kantian project predicated upon ‘synthetic judgement’ is replaced by

[A] thought synthesizer functioning to make thought travel, make it mobile, make it a force of the Cosmos (in the same way as one makes sound travel).<sup>32</sup>

Kant’s identarian concept and Idea of the understanding are hereby once again subject to different/ciation, however this time, difference is machined as part of an assemblage of material components and lines of modulation, variation and drift, as one finds performed by a (modular) sound synthesizer. As such, the assemblage of the synthesizer exemplifies for philosophy a way of conceiving of its future in terms of a constructivist ‘knowledge-practice’, as distinct from what Kant calls the ‘theoretical sciences of reason’<sup>33</sup>, its ethical orientation in the replacement of judgements ‘as to the legitimacy of the claims of knowledge’ with judgements ‘as to the desirability of social formations and representations’.<sup>34</sup> Some very interesting observations have been made with regard to this conception of the thought-synthesizer from a number of quarters which are worth

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<sup>31</sup> See Coda

<sup>32</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.343.

<sup>33</sup> Gilles Deleuze, *Kant’s Critical Philosophy: The Doctrine of the Faculties*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Athlone Press, 1984), p.5.

mentioning in brief as they all ultimately inform the underlying trajectory of this project.

Firstly, in the important contribution made to a study of the relationship between Deleuze, Guattari and music, Christine Bezat has gone into some detail in describing the assemblage of the thought-synthesizer.

Deleuze and Guattari place different elements in continuous variation on a synthesizer as an active, creative process of thinking a multiplicity. The polyphonic interaction of synthesizing makes it possible to forge connections, articulate relations, and determine uses and functions between the differing lines and registers of thought, without reducing the many to the one or subsuming one in another.<sup>35</sup>

Furthermore, in a highly useful footnote she draws our attention to the Bakhtin connection she states that

[T]his process of synthesizing intersects with Mikhail Bakhtin's notion of dialogical polyphony, which allows for an interaction of several "consciousness-centers" that are not reduced to "a single ideological common demoninator".<sup>36</sup>

The significance of this is that it makes of Bakhtin a precursor to Deleuze and Guattari in their re-assemblage of Althusserian interpellation that does not locate a structured Subject, or at least not so long as the idea of 'structure' is understood as transcendentally fixed or static. In addition, the connection shows Guattari's debt to Bakhtin in his conception of the assemblage and his 'mixed semiotics' which, as we have seen, endeavour to create a complex, multivalent conception of subjectification

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<sup>34</sup> The idea of a knowledge-practice that is oriented along these ethical lines is developed by Eugene Holland in *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, cf., p.127n35.

<sup>35</sup> Christine Bezat, *Music Affect at Work: The Bodymind, Subjectivity, and Thought*, Unpublished Thesis, University of Minnesota, 1999, p.41.

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41.n.



partially constituted from refrains or ritornellos which, as we also saw, Bakhtin pre-empted in his use of ‘dialogical’ polyphony. As Bezat goes on to explain, citing Bakhtin, dialogism qualifies the relation between the different ‘consciousness-centers’ in terms as a ““whole formed by the interaction of several consciousnesses, none of which entirely becomes an object for the other” and “which meet on a plane of the present where past, present, and future are quarreled together””.<sup>37</sup>

The second writer to look at when exploring the reception of the ‘thought-synthesizer’ is Gary Genosko who, whilst characteristically underplaying the complexity of these ideas does demonstrate an ability to make insightful and - it has to be said - amusing connections between popular culture and Deleuze and Guattari’s ‘Pop’ philosophy by way of the synthesizer. In comparing the technique of post-performance editing or ‘splicing’ to the advent of more advanced music technology in the shape of the Moog synthesizer, Genosko states:

[T]he Moog synthesizer, even more than post-performance editing, it needs to be added, enables one to de-stratify and assert the multiple by assembling tones. Deleuze and Guattari seem to have a similar thing in mind, while at once urging sobriety in the proliferation of lines and cautioning against a cult of the machine [...]

Avoid noodling [...] - a pastime perfected by the ‘keyboard wizards’ of progressive rock in the early 1970s, when the synthesizer invaded rock with a vengeance, just as today old analog models like the Moog are being dragged from the scrapheap to fuel the ambient music scene - and the agglomeration of reproduced, synthesized sounds.<sup>38</sup>

What is both amusing but also highly pertinent about Genosko’s observation is that in recognizing the problem of ‘noodling’ as effected in the works indexed to band names

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<sup>37</sup> Mikhail Bakhtin, *The Problem of Dostoevsky’s Poetics*, trans. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), pp. 18, 90, cited in *ibid.*, p.41n.

including *Yes* and *Genesis*, he highlights the danger of the Body of Capital falling back on (*se rabat sur*) a deterritorializing potential marked by the entry of new 'technical machines' into machinic assemblages of music. This is important because, firstly it is a problem that does not just pertain to the synthesizer as a technical machine, but also as the assemblage proper to philosophy. Genosko is aware that the danger of such ideas is that they amount to nothing more than 'theoretical noodling', in which any pragmatic, ethical, ethico-aesthetic or political potential opened up by such philosophical constructions is forfeited in the name of a techno-fetishism and - to put it crudely - showing off. It should be very clear by this stage that - should this scenario transpire - the efforts to challenge the 'hasty' dismissals of chapter 1 not only collapses but falls fully into the hands of advocates of such a view: the relation between differences of degree and those of kind might become blurred, distorted and ultimately forsaken, allowing the binary determinations of generality, particularity, equivalence and analogy, forfeiting difference, and thus allowing the refrain to collapse back into chaos.

Genosko's observation is also very important for this project because - in singling out 1970s 'Prog-Rock' as an example of how not to proceed, it is necessary to recognize that the period of jazz fusion that immediately precedes and initially overlaps these developments provides these rock bands with so much of their raw musical material and their mythico-poietic incorporeal universe of reference.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>38</sup> Gary Genosko, *Undisciplined Theory*, p.80.

<sup>39</sup> The work of Miles Davis and his numerous bands during this period can be seen to have had a formidable influence on these developments and even some of his own bandmembers at this time would go on to arguably do their own extensive 'noodling', most notably the work done by the guitarist John McLaughlin with his *Mahavishu Orchestra*. More stern critics might also look at former 'Miles Davis 2<sup>nd</sup> Great Quintet' band-member Herbie Hancock's work of this period (albums like *Sextant* and *Crossings*) as an example of such noodling, but it might also be distinguished from the work of McLaughlin's band as having worked with



Lastly, it is worth bringing Bezat's and Genosko's respective accounts into relief by briefly highlighting the one given by Douglas Kahn. As a historian of sound, noise and music in 'the Arts', Kahn has taken Deleuze and Guattari to task for using the work of Edgar Varèse as their exemplary illustration within the field of music and using some of the work of John Cage to warn of the dangers.

[A] demarcative use of Cage's own music comes from an unlikely source, that of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. One would suspect they might share Cage's musical radicalism, yet they thought Cage went too far, and, more surprisingly, the offending works were not among his most raucous but were instead the fairly benign piano pieces.<sup>40</sup>

So how do Deleuze and Guattari distinguish Cage from Varèse?

Varèse's procedure, at the dawn of this age, is exemplary: a musical machine of consistency, a sound machine (not a machine for reproducing sounds), which molecularizes and atomizes, ionizes sound matter, and harnesses a cosmic energy.<sup>41</sup>

Unlike the prepared piano pieces of Cage, apparently:

[S]ometimes one overdoes it, puts too much in, works with a jumble of lines and sounds; then instead of producing a cosmic machine capable of "rendering sonorous", one lapses back to a machine of reproduction that ends up reproducing nothing but a scribble effacing all lines, a scramble effacing all sounds.<sup>42</sup>

Kahn is not satisfied with the distinction that Deleuze and Guattari make between Varèse and Cage, and both his reasons and his conclusion are telling.

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problematic affects and the production of *new* incorporeal universes of reference, although the extent to which such a distinction can be made between the two group should be subject to more rigorous investigation.

<sup>40</sup> Douglas Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat: A History of Sound in the Arts* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999), p.114.

<sup>41</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.343.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.343-4.

What terrestrial and territorial hazards drove Deleuze and Guattari away from Cage's music? Their portrayal of Varèse's music as a synthesizer would be appropriate to his percussion-laded music, but not, say, *Poème Electronique* (1958), which used new technologies to both produce and reproduce sound. The prepared piano was an act of melding a percussion ensemble and with the piano (itself an instrument already equipped with percussive functions) following Varèse's own formidable forays into percussion. The specific occasion for its development was a dance by Syvilla Fort at the Cornish Institute in Seattle. Fort, an African-American choreographer and dancer, wanted music with an African feel to it, but the stage was too small for a percussion ensemble, thus its miniaturization under the lid of a piano.<sup>43</sup>

Kahn shows that Deleuze and Guattari, in their choice of examples, have once again potentially fallen foul of dangers they themselves perceive and articulate. This may be an example of where the approach based on 'rigorous yet anexact' use of deterritorialized vocabulary runs up against a limit, the 'angelic' or 'too incorporeal' attempt to produce a more or less concrete case exposes its weaknesses and - at the very worst - the philosophical (and non-philosophical) apprenticeship begins to break down to be replaced by 'theoretical noodling'. Firstly, this would be because they have not made a sufficiently detailed foray into the history of modern Classical music, and - even worse than that - in failing to sufficiently follow the rule of proceeding with 'utmost sobriety', they have missed a crucial connection that situates Cage's experiment in relation to African-American music. Secondly, this oversight symptomatizes both Deleuze and Guattari's propensity - despite their best efforts - to reify Classical music as a category that retains something of a perceived evaluative superiority, allowing the binarism Classical (white, Western)-African-American, to re-territorialize their refrain. As Kahn rhetorically asks,

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<sup>43</sup> D. Kahn, *Noise, Water, Meat*, p.115.



[W]hy was it, then, that their interpretation of musical events so easily sailed skyward to the unpopulated vacuum of the cosmos and not south?<sup>44</sup>

His answer is as follows,

[M]any of these problems could be credited to a general lack of understanding about sound; there is, after all, little discourse on sound.<sup>45</sup>

So perhaps these problems are not so much attributable to Deleuze and Guattari's lack of sufficient investigation after all, and perhaps it is a case of transversalizing the relation between the kind of philosophical work that they specialize in and the work of music historians, 'new' musicologists and ethnomusicologists, to 'render sonorous' forms of content that are musical. However, the fragility of such a project as Deleuze and Guattari attempt in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and this more modest attempt under way here, is surely a lot clearer now, and, unfortunately, Deleuze and Guattari's oversights do not restrict themselves to an ignorance of Non-Western musical forms, but to a contentious take on popular music which - despite their calls for a 'Pop' philosophy - is decidedly stuffy, given their use of mostly-Classical examples and their belief that - with only a few marked exceptions<sup>46</sup> - popular music is not capable of deterritorializing the refrain.

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

<sup>46</sup> The exceptions being referred to can be found at various points in the individual and collective work of Deleuze and Guattari. For example, cf. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, where Deleuze likens his ideal pedagogical approach to the song-writing style of Bob Dylan, where on pages.7-8 he says that '[A]s a teacher I should like to be able to give a course as Dylan organizes a song, as astonishing producing rather than author'; in 'Introduction: Rhizome', Deleuze and Guattari use the song Old Man River to illustrate the image of the rhizome, cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.25; the work produced by Richard Pinhas has not gone unnoticed by Deleuze and Guattari who cite him twice in footnotes in *A Thousand Plateaus*, cf., pp.551n.53, 562n.94; Deleuze actually corresponded with some of the people working for the Mille Plateaux and Sub Rosa labels; Deleuze also professed a liking for the singing of Edith Piaf, cf., Charles Stivale, 'The ABC of Gilles Deleuze' at [www.langlab.wayne.edu/Romance](http://www.langlab.wayne.edu/Romance); finally, in a quite humorous and telling

The reason given for why the refrains of popular music are inadequate to the task of a positive deterritorialization is given in a crucial footnote to '1833: Of the Refrain', taken from an essay by Gisèle Brelet,

[P]opular music is melody, in its fullest sense, melody persuading us that it is self-sufficient and is in fact synonymous with music itself. How could it not refuse to bend to the learned development of a musical work pursuing its own ends [...] The popular melody could never constitute a true theme, and that is why, in popular music, the melody is the entire work, and why once it is over it has no other recourse than to repeat itself.<sup>47</sup>

In other words, popular songs are reducible to melody *qua* a *repetition of the same*.

However, given that any rigid segmental division between Classical and popular musics obstructs access to the refrain, one has to question the extent to which this is unequivocally the case. In looking at Miles Davis, and the use of popular songs in jazz, we can begin to address this problem.

### **In a Silent Way: Words and Music by Miles Davis**

*Good music speaks for itself. No sleeve notes required.*  
Kodwo Eshun<sup>48</sup>

*I've been trying to get Irving [Irving Townsend, the Columbia A&R man] for years to put these albums out with no notes [...] [T]here's nothing to say about the music. Don't write about the music.*

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section of the discussion conducted with Charles Stivale, Guattari professes an interest in jazz music before betraying his ignorance of non-Classical musics, cf., Stivale and Guattari, 'Pragmatic/Machinic', in *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari*, p.207.

FG: Jazz has a great impact on the level of world culture. Line up cinema, jazz, the mystery novel [...]

CS: I think the problem for me is that I'm too close to daily life in the States, and I see so much stupidity in all these areas[...]

FG: That's true: when one hears the classical music that people listen to in the United States, it's overwhelming. Won't you ever get fed up with Rachmaninoff, Tchaikovsky, and all that...?

CS: I was really thinking about popular music [...].

<sup>47</sup> Gisèle Brelet, cited in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.551-2, n.59.

<sup>48</sup> Kodwo Eshun, *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction* (London: Quartet, 1998), p.vii.



The selection of Miles Davis as providing the main case for this project returns us to one of the more pressing questions asked in chapter 1, the question of investment. It has to be said that Miles Davis is not as obvious a choice for a case exploring the pragmatic potential for transversalizing the work of Deleuze and Guattari and music, as one would doubtless locate more points of interface and more potential resonances by taking the work produced on the record labels Mille Plateaux, Sub Rosa, Force Inc., and Cuneiform, whose signed artists and - in the case of Mille Plateaux and Force Inc. - their founder, Achim Szepanski, have all actively embraced Deleuze and Guattari's work extensively. In a number of instances, the records produced on these labels have ventured a sustained effort to embody the concepts developed in this work - in particular in *A Thousand Plateaus* and *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* - in such a way as to activate the relation between philosophy and non-philosophy that takes Deleuze and Guattari at their word: key concepts have all been taken up on two albums produced on Sub Rosa records, respectively entitled *Folds and Rhizomes* and *Double Articulation*; text from *Anti-Oedipus* has been performed using customized technological prosthetic enhancements in the work produced by Richard Pinhas and Maurice Dantec, in particular on their album *Schizotrope* and the work Deleuze has done on the event, molecularity and the 'abstract machine' forms the basis of the work produced for the *In Memoriam: Gilles Deleuze* album released on Mille Plateaux Records.

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<sup>49</sup> Cited in Ralph J. Gleason, 'At the Blackhawk', in Gary Carner, *A Miles Davis Companion: Four Decades of Commentary* (London: Schirmer Books, 1996), p.85.

Whilst doubtless these are important and highly interesting developments that resonate widely with the work of their primary inspiration, and therefore should be subject to more detailed consideration, the choice of the life and work of Miles Davis as a case embodies a slightly different set of concerns. Firstly, where it concerns the question of investment, the proper name 'Marcel Swiboda' assembling and assembled in this project, to the extent that it involves *propria*, privation and affective capacities is inextricably bound up with an investment in those indexed to the name of Miles Davis. As should by now be quite clear, a project that accedes to the name of a transcendental or 'superior' empiricism should be able to lodge itself in any given assemblage in order to partake of an immanent self-survey, and should not be forced to select the ones that seem to connect most explicitly with the work of Deleuze and Guattari or their concepts. It has been said already that the treatment of their work as an unacknowledged instance of nomenclature is both a fact of some of the secondary work done in the field and remains a danger for the present and any future endeavours. In order to try and avoid this danger, ultimately at worst one that leads to an exercise akin to painting-by-numbers, a strategic decision has been made to choose a case that in some ways goes against the grain of Deleuze and Guattari's work: a representative of popular culture that they would perhaps prefer not to find used to blow the proverbial trumpet of their oddly elitist 'Pop' philosophy, one who arguably sacrificed his musical and cultural credentials to one of the predominantly white, majoritarian, male, middle-class developments, neutralized within the axiomatic of capitalism and its reterritorializing archaisms of heterosexual, woman-objectifying conjugality, liberal



democratic consensus politics and pseudo-individuality and its machinic enslavements.<sup>50</sup>

The motor-force of these claims lies in the career trajectory of Miles Davis's music, which can be summarily described by recourse to a brief resumé of the developments with which he credited and paths that his music took over the five decades that he was working. Born into an African-American middle class family in Alton, Illinois in 1926 and brought up in East St. Louis, Miles Dewey Davis III, a dentist's son, grew up in a provincial part of the United States, influenced from around the age of six by the radio show 'Harlem Rhythms', playing the music of Louis Armstrong, Count Basie, Bessie Smith and Duke Ellington, before receiving his first trumpet as a present when he was 'nine or ten'.<sup>51</sup> The lure of the metropolitan world of jazz would gradually become more concrete than ethereal and imaginary and by 1944, Davis won a scholarship to the Juilliard School of Music in New York, where he moved and lived a 'Jeckyll and Hyde existence'<sup>52</sup>, dividing his time between the austere, academic world of the Juilliard School of Music and the jazz clubs of 52<sup>nd</sup> Street (with the latter largely winning out in its claim on his libidinal investments), where the pioneers of the Bebop style of jazz were resident, in particular both in the canon of jazz history and in the affections of Davis, Charlie 'Bird' Parker and Dizzie Gillespie, who would give Davis something of an apprenticeship in the music, culture and lifestyle of the New York jazz scene.

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<sup>50</sup> Cf., Deleuze and Guattari, , '7000 B.C.: Apparatus of Capture', in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.458.

<sup>51</sup> Ian Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography* (London: Harper Collins, 1998), p.4.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, p.18.

Using these initial outings as his career springboard, Miles Davis would proceed from his tentative, youthful beginnings as a professional musician to become one of the main innovators of the 'Cool' style of jazz in the late 1940s and early 1950s, along with his long-time collaborator, the arranger Gil Evans, proceeding to contribute to the development of the Hardbop style of jazz in the late 1950s, at roughly the same time as his groundbreaking contribution to the establishment of 'modal' jazz to be examined in Chapter 3. This would pave the way for the transformations of the 1960s, to be taken up and developed to the highest level of sophistication and skill by John Coltrane, a band-member of Davis's 'First Great Quintet' between 1955 and 1961.

By 1967 Davis would be venturing towards another highly controversial development - the incorporation of electronic instruments, electric guitars and effects, rock-style rhythms and the endorsement of extensive post-production modification - in what would come to be called the period of 'jazz-rock' or 'fusion'. Prompting accusations of 'sell-out'<sup>53</sup>, this is the moment when Davis would provide his initial grist for the critical mill which, for his fans, would find a constant source of renewal in his 'Cellar Door' experiments in the early 1970s and ultimately in his covers of songs like the Cindy Lauper hit 'Time after Time' in his 'systems funk' bands of the 1980s. As we shall come on to see, the extent to which these late developments in Davis's career mark a significant departure from what went before in terms of the orientation and self-consistency of the music produced earlier on is a highly complex question, and the issue

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<sup>53</sup> Cf. in particular Stanley Crouch's scathing attack on Miles Davis's fusion period, entitled 'On the Corner: The Sell-Out of Miles Davis', in Robert Gottlieb, *Reading Jazz*, pp.898-914. On page 898, Crouch claims that - during the period of this music - 'when one hears his music or watches him perform, deserves the description that Nietzsche gave of Wagner, "the greatest example of self-violation in the history of art"'.



of whether he actually 'sold out' is important. It matters not so much in terms of the entropic 'squabble assemblage',<sup>54</sup> of the musicological and critical *dispositifs*, but rather in terms of the ways in which the developments and their reception symptomatize more nuanced and more pressing problems, at least where this project is concerned, by pointing up so many difficulties regarding the problem of the music's relation to the political, and to capitalism.

With regard to the other claims made earlier of the dangers and limitations that threaten both the self-consistency of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy and the transcendental empirical world that provides it with sources of inscription, in terms of Miles Davis's life, one might point to his intermittent addictions to drugs, most notably heroin and cocaine, at various stages in his career, the oft-cited question of whether or not he had homosexual affairs and - most troubling of all - his proclivities for brutal physical violence against his female partners. Of course, in such an eventful and protracted, high-profile career as Miles Davis had, there are many other perhaps less obvious but no less symptomatic aspects to which one might point, as we will doubtless do as we proceed, but - despite running the gauntlet of a molarizing tendency in giving a biographical account of Miles Davis's life and work as is the case here - there is a degree of necessity attached to providing this information in order to provide a schematic frame for the remainder of this project.

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<sup>54</sup> The idea of the 'squabble assemblage' I have taken from the section of *A Thousand Plateaus* entitled '587 B.C. - A.D. 70: On Several Regimes of Signs', in which Deleuze and Guattari develop their work on the problem of the relations between thought, language and 'conjugalities', the squabble being largely 'domestic' and therefore territorial. I have taken the liberty of applying the idea beyond the confines of the domicile and conjugalities to locate it in the order-word assemblage as it passes into critical and musicological debates which - in short - are bound up with the vain effort to objectify judgements based on taste, cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.132.

For more positive reasons, Miles Davis does turn out to be an appropriate choice for a case: the complexity and ambivalence of his life both 'within' an 'outside' of music-making; the milieus, territories and assemblages weaving the fabric of his subjectification-subjection, his refrains and becomings. Miles Davis embodies something of that constitutive indiscernibility that Massumi finds in Ronald Reagan in the sense that one can look at the archive of inscriptions (the recordings of music, biographical data, sleevenotes, artwork, speech) and be confronted at every turn with an extremely overdetermined array of symptoms, motivations or traits which - as constitutive - may be read, viewed or heard as mutually inclusive enunciative and affective possibilities that can open towards an outside in a way that promotes transversality. In the remainder of this chapter and the one to follow will be an attempt to explore in some detail this claim by surveying taking some key formative moments in the music of Davis to produce a modest yet illustrative case.

An ostensibly undermining qualification of music in general and one that was vehemently propounded by Miles Davis is the idea that 'music speaks for itself' and therefore has no need of explanation, description or analysis. As a statement that Davis went on the record to make on a number of occasions it is characterized by his reticence regarding the provision of extensive sleevenotes to his recordings, and - most interestingly and infamously - is captured in his live performances (at least until the 1970s) in which he acquired a reputation for arrogance and disrespect in his attitude towards his audience by his refusal to announce songs, introduce band-members and by



his tendency to walk off-stage mid-performance and turn his back on the audience (see chapter 3). His strongly-held belief that music should not be belaboured by critics or commentators is documented - perhaps somewhat ironically - in the sleeve-note for a concert recording released as *Saturday Night Live at the Blackhawk*, quoted in the epigraph above.

The writer Kodwo Eshun begins his book *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction* by arguing that such a view typifies what he reads as example of 'cretinism':

[R]espect due. Good music speaks for itself. No sleevenotes required. Just enjoy it. What else is there to add?

All these troglodytic homilies are [Great British] cretinism masquerading as vectors into the Trad Sublime [...] The fuel this inertia engine runs on is fossil fuel: the live show, the proper album, the Real Song, the Real Voice, the mature, the musical, the pure, the true, the proper, the intelligent, breaking America: all notions that stink of the past, that maintain a hierarchy of the senses, that petrify music into a solid state in which everyone knows where they stand, and what real music really is [...] this insistence that Great Music speaks for itself.<sup>55</sup>

Eshun's neologistic flourishes aside (an issue to be returned to later), what makes his claim particularly interesting and pertinent in terms of Miles Davis's observations and gestures that seemingly support such a view as the one Eshun decries, is that Davis represents for him an exemplary instance of everything that stands against this view. Eshun sees Davis as an exponent of the science-fictional critique of White, occidental hegemony and an attempt at a radical cultural politics that challenges its dominance - retrospectively cast according to the description 'Afrofuturism'<sup>56</sup>, most notably in the

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<sup>55</sup> Kodwo Eshun, *More Brilliant than the Sun: Adventures in Sonic Fiction*, p.vii.

<sup>56</sup> Afrofuturism covers a highly disparate body of work across different media. As Mark Dery explains, in his editor's introduction to a series of interviews conducted with the Black writers Samuel Delany, Greg Tate

recordings between 1968 and 1975 which for Eshun unequivocally do not mark the demise of Davis's career but, on the contrary, his most inventive and enduring challenge to established narratives of music history, including those of jazz music.

The reasons for this will be explored in some detail in the final chapter. Still, as should be instantly discernible from this paradox is that the case of Miles Davis, where it concerns the relationship between music and written documentary accounts of its worth, is somewhat paradoxical. It is one of the many instances in which the name 'Miles Davis' lends itself to the reciprocal suspension of different possible worlds.

Kodwo Eshun's approach to music writing is to make writing musical, hence his coining the term 'sonic-fiction' to describe his book. Whatever the successes and failures of this book (see chapter 3), Eshun does provide a means for thinking and writing a way out of the impasse between music and its documentation, and more specifically the place of philosophical concepts as part of such an endeavour. The way in which this should be done, according to Eshun, is to avoid as much as possible writing 'on' music so as to generate a series of mediators and relays between sonorous

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and Tricia Rose, '[I]f there is an Afrofuturism, it must be sought in unlikely places, constellated from far-flung points. Glimpses of it can be caught in Jean-Michel Basquiat's *Molasses* [...]; John Sayles's *The Brother from Another Planet* [...]; Jimi Hendrix's *Electric Ladyland*, George Clinton's *Computer Games*, Herbie Hancock's *Future Shock* [...]; and in the intergalactic big-band jazz churned out by Sun Ra's Ominverse Arkestra, Parliament-Funkadelic's Dr. Seussian astrofunk, and Lee 'Scratch' Perry's dub reggae', cf., 'Black to the Future: Interviews with Samuel R. Delany, Greg Tate and Tricia Rose', in Mark Dery (ed.), *Flame Wars: The Discourse of Cyberspace* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1994), p182. The term itself largely describes the endeavours of Black science-fiction writers and artists to re-appropriate the genre and explore its extrapolative qualities to examine the relation between Black culture and technology and how in doing so Black culture and its subjectivities might be inflected or altered. For his part, Kodwo Eshun uses the terms 'Afrodiasporic Futurism', 'Black Atlantic Futurism' and 'Sonic Futurism' and, where it concerns Miles Davis, the term 'Afrodelia' is deployed to specifically signal the developments of electric jazz and what he calls the 'fission' music of the late 1960s and 1970s. His own writing style reflects the science-fiction orientation that Mark Dery locates in Afrofuturism.



production and reception, the material body and the affective, perceptive and conceptual aspects of literary and philosophical writing combined. We might go so far as to say that Eshun is attempting to map the transversal relations that immanently conjoin these various, artificially closed systems in such a way as their complexity and relation to the outside can be discerned. To this extent, the approach to Miles Davis in Eshun's book and in this thesis are oriented along the same lines. It is important to bear in mind that what Miles Davis objects to in attempts to capture his recordings and performances in a written form is the desire for explanation, reduction, resolution, or categorical evaluation. This desire is objectionable to Davis not least of all because it symptomatizes the fact that what is usually written and published on jazz in the mass-media is written by white people and that the modes of dissemination of these media were and still largely are geared towards the reinforcement of exclusion and appropriation. In the language of this thesis, we might say that the investments of prepersonal desire constitutive of these subjectivities are fabricated as part the institutional *dispositifs* making up - at least in part - the media establishment, libidinally constituted as part of a restricted economy that seeks to regulate or manage *dispositional* intensifications, or 'the dissimulation of tensors', consolidating its internal limit by the constantly falling back on archaic determinations of race, cultural superiority, and so on. It is a problem strongly implied by Miles Davis on several occasions in his 'autobiography':

[A] lot of white critics kept talking about all these white jazz musicians, imitators of us, like they was some great motherfuckers and everything [...] but wasn't nobody writing about them like they was writing about us. They didn't start paying attention to white guys being junkies until Stan Getz got busted trying to break into a

drugstore to cop some drugs. That shit made the headlines until people forgot and went back to just talking about black musicians being junkies.<sup>57</sup>

We shall encounter this problem in more detail in the examination of 'My Funny Valentine', which is to follow in the next two sections.

### 1956-1964: A Sonorous Trajectory: 'My Funny Valentine'

*Is your mouth a little weak? This is your song..*  
Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart<sup>58</sup>

*There are no wrong notes in jazz.*  
Miles Davis<sup>59</sup>

'My Funny Valentine', written by Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart in 1937, was originally composed as a Tin Pan Alley tune, and if anything singles it out at all from the vast output of other Tin Pan Alley recordings of the time it is the lyrics which, going against the grain of some of the conventions of the love-song idiom, disparagingly profess love for a person who is - to put it crudely, yet aptly - ugly: 'My Funny Valentine/Sweet Comic Valentine/Your looks are laughable/Unphotographable/Yet you're my fav'rite work of art'.<sup>60</sup> Despite its Tin Pan Alley credentials and its trite, melodramatic lyrics, the song has acquired an ambiguous history in its recording by different artists, turning on the song being performed as a 'cutesy ditty' at one moment and as a 'rueful lament' the next.<sup>61</sup> Structurally, the song frames the ambiguity in terms

<sup>57</sup> Miles Davis and Quincy Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography* (London: Macmillan, 1989), p.146.

<sup>58</sup> Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart, 'My Funny Valentine', cited in Tim DeLisle [ed.], *Lives of the Great Songs* (London: Pavilion, 1994), p.27.

<sup>59</sup> Cited in Ashley Kahn, *Kind of Blue: The Making of a Miles Davis Masterpiece* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2001), p.28.

<sup>60</sup> Lorenz and Hart, 'My Funny Valentine', cited in DeLisle [ed.], *Lives of the Great Songs*, p.27. De Lisle himself reminds us that the song was actually written for a Broadway music called *Babes in Arms* 'in which Betty, smart and self-possessed, sings it to a character actually called Valentine, a dope who has failed to notice her affection for him'.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid.



of its key and mode, which 'while it is predominantly C minor, the bridge is in the relative major, E-flat and the tag brings the song to a conclusion in E-flat major'.<sup>62</sup>

Numbered amongst the many popular and jazz musicians who have re-worked the standard, including Tony Bennett, Chet Baker and Ella Fitzgerald is Miles Davis, who is famous for having performed and recorded three versions of the song, the first in 1956 as the opener on the Prestige album *Cookin' With the Miles Davis Quintet*, then in 1958 he did a version which can be heard on the Columbia release *Stella by Starlight*, and in 1964 he performed his most in/famous rendering of the song in a performance given at the Lincoln Center's Philharmonic Hall which again, barring the MC Mort Fega's vocal introduction to band, is the opening Miles Davis tune on the CD - released on Columbia Records as *Miles Davis: The Complete Concert 1964: My Funny Valentine + Four and More*, the performance stretching the 36 bar (32 bars plus a 4 bar tag) number to last for 14 minutes and 54 seconds.

Giles Smith provides a short musicological account for the ambiguity of the song:

[...] "My Funny Valentine" shares a crucial compositional device with "Three Blind Mice". And yet the song is built around an evenly descending bass-line, and the slight rise of the melody against the slow fall of the bass can come over you like melancholy.<sup>63</sup>

In the 1956 version of the song recorded by the Miles Davis Quintet, the structure is AABA and the tempo is downbeat (64bpm), played in straight 4/4 time. The performance of the melody by Davis is controlled, restrained and - often coming in

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<sup>62</sup> Howard Brofsky, 'Miles Davis and "My Funny Valentine: The Evolution of a Solo"', in Bill Kirchner [ed.], *A Miles Davis Reader* (Washington and London: The Smithsonian Institution, 1997), p.142.

quite far into the bar - generates a good deal of musical space. The swinging quality of the bridge section is largely a characteristic of Red Garland's piano playing style, heavily off the beat. Garland is actually the only bandmember to solo during the bridge, before the song returns for a final half-chorus and re-states the opening melody, ending with the four bar tag.

Structurally, the ambiguity is marked by a transition between what we might label a blues-tinged 'rueful lament' and a period of sustained levity from 2 minutes and 18 seconds, a transition prior to which the song - and in particular the trumpet lead - have a dynamically subdued, tempered and lyrical quality. At the bridge, where the transition takes place, the song adopts a much lighter, more upbeat character, with the rhythm section providing the ground for a piano improvisation by Garland, whose lightness of touch complements the delicacy of Davis's trumpet-playing but adds to this a lilting, swinging playfulness, until at 4 minutes and 29 seconds it returns to the opening theme and the dropping of the double-time, restoring to the re-statement the minimalist sparseness of the opening one. In addition, the descending bass-line of the original song that, for Smith, makes it 'like melancholy' has actually been modified, with Davis substituting an A-flat 7<sup>th</sup> (augmented 11<sup>th</sup>) for the original, which gives the opening four bars a strange harmonic quality that greatly alters the mood of the original song thus compounding its structural ambiguity.<sup>64</sup>

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<sup>63</sup> Giles Smith, 'My Funny Valentine' in DeLisle [ed.], *Lives of the Great Songs*, pp.26-7.

<sup>64</sup> Brofsky, 'Miles Davis and "My Funny Valentine"', p.144, where the description of the modification is given and a comparison made with Chet Baker's 1952 recording of the song which maintained the original



Furthermore, the recording is notable for the precision and clarity of Davis's playing, which - with his trademark amplified use of the Harmon mute generates a delicate, gentle yet piercing sound - a sound practically indissociable in jazz from his style. The combination of the mute, microphone and amplification is an innovation that Davis incorporated into his recordings starting with 'Oleo' in 1954, just two years before the first version of 'My Funny Valentine'. As Davis's biographer Ian Carr notes,

[I]t was with this recording that Miles Davis introduced a totally new sound to jazz: the amplified sound of the Harmon mute with its stem removed. The mute has to be placed very close to the microphone, and the resulting sound is full and breathy in the lower register and thin and piercing in the upper.<sup>65</sup>

The ambivalence of the soft, subdued and 'intimate' character of the sound and its piercing, driving and visceral quality when played loud in the upper register maps onto the ambiguity of the song itself, with both aspects in evidence, impossible ultimately to separate.

So, the recording has something of the 'rueful lament' about it and despite being too complex to be described as a 'cutesy ditty' - plays with the ambiguity of the song by conjoining a profoundly sombre rendering of the trumpet theme in C minor with the vivacious piano chops of Garland during the bridge in the relative major of E-flat. In addition, the use of the amplified Harmon mute introduces something of a more staged

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descending chromatic bass-line. A comparison of the openings of Baker's and Davis's early recording brings the marked difference into relief.

<sup>65</sup> Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.81.

quality into the performance and its recording which parallels the style and technique of Frank Sinatra's singing, a major influence on Miles Davis.<sup>66</sup>

When we move on to consider the 1964 recording we find aspects of the original's melodic exposition retained, albeit in a more fragmental form, and the 'intimacy' is still much in evidence, with Davis once again playing with the amplified Harmon mute, but the song becomes drastically different in almost every other way. It is in considering this version where the attempt to categorize the emotive aspects of the piece - obviously a problematic endeavour when the aim is to get at the 'extra-textual' dimension informing the music and its reception - comes up against its own limits. Returning to the third of Guattari's four functions, this earlier version of the song introduces a degree of deterritorialization of the 'refrain', but retains a low co-efficient because the form of its content retains a good deal of proximity to the original standard. Nevertheless, embodied within this version is the potential for going further, expressed in the manipulation of song's conventional harmonic 'like melancholy' structure to produce an affect that *cannot even inadequately* be described as using this term, or any other

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<sup>66</sup> Giles Smith, 'My Funny Valentine', p.27. Smith claims that the song was transformed by Frank Sinatra in 1953 when he recorded for the album *Songs for Young Lovers*, whereby it became 'intimate' and 'informal'. Sinatra is recognized as a pioneer of amplified vocal technique which he manipulated to generate the effect of intimacy with his audience. Smith describes the transformation of the song as one between 'theatre' and 'nightclub'. His characterizing of the transformation applies in some measure to Davis's early recording, at least where the intimacy effect is concerned, to some extent attributable to the new methods of 'rigging' enabled by technological developments that allowed for *sotto-voce* phrasing that could be heard clearly by sizable audiences. In the shift from the theatre to the nightclub, the theatrical quality is not therefore abandoned, but is itself transformed, in the shift from one assemblage to the other. It is not quite so easy however to qualify Davis's version as 'informal', especially when one is aware of the extent to which he detested the pandering of some performers to their audience and that he adopted strategies for challenging such informality which would confound many critics and even some of his audiences. The difficult question of Davis's relation to performativity and theatricality will be dealt with in the next chapter. For Miles Davis on Frank Sinatra, Cf., Davis, *Miles : The Autobiography*, p.60: 'I learned a lot about phrasing [...] listening to the way Frank, Nat 'King' Cole and even Orson Welles phrased. I mean all those people are motherfuckers the way they shape a musical line or sentence or phrase with their voice'.



nomenclature of emotion (as some music critics are wont to use a term like 'melancholy'), yet one that - indexed to the limited refrain of the version - generates an affect of sensation for that moment. In the 'launching forth' of the 1964 version, this problem will be brought out much more pronouncedly.

Working with an entirely different group of musicians, three of which would - along with Davis - provide four of the five of his 'Second Great Quintet' that extended the vocabulary of the modal conception developed in the late 1950s between 1965 and 1967: Herbie Hancock on piano, playing in a more impressionistic style than Red Garland, in the wake of Bill Evans's work with Davis (incidentally, the pianist on the 1958 version of 'My Funny Valentine' for which there is insufficient space to describe here, but whose contributions to *Kind of Blue* will be explored in chapter 3), Ron Carter on bass and the teenage virtuoso Tony Williams on drums. The only musician who did not make it into the second quintet is George Coleman on tenor saxophone. Collectively this quintet works very loosely around the original melody, rhythmic and harmonic characteristics of 'My Funny Valentine' which crosses into numerous different time-signatures, makes use of Latin rhythms at key points. The performance is extended and 'everyone "stretches out more' so that the song has six complete choruses, two played by Davis, two by Coleman, one-and-a-half by Hancock and the last half-chorus played by Davis again.<sup>67</sup> The extension of the song to such a protracted length enables a much more profound experimentation in which many of the possibilities of melodic, harmonic, rhythmic and textural qualities are explored - not just those of the song - but those available more generally during the time as part of the jazz vocabulary.

However, these more conventional musicological aspects of the performance are not - in the instance of the 1964 version of the song - the features that shall be drawn out here, but rather Davis's solo in the opening theme and more specifically its 'problems'

At the opening of his essay 'Out of Notes: Signification, Interpretation and the Problem of Miles Davis', the musicologist Robert Walser introduces the reader to a rather telling problematic at the heart of the music of Miles Davis.

A flurry of posthumous tributes to Miles Davis almost managed to conceal the fact that jazz critics and historians have never known how to explain the power and appeal of his playing. Miles Davis has always been difficult to deal with critically: along with his controversial personal life. 'The problem of Miles Davis' is the problem Davis presents to critics and historians. How are we to account for such glaring defects in the performance of someone who is indisputably one of the most important musicians in the history of jazz?<sup>68</sup>

In order not to presuppose any level of familiarity with the very long, varied and complex musical career of Davis, but without going into too much biographical detail at this stage, it should be made clear that - despite his generally recognized contributions to conception, composition, and band-leadership, at least to the point of his turn towards rock-influences and jazz-fusion - a point of contention amongst critical and followers of his music is what we might spuriously yet tellingly call the command of his instrument, namely the trumpet (and occasionally flugelhorn). Again, to quote Walser:

[W]hile nearly everyone acknowledges his historical importance as a band leader and a musical innovator, and while for decades large audiences flocked to his

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<sup>67</sup> Brofsky, 'Miles Davis and "My Funny Valentine"', p.150.

<sup>68</sup> Robert Walser, 'Out of Notes: Signification, Interpretation and the Problem of Miles Davis', in David Schwarz, Anahid Kassabian, and Lawrence Siegel, [eds.], *Keeping Score: Music, Disciplinary, Culture* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), p.147.



concerts, critics have always been made uncomfortable by his “mistakes”, the cracked and missed notes common to his performances.<sup>69</sup>

Before going any further, it is necessary to take care and avoid proceeding along a potentially wayward path into the well-trodden and somewhat murky terrain of critical and musicological narratives regarding the persona of the artist, his or her worth in terms of individual contributions or - to point up the problem - the contribution of individual, most tellingly evinced by the expression ‘artist-hero’<sup>70</sup>, with all of the Manichean ‘bipolar valorizations’<sup>71</sup> thereby suggested (individual-collective, hero-villain, man-woman) and their resulting exclusions. In venturing to challenge the primacy of subject and object, self-identity and personological categories, it would be somewhat self-defeating to fall back on such an archaic conception of the musician, however it is strategically necessary to proceed by way of such molarities before trying to ‘tip the assemblage towards the Body without Organs’.

The first point that we can uncontentiously assert regarding the issue of Miles Davis’s technical accomplishment is that in a great many of his recordings, whether done in the studio or performed live, the music produced includes a good many instances of unpredictable notes and sounds. In the parlance of the instrumentalist-technician, he often ‘half-valves’, depressing the valves of his trumpet such that the sound produced

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> The figure of the artist as ‘hero’ is - according to the three stages of the refrain conceived as Classical, Romantic and Modern pertains to the Romantic stage. Christopher Small has explicitly mentioned the problem of Miles Davis in relation to the trope of artist-hero in jazz discourse, cf. Christopher Small, *Music of the Common Tongue* (London: John Calder, 1987), p.315: ‘[T]he notion found in many histories and other studies of jazz, of the great individual artist-hero - Charlie Parker, John Coltrane, Miles Davis for instance - creating out of his own nature and genius, has to be treated with great caution’. To bring Deleuze, Guattari and Small together, one can conclude that - in terms of the refrain - the figure of the artist-hero in jazz an example of an archaic reterritorialization of a more ‘Modern’ moment.

lacks precision and clarity in its failure to accurately hit on a given note. Slightly less technically, he has also been known to burble notes and swallow notes. If one listens to Miles Davis's recordings starting with the early sessions that he recorded with Dizzy Gillespie and Charlie Parker in the 1940s, when his playing had undeniably yet to mature, right through his 'cool', 'hard-bop' and 'modal' accomplishments in the 1950s and 60s, to the 'electric' phase of his career that predominantly characterized his work from the late 1960s until his death in 1991, one can find any number of instances in which the sounds produced sound at best unusual and at worst just sound plain wrong.

Rather than get embroiled in the ongoing debate around the questions of Davis's playing ability or lack thereof, there seems to be another way in which this investigation might proceed that avoids the intractability of what amounts to yet another example of the order-word assemblage, in that asking what is a right note and what is a mistake leaves the partaking subjectivities with a highly limited and largely already determined set of possible responses from which answers to such questions might be produced, thereby contributing to the tendency of an institutional *dispositif* towards stratification, ossification and aggregation, as well as a refusal to locate the terms of the debate in relation to *investment*.

Hence - rather than remain limited to analysing the playing of the person named 'Miles Davis' as 'good' or 'bad', judgements made that lead such analysis to restrict itself to a framework built out of a musical (*quasi-*)object and a de-sexualized, de-corporealized supposedly self-same subject(ivity) - the questions that might be asked here might make

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<sup>71</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p.29.



use of the groundwork laid down in chapter 1. The problem of what constitutes the 'correct' note or sound is in actual fact bound up with the relationship between sound and noise, and the political and libidinal-economic task of Western music has throughout its history and to some extent still very much in the present attempted to fend off any extraneous notes, sounds or harmonic intervals that we might - in the language of information theory - call 'noise'. As was claimed earlier, the category of noise needs to be wrested from its own scientific objectifying tendencies in order to be put to work as part of a deterritorialized vocabulary which respects not just the informational character of noise, but the ways in which what qualifies as noise has itself become modulated and transformed over the course of the historico-materialist developments of Western culture. As such, it is necessary to locate the perception of noise and its affective constitution in connection with the aggregated investments of the institutional *dispositif* of music in order to proceed towards their *dis*-positioning.

In the case of Miles Davis, what characterizes the relationship between sound and noise, or signal-to-noise ratio is as much about the lines along which the investments of critics and musicologists are constituted. Within the context of the narration of jazz music history, words initially used by musicians in relation to their own practice have found their way into the critical vocabulary. As Walser states, where this concerns the performance of incorrect or inaccurate notes, including in the work of Miles Davis, the term 'clams' might readily be invoked, not just to give a name to musical mistakes, but to label the discrepancies as things to be ignored or dismissed as unfortunate by-

products of extenuating circumstances, which - for Walser - has hitherto largely been the case.

Often critics simply ignore the mistakes. In his history of jazz, Frank Tirro delicately avoided any mention of the controversies surrounding Davis, whether missed notes, drug use, or electric instruments. Joachim Berendt, in *The Jazz Book*, regrettably mentions Davis's "clams" but quickly passes on, and the widely used jazz appreciation text by Mark Gridley, like that of Donald D. Megill and Richard S. Demory, similarly whitewashes Davis's career.<sup>72</sup>

'Clams' as a term not only signifies mistakes, but also symptomatizes the status of music criticism as a masculinist discourse (see chapter 3).

Given that this project aspires to a workable ethics of increased capacity another avenue that must be avoided is the one that leads us towards moralizing dogma, hence to decry Miles Davis's critics for labouring and belabouring the issue of unwanted detritus marring his music and the question of the majority of these critics' failure to recognize their own profoundly problematic relation to the Manichean couplings informing their own discourses. The way in which this is to be done is to bring together the inventory of conceptual and semiotic devices that have provided the mainstay of this thesis so far in an attempt to re-synthesize these in the exploration of the milieus, territories and deterritorializations marked by the name 'Miles Davis' and at least suggested in the work of more theory-minded writers such as Robert Walser, Joachim Berendt and Gary Tomlinson.<sup>73</sup> In addition, the new areas of concern that the investigation will open out

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<sup>72</sup> Robert Walser, 'Out of Notes', pp.147-8.

<sup>73</sup> As indicated by the title of his essay, Walser attempts do deal with the problem of Davis's music and its reception in terms of Henry Louis Gates Jr. development of the African and African-American function of 'Signifyin(g)', cf., *The Signifying Monkey: A Theory of African American Literary Criticism* (New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988). Gates's work will be discussed in a slightly modified context in chapter 3. Interestingly, Gary Tomlinson has explored the 'electric period' using both Gates's research and Bakhtin's dialogical approach to language, cf., Gary Tomlinson, 'Cultural Dialogics and Jazz: A White



onto to some extent by necessity, but also inevitability, will be the relation of music production and reception to the problem of investment as it is indexed to the issues of race, gender and to the wider circuits of late Capitalism, or Empire. As an in-road into this, and as was mentioned in the first chapter, one of the tests of the pragmatic efficacy of Deleuze and Guattari's work would proceed by attempting to map the transversal relations between and across the overcodings of theory and philosophy across the network of lines, forces and subjectifications of the academic institutional *dispositif*. By returning to the elaboration of the three syntheses of the machinic unconscious, as well as stratoanalysis and the refrain, I shall shortly attempt to patch these into a key essay by Adorno, putting the claims of transcendental empiricism to the test by attempt not just to map transversal connections between Deleuze, Guattari and Adorno, but to also to produce an immanent, corporeal and ultimately libidinal theory of auditory reception which we can then use to examine the problem of thinking the music of Miles Davis as a potential example of non-philosophy capable of providing at least a degree of redress to the hasty criticisms of Deleuze and Guattari and the more considered ones that we found to be epitomized by the work of Alain Badiou. This endeavour will take the 1964 recording of 'My Funny Valentine' as the starting point, as it is this recording more than most that has become the (*quasi*-)object of a fair share of libidinal discharge.

When Howard Brofsky and Bill Cole independently transcribed and published the trumpet solo of Davis's 1964 recording of "My Funny Valentine", both chose to leave out the cracks, slips, and spleeahs, enabling them to produce nice, clean texts and to avoid many problematic aspects of the performance.<sup>74</sup>

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Historian Signifies' in Katherine Bergeron and Philip V. Bohlman [eds.], *Disciplining Music* (Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press, 1992), pp.64-94.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p.148.

Brofsky, who in his analysis produces a musicological comparison between the 1956 and 1964 versions has recourse to extensive use of transcription, in particular of the later, more complicated version and as Walser rightly points out, nowhere in his essay or his transcriptions does he give an account of the more problematic elements [see fig. 5].



Musical score for Miles Davis and "My Funny Valentine". It consists of four staves of music in G major. The first staff has a measure marked with a '3' and a '30'. The second staff has a measure marked with a '3'. The third staff has a measure marked with a '35'. The fourth staff has a measure marked with 'IIIa' and a '3'. The piece concludes with the instruction 'End and piano'.

Fig 5.

Musical score for "Out of Notes". It consists of six staves of music in G major. The first staff has notes marked with 'x' and '~', and is labeled with 'Ab4'. The second staff is labeled with 'C-'. The third staff has notes marked with 'x' and '~', and is labeled with 'Ab7', 'A7', and 'Ab4'. The fourth staff has notes marked with 'x' and '~', and is labeled with 'F7', 'Ab7', and 'Eb6 Latin'. The fifth staff has notes marked with 'x' and '~', and is labeled with 'D7', 'G7b9', 'IIIa C- Swing', and 'x'. The sixth staff has notes marked with 'x' and '~', and is labeled with 'C-4'. There is a 'scramble' section indicated by a wavy line and a 'John Ferguson' signature at the bottom right.

Fig 6.

x = half valved note

~ = swallowed, burbled, or ornamented note

Walser's attempt to re-assess the role of the musical 'accident' in terms of the 'problem' of Miles Davis leads him to single out this later recording of 'My Funny Valentine' because it contains 'one of the most notorious fluffs ever released'.<sup>75</sup> The errors are numerous and frequent, yet despite this, the piece was the opener for what was regarded at the time by participants and is still regarded now by some critics as one of the outstanding performances of Davis' career. According to Chip Deffaa's sleeve-note for the album, Mort Fega - the MC at the opening of the recording - witnessed Miles' producer Teo Macero with an 'almost euphoric expression' on his face.<sup>76</sup> Miles Davis himself famously observed:

We just blew the top off that place that night. It was a motherfucker the way everybody played - and I mean everybody.<sup>77</sup>

Walser is amongst the critics prepared to defend the performance - warts and all - as an exemplary instance of Davis's experimentation with his instrument. Following the example of Howard Brofsky, Walser's proceeds by way of a musicological analysis of the piece, relying on a transcription that he himself produced [see fig. 6].

By looking at the end of the score, one can see that Walser has provided two new symbols to accompany the more established tools of musical annotation. The cross denotes what he calls a 'half-valved note' whilst the wavy dash denotes a 'swallowed, burbled, or ornamental note'. One may further note that Walser has added individual remarks at certain key points in the performance which can be found written under the

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid.

<sup>76</sup> Chip Deffaa, Sleeve-note to *Miles Davis, The Complete Concert 1964: My Funny Valentine + Four & More*, Columbia, 1964, p.4.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.



stave at the points in question. It should therefore be sufficient to remark Walser's explanation for the numerous additions. For the most part, rather than point to a technical ineptitude on the part of Davis, these details actually mark an attempt to explore the potential of the trumpet beyond its more regular confines of usage. This is not to say that Miles Davis is technically infallible or that he did not make mistakes, but rather to call into question the idea that any wrong note, extraneous noise or interference is to be considered negatively at all. The fact that Macero rated the performance so highly with his ear so attuned to the very materiality of sound and Davis - self-critical in the extreme - would call it a 'motherfucker', suggests quite clearly that for both of them such 'accidents' are not what they seem.

Miles was quoted as saying, "[T]here are no wrong notes in jazz". What he obviously meant was that you could take one particular thing that might sound incorrect or jarring, and build something beautiful. He felt that that was a way of improvising, to get out of what seems to be a terrible situation was a challenge. "To me, it's all like a high-wire act", he said and moved his arms like a bird, just for a minute.<sup>78</sup>

The way in which Miles worked as a 'composer' is documented as being something he did on the fly, an experimental, improvisatory conception of writing. To quote Wilfred Mellers on the solo in the first fully 'modal' composition called 'Milestones' from 1958, 'Bird [Charlie Parker] was a composing improviser, and Miles is an improvising composer'.<sup>79</sup>

The 'clams', 'fluffs', 'burbled notes', 'swallowed notes' and 'half-valved notes' that occur in the first few minutes of the 1964 recording of 'My Funny Valentine' are

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<sup>78</sup> David Amram, *Vibrations: The Adventures and Musical Times of David Amram* (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1968), cited in A. Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, p.28.

doubtless jarring, and if one's musical *habitus*, born of particular listening experiences and affective and motor action-reaction circuits have become conditioned according to a tonal, diatonic auditory *dipositif*, as have those bodies subject to the vast majority of music produced in the Western tradition including both 'Classical' and 'Popular' denominations, then such aberrances will strike the listening body/ear as detritus to be removed, that should be dismissed as extraneous to auditory participation. However, if one ventures a *counter-actualization* of this habitual type of reaction and attempts to survey the immanent constitution of such a visceral convulsion as results then it becomes possible to 'render sonorous' the potential for such detritus to become a 'leitmotiv' for the deterritorialization of the refrain and the opening out onto an outside, and into new 'incorporeal universes of reference'. That does not mean to say that every such instance will lend itself to this possibility, as in some what might result is 'a scribble effacing all lines, a scramble effacing all sounds'. However, as we saw in this instance, to dismiss without sufficiently exploring and elaborating the case in question runs the risk of reducing the theoretical exercise to one of 'noodling', so the task with the 1964 recording of 'My Funny Valentine' would be to try and better discern what really constitutes such an effacement and what accedes to the capacity of becoming a deterritorializing *motif*.

Walser's analysis leads us to recognize that the additional customized annotations that he incorporates into his transcription are perhaps in one register signifiers but in another they are tensor-signs, marking 'zones of indiscernibility' in which a *dis*-positing of investment can take place, onto 'lines of drift', a musical *dérive* which in de-

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<sup>79</sup> Cited in Carr, Miles Davis: *The Definitive Biography*, p.130,



institutionalizing music may facilitate the production of new universes of reference. This is an auditory or sonorous rendering of the example of the face and the 'possible world' that we encountered earlier, in which multiple possible worlds are suspended without resolution, in excess of emotion and therefore problematizing the enunciations attributable to the 'I' as linguistic index: a complex of sounds emerging from the auditory field which may plunge the milieus of the first aspect of the refrain of subjectification into chaos or may open the territories binding them in the second aspect up to the forces of the outside. This returns us to Guattari's division of affect as part of both sensory and problematic functions. The shift between the sensory function and its refrains/ritornellos and the problematic affect is what constitutes the affective difference between the two versions of 'My Funny Valentine', with the first limited to the relatively low co-efficient of deterritorialization when compared with the second, effected by the relatively more territorialized refrain/ritornello of the former on the order of a low-intensity sensory affect, which in the latter is accompanied by a problematic affect that deterritorializes the musicality traits further through Davis's 'mistakes'. In more simple, more music-based terms, it can be said that the in jazz from the 1940s onwards, if not before, the very task is to take the standard as a 'melody' and deterritorialize its refrain, to make invent ways of transforming a repetition of the same into a repetition of difference. If we return to Deleuze and Guattari's dismissal of popular music on the grounds of its supposedly being reducible to melody, the quote they use to make the point from Gisèle Brelet singles out Béla Bartók as an exception. Let us just remind ourselves of the quote.

The popular melody could never constitute a true theme; and, that is why, in popular music the melody is the entire work, and why once it is over it has no other recourse but to repeat itself.<sup>80</sup>

But then the question is asked,

But can't the melody transform itself into a theme? Bartók solves this problem, which was thought insoluble.<sup>81</sup>

We are not told here how Bartók actually achieves this but this is not our major concern. What is being suggested in this thesis is that jazz music is capable of doing the same, and that the example of the 1964 recording of 'My Funny Valentine' supports this suggestion.

### **Traversalizing Adorno, Deleuze and Guattari: The Signal:Noise Ratio of 'My Funny Valentine'**

*In Beethoven, position is important only in a living relation between a concrete totality and its concrete parts. In popular music, position is absolute. Every detail is substitutable; it serves its function only as a cog in the machine.*  
Theodor W. Adorno<sup>82</sup>

*Lapses, parapraxes, symptoms are like birds knocking on the window with their beak. The point is not to interpret them. It is rather a question of mapping their trajectory to see whether they can serve as indicators of new universes of reference capable of acquiring enough consistency to turn around the situation.*  
Félix Guattari<sup>83</sup>

In his essay entitled 'On Popular Music', Adorno philosophically explores the conditions of popular music reception within the Culture Industry and its instrumental

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<sup>80</sup> Gisèle Brelet, cited in Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.551-2, n.59.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, 'On Popular Music', in *Studies in Philosophy and Social Science* 9: 1941, p. 19.



*modus operandum* in a way that is strikingly akin to the means by which redundancy is used to describe the production of subjectification-subjection by Deleuze and Guattari. His is a definitive retort to the purists who believe that music can be independent of social, economic and cultural factors. By the same token he succeeds in bringing things back to the actual music itself, its formal, material and sensory characteristics whereas many critics are inclined to take these details out of the loop. Taking jazz as his primary case, as on numerous occasions he was wont to do, Adorno examines the ‘standardization’ of the popular song, the mechanisms of the production process, both cultural and economic, including the music recording and publishing industry, notably the output of Tin Pan Alley, as well as radio broadcasting and film, and the roles played by recognition, appropriation and repetition in the production of what shall continue to be described as redundancies.

This is framed in terms a formal analysis of the ways in which popular music functions and how this differs from the more exemplary instances to be found in the classical canon, examined in relation to the conditioning factors of the culture industry.<sup>84</sup> In this piece, the differences pertain to differing relationships between whole and part, with the better instances of classical music engendering a complex interaction between whole and part whereas popular and jazz forms short-circuit the relation between whole and

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<sup>83</sup> Félix Guattari, *Les années d'hiver*, cited in Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin John Heller, [eds.], *New Mappings*, p.158.

<sup>84</sup> As with Deleuze and Guattari, despite the ostensible rejection of popular and jazz forms - inevitably born of an insufficient investment - Adorno, though renowned for his scathing attacks on jazz and popular music's development is not unequivocal in his rejection of these forms any more than he is that classical music is one hundred-percent good, and in reading them and he against the grain of their investments, it is most certainly possible to put their respective conceptions to work in attenuating this inadequate, categorical distinction. I am indebted to Barbara Engh for drawing my attention to the largely unexplored yet crucial intersections between Deleuze, Guattari and the Frankfurt School work of Adorno and Walter Benjamin.

part by making the whole equivalent to the entire framework of popular music production. This is what is meant by standardization. To relate the detail to the rest of the composition in popular and jazz forms is to relate it to every other composition that conforms to the process of standardization: this is the first redundancy of the popular listening experience. To quote Adorno:

[T]he primary effect of this relation between framework and the detail is that the listener becomes prone to evince stronger re-actions to the part than to the whole. His grasp of the whole does not lie in the living experience of this one concrete piece of music he has followed. The whole is pre-given and pre-accepted, even before the actual experience of the music starts [...]<sup>85</sup>

For Adorno, the detail no less than the whole is deprived of singular or qualitative value. In other words, it too is redundant:

[I]n popular music, position is absolute. Every detail is substitutable; it serves its function only as a cog in a machine.<sup>86</sup>

This is not the same as saying that popular music is simplistic, either:

[H]armonically, the supply of chords of the so-called classics is invariably more limited than that of any current Tin Pan Alley composer who draws from Debussy, Ravel and even later sources [...] Listening to popular music is manipulated not only by its promoters, but as it were, by the inherent nature of this music itself, into a system of response-mechanisms wholly antagonistic to the ideal of individuality in a free liberal society.<sup>87</sup>

So what happens to this 'ideal of individuality' where popular music is concerned?

According to Adorno it becomes 'pseudo-individualization' as 'the necessary correlate of musical standardization':

[B]y pseudo-individualization we mean endowing cultural mass production with the halo of free choice or open market on the basis of standardization itself [...]

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<sup>85</sup> Theodor W. Adorno, 'On Popular Music', p.18.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p.19.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., p.21-2.



Pseudo-individualization, for its part, keeps them in line by making them forget that what they listen to is already listened to for them, or 'pre-digested'.<sup>88</sup>

This is the third redundancy: that of subjectivity.

An effect of these complementary redundancies that specifically relates to jazz music concerns the status of improvisation, which - as a result of standardization - finds its freedom 'severely delimited', and as thereby found its possibilities 'quickly exhausted', relegating the apperception of musical freedom to one of pseudo-freedom.

The standardization of the norm enhances in a purely technical way standardization of its own deviation - *pseudo-individualization*.<sup>89</sup>

The improvised flourish does not therefore escape the redundancy of the detail.

It is well-known fact that in daring jazz arrangements worried notes, dirty tones, in other words, false notes, play a conspicuous role. They are apperceived as exciting stimuli only because they are corrected by the ear to the right tone.<sup>90</sup>

Adorno seems to be making some very worthwhile observations here with regard to the listening experience, and his analysis goes quite some way to providing a groundwork for a *constitutive* account of investment in material, perceptual and semiotic terms.

However, there are three significant limitations to Adorno's critique. Firstly, like Deleuze and Guattari, he adopts a position here towards non-Classical musical forms of production in a way that goes against the grain of the need for a more thoroughgoing exploration of the complex relation such music has with the production of subjectivity, even in its most superficial manifestations. Adorno's position, adopting a schemata for

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<sup>88</sup> Ibid., p.25.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p.26.

relating particular detail to a whole piece calls upon an *organismic* conception of the work which seems far more amenable to the formal strictures of Classical composition and performance than it does to more popular forms which - as shall be shown - do not necessarily lend themselves to such a conception. This leads to the second limitation which is that, in describing popular forms according to a logic of whole-part reverts to a *mechanistic* picture of this relation, the substitutable detail as a 'cog in the machine', a workable metaphor for how superfluous details of production/consumption within the culture industry mirror the substitutions of labour and commodities as part of a capitalist mode of production, but unfortunately restricting a consideration of production/consumption in capitalism to a formalist, static representation of the structure of a song that permits very little latitude for the consideration of *process*, a description whose limitations are perhaps evident when compared to the refrain of Deleuze and Guattari which lends itself more readily to dealing with the processual dimension of sonority. Finally, his account of improvisation does not go far enough in its exploration of the relation between the 'worried notes' and 'dirty tones', how the relationship between signal and noise plays out in a way whereby process is emphasized according to its tendential character, towards and/or away from the redundancies of standardization, pseudo-individualization and auditory subjectivity, and towards and away from *de-standardization*. However, for all of these shortcomings, as was made clear earlier, the aim here is not to criticize or deride the work of Adorno *contra* Deleuze and Guattari as part of a 'squabble assemblage' but rather to tentatively open up a transversal or diagonal line across and between Deleuze, Guattari and Adorno, and there are numerous important and original observations that Adorno makes in 'On

Popular Music' that may facilitate a more nuanced account of popular and jazz music production and reception and the affirmative potential virtually crystallized in the seemingly-extraneous elements of music and sound.

Returning to the task of situating the body or corporeality within an assemblage - here an auditory or sonorous assemblage - and exploring how one might *dis*-position the investments thereby constituting subjectification and subjectification-subjection within a musical, sonorous and social *dispositif*, now is the time to bring Adorno, Deleuze and Guattari together from the perspective of the latter's conception of the 'three syntheses of the machinic unconscious' from chapter 1, by linking it to an exemplary account of listening and its enunciative effects that Adorno describes in his essay.

According to Adorno, the listener who encounters a particular version of a standard for the first time will undergo two stages of recognition on the order of a 'that's it', the utterance which implicitly or explicitly is elicited from said listener.

[T]he moment of actual identification - the actual "that's it" experience. This is attained when vague remembrance is searchlighted by sudden awareness. It is comparable to the experience one has sitting in a room that has been darkened when suddenly the electric light flares up again. By the suddenness of its being lit, the familiar furniture obtains, for a split second, the appearance of being novel.<sup>91</sup>

Adorno's visual metaphor for standardization, the improvised detail and pseudo-individuality pertains to a conception of the consuming subject as empty, not in the same sense as Deleuze says in his *Foucault* book, because it is disconnected from a line of the outside, and this subject's consumption of music is reduced to a 'regressive' or

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.34.



childish, fetishistic activity that results in extreme privation. One conceivable yet possibly tenuous way that a transversal line might be plotted between Deleuze, Guattari and Adorno is to take the visual metaphor of Adorno and to 'literalize' it, which is to say, treat the illustration as an actual embodiment of a 'possible world', and at the same time of a *dispositif*.

As already made clear, the refrain consists of three aspects: milieus, territory, deterritorialization. The darkness that threatens the fabric of milieus and territory that make the home or the domicile is that of chaos, the collapse of the order that emerged from this chaos. We might follow Deleuze and Guattari's thesis in '1833: Of the Refrain' that in a certain sense - the sense of a human and non-human capacity for the selection of milieu components into a territorialized combination and terrestrial inscription - that 'all history is the history of perception'. Here perception is conceived along Bergsonian lines as a 'perception-image' which is relational and completely non-localized 'in principle' yet from which the body is formed and from which it extracts or selects 'its' perceptions *in practice*.<sup>92</sup> Using this thesis to read Adorno's example, the

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<sup>92</sup> For Bergson's description of how perception in practice, as distinct from pure perception, is bound up with the passage between 'virtual action' to a selection or actualization in 'real action' which registers at the level of sensation in terms of 'affection, cf., Henri Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, trans. Nancy Margaret Paul and W. Scott Palmer (New York: Zone Books, 1991), p.44: 'That matter should be perceived without the help of a nervous system and without organs of sense, is not theoretically inconceivable; but it is practically impossible because such perception would be of no use [...]; p.57: '[O]ur perception of an object distinct from our body by an interval, never expresses anything but a virtual action. But the more distance decreases between this object and our body (the more, in other words, the danger becomes urgent or the promise immediate), the more does virtual action tend to pass into real action. Suppose the distance reduced to zero, that is to say that the object to be perceived coincides with our body; that is to say again, that our body is the object to be perceived. Then it is no longer virtual action, but real action, that this specialized perception will express, and this is exactly what affection is'. Extending the selection process of perception out onto non-human processes has been attempted by Manuel DeLanda where he describes geologists' attempts to show how geological processes form a 'sorting computer', cf., DeLanda, *A Thousand Years of Non-Linear History*, p.66, taking Deleuze and Guattari's notion of double-articulation from '10,000B.C.: The Geology of Morals, or Who Does the Earth Think it is' in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Likewise, Massumi actually uses this plateau

metaphoric use of a 'rendering visible' to illustrate a 'rendering sonorous' is complemented in an alternative register by a processual rendering based around the selection of perceptions from a perception-image, or percepts, and their accompanying affection-images, or affects.

The gradual emergence of familiarity from undifferentiated darkness *also* marks a territorialization, the gradual return to visibility of definition in light and shade, or the defining contours, shapes and characteristics that make it *a room*, and in the passage between indiscernibility and discernibility there is - for Adorno - a semblance of novelty, but it is ultimately an optical illusion. In this passage, the re-establishment of contours of visibility and invisibility that mark out the space as discernible is accompanied by an enunciative possibility, 'that's it'. This returns us to Deleuze's account of Foucault in 'What is a *Dispositif*', the seeable and the sayable forming a Spinozist parallelism, with curvatures of light, lines of force and lines of subjectivation forming a complex of interactions. In terms of the three syntheses, the indiscernibility and its passage toward discernibility is on the order of a 'contour *and* shape *and* reflection *and* light *and* face' in a 'zone of indiscernibility...'.

This reading of Adorno and '1833: Of the Refrain' highlights the pragmatic orientation of *A Thousand Plateaus* and the importance of the case in that particular work: embodiments of *the syntheses of the machinic unconscious*. From milieus to territory: partial objects are the milieus components that enter into a connective synthesis with

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and the idea of geological selection to illustrate a different embodiment of the 'three syntheses of the machinic unconscious', cf., Massumi, *The User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, pp.56-57.



one another and the territory is composed of an inscription (*enregistrement*) of the Body of the Earth that inclusively disjoins the interconnected milieu components; accompanying all this, is the production of residual subjectivity indexed to enunciation: “that’s it”: synthesis of conjunction-consummation.

One might attempt to use the diagram of the searchlighted room to venture a ‘rendering sonorous’ rather than ‘rendering visible’ with regard to the popular music standard, whereby the first moment ‘of actual identification’ is attained when the first few bars are heard and are ‘searchlighted’ by sudden awareness. An initial impression of novelty subsides to be replaced by one of familiarity. In inscribing the Body of the Earth as a recording surface produced in the process of synthesis (between connection and disjunction) that falls back (*se rabat sur*) on the syntheses and enables them to function, the syntheses are constituted from an assemblage that is more or less restricted by milieus that it brings together and the degree to which they are aggregated or ‘stratified’ and the extent to which their combination is territorialized. This is what enables the unfamiliarity to subside and be replaced by recognition of something that one has heard before, such that the ambient fluctuations of sound, the background noise, hiss or interference, all co-mingle in the beginning seconds of listening to a piece of music with which one is unfamiliar.

Where it concerns standardization in music, the recognition that a tune is famous, that is it is or was a hit: ‘that’s the hit ‘Night and Day’,<sup>93</sup> Adorno calls the ‘element of subsumption’ which binds recognition to the social, a ‘connecting reaction’ that brings



the listener to perceive 'his apparently isolated, individual experience of a particular song as a collective experience'. The relation between individual and collective understood as such is a Manichean opposition and therefore another example of illegitimate connecting, disjoining and conjoining between the social and the psychic, or between social machines, desiring-machines and technical machines in a way that makes the individual a local unit of a global society who apperceives a self connected to others in a way that has a semblance of increased capacity but is actually entirely bound up with *propria* and privation, reflected in the 'element of self-reflection on the act of identification: "oh, I know it; this belongs to me"': a moment of consummation-consumption of desire, marking a momentary intensification perhaps, but one that is ultimately narcissistic and redundant and one that leads the listener to perform an illegitimate use of the third synthesis, whereby they hear the song as something that belongs to themselves, thereby positing a self to which the song belongs.<sup>94</sup> From the perspective of the refrain, such a move amounts to a reterritorialization of the auditory or sonorous assemblage on the refrain of the *natal* and a population of a 'one-alone' relating to a 'one-crowd' that Deleuze and Guattari associate with Romantic music which - from the perspective of the Body of Capital is an archaism which the latter relies on to consolidate its own internal limit.

In brief, the notion of break-flow has seemed to us to define both capitalism and schizophrenia. But not in the same way; they are not at all the same thing, depending on whether the decodings are caught up in an axiomatic or not; on whether one remains at the level of the large aggregates functioning statistically, or crosses the barrier that separates them from the unbound molecular positions;

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p.34.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.35.

on whether the flows of desire reach this absolute limit or are content to displace a relative immanent limit that will reconstitute itself further along [...]<sup>95</sup>

For Adorno, the process of making pseudo-individuals is a function of the culture industry and as such is one based on *propria*.

By the identification and subsumption of the present listening experience under the category “this is the hit so and so”, this hit becomes an object to the listener, something fixed and permanent. This transformation of experience into object - the fact that by recognizing a piece of music one has command over it and can reproduce it from one’s own memory - makes it more proprietable than ever.<sup>96</sup>

However, Adorno does acknowledge that energy is expended in no small measure in by pseudo-individuals in their adherence to a culture that is increasingly cynical about its capacity to channel this energy towards the accumulation of surplus value, doubtless in no small measure fear of the loss of their pseudo-individuality. Again, in Deleuze and Guattari’s libidinal philosophy every synthetic interaction involves the conversion and expenditure of energy *whether legitimate or illegitimate*, and both theirs’ and Adorno’s thinking here owes a debt to Nietzsche’s conception of ‘*ressentiment*’: ‘More taxes, less bread!’.<sup>97</sup> Adorno imagines the possibility of such energy having some kind of potential for challenging, resisting or overturning the machinations of instrumental reason.

In order to become a jitterbug or simply to “like” popular music, it does not by any means suffice to give oneself up and to fall in line passively. To become

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<sup>95</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, pp.247-8. From another perspective, the process could be described as being one of ‘interpellation’, in which it is a ‘subject’ which is being ‘hailed’ by the refrain, whereby the searchlight becomes a light of interrogation, and the assemblage is transformed into an ‘order-word assemblage’. However, as subject of statement and subject of enunciation are themselves assembled processually, it is here where Deleuze and Guattari depart from a more rigidly structuralist use of the theory of interpellation towards one that endeavours to foreground process and survey movement, and we can say that what is altered in the act of self-survey are pre-individual *and* pre-subjective percepts and affects. This is something that shall be returned to in Chapter 3.

<sup>96</sup> Adorno, ‘On Popular Music’, p.35.

<sup>97</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.29.



transformed into an insect, man needs that energy which might possibly transform him into a man.'<sup>98</sup>

For Adorno, the possibility of transformation of popular culture and the 'jitterbug' is most definitely not a transformation *through* them, which is to say that whilst energy is expended in no small measure in the frenetic activity of a dancehall full of pseudo-individuals doing the jitterbug - the latter removed from the subsumption of the culture industry - might be able to become individuals. For Deleuze and Guattari, 'real subsumption' or machinic enslavement are massive dangers, but they represent one amongst a number of tendencies for 'capture', another of which is a tendency towards productive capture made possible by legitimate uses of the three syntheses such that the surface of inscription of the second synthesis captures the connective syntheses of production and produces a 'surplus value of code' which is not predestined towards the consumption-with-minimal-consummation of wholly privated subjectivities (Adorno), but which itself might be put to the task of 'trans-coding' across different assemblages that enables a connection to the outside, whereby the consumption-consummation of the third synthesis becomes nomadic. Again, one might take the metaphoric use of the 'jitterbug' and approach it from the register of 'becoming-animal' in order to show how popular music is capable of transversalizing itself and its listening subjects, as for example through the ethology of bird-song, a return to a Spinozist ethical physics of bodies, desire and thought, although such a theory of becoming-animal, not unlike that of the other becomings, is problematic.

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<sup>98</sup> Adorno, 'On Popular Music', p.48.



What Adorno's own use of his examples brings to the theoretical transversalization attempted here is a renewed sense of the danger in partaking of such exercises. If the machine of Deleuze and Guattari has been the object of hypercathexis or overinvestment, then perhaps so has the notion of becoming which - in its invocation on the order of nomenclature, whereby becoming becomes sufficient to itself without the need for a rigorous theoretical or analytical account of its attainability, dangers and limitations may well just serve to reinforce the standardizing tendencies of a culture industry. Whatever the case, Adorno's account of popular music, its instrumental serviceability and its 'fetish' character provides a cautionary warning against too-easily affirming its consumption as a *consummation* of desire at the same time as it implicitly warns against theoretical noodling. By bringing Deleuze and Guattari together with Adorno there is a danger that such noodling is all that will have resulted, but at least its dangers will have been further emphasized and made more theorizable in themselves. At best, a transversalizing connection will have been drawn that raises the power of the effects associated with each and all of the proper names Deleuze, Guattari and Adorno. Let us try to summarize how this might be conceived.

Despite a shared degree of ignorance and reticence regarding popular musical forms all three thinkers contribute a way of articulating the embodiment of auditory subjectivity in a way that connects it to the social and to capitalism and ventures an exposition of its logic and the processes underlying subjectification-subjection or 'pseudo-individuality' and its unethical privations. However, whilst Adorno's searchlight can bring familiarity and recognition out of indiscernibility, as we have seen Deleuze and Guattari's

conception of the refrain keeps open the potential for its *deterritorialization*, whereby the domicile opens up to the outside and ‘one launches forth’ or ‘hazards an improvisation’. For Adorno the standard and improvisatory detail are bound up with redundant repetitions of the same, and in this he does not depart greatly from Deleuze and Guattari. Nevertheless, an important proviso needs to be made. What Deleuze’s conception of difference and Deleuze and Guattari’s development of this into the refrain bring to the task of corporealizing and analyzing auditory and sonorous subjectivity is the thinking that a repetition of the same is always already a repetition of difference, and to ask by what means the repetition of difference permits an immanent survey of its constitutive irreducibility. The standard is most usually a repetition of difference that amounts practically to a repetition of the same, in other words, redundancy, and one at the level of the culture industry (Adorno) or the *socius* (Deleuze and Guattari) is in both instances bound up with what I have been calling a *dispositif*. The difference is that - in the case of Adorno - to conceive the culture industry as such would be to posit the *dispositif* as rigidly structured in a way that disavows the potential for ethical or affirmative *dis*-positioning, but - in the case of Deleuze and Guattari as has been shown - is upheld. To quote Guattari,

[O]ne has here to contrast the abstract machines of music (perhaps the most non-signifying and de-territorializing of all!) with the whole musical caste system - its conservatories, its educational traditions, its rules for correct composition, its stress on the impresario and so on. It becomes clear that the collectivity of musical production is so organized as to hamper and delay the force of deterritorialization in music as such.<sup>99</sup>

With the 1956 recording of ‘My Funny Valentine’ one to some extent is constituted in terms of auditory subjectivity following the path towards benign familiarity, but



crystallized within this version is the potential for converting its formal ambiguity into something different, something that goes beyond musicological designations and the vocabulary of privated emotion: the molecularization of sound *qua* force-matter whereby the perspective of standardized investment that corrects 'mistakes' to the right note has the potential for a counter-actualization. The decodings of the 'mistakes' in the 1964 recording of 'My Funny Valentine' potentially achieves the conversion by challenging the molarizing, standardizing aspects of song-structure, performance protocol and 'interpretation' and exposing the auditory field to the *rasch*<sup>100</sup> that always threatens to tear a rent into its fabric and irreversibly change things, and that in gathering together the field's component activities into what Christopher Small calls *musicking*<sup>101</sup> one may turn the order-word of standardization into a genuinely novel 'problem', into a 'pass-word' that facilitates incorporeal transformation and promotes passage away from the organizing tendencies of the order-word assemblage straddling the *dispositif*.

There are pass-words beneath order-words. Words that pass, words that are components of passage, whereas order-words mark stoppages or organized, stratified compositions. A Single thing or word undoubtedly has this twofold nature: it is necessary to extract one from the other - to transform the compositions of order into components of passage.<sup>102</sup>

Reprising the quote from Guattari that provided an epigraph for this section, this Chapter will be brought to a close with a succinct re-iteration of the role that the

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<sup>99</sup> Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics* (London: Penguin Books, 1984), pp.106-7.

<sup>100</sup> Deleuze and Guattari invoke Roland Barthes' work on Schumann regarding the '*rasch*' of corporeality his music, cf., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.297.

<sup>101</sup> Christopher Small, *Musicking: The Meanings of Performance and Listening* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1998), p.9: 'To musick is to take part, in any capacity in a musical performance, whether by performing, by listening, by rehearsing or practicing, by providing material for the performance, whether by performing (what is called composing), or by dancing'. See chapter 3.

<sup>102</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.110.



'accident' plays as the catalyst for potential transformation, a shift marked at an affective level by the gap between sensory and problematic affect:

Lapses, parapraxes, symptoms are like birds knocking on the window with their beak. The point is not to interpret them. It is rather a question of mapping their trajectory to see whether they can serve as indicators of new universes of reference capable of acquiring enough consistency to turn around the situation.<sup>103</sup>

The question of how far resistances and potential transformations by and of *musicking* bodies are real, attainable, ethico-aesthetic and political is the topic of the final chapter.

We will look at some of the social machines, technical machines and desiring-machines from which listening and performing bodies are assembled, and how Miles Davis and his 'problem' turns on the complex issues of resistance, transformation, but also violence. Deleuze's claim for a transcendental empiricism and his and Guattari's pragmatics/schizoanalysis/stratoanalysis will be put to the test again, with the question of the relationship between philosophy and non-philosophy to the fore.

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<sup>103</sup> Guattari, *Les années d'hiver*, cited in Kaufman and Heller, [eds.], *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings*, p. 158.

### **Chapter 3 - Strategies of Non-Philosophy: Lines of Flight, Segments of Power**

In this final chapter, the various lines, trajectories and orientations that have been followed up to the present point in this thesis will be brought together in an attempt to produce some more refrains and partial syntheses whilst pursuing more extensively the question of their remit. This chapter will also bring the question of the case into relief in a renewed consideration of the relationality that Deleuze and Guattari find between philosophy and non-philosophy. Music, and once again the jazz innovations associated with Miles Davis will provide the mainstay of the case, but in considering this case the chapter will open out onto a wide array of material which Deleuze and Guattari would place under the aegis of non-philosophy: film, theatre, visual art, and politics. These areas will be explored picking up the threads of the various preceding lines of argument and taking them further with the investigation unfolding from a more detailed examination of the 'life' and 'work' of Miles Davis and returning at various junctures to the problem of investment, considered from the perspectives of gender and race issues and the problematic status of becoming.

#### **Dispositions of Investment 3: The Libidinal Economy of Modal Miles and Monteverdi**

*Coltrane said the reason he played so long on [modal tunes like 'So What'] was that he couldn't find nothing good to stop on.*

Jimmy Heath<sup>1</sup>

*Call it the Modal Manifesto. Subtitle: You Can Feel the Changes.*  
Ashley Kahn<sup>2</sup>

In 1957, Miles Davis visited Paris and - via his one-time lover, the actress-singer Juliette Gréco - met the film-maker Louis Malle. Malle was working on his début feature to be

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<sup>1</sup> Quoted in A. Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, p.70.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.



called *Ascenseur pour L'échaffaud*, translated into English as *Lift to the Scaffold* in the UK and *Elevator to the Gallows* in the US, and asked Miles Davis to compose a 'score' for the film, a request which Davis accepted and produced a series of improvisation-based compositions comprised mostly of 'straight ahead blues themes and simple riffs'<sup>3</sup> in the space of one evening whilst watching the rushes of Malle's film. The word 'mostly' is used here because on one of the tracks produced around the stock of themes that would eventually provide the musical dimension of the film, Davis jettisoned a vertical chordal progression and replaced it with a scale and implied melody. This move arguably marks the initial shift towards the use of modes instead of blocks of chords as the basis for harmony, a scalar or modal conception of musical composition and improvisation that would explicitly inform Davis's work into the mid-to-late sixties, most notably on the land-mark recordings *Milestones* in 1958 and *Kind of Blue* the following year.

In a manner that anticipates the suspended effect of a composition like *Kind of Blue's* "Flamenco Sketches", "Le Petit Bal" on the *Ascenseur* soundtrack eschewed any chordal movement at all, allowing Miles to project a mood by simply playing off one scale, subtly implying a lyrical line.<sup>4</sup>

The themes making up the slower cuts on the soundtrack album are in a minor key and involve a mixture of muted and unmuted melodies and improvisations, again using the Harmon mute, and sometimes mixing muted and unmuted trumpet on the same track. The effect is variable, but usually very blues-oriented and often 'like melancholy', as on 'My Funny Valentine' once again partially a product of the economic use of space and occasionally due to the addition of studio processing using a reverb system that cycles through a virtual-actual circuit to enhance this sense of space. Not so pronounced is the

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid., p.64.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.65.

role played by the Harmon mute. The overall mood of the slower tracks is described by Eric Nisenson as 'indigo'.<sup>5</sup> In 'Le Petit Bal' the effect of the music is very much in keeping with the rest of the soundtrack but for the use of two chords composed of the same intervals played a tone apart repeatedly in a sequence continued almost throughout without any development.<sup>6</sup> The result is that the scale pushes through the chords and thereby becomes emphasized as the key harmonic component. As such, it therefore anticipates the more fully-developed modal composition from the following year, 1958's 'Milestones', recorded for the album of the same name.

The piece which most obviously opens up new territory, and points to the future developments, is the title track, 'Milestones'. Once more, this explores areas touched on in the *Scaffold* film music [...] The whole piece is thus built on only two separate scales, with harmony becoming decorative rather than functional. In other words, when each scale is used, different chords can be picked out from the notes of that scale; the chords may thus change while the scale (and key) remains constant.<sup>7</sup>

In addressing the issue of modality's introduction into jazz during this period one can use it to sound-out at least two very important connected concerns. Firstly, from the perspective of performance, production and reception, modality leads to a reorientation of investment in the *habitus* of tonal music based on chords, along with its tendency towards locking tensor-signs into the restrictive action-reaction circuits confined by the redundancies and order-words of a musical and auditory or sonorous *dispositif*. Aggregated molarities such as the indexing of major and minor keys to different 'moods' as we have seen (major=playful, lively, joyous, etc.; minor=sombre, intimate, indigo, etc.) form elementary

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<sup>5</sup> Eric Nisenson, *The Making of Kind of Blue: Miles Davis and His Masterpiece* (New York: St. Martin's Griffin, 2001), p.46.

<sup>6</sup> The use of chords is not entirely abandoned in modal jazz. There are reasons for this as Ashley Kahn has documented, cf., *Kind of Blue*, p.69, when he invokes the music scholar Barry Kernfeld in saying that 'many jazz soloists would play off a prescribed scale - hitting the same bluesy notes that were an inherent part of chordal jazz. Even musicians like Miles and Coltrane, who adhered more closely to the modal path, suggested chordal patterns in their solos'.



schema that are highly restrictive of the potential to survey the complexity of the investments but also the rigid segmentarity of molarized investment. Perhaps the best indicator of the functioning of auditory or sonorous investment along such lines would be cadential resolution, which itself regulates libidinal discharge according to an exclusive disjunction of successful resolution (pleasure), or unsuccessful, unresolved cadences (pain), thus constraining affective capacity to the narrow latitude afforded it by such an illegitimate either/or.

The second important result of the introduction of modality into jazz affects the relationality between philosophy and non-philosophy *qua* music. Modality was actually introduced into jazz as a theoretical development by the composer-theorist George Russell, whose book *Towards a Lydian Chromatic Concept for Tonal Organization* explores in immense detail the nuanced complexity of modality in its relation to the very rudiments of occidental harmonic and melodic conceptions of music. To what extent Russell's 'Concept' fits the status accorded to it by Deleuze and Guattari is a task that - were it to be done in sufficient detail - would be another project in itself, but its importance to the case and to the question of non-philosophy means that it must be considered, if only on the basis of the limited amount of extant writing presently available on Russell's work.

By providing a more in-depth analysis of these two issues of 'modality' in jazz there opens up the potential for relating the question of investment back to the 'creation of concepts' and also to percepts and affects, as well as for further exploration of the connections between libidinal-economics and the rigid segmentarities of social apparatuses or

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<sup>7</sup> Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.129.



*dispositifs*. However, these ideas will need to be brought into conjunction with some of the critical musicological work done by Susan McClary on the topic of modality to situate its relation to music more historically and, in particular, the rigid segment of gender. It is with a quote from McClary that we shall now proceed, showing as she does the Manichean opposition between masculine and feminine in terms of cadential resolution:

The 1970 edition of the Harvard Dictionary of Music [...] includes the following entry:

**Masculine, feminine cadence.** A cadence or ending is called “masculine” if the final chord of a phrase or section occurs on a strong beat and “feminine” if it is postponed to fall on a weak beat. The masculine ending must be considered the normal one, while the feminine is preferred in more romantic styles.

This standard definition makes it clear that the designations “masculine” and “feminine” are far from arbitrary. The two are differentiated on the basis of relative strength, with the binary opposition masculine/feminine mapped onto strong/weak.<sup>8</sup>

With the development of modal jazz and in particular ‘Milestones’, Miles Davis, his band of the time and George Russell innovated the new non-chordal harmonic system of organization and with this brought a challenge to the convention of using cadences to end passages or whole compositions. By working with the diagonal relation between melody and harmony against the use of more standard chordal progressions, the modal or scalar approach would - as with the example of ‘Le Petit Bal’ - work with very limited harmonic repetitions that would usually involve only the smallest variations or deviations of a tone or even a semitone with the same intervals regulating the few chords that would be used to foreground their modal underside. As a result, a piece like ‘Milestones’ moves between these limited variations from start to end with modulations going into and coming out of the bridge, but retaining the same harmonic approach throughout, and this proceeds to the

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<sup>8</sup> Susan McClary, *Feminine Endings* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), p.11.

‘end’, the quotes indicating the fact that there is no cadential resolution of any kind in either of the takes of the track available on the re-issued CD, both finishing as they do with a fade-out and therefore no definitive closure.<sup>9</sup> The suspensions - musical and libidinal - that result from the move from the suspension-resolution of a cadential sequence of chords are by proxy no longer in evidence, any more than the piece carries a sense of ‘mood’ according to key, whether major or minor, which is also challenged by the composition’s modality, so affectively it is also much harder to characterize. There are a number of other crucially important offshoots of this development for this project to which I shall come shortly.

However, to deal with the matters in hand it is necessary to situate these developments more firmly in relation to the cultural history of musical investment. With regard to this, Susan McClary makes the following point:

The codes marking gender difference in music are informed by the prevalent attitudes of their time. But they also themselves participate in social formation, inasmuch as individuals learn how to be gendered beings through their interactions with cultural discourses such as music.<sup>10</sup>

These codes - ‘overcodings’ - in Deleuze and Guattari’s terms reside at the level of musical signification in which gender is ascribed a given value according to the formal and stylistic traits of a certain musical approach. These significations are structured according to the

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<sup>9</sup> A more detailed description of this approach can be found in the appendix of Nisenson’s book *The Making of Kind of Blue*, described by Russell himself which he first began to develop whilst recovering from tuberculosis in a solarium during the 1940s, cf., p.219: “It was there in the solarium that I began to play the Lydian scale. I took the second tetrachord at the G-major scale: G-A-B-C, in a C-major scale. I said to myself, ‘That sounds the unity’. Then, logically, I just ran the second tetrachord at the G-major scale: D-E-F-G [...]”. Russell has continued to develop his theory since the 1940s and recently published in his own imprint a final version of the work, whose complexity is beyond the scope of this project. The quote from Russell should suffice to indicate in a more musically erudite way the basic details of modal organization.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., pp.7-8.



binary determination of masculine-feminine in which the second term is evaluatively differentiated from the first in a way that makes the problem of a positively constituted musical 'femininity' problematic, and from certain perspectives arguably impossible. McClary's work sets out to challenge the evaluative biases and exclusions that favour masculinity over femininity in music by analysing and debunking a number of musicological myths and by exposing the political and libidinal economics that underscore the problem of affirming feminine difference and the violence that is done to any unconscious threat posed by the possibility of its emergence. For McClary, as has already been hinted, the ways in which these codings are structured changes according to cultural, political, economic and social shifts.

These codings change over time - the "meaning" of femininity was not the same in the eighteenth century as in the late nineteenth, and musical characterizations differ accordingly.<sup>11</sup>

Taking modality into account, she explores in some musicological detail the libidinal economics of Claudio Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo*. In comparing this example to 'Milestones' there are some interesting parallels.

Underlying Orfeo's opening strain is one of the most predictable progressions for that time: the generating modal line initiates a descent through the G-dorian [...] [Y]et instead of simply singing the modal line as his melody [...], Orfeo embellishes its first element to an extreme that is almost unbelievable, given the expectations of the day [...] We are instilled with a longing to hear motion, yet dazzled by the audacity and control with which he stretches out...and out...his initial appeal.<sup>12</sup>

In providing further detail of Orfeo's postponement of libidinal discharge she explains how, during the second section,

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<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p.8.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., pp.40-1.



[T]wice the listener is encouraged to expect the promised resolution - and twice - after tricking us into investing libidinally in hearing that final - [...] [W]hat occurs in the rarified, suspended animation that follows the ruptures is extremely significant [...] [W]hen he approaches the source of his happiness - Euridice and her responses to his sighs - his forthrightness is sidetracked by eros. Gradually that moment of rupture on [section]a becomes the pivot to another pitch centre that lies deep within his modal ambitus [...]<sup>13</sup>

What both of these passages clearly show is that the use of modes in Monteverdi's opera brings with it a libidinal economy that lends itself readily to irresolution or postponed resolution. The ruptures, suspension, pitch-changes and modal transformation all contribute to the musical 'character' of Orfeo and 'his desire-laden frisson' which - even when a cadence occurs (under the burden of the musical *habitus*, including audience expectation) it is not the one expected.<sup>14</sup> This constant bucking of expectation reflects the postponements of Orfeo's fulfilment at the same time as the consummation of desire that the audience anticipates as a necessary correlate of its investment.<sup>15</sup> The overall effect is designed here to be dramatic: to postpone heightens intensity and prolongs it. This might even be a description of a 'plateau' as used by Deleuze and Guattari and, as they argue, effectively paralleled by the 'non-Western' libidinal economy of Taoist sexual practices,<sup>16</sup> away from the 'orgasmic orientation'<sup>17</sup> of the West.

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp.41-2.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p.43.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid.

<sup>16</sup> The expressions 'non-Western libidinal economy' is the description that Massumi to the observations made by Gregory Bateson with regard to Balinese sexual practices, whose term 'plateau' was explicitly taken up by Deleuze and Guattari for their work, cf., Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword', p.24. and Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.21-22; for a description of Taoist sexual practices, cf., p.157: 'A great Japanese compilation of Chinese Taoist treatises was made in A.D. 982-984. We see in it the formation of a circuit of intensities between [...] [T]he condition for this circulation and multiplication is that the man not ejaculate'.

<sup>17</sup> Massumi, 'Translator's Foreword', p.24.

McClary argues that the libidinal economy of the seventeenth century as captured in the work of Monteverdi marks a shift in Western history:

From this moment on in Western history, men are encouraged to stifle their feelings, while women are expected to indulge in emotional expression.<sup>18</sup>

So, the division of masculine-feminine along the lines of stifling and emotional indulgence is a division that, according to McClary, establishes itself as the dominant mode of libidinal-economic production. However, the shift that takes place is marked by a period of ambiguity that she locates between *L'Orfeo*, and Domenico Scarlatti's *La Griselda*, in which

[O]peratic spectacles [...] may not actually have served their masters in as monolithic a way as we might expect. Indeed, in Venice, where a degree of free enterprise tempered the administered culture of the courts, it seems actually to have been in the interest of some of the elite to underwrite spectacles that displayed a more varied, more liberal social network.<sup>19</sup>

This moment - illustrated by Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* - provides an example of not only how music is indexed to social, cultural, and political-economic molarities but how its libidinal orientations can be made to disrupt their statistical aggregation. The period marks an alteration in the libidinal trajectory of official music in which deceiving the audience as to their investments and expectations mirrors the contemporary crisis in most forms of patriarchal authority, and the mask of deceit worn by the 'intellectual libertines' who sought to challenge such authority.<sup>20</sup> Hence, the rigid segment of masculine-feminine bisecting the lines of audition, force and subjection that make up this *dispositif* are also challenged such that, in the case of *L'Orfeo* 'the

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<sup>18</sup> McClary, *Feminine Endings*, p.50.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*, p.51.



extravagant sensuality and the extravagant anguish exhibited by Orfeo come to be regarded as “effeminate”.<sup>21</sup>

This challenge posed to the binary determination of masculine-feminine and the relations of force (*puissance*), power (*pouvoir*) and subjectivity in some ways returns us to the ambiguity of the song ‘My Funny Valentine’ and the 1956 recording by Miles Davis which, in its combination of ‘rueful lament’ and nightclub ‘intimacy’ combines elements that - at the time of Monteverdi - were considered profoundly emasculating and therefore to be avoided. Interestingly, lament and seduction were two key rhetorical forms at the time of Monteverdi’s music, but - when displayed in the intense, protracted postponements of Orfeo - masculine (rhetorical) authority subsides and gives way to a more delirious relation between sexuality and ‘madness’.

While sexuality and madness remain favorite themes of music drama, they prove to be extremely problematic when enacted by male characters. The “mistake” was rarely repeated, for in operas by Monteverdi and others after *L’Orfeo* [...], both forms of rhetoric - seduction and lament - come to be practiced almost exclusively by female characters.<sup>22</sup>

In bringing this deviation back to the issue of modality, and more specifically the modality of Miles Davis’s music, we can use some of the foregoing insights of McClary to further explore the key outstanding ‘problem’ from the previous chapter by considering it in terms of the work of Davis and its documentation, in which one repeatedly finds descriptions of his playing that refer to its tenderness, fragility and vulnerability which - when considered alongside the aggressive aspects of his sound - generates a central paradox informing the

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<sup>20</sup> An observation made by the music historian Lorenzo Bianconi regarding the Accademia degli Incogniti of which the librettist for *L’incoronazione di Poppea* was a member, cf., Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p.50.

'problem' of Miles Davis which is ultimately a problem of violence, and whether affirmative violence to the confinements of a social *dispositif* inevitably entails violence to the superlinear fabric from which it is weaved, is a question which shall be considered towards the end of the chapter and in the conclusion. Before doing this, the focus will remain on Davis's and Russell's conception of jazz modality, to be explored in the next two sections through its embodiment of a Guattarian historico-materialist semiotics of music, the Deleuze-Guattarian conception of the war machine, and their collective work on percepts, affects and concepts.

### The Machinic Heterogenesis of Modality

*What we are aiming at with this concept of the refrain aren't just massive affects, but hyper-complex refrains, catalysing the emergence of incorporeal Universes such as those of music or mathematics, and crystallizing the most deterritorialized existential Territories.*  
Félix Guattari<sup>23</sup>

*[M]usic inevitably refers to other music.*  
Kofi Agawu<sup>24</sup>

George Russell's 'Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization' has a number of features that characterize it as a 'concept' of modal theory, but - as with McClary's analysis of Monteverdi - these developments need to be explored in relation to those other 'factors' of a social *dispositif*. According to Joachim Berendt, Russell's project constituted 'the first work deriving a theory of jazz harmony from the immanent laws of jazz, not from

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>23</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, p.5.

<sup>24</sup> Kofi Agawu, *African Rhythm: A Northern Ewe Perspective* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p.7.



the laws of European music'.<sup>25</sup> Christine Bezat's observations on the matter of 'structural immanence' in music should be borne in mind here in order to distinguish the idea of music embodying its own formal laws independently of social, cultural, political and economic factors, as - to return to Eshun's description of the 'troglodytic homilies' from the previous chapter - are used to try to make music entirely autonomous from the outside of what is, in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of immanence, its own constitutive relationality. Obviously, the idea of immanence as structurally autonomous from social and political co-ordinates invites a necessary degree of suspicion. However, as becomes clear when the idea of the 'immanent laws of jazz' is subject to such scrutiny the likelihood of their being autonomous from the non-structural<sup>26</sup> constitutivity of the *socius* can be dismissed, in a way that re-opens up the question of Deleuze and Guattari's uses of music in relation to those of African and African-American cultures.

Miles Davis's connection with Russell begins during the mid-1940s when - experimenting with modal possibilities - Davis obliquely suggested that the conventions might be opened up to experiment, and it was Russell that he turned to. Whilst he never worked on any compositions as such with Miles Davis he is credited - by Eric Nisenson at least - as being as important as Davis's bands in the late 1950s in helping to shape the modal sound.<sup>27</sup> To quote Russell about his involvement with Davis as early as 1945,

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<sup>25</sup> Joachim E. Berendt, *The Jazz Book: From Ragtime to Fusion and Beyond* (New York: Lawrence Hill Books, 1992), p.412.

<sup>26</sup> It should be noted that the use of the term 'structural' is not to be read in terms of 'structuralism' which - as was suggested in Chapter 1 and has been hinted throughout - is not as antagonistic to the processual thinking of Deleuze and Guattari.

<sup>27</sup> Nisenson dedicates an entire chapter to his 'Rashomon'-inspired approach to the making of *Kind of Blue*, a story told from the perspective of each of the musicians who played on the album (though ominous by their omission are half of the rhythm section: Paul Chambers, the bass player and Jimmy Cobb on drums) and

We used to have sessions together. He was interested in chords, and I was interested in chords. We would sit at the piano and play chords for each other. He'd play a chord and I'd say, "Ooh, that's a killer".<sup>28</sup>

To quote Ashley Kahn, quoting Russell,

"When I asked him in the forties what music he was playing", recollected Russell, "he said he wanted to learn all the changes. That sounded ridiculous to me. Miles knew how to play all the changes". Russell recognized in that comment the essence of the search that eventually led Davis to modes and modality.<sup>29</sup>

The first thing to say in bringing all this back to Deleuze and Guattari is that Russell's claim for the 'non-European' status of modal harmony has two sides to it. Firstly, in distinguishing between European and non-European music it should be borne in mind that the traditions described by Russell as 'European' refer predominantly to the tonal tradition of Classical music. Given that this tradition itself was being pushed to its limits and beyond during the twentieth century by Classical composers, this opens up something of a more productive connection between the work of some 'European' composers and the aims of modal jazz. As a result of this, in finding resources for establishing this new conception the music of Classical composers was analysed and used. Ravel, Debussy, Bartók, Katchaturian and Stravinsky to name just a few. Added to the work of some Classical composers are European folk-traditions, such as the Armenian tradition that influenced Katchaturian, which - in actual fact - is 'basically modal'.<sup>30</sup>

Miles Davis himself listened intensely to the music of Bartók, Ravel, Katchaturian and later in his career Stockhausen and Messiaen. In addition, the crucial role played on the

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George Russell who gets his own chapter and the only appendix in the book, cf., Nisenson's *Kind of Blue*, Ch.3, 'The Lydian Odyssey of George Russell' and 'Appendix'.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p.60.

<sup>29</sup> A. Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, p.69.



1959 landmark modal recording of the Miles Davis Sextet *Kind of Blue* by the classically-trained pianist Bill Evans is marked by a very impressionistic quality that was to some extent a product of Debussy's influence. This first aspect of modal jazz - in Deleuze-Guattarian terms - is one that should be thought of as the embodying a 'war machine', in their specific sense of the expression, in that the machinic 'phylum' that crosses these different musical assemblages was strategically tapped in its development whereby the strata composing the more established, more dominant auditory and sonorous *habitus* of Modern European Classical music were swept along a line of flight, upon which the 'war machine' is constructed. This involved a massive appropriation of the institutionalized European musical innovations and their passage across different assemblages in the tapping of the machinic phylum, which is the movement of deterritorialization itself engendered at the level of matter-force, independently of its double-articulation as forms of content/expression. Bringing it back to the refrain in order to think sound in terms of matter, one must remember that the molecularization of sound produced in its Modern moment is geared towards the freeing of sound from the content/expression nexus, a task massively aided as has been seen by the advent of new technologies.<sup>31</sup> The machinic phylum that is being tapped in the present case could itself be described as the phylum of musical modality. Guattari describes the 'French musical phylum' as catalysed in the 'pentatonic' refrain, and a perhaps by now quite obvious point should be made regarding Kofi Agawu's statement used at the opening of this section, in that whilst 'music inevitably refers to other

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<sup>30</sup> Ibid., p.48.

<sup>31</sup> The idea of war machines constructed through the assemblages of 'jazz' and the intensive transformations allied to the tensor-sign 'Miles Davis' perhaps find their most convincing case in the electric period and the role played by technological development in this construction is something to which we shall all-too-briefly return in the Coda.

music', when it comes to Guattari's conception of music - *à propos* his materialist, mixed semiotics - referentiality is only a relatively small part of the story:

Consider for a moment the example of the pentatonic musical refrain which, with only a few notes, catalyses the Debussyist constellation of multiple Universes:

- the Wagnerian Universe surrounding Parsifal, which attaches itself to the existential Territory constituted by Bayreuth:
- The Universe of Gregorian chant:
- that of French music, with the return to favour of Rameau and Couperin
- that of Chopin, due to a nationalist transposition (Ravel, for his part appropriating Liszt):
- the Javanese music Debussy discovered at the Universal Exposition of 1889:
- the world of Manet and Mallarmé, which is associated with Debussy's stay at the Villa Médicis.

It would be appropriate to add to these past and present influences the prospective resonances which constituted the reinvention of polyphony from the time of the Ars Nova, its repercussions on the French musical phylum of Ravel, Duparc, Messiaen, etc., [...] <sup>32</sup>

This characteristically jargon-ridden passage from *Chaosmosis* takes the phylum, which - as the abstract machine of matter - is bound up with its flow and distribution. Okay, so now the appeal to flux has emerged despite the warnings early on against its hasty affirmation but invoking this term now is not tantamount to joining the ranks of the 'apostles of desire and flux' that Badiou supposedly left feeling 'apoplexy', the task here is to make something more rigorous of Guattari's reconstruction of the machinic phylum of music so that we can use it to produce a diagram of the modal phylum and attempt work towards the inevitable follow-on question: can modal jazz be conceived along the lines (of flight) of a 'war machine'. <sup>33</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, pp.49-50.

<sup>33</sup> Meaghan Morris was quoted as saying earlier that '1227: Treatise on Nomadology - The War Machine' had been hastily appropriated by some of its readers. One of the most notorious sections of the book in its reception and - along with '10,000B.C.: The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)' - is the most far-out of all the plateaus composing the book. As such it invites somewhat readily the 'hippy' and



In '1227: Treatise on Nomadology - The War Machine', the machinic phylum is described as a matter-flow to be followed. Given that the case in question in this section is that of 'nomad-thought' it has been 'populated' by the nomads of the Asian Steppe, their creation of new weapons and tools, their development of new techniques of movement, mobility and projectility. Central to this 'smooth space' is the tapping into of a metallurgical matter-flow that provides the immanent, material conditions of existence for the nomads, who are described as 'itinerant', 'ambulant' and 'artisanal'. It should be pointed out here that the nomads of the Steppe are not of primary interest here and that the fetishistic nomenclature that has followed them has largely missed this point of the war-machine idea. What matter in this instance are the abstract machinic connections that the plateau has to modal jazz, and the key to these connections is in the description of the relation between metallurgy and music:

If metallurgy has an essential relation with music, it is by virtue not only of the sounds of the forge but also of the tendency within both arts to bring to its own, beyond separate forms, a continuous development of form, and beyond variable matters, a continuous variation of matter: a widened chromaticism sustains both music and metallurgy [...]<sup>34</sup>

So the machinic phylum of music, like all machinic phyla constitutes the matter-flow which has to be considered as having a non-organic life, independently of its double-articulations as part of the expression/content captures. This is what makes the machinic phylum the material correlate of the abstract machine because as with the abstract machine it only deals with form as on the order of 'diagrams' or 'diagramming' procedures, the form of a 'map' that is 'immanent to the territory'. A metallurgical 'flow' is indivisible and

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'gothic' readings that it has received and makes the task of using the section to say anything that is not tantamount to some form of theoretical noodling or fetishism, yet that is the task here.

<sup>34</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.411.

irreducible at the level of matter-force, at least from the perspective of its 'molecularity' in Deleuze-Guattarian terms irrespective of the statistical aggregates that a more scientific-physical conception of atoms and molecules might make of it, however, for all of its fluidity it serves multiple functions and in terms of the 'tools' and 'weapons' of the nomads of the case provides the conditions of existence for their war machine, with the invention of the stirrup changing the relationality between human and non-human (horses, weapons, tools, but also the Body of the Earth) compositions and thereby introducing new mobility, or new relations of speeds and slownesses into their relationality. In short, from this Spinozist perspective, the nomads' capacity to act and to be affected has been massively increased.

But what of the sonorous machinic phylum? How does that perform a like task in the 'war machine' of modal jazz? Well, returning to Guattari's description of the French music phylum, we can begin by outlining some of the characteristics of its 'machinic heterogenesis'.<sup>35</sup> We have a head-start in doing this with the list of 'incorporeal Universes of reference' that connect both the French and the modal machinic phylum, the Debussyist Universe, signalled primarily by the pentatonic elements in the piano style of Bill Evans on *Kind of Blue*; but also of Ravel, the folk idioms of Katchaturian, Stravinsky, whose work was used extensively in the compositions of George Russell, and a number of other 'Universes'. Following Guattari the Universes that compose the 'musical refrain' of modality might be listed as follows:

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<sup>35</sup> Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, pp.32-57.



- The Universe of Katchaturian<sup>36</sup>, with the modal aspects of Armenian folksong; additional Eastern European folksong elements tapped into included Slavic music, Turkish, Romanian and Hungarian music<sup>37</sup>:
- the Javene Debussy 'discovered', with his visit to the Universal Exposition of 1889 and the introduction of more pentatonic elements into European music<sup>38</sup>:
- that of Chopin<sup>39</sup>, and Ravel, 'for his part, appropriating Liszt'<sup>40</sup> as well as Rachmaninoff, captured in the sonority of the Dorian mode<sup>41</sup>:
- the Universe of blues captured in the sonority of the Dorian mode<sup>42</sup>:
- that of Spanish folk music, captured in the sonority of the Phrygian mode<sup>43</sup>:
- that of North African and Middle Eastern scales<sup>44</sup>:

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<sup>36</sup> Cf., A. Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, p.70, where Davis is quoted as saying to jazz writer Nat Hentoff: "I think a movement in jazz is beginning away from the conventional string of chords, and a return to an emphasis on melodic rather than harmonic variations. There will be fewer chords but infinite possibilities as to what to do with them. Classical composers - some of them - have been writing this way for years, but jazz musicians seldom have". Kahn points out that '[O]ne of the classical composers Miles was referring to was the Armenian Katchaturian, who uses scales that, as Miles said, "were different from the usual Western scales"'.  
<sup>37</sup> Ibid.: 'The Austrian-born [composer and keyboardist] Zawinul, who would join forces with Miles in the late sixties, brought a native familiarity with ethnic modalities of eastern Europe when he arrived in New York in 1958.

In the early fifties, we were doing modal stuff in Vienna, you know? We were getting into all these different scales from folk music. Where I come from there were all these different influences from Slavic music, Turkish, Rumania and Hungarian'.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., p.74: '[...] Davis and Evans proved to be two musical explorers bound by kindred passions and visions. Both were ardent fans of modern classical composers such as Rachmaninoff and the French impressionists'.

<sup>39</sup> Cf., Berendt, *The Jazz Book*, pp.282-3: '[Bill] Evans [...], in today's terms [...] was the first "modal" pianist. He might be designated a "Chopin of the modern jazz piano", with the eminent skill - without comparison in jazz - to make the piano sound in a way that places him (in terms of sound) in the vicinity of a pianist like Rubinstein [...]'].

<sup>40</sup> Cf., A. Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, where Davis is quoted as saying of the modal approach in the late 1950s. To cite Kahn quoting Davis, "[W]e were just leaning toward - like Ravel, playing a sound with only the white [piano] keys [a common way of defining a mode] .... It was the thing to do.... Like all of a sudden all the architects of the world started making circles, you know, like Frank Lloyd Wright".

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p.71: 'The Dorian mode - favored by classical composers like Ravel and Rachmaninoff - works well as a blues scale and was employed by Miles on "Milestones" off the album of the same name.

<sup>42</sup> Cf., Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.8, where he quotes Davis as having said that '[W]e always played the blues in St. Louis. Bands came up on the boats from New Orleans, guys came down from Kansas City and Oklahoma City, all playing the blues... When I was a kid I was fascinated by the musicians, particularly guys who used to come up from New Orleans and jam all night... you listened to everybody and took the parts you liked. You watched how they hold the horn, how they walk ... I mean, if you're fifteen!'.

- that of Gospel music and slavery songs<sup>45</sup>:
- that of the post-tonal experiments of Schoenberg and the Viennese School<sup>46</sup>.

And, again following Guattari '[I]t would be appropriate to add to these past and present influences [...] prospective resonances', including Gregorian chant with its working through of 'all the permutations of the major scale'<sup>47</sup>, the construction of harmony in European Classical music prior to Rameau<sup>48</sup> and the dominance of the triad, including the use of modes in the music of Monteverdi<sup>49</sup> and the influence that these would have on the modal phylum as followed in jazz and beyond, as part of the modal experiments of John Coltrane in the 1960s, the work of the Second Miles Davis Quintet and the move in the direction of electric jazz and fusion and the new Universes of reference marking the 'deep African thing' that came to be produced in the late 1960s and early 1970s, to which I shall return later in the chapter.

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<sup>43</sup> Ibid., pp.70-1: '[T]he Phrygian can be exploited to exude a Spanish sonority, as on [the Davis album] *Sketches of Spain*'.

<sup>44</sup> Cf., Ibid, p.71, where David Amram is quoted as saying that jazz musicians at this time would listen to 'Egyptian, Lebanese and sometimes music from Morocco, all of which had in common a certain rhythmic pattern and a certain mode'.

<sup>45</sup> Cf., Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, p.104: '[N]o matter what the provenance of the songs, they are seldom if ever sung 'as written', either words or music, even when printed texts are used. Those [...] practices noted by the editor of *Slave Songs of the United States* are still in evidence today: rhythmic elaboration, pitch bending, hand clapping on the off beats, stamping and swaying, call and response and *dense improvised harmonic and heterophonic textures* [emphasis added], and above all an emotional intensity without parallel in European or Euro-American *musicking* [...]'.

<sup>46</sup> Cf, n.50 below.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid., p.70.

<sup>48</sup> Susan McClary, 'Afterword', in Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, Jacques Attali, trans. Brian Massumi, 'Foreword' by Fredric Jameson, 'Afterword' by Susan McClary (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986, p.151: 'Before Rameau' *Traité de l'harmonie* [*Treatise on Harmony*] (1722), theories and pedagogical methods dealt principally with two aspects of music: coherence over time (mode) and the channeling of noise in the co-ordination of polyphonic voices (counterpoint) [...] Rameau, in a striking re-working of Descartes' Cogito manifesto, declared this earlier tradition moribund and, in seeking to build a musical system from reason and science, hailed the triad as the basis of music'.

<sup>49</sup> See the above account of modality in Monteverdi.



Guattari's machinic heterogenesis is not just about the production of universes of reference and the tapping of their phylic connections. In order for this to make more sense and to stop the whole conception of 'Universe' sounding the return of transcendence or naïve idealism, or even worse, mysticism, it is necessary to respect its parallelism with the 'existential territories' formed of machinic links which bring together 'technical machines, social machines and desiring machines' at the level of their concrete materiality, to some extent bringing in the conception of milieus, territories and deterritorialization from '1833: Of the Refrain'. So, what would be some of the milieus components and territories that would be carried along the 'line of flight' of modal jazz?

These milieus and territories are largely to be found in the largely Black-populated districts of New York during the 1950s and would be comprised of a number of diverse spaces including the library, local restaurants and 'belly-dancing clubs'.<sup>50</sup> In addition to these one should add the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Studio on New York's East-Side where the album *Kind of Blue* was recorded, one of the most sustained, definitive experiments in modal jazz of the time and certainly in the career of Miles Davis. Radios, gramophones, engineering equipment and magnetic recording tape would number amongst the technological machines making up the milieu components that constituted these territories<sup>51</sup>, along with human body-parts

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<sup>50</sup> A. Kahn, *Kind of Blue*, p.70: '[J]azzmen of the fifties- in the spirit typified by Miles's music library visits - sought out new and unusual modal patterns beyond the usual major and minor scales [...] New scales would also be found in musical exercise books. "A lot of the scalar material Coltrane was playing was Nicola Slonimsky's Thesaurus of Scales and Melodic Patterns", keyboardists Joe Zawinul remembers, and he adds: "Most of the reed and trumpet players played out of different violin books, and also scale books like [Carl] Czerny' [...] David Amram recalls

I knew about some of those primary modes, because living in New York you could go to these belly-dancing restaurant-bars like the Egyptian Gardens [...] Some of the jazz players were really into that. They'd say, "The baddest cats are Bela Bartok [sic.], Arnold Schoenberg, and the guys playing in those belly-dancing clubs"

<sup>51</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.311: 'Radios and television sets are like sound walls around every household and mark territories (the neighbours complain when it gets to loud)'.

in machinic connection with non-human body-parts: lips/tongues-mouthpieces, fingers-valves, eyes-scores, lips-cigarettes [see fig. 7]. The 30<sup>th</sup> Street studio, an abandoned Greek orthodox church, is also notable for a number of its own milieu components: the 'sound wall' generated by its reverberant room and its wooden (rather than metal) surfaces. Additionally one might add that the sessions he recorded at the studio introduced Davis to his future producer Teo Macero and - of particular importance - the studio itself was run under the auspices of Columbia Records, pioneers of mass distributed music and who patented the invention of the 33 1/3 RPM 'long-playing' record: 'the apparatus of capture' and - as such - a marker for another crucial ambiguity that is allied to the name 'Miles Davis', in his later 'electric' work, which is one of his relationship to Capitalism and power. This shall be returned to later in the thesis. However, it is necessary to return to the question of modal jazz's relation to its African-American connections and - at the same time - to ascertain more clearly what the modal sonorous phylum means to the idea that it comes to embody a war-machine, a question that in some ways sets the terrain for dealing with the ambiguity just mentioned.



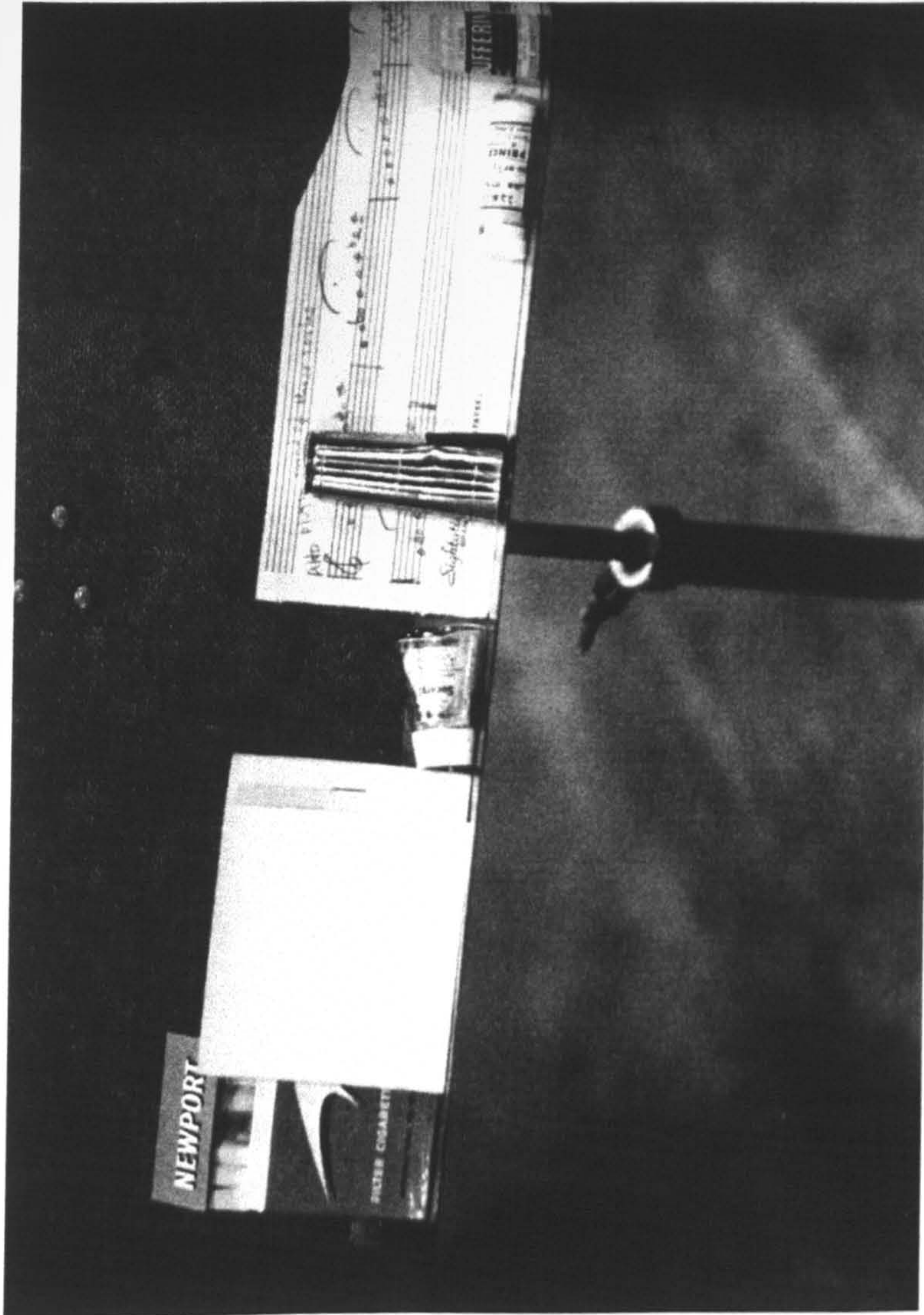


Fig 7.

## 1945-1959A.D.: Treatise on Jazz Modality - A War Machine?<sup>52</sup>

*Writing and music can be war machines.*  
Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari<sup>53</sup>

It has been said a great many times that music is an essential aspect of culture, and documents claiming this with regard to African and African-American cultures are not hard to come by. In some ways, the task of this project is to assess such a claim and ask what can be said of music's functions within contemporary western Capitalist society that does not simply fall into pessimism or nihilism. In the case of Christopher Small and John Miller Chernoff, the particularly fundamental role played by music in African and African-American cultures has itself been allied to an ethics of a similar order than the one that underpins the concerns regarding music here. For some examples of parallels that might be drawn it is worth dwelling momentarily on a few of their observations. To quote Chernoff,

The fact that most people in Africa do not conceive of music apart from its community setting and cultural context means that the aesthetics of the music, the way it works to establish a framework for communal integrity, offers a superb approach to understanding Africans' attitudes about what their relationship to each other is and should be.<sup>54</sup>

Christopher Small quotes Chernoff as saying that

[J]ust as a participant in an African musical event is unlikely to stay within one rhythmic perspective, so do Africans maintain a flexible and complicated orientation towards themselves and their lives [...] The sensibility we have found in musical expression more accurately appears to represent a method of actively tolerating, interpreting and even using the multiple and fragmented aspects of everyday events to build a rich and more diversified personal experience [...]<sup>55</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> I am indebted to Professor John Mowitt for drawing my attention to this connection.

<sup>53</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.513.

<sup>54</sup> Cited in Nisenson, *The Making of Kind of Blue*, pp.2-3.

<sup>55</sup> Cited in Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, pp.23-4.



Personological and interpretative orientations notwithstanding, these accounts of African music in its relation to culture can be transposed into a Deleuze-Guattarian register which - far from being a redundant exercise - will provide a means for grasping what it is that modal jazz has done in 'following' the sonorous phylum and its machinic heterogenesis as described above in a way that gives a much clearer understanding of how far it has gone in taking a line of flight and in assembling its tools-weapons along the lines of a war machine. One must be wary nevertheless of doing with the concept of the war machine the very thing that should be avoided, that is - a hasty affirmation of dispossession and diasporic nomadism that would romanticize slavery and racist exclusion.

The first observation of Chernoff's makes clear that music is important in terms of the potential for moving towards a common notions of the relationality between bodies composing a set of milieus and territories making up a given 'community'. The second observation points to the heterogeneity of the relations composing these milieus and territories and the idea that music contributes to the production of a 'flexible and complicated orientation' towards life and one that is 'rich and diverse', which recalls the description of the 'hyper-complex' refrain of Guattari, the production of which is the task of ethico-aesthetics and a transversal enhancement of subjectivity through its more creative capacities. By way of another quote from Chernoff, we can see that the description given is not simply one pertaining to 'culture', but in actual fact to 'nature-culture'. To quote Small once again,

[...] Chernoff, who himself trained for some years as a drummer in the Ewe tradition of Ghana, makes a strong case for a parallel "between the aesthetic conception of

multiple rhythms in music and the religious conception of multiple forces in the world".<sup>56</sup>

Kofi Agawu's work on the Ewe tradition of complex rhythm reaffirms a conception of its relation to the *socius* as being akin to a hypercomplex refrain:

The absence of a single word for "rhythm" in Ewe suggests that rhythm refers to a binding together of different dimensional processes, a joining rather than a separating, an across-the-dimensions instead of a within-the-dimension phenomenon. I have taken a cue from this interpretation to begin the present study of Northern Ewe rhythm on the broadest possible level, the level of the rhythms of society.<sup>57</sup>

Whilst rhythm and religion - obviously immensely important aspects of African and African-American musics and cultures - is the main concern of Chernoff, and is not simply a product of overinvestment on his part, there will not be sufficient space available to explore either of these areas in the remainder of this project. That said, his observations regarding the parallelism between 'multiple rhythms' and a 'religious conception of multiple forces in the world' can be found to map in terms of the parallelism between the conception of modality and its relations to 'force', or more specifically 'matter-force', which - it should also be pointed out - can be deterritorialized in such a way as to be capable of producing religious and mystical universes of reference.

For all that African and African-American musics might share in the Spinozism constituting perhaps the main refrain of this project, their participation in such an ethics does not preclude its role in a politics, which is a politics of a war-machine against a state apparatus. From the perspective of music, this is an apparatus of tonality, as coded in music, but also as it overcodes music in its relation to the *socius*, and desiring-production.

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<sup>56</sup> Ibid., p.23.



As Deleuze and Guattari say, the state apparatus has its own science, which here is a science of tonality, resonating with mathematics dating back to Pythagoras, horizontal harmonic development and diatonic capture of musical possibility in ways that permit its overcoding to be successful in generating redundancy and resonance at the level of signification and subjectification and thereby is an arbiter of interpellation, or the aggregation of subjectivity in accordance with desiring-repression of state-forms.

Not ones to be entirely negative, Deleuze and Guattari also posit an 'itinerant' or 'ambulant' science of nomadism and the war machine, which bring us back to the smooth space-time of the previous chapter, and its complement: sedentary space. The state apparatus effects its captures in order to regulate space and the behaviours, passages and movements that take place as part of this space. To invoke Deleuze and Guattari's overly-laboured but endlessly useful illustrations, the game of Chess is an embodiment of this type of regulatory space-time because all of the possible permutations are overcoded to the extent that pieces are hierarchized in the designation of specific functions according to top-down rules of organization. To the extent that the organization of state-space involves a 'science', it is a science that promotes this regulative, regulated sedentarity. This point perhaps does not need much by way of its own illustration, given that there are endless daily examples of how science engenders this capture, but to provide just one example from Deleuze, we might refer to the use of Muzak in the regulation of suburban mall spaces, or the enslaved, sedentary televisual subjectivities that make ever greater demands

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<sup>57</sup> Agawu, *African Rhythm: A Northern Ewe Perspective*, p.7.

on the assemblage of each (human) body and its affective correlate: *Countdown*.<sup>58</sup> But what of itinerant science capable of creating and distributing its productions in a smooth space, and moreover a science that is musical? A quote from Jacques Attali (and Iannis Xenakis) should help us here:

*[S]cientism.* Western music theory is expressed essentially in the context of its relation to science and its crisis [...]: “Music is unified with the sciences in thought. Thus, there is no break between the sciences and the arts ... Henceforth, a musician should be a manufacturer of philosophical theses and global systems of architecture, of combinations of structures (forms) and different kinds of sound matter” (Xenakis)[...] Like science, music has broken out of its codes.<sup>59</sup>

Music can be coded, overcoded, but also decoded, and thereby decoding. The quote attributed to the composer Xenakis is telling for a number of reasons: firstly, he equates music, science, philosophy and architecture as being reciprocally bound up with one another in the task of manipulating sonorous matter. This returns us to the problem of non-philosophy and in particular, music, in its relation to philosophy and the status of the concept in relation to non-philosophy. It also suggests that music - with what has been found here to be a supposedly high co-efficient of deterritorialization - is capable under the appropriate circumstances to sweep all these assemblages along a line of flight. So, to bring it back to the sonorous phylum, the war machine and - where we started out in this section - modality in jazz, and in the music of Miles Davis. Returning to the much-laboured board-game example, if Chess is an embodiment of the overcoding procedures of a state-based apparatus or a sedentary science, then the Japanese board-game Go is an embodiment of the smooth space of the war machine, or *nomad-nomos*. The distribution of

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<sup>58</sup> I am indeed referring to the daytime television gameshow here, and Deleuze refers to the French equivalent when he says that ‘[I]t’s rather worrying that there’s an enthusiastic audience that thinks it’s watching some cultural activity when it sees two men competing to make a word with nine letters’! Cf., Deleuze, ‘Mediators’ in *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, pp.128-9.

<sup>59</sup> Jacques Attali, *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, p.113.



counters in this game are arrayed in relation to one another as part of an open system of infinite permutations that are not random but ordered, yet ordered in a way that is non-hylomorphic.

If modal jazz in any way can be considered an example of a war machine that successfully follows the sonorous phylum by assembling its inventory of tools-weapons on a line of flight, it has to be to the extent that in tapping the sonorous phylum that passes across the multiple, machinic and heterogeneous universes of reference and by using its tools-weapons as part of a set of given existential territories to engender passage, or *incorporeal transformation*, extracting from these relations a diagonal that sweeps them along a line of flight: '[T]he immanent power of corporeality in all matter, and [...] the *esprit de corps* accompanying it'. And this bring us back to where we began, with George Russell and his Lydian Chromatic 'Concept'. Firstly, let us situate this 'Concept' in relation to the State apparatus of musical overcoding, with a quote from Russell himself:

Traditional European harmony overlooked a lot. Harmony was viewed in a progressional manner, going from one chord to the five-chord and back to the one. That was considered "harmony". But the dictionary says that "harmony is unity". People completely overlooked the individual chord as a viable and individual entity that has unity and could evolve into a Lydian chromatic scale, with is all of equal temperaments [...] Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring* was recently analysed in some bullshit way, like "Oh, this is the first theme, and then he repeats the second in bars three and four" and so on. But what is really going on in the music? Analysis like this has no name for it.<sup>60</sup>

This points to an approach constituting the primary investment of the academic musicologist as part of an institutionally aggregated *dispositif*, and at the same time implies the overcodings of such analysis as part of a European system of tonality which captures and bisects the lines of the *dispositif* and the lines that patch it into wider *socius* according

to rigid segmentarities (gender, race, and arguably class). So what does the modal Concept do that challenges this in the radical way that is being suggested:

The Concept defined the meaning of 'horizontal' and 'vertical' playing. These terms depend on how the musician relates to the chord of the moment. The vertical player depends on the chord of the moment to access a scale that will enable him to sound the genre of the chord in an artful way. The horizontal player depends not on the chord of the moment, but rather, the chord to which chords are resolving. The non-final chords resolve to a final, and the horizontal player depends on that final, of which he picks the scale to either vertical or horizontal. Horizontal playing had to do with the cotton fields, and the black interpretation of English ballads. That is where the blues come from. Lester Young was the grandfather of the horizontal, and he also played vertically in a beautiful way. Bird personified the melding of horizontal and vertical.<sup>61</sup>

The Concept is therefore designed to explain how it is possible to move away from what Guattari might call a 'despotism' of the 'horizontal' through a reassertion of the 'vertical' and their relative diagonalization. The horizontal, as it is now possible to see quite clearly, is bound up with *resolution* and all that this brings, including the libidinal economics of an 'orgasmic orientation' that plug directly into the state-apparatus and in this instance, post-World War Two capitalism. In following the machinic phylum that cuts across the universes of reference that were listed earlier, modal jazz has constructed an alternative conception of musical harmony that deterritorializes and decodes the universes crossed by the phylum and takes them on a creative line of flight: a diagonal or zig-zag line that acts as a crack, or intensive fault-line between the milieus, territories, assemblages and strata and moreover, a diagonal that has potential to cut a transversal line between the horizontal and the vertical. The horizontal line patches into the phylum as it crosses the Blues universe of reference, a flow of sound-matter that passes through heavily-striated space of slavery to be double-articulated through expression/content of blues music, and a vertical

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<sup>60</sup> Cited in Nisenson, *The Making of Kind of Blue*, pp.220-1.



line rediscovered by Lester Young and Charlie Parker, the latter of whom contributed most to the seismic transformations in the sound of jazz with his Bebop innovations: 'Bird personified the melding of vertical and horizontal' Tapping this lines, Russell, and his Concept, have succeeded in articulating the ways in which the new modality rediscovers the vertical and opens up the possibility of shifting vertical and horizontal along a diagonal, to get back to the 'immanent laws of jazz' (immanent in the broader philosophical sense) and away from the 'laws of European music':

Western traditional music theory overlooked the vertical aspect of music, which means it left out one-third of music. The Concept is the first theory to address that missing third.<sup>62</sup>

For all this, there is a problem. The line of flight is - by definition - a line of *absolute* deterritorialization, and it is not clear at all to what extent the development of modality is located on a line that only reterritorializes on its deterritorializations. This is for a number of reasons. Firstly, whilst it is the case that a war machine is always produced in a relation of reciprocal presupposition with a state apparatus and the question of its success or failure in engendering a creative line of flight away from the overcodings and captures of this state apparatus concerns whether it uses its weapons-tools in such a way as to take the line itself as the end, rather than war as such, and only pursues the latter trajectory to the extent that it attempts to fend off the overcodings and captures of the state. It certainly seems that the assemblages constituting the development construct themselves on a line of flight that taps directly into the machinic phylum passing through all the universes of reference and more that were listed earlier, to the extent that the assemblage is defined in its relation to the war machine as 'every constellation of singularities and traits deduced from the flow -

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<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p.221.

selected, organized, stratified - in such a way as to converge (consistency) artificially and naturally; an assemblage in this sense, is a veritable invention'.<sup>63</sup> Modality, at least from this perspective, would seem to fit the bill. Furthermore, the 'assemblages cut the phylum up into distinct, differential lineages, at the same time as the machinic phylum cuts across them all, taking leave of one to pick up again in another, or making them co-exist'.<sup>64</sup> This would also seem to be the case, as the lineages that are brought together in modality are arrayed such that they transform and are transformed in jazz and the incorporeal universes that are the 'esprit de corps' of these lineages *qua* the sonorous phylum. Where things become less clear is when one has to 'take into account the selective action of the assemblages upon the phylum, *and* the evolutionary reaction of the phylum as the subterranean thread that passes from one assemblage to another, or quits an assemblage, draws it forward and opens it up'.<sup>65</sup>

The assemblages definitely do make a 'selective action' of the phylum, and it is arguably the case that the phylum reacts within and across the assemblages and 'opens it up'. However - whilst the order-word of European music and culture has been challenged by the pass-word of modal jazz, has doubtless in doing so counter-actualized many of the actions-reactions of bodies and tools making up *its* assemblage and extracted from the other assemblages and universes a certain 'incorporeal' power (*puissance*), but it would seem that it remains somewhat limited, localized and circumscribed, in that its existential Territories remain to some extent at the behest of consumer culture. Jazz changed, and

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<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.406.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p.407. Emphasis added.



American culture changed in no small measure during this period. This much is beyond question, yet - as Deleuze and Guattari say of Kerouac - in crossing the frontier there is always the risk of reterritorializations that cause the Body of the Earth, the Body of the Despot or the Body of the Capital to fall back on (*se rabat sur*) the assemblage and its deterritorializations thus introducing new segments into the line, stratifying it and prohibiting its movement, or else combining rigid and supple (more deterritorialized) segments thus turning potential (*puissance*) into power (*pouvoir*). Finally, any failure to maintain a line of flight by the war machine might ultimately be due to an in-built tendency that prevents such a maintenance:

[I]s the war machine already overtaken, condemned, appropriated as part of the same process whereby it takes on new forms, undergoes a metamorphosis, affirms its irreducibility and exteriority, and deploys that milieu of pure exteriority that the occidental man of the State, or the occidental thinker, continually reduces to something other than itself?<sup>66</sup>

This danger concerning the line of flight returns the problem to one that has been spoken of selection, and whether it is ultimately something that can be made, or else whether complexity is hypercontingent such that a strategy such as that which is being developed in the work of Deleuze and Guattari and also in this thesis, is ultimately non-negotiable..

One thing that is beyond doubt is that the nomad of the steppe did not have to contend with the full force of the capitalist axiomatic which would have been beyond its horizon, whereas modal jazz, and jazz and more 'popular' forms of culture in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century have had to. This is the capture of the capitalist axiomatic, and it greatly complicates things, including the assertions that can be made regarding the creative or revolutionary role of

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<sup>66</sup> Ibid., p.356.

music and culture both in the past and in the future. Remember, Columbia Records owned the 30<sup>th</sup> Street Studio, invented the long-player and produced, promoted and distributed Miles Davis's output for most of his career, including *Kind of Blue* - one of the most widely owned jazz records to this day - and *Bitches Brew*, the best selling 'jazz' record of all time.

Returning to Russell's Lydian chromatic Concept, we can also see that - as a monadic embodiment of the wider movements and transformations perceived to be taking place and their limitations - at once gestures towards the potential for a diagonal or zig-zag line *and* for a reassertion of verticality which results in a reterritorialization. It is a question of whether Russell's 'missing third' of harmony pits itself against the other two thirds in a way that sweeps them along a line of flight or whether the '*gravitas*'<sup>67</sup> of the vertical reasserts itself in such a way as to merely substitute for the resolution of the horizontal other reterritorializations which index modal jazz no less thoroughly to the libidinal economy of the dominant culture of capitalism and its reliance on the segmentarity of the white, male adult: '[A]s long as there is form, there is still reterritorialization in music'.<sup>68</sup>

These problems are complex and are destined to remain ongoing. Modal jazz provides a solution to a problem, a very musical problem: how to do all the changes and free up the potential for more extensive improvisation. It is embedded in the production of new universes of reference whose cultural impact is undeniable: Bebop, Cool, Modal, Free, etc., yet it would be naïve in the extreme to imagine that these developments have

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<sup>67</sup> Cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.371.



engendered a revolution at the molar level: all of the pre-existing problems with their ready-made solutions are still much in evidence in the order-words of the state, of racism, sexism, violence and wide-scale material and cultural exploitation. Perhaps they have done so at the 'molecular' level, which is something that I shall come onto quite shortly, but for now it should be flagged as a problem in itself: the problem of understanding exactly how a conception of molar, political transformation can emerge in relation to a molecular one, where every gesture is supposedly political, yet up against the most cynical, insidious and enslaving efforts of capitalism and the apparatuses of capture it uses and exploits to consolidate its internal limit.

Another undeniable feature of George Russell's theory is that - whether or not it succeeds absolutely in deterritorializing the assemblages through which the sonorous phylum passes - it does succeed in producing a diagram that at least suggests the possibility of liberating the phylum of sonorous-matter from its aggregation as part of stratified, doubly-articulated expression/content relations in order to produce new universes of reference that might have a more obvious effect on the apparatus of capture and the political.

Writing and music can be war machines. The more an assemblage opens and multiplies its quantifiers of intensities and of consolidation, the closer it is to the living abstract machine.<sup>69</sup>

More research should be done into the details of Russell's conception of modality and its relation to verticality, horizontality and transversality, in order to determine more accurately what the Russell 'effect' might have been, and how - in a certain register - this

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<sup>68</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p.6. A more detailed consideration of music and sound as they are used in this work will follow.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p.513.

name is a tensor-sign for diagramming nature-culture in and its potential for transformation. Doubtless a contribution has been made towards the production of new affective potential and thereby arguably ethical potential, an aim of certain African and African-American uses of music and culture, if only due to the challenge to the hegemonic libidinal investment in tonality and resolution; in doing this, modality has arguably succeeded in constructing a plateau of intensity. Doubtless also, modality has succeeded in creating something of a smooth space - at least as part of its own assemblages - in that the reassertion of the vertical does at least mean that the metric, linear temporality of the cadence has been replaced by the fade-out of modal harmony, thereby arguably bringing to a juncture the metric and nonmetric multiplicities that permit those *musicking* to 'occupy without counting' (*nomos*) rather than 'count in order to occupy' (*polis*).

Finally, whatever else it is the Concept is geared towards a chromaticism which, as has already been claimed in this thesis, is - in language and in music - characteristically tensorial. For all this, however, one must still ask how far this innovation goes to smoothing the striations of the state and coping with the speedier smoothings used by capitalism. It is a question not just about Russell, about Miles Davis or about jazz, but about the value of the war machine concept itself: does it have the power (*puissance*) to generate widescale ethical and political transformation? Or is it the product of theoretical noodling or - to return to Adorno - the fetish character of theory and the privations of contemporary infantilism? A 'parable' told by Charlie Parker's biographer and relayed by the music writer and composer David Toop embodies the nuanced complexity of all these questions and the stakes that are involved following the sound-matter phylum:



There are stories, perhaps apocryphal, of Charlie Parker following Varèse through the streets of New York, plucking up the courage to ask for private tuition. Varèse played down this not entirely innocent image of the jazzman curled up at the feet of the European master [...] Parker wanted to learn structure, wanted to be taught how to write for an orchestra and was even prepared to cook for Varèse in repayment. “He spoke of being tired of the environment his work relegated him to [...]”. [P]arker struggled for escape, not only from the harmonic limitations of the blues or the conservatism of jazz, but from the expectations of promoters [sic.], record companies and the suffocating embrace of fans.<sup>70</sup>

Parker, pioneer of Bebop and cutting across the ‘vertical’ and the ‘diagonal, pursues Varèse, the ioniser of sound-matter through the streets of New York seeking to move away from the horizontality of the blues and the stratifications of jazz ‘conservatism’ that the music pioneered in his name had already done so much to transform, at the same time as running the gauntlet of poverty, exploitation and ‘stardom’ (capture). ‘Parker’ is a tensor-sign for the diagonal line diagrammed by Bebop whilst ‘Varèse’ is a tensor-sign marking the abstract machine of sonorous matter-force: assemblage and phylum. This is a cautionary tale, especially when it is recalled that Parker died at the age of 34 from the abuse of alcohol and drugs: line of flight/line of abolition?

Whatever the answer to the above questions, one could do worse than quote Robin Mackay on the uses of Deleuze-Guattari at the same time as introducing one of the key terms to be explored in the final section of this chapter:

It remains for us to see how, effectively, simultaneously, these various tasks of stratoanalysis proceed.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>70</sup> David Toop, *Ocean of Sound: Aether-Talk, Ambient Sound and Imaginary Worlds* (London: Serpents Tail, 1995), p.85.

<sup>71</sup> Robin Mackay, ‘Capitalism and Schizophrenia: Wildstyle in Full Effect’, in Keith Ansell Pearson, *Deleuze and Philosophy: The Difference Engineer* (London and New York: Routledge, 1997), p.267. This is actually

Before we get to this, there still remains the outstanding question of to what extent George Russell's Concept is a concept in the specific sense attributed to the term by Deleuze and Guattari.

### Percept, Affect and (the) Concept: The Russell Effect

*Philosophy needs a nonphilosophy that comprehends it; it needs a philosophical comprehension just as art needs nonart and science needs nonscience.*  
Deleuze and Guattari<sup>72</sup>

*What I see is thinking; what I hear is thinking too.*  
Atom Heart<sup>73</sup>

The most clear elaboration of the status of the concept in (Deleuze and Guattari's) philosophy is to be found throughout their last collaborative work, *What is Philosophy?*. Each chapter of this work involves a re-thinking of the role of the concept both in terms of its 'properly' philosophical uses, how concepts inscribe a pre-philosophical plane of immanence which in its very inscription comes into being and how concepts and their 'zones of indiscernibility' or 'neighbourhoods' are 'peopled' by 'conceptual personae' that enable concepts to attain consistency and have a history.

In addition to the philosophical constructions on a pre-philosophical plane of immanence, there are the non-philosophical compositions of art, music and literature that come to occupy a plane relative to the pre-philosophical one, but one that is primarily composed of 'percepts' and 'affects'. There are also other planar constructions to be found which a

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a quote 'sampled' from the last page of *Anti-Oedipus*, in which the word 'schizoanalysis' is used instead of<sup>71</sup> 'stratoanalysis', cf. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.382.

<sup>72</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.218.



relative to the philosophical and aesthetic ones in science and logic, the former produced in terms of functions or ‘functives’ whilst the latter is made up primarily of ‘prospects’. As is perhaps already clear from this brief outline, it is the first two planes that are of particular interest in this study: the plane of immanence of (pre-) philosophy and its concepts, and the ‘plane of composition’ of art, and more specifically, music. However, as science seems to occupy a key place in the description of the war machine, it also seems pertinent to dwell briefly on the role played by functives.

The notion of the conceptual persona is yet another one deterritorialized from the musical writings of the French composer Olivier Messiaen, and his ‘rhythmic *personnages*’ or ‘characters’. By returning to ‘1833: Of the Refrain’ it is possible to track how the passage between the rhythmic characters or *personnages* and conceptual personae proceeds. In this earlier work, Messiaen is invoked to provide the connection between music qua formations of content/expression in the work of the composer but also in terms of its co-efficient of deterritorialization that enables a survey of other content/expression relations on the nature-culture continuum, in particular the contrapuntal conception of nature inspired by the work of Jakob von Uexsküll that was briefly mentioned in the previous Chapter, as well as the work of Konrad Lorenz, Irenäus Eibl-Eibesfeldt and Nikolaas Tinbergen.<sup>74</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Atom Heart, ‘Abstract Miniatures In Memoriam Gilles Deleuze’, from Various Artists, *In Memoriam: Gilles Deleuze, Mille Plateaux*, Sub Rosa, 1996.

<sup>74</sup> As was stated earlier in the project, these are important precursors in the elaboration of a thoroughgoing ethology both because of the contributions their ideas make to articulating a more rigorous conception of becoming-animal and because of their dubious connection to fascism and racism, but unfortunately - despite their relevance - I have had to gloss in order to allow sufficient space for a discussion of the other problematic becomings of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy: becoming-child, becoming-woman, becoming-black, becoming-minor.

The rhythmic *personnage* is characterized in terms of the territorial (leit)motifs that were found to operate in the refrain, and is described as follows:

[W]e should say, rather, that territorial motifs form rhythmic faces or characters, and that territorial counterpoints form melodic landscapes. There is a rhythmic character when we find that we no longer have the simple situation of a rhythm associated with a character, subject, or impulse. The rhythm itself is now the character in its entirety [...] <sup>75</sup>

The rhythmic *personnage* undergoes something of a further deterritorialization in its transformation to conceptual persona, whereby it moves from a non-philosophical plane of composition to a pre-philosophical plane of immanence, and is characterized no longer explicitly as a motif of a musical refrain as before, even if this is one of 'bird-song', but instead becomes a key component of the deterritorialized refrain of thought on the plane of immanence.

The role of conceptual personae is to show thought' territories, its absolute deterritorializations and reterritorializations. Conceptual personae are thinkers, solely thinkers, and their personalized features are closely linked to the diagrammatic features of thought and the intensive features of concepts. A particular conceptual persona, who perhaps did not exist before us, thinks in us. <sup>76</sup>

This shift goes some way to showing the relation between the non-philosophical plane and the pre-philosophical one. No longer able to invoke a notion of the apperceiving subject or even a structured subject residing solely in language or in ideology, in order to attain a sufficient level of consistency philosophy has to call upon its inventive capacities to elaborate and sustain a relational conception of philosophy and non-philosophy that finds a place for the residuum of subjectivity which remains when apperception is removed from the equation, which has been perhaps the key task of Deleuze and Guattari's work one way

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<sup>75</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.318.

<sup>76</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.69.



or another throughout.<sup>77</sup> In *What is Philosophy?*, this relationality is elaborated and sustained using the conceptual persona as the means for exploring the residuum of thinking subjectivity. The persona populating the plane of immanence a numerous and - by implication - *What is Philosophy?*'s 'manifesto' for philosophy invites the 'reader' who is inclined towards philosophy to go away and create their own. In providing a head-start, Deleuze and Guattari enumerate the following personae: friend, claimant, rival and idiot, all of which mark positions that thinking subjectivities might adopt in their inscription of/on the plane of immanence, and all of which can be found to have functioned in various mixtures throughout the course of 'geophilosophy'.<sup>78</sup>

When it comes to outlining the role played by affect and percept, and their relation to the concept, it is necessary to shift registers onto a plane of composition. In this work, following on from the highly detailed and as yet underexplored elaboration of perception-images and affection-images derived from Bergson by Deleuze and put extensively to

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<sup>77</sup> In this last work that the two authors produced together, the question not just 'what' is asked, but also 'why', in that it attempts to address the declaration of the 'death of philosophy' that predated it in the postmodern 'impasse' of the 1980s and its relation to capitalism. It is no longer presupposed that philosophy is a question of how one makes it work, but why it might still be important to do so in an age 'when computer science, marketing, design, and advertising, all the disciplines of communication, seized hold of the word concept and said: "This is our concern, we are the creative ones, we are the *ideas men!* We are the friends of the concept, we put it in our computers". This enormously important issue will be tackled in some measure towards the end of this essay.

<sup>78</sup> For example, the friend of the concept is a persona that they find operating in the original Greek conception of 'philo-sophy', and one that continues to function across the history of philosophy up to the present. Along with the claimant, lover and rival the friend composes 'transcendental determinations that do not for that reason lose their intense and animated existence, in one persona or in several': determination-indeterminacy; the idiot as conceptual persona is - for Deleuze and Guattari - to be found in Descartes' method of doubt and in Dostoyevsky's 'idiot', inscribing the plane according to the 'image of thought' that it simultaneously constructs: '[I]t is the Idiot who says "I" and sets up the cogito, but who also has the subjective presuppositions or lays out the plane. The idiot is the private thinker, in contrast to the public teacher (the schoolman): the teacher refers constantly to taught concepts (man-rational animal), whereas the private thinker forms a concept with innate forces that everyone possesses on their own account by right ("I think"). The idiot is a conceptual persona'; in Dostoyevsky the idiot is modified to become a persona that turns 'the absurd into the highest power of thought', and the fact of its appearance in Dostoyevsky's work

work in his *Cinema* books, percepts and affects are (for once!) lucidly and succinctly described.

Percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them. Sensations, percepts, and affects are beings whose validity lies in themselves and exceeds any lived.<sup>79</sup>

We will return to look at percepts and affects in a little more detail in the next section, but for now we need to consider just what it is that links the percepts and affects of modal jazz during the mid-late 1950s to concepts, and George Russell's Lydian Chromatic Concept.

Percepts and affects, as 'blocs' on a plane of composition that are independent of those who 'created' them and last only as long as the bodies that enter into a relation of becoming with them partake of that relation, only to be activated again when the same body (which is no longer the same, like Ronald Reagan after his 'amputation') or different bodies (which are always already different) partake of such becomings. To the extent that this is the case it follows that memory is never something invoked when bodies participate in affective or perceptive becomings, at least as a 'childhood memory' or nostalgia, but through 'blocs of childhood that are the becoming-child of the present'.<sup>80</sup> When it comes to the becomings-child of non-philosophy, Deleuze and Guattari claim the following:

Music is full of them. It is not memory that is needed but a complex material that is found not in memory but in words and sounds: "Memory, I hate you". We attain to the percept and the affect only as to autonomous and sufficient being that no longer owe anything to those who experience or have experienced them [...]<sup>81</sup>

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testifies to the capability of non-philosophy (in this case, literature) to mobilize conceptual persona and in doing so to be 'philosophical'.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., p.164.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., p.168.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.



Furthermore, they use Messiaen and his conception of rhythmic personae or characters and ‘melodic landscapes’ which they first used in ‘1833: Of the Refrain’.

Affects are precisely [...] non human becomings of man, just as percepts [...] are nonhuman landscapes of nature [...] This is true of all the arts: what strange becomings unleash music across its “melodic landscapes” and its “rhythmic characters”, as Messiaen says, by combining the molecular and the cosmic, stars, atoms and birds in the same being of sensation.<sup>82</sup>

If conceptual personae occupy a plane of immanence of thought in relation to the concept, then in occupying a plane of composition rhythmic characters or personae come into being by becoming with percepts and affects, the former of which involve a ‘centre of action’ in a relation to the world conceived of in itself as perception. This is Bergson’s understanding of perception, or more specifically, of the perception-image. This is why Deleuze and Guattari describe percepts as landscapes. As regards affects, these always accompany percepts in that a given centre of action will always constitute a perception-image or percept with the world that constitutes it in that this centre will always be given to undergo a change in the relational shifts of the centre of action and ‘its’ perception. This complex Bergsonian idea is best described in the *Cinema* books, and even better in the films that Deleuze chooses as his cases. Again, this shall be returned to in the following section. But what of ‘modality’? We are given a clue by Deleuze and Guattari’s observations regarding non-philosophy, including music:

In each case style is needed - the writer’s syntax, the musician’s modes and rhythms, the painters lines and colors - to raise lived perceptions to the percept and lived affections to the affect.<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p.169-70.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid.

As was shown earlier in this chapter, modal jazz moves beyond the totalizing conception of harmony rendered purely horizontally along with its incumbent resolutions, and thereby altering the relation of music to the libidinal investments constituting listening or auditory subjectivities. Conceived along the lines of percepts and affects it is possible to further qualify this transformation in jazz: the use of modes changes the relation between melody and harmony such that the new relation that modality constitutes between them is one that changes melody into 'fragment' ('Le Petit Tabac', in/on *L'Ascenseur pour L'échaffaud*) or into extended improvisation ('Milestones' and *Kind of Blue*) and which changes harmony into a more vertically-oriented construction that allows minimal chords to be used as a means to modal ends by allowing the modes to push through the limited chordal structures. In doing this, modality moves away from harmonic resolution in ways that force an alternative description of its workings, one which has to take account of the new relations between melody and harmony, where melody can be said to have become motival or tensorial - a *character* of modality - which creates affects that are specific to the modal deployment of melody, ones that submits 'forms and motifs to temporal transformations, augmentations or diminutions, slowdowns or accelerations, which do not occur solely according to laws of organization or even development'.<sup>84</sup> This description pertains to any instance in which music succeeds in deterritorializing a refrain, but to the extent that it occurs in modal jazz it applies specifically in relation to the way that harmonic and melodic interaction temporalize thus making it irreducible to the pulsed time of metricity,

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<sup>84</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.270.



which brings to the music an element of 'non-pulsed time' that engenders a musical time that is not unlike that of Minimalism and its phase-transitions.<sup>85</sup>

Certain modern musicians oppose the transcendent plan(e) of organization, which is said to have dominated all Western classical music, to the immanent sound plane, which is always given along with that to which it gives rise, brings the imperceptible to perception, and carries only differential speeds and slownesses in a kind of molecular lapping [...]<sup>86</sup>

Listening to the modal jazz of Miles Davis and George Russell, and even more so to the 1960s modal experiments of John Coltrane, there is undeniably an element of 'molecular lapping', an inscription of the plane of composition, where melody arguably *does* become theme, or at least the music becomes irreducible to its melody and harmony and melody enter into a modified relation to one another that inscribes the plane of composition in a particular way.

In fact, the most important musical phenomenon that appears as the sonorous compounds of sensation become more complex is [sic.] that their closure or shutting-off [...] is accompanied by a possibility of opening onto an ever more limitless plane of composition. According to Bergson, musical beings are like living beings that compensate for their individuating closure by an openness created by modulation, repetition, transposition, juxtaposition.<sup>87</sup>

The question of whether modal jazz successfully produces compounds of sensation capable of 'standing up'<sup>88</sup> is a question of how one conceives its relation to openness. Certainly, it is bound up with a complex relation to modulation, repetition, transposition and juxtaposition, and as has been shown it definitively opposes harmonic closure, at least in the examples that were examined earlier. To the extent that it succeeds in achieving this, it

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<sup>85</sup> Deleuze and Guattari rightly point out that the music of Steve Reich and Philip Glass has an element of non-pulsed time as one of its key characteristics, cf., *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.542n.46.

<sup>86</sup> *Ibid.*, p.267.

<sup>87</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, p.190.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, p.164.

can be said - in terms of the definition of the 'theme' given by Deleuze and Guattari - that it performs an 'unclenching, splitting, opening' of its motifs and in doing so generates new 'sonorous compounds'.<sup>89</sup> As such, it successfully creates percepts, in terms of the 'landscape' that the music composes between auditory body *qua* centre of action - that is - a modification of the 'field' of perception that alters in some way the relations composing it and the '*visages*' of the characters emerging in this field through the non-pulsing of musical time. Accompanying these percepts are affects where the centre of action undergoes changes of degree or intensity according to a) a libidinal investment in the music and b) permission granted to the music to engender intensive difference in the listening body.

It should be stipulated however that - whilst there is clearly an argument for the attainment of a diagonal 'thematic' transformation of compositional elements in modal jazz - the question of whether this is an example of 'popular music' is not a simple one. Miles Davis, as much of an entrepreneur as he was a musician, composer and bandleader (an issue that I shall go on to discuss shortly), always endeavoured to make his music popular to a wide audience. Where the diagonal line of Charlie Parker's bebop innovations 'closed more clubs than it opened',<sup>90</sup> Davis and the cool, modal and fusion experiments would each respectively attain a high degree of popularity that makes it possible to argue against Brelet's and Deleuze and Guattari's formula distinguishing Classical from Popular music. This is certainly the case with *Kind of Blue*, which as was said earlier has gone on to be the most popular jazz album of all time, and one which - if there is one jazz album that a

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<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ken Burns, *Jazz - A Film By Ken Burns*, Dd Video, 2001.



person is likely to own - it is likely to be this one. However, this popularity may come at a price. We will see this briefly as the electric period receives summary consideration as this thesis draws to a close, but where it concerns modal Miles Davis, the price may ultimately be one of a reterritorialization of the musical innovations on a rigid segment of gender binarity that the music does so much to challenge and escape, *at least on a formal level*, if not entirely at the points where it patches into the *socius*.

To the extent that the modal Concept succeeds in plotting a transversal line between vertical and horizontal it involves 'sonorous blocs of variable individuation but that also opens them up or splits them in a space-time that determined their density and their course over the plane', it creates percepts and affects. But is the word 'Concept' here describing a compound of sensation, or is it describing something else: a concept, or even a function.

Once again, perhaps only a provisional answer can be given to this question (remember that it is a question of finding a solution worthy of the problem, which often means complicating the situation rather than seeking its resolution) and this brings us back to Guattari's four functions and the distinction between sensory affect and problematic affect. It has been shown how it is that one might legitimately ascribe to modal jazz a stake in the production of percepts and affects, but whilst it produces sensory affects which are more or less intense as they solicit or extract their affective responses from the invested listening body, it needs to be capable of producing problematic affects that permit a survey beyond the double-articulation of expression/content relations and produce a diagonal tending towards affect's problematization, and thereby towards the abstract machine. If the modal

Concept is capable of extracting from the relations of percept and affect their abstract machinic constitution then it is possible that the Concept is able to build a bridge<sup>91</sup> between the plane of composition and the plane of immanence of thought and thereby enable *the* Concept to be rendered as *a* concept.

Sensory becoming is the action by which something or someone is ceaselessly becoming-other (while continuing to be what they are) [...] whereas conceptual becoming is the action by which the common event itself eludes what is. Conceptual becoming is heterogeneity grasped in an absolute form; sensory becoming is otherness caught in a matter of expression.<sup>92</sup>

The extent to which Russell's Concept is a concept in the Deleuze-Guattarian sense is the extent to which it succeeds in plotting the diagonal or transversal line towards the 'absolute form' of the abstract machine, not just independently of forms of content/expression, but also of the *matter* of expression. As a result, the problem is the same one that was encountered when trying to determine the extent to which modal jazz constituted a war machine, except that instead of trying to discern the extent to which it provides access to the phylum, or 'abstract machine' of matter, it is a question of the extent to which it enables a survey of the incorporeal plane of immanence of thought. Again, the answer to the question is dependent upon whether the Concept succeeds in plotting its transversal in a way that does not fall foul of '*gravitas*', and - given that a conception of tonal gravity underscores the Lydian Concept - to determine whether this engenders a new form of harmonic resolution or reterritorialization - it is a question that must remain somewhat open until further research into the Concept has been carried out. In addition, if it is to successfully create a bridge across the planes then one must not just discover its 'rhythmic' personages, but also its conceptual persona(e).

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid., p.17.



Despite the inconclusiveness of this consideration of the Concept and the concept, one thing remains certain, and of unequivocal importance. Where it concerns the pragmatic remit of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy and its political worth, it needs to be pointed out is that the question of the relation between percept, affect and concept - far from necessarily or simply being an act of theoretical noodling - is one that Hardt and Negri might call a question of the 'general intellect', which is to say that some of the political force of Deleuze and Guattari's work in this area needs to be refigured along the lines of the intellectual work done by non-academic groups. The attainability of the concept, as has been shown is bound up with an ethical trajectory in that it involves surveying outwards towards the abstract machine of content/expression articulations. If a move beyond the micropolitical concerns of the group is to be made towards a re-figuring of wider or more molar political struggles, it is imperative that the claims on the concept made by non-white, non-middle-class and/or non-male groups - whether consciously philosophers, intellectuals, or not - be considered in a way that is sensitive to its singularity and force in the thought and action of such groups, and thereby sensitive to the danger of its appropriation. The status of the Concept in African-American music is, therefore, bound up with the issue of intellectual status of African-American culture.

What of the Concept's relation to scientific function, then? This is a difficult question, primarily because there is a complex relation between the itinerant science of the war machine in *A Thousand Plateaus* and the conception of (state?) science as it appears in *What is Philosophy?*, that has yet to be explored or articulated sufficiently. In the latter

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<sup>92</sup> Ibid., p.177.

work, science is - according to Deleuze and Guattari - bound up with the incarnation of 'events' in 'states of affairs', where the 'partial observer' is substituted for the conceptual persona of philosophy and the rhythmic persona or character of art. This move towards an actualization of the event makes of science a trajectory ostensibly opposed to the one of philosophy which seeks rather to extract events and ultimately the Event from states of affairs (counter-actualization). This is perhaps what most clearly distinguishes the itinerant from the 'Royal' scientist in the former work, given that the itinerant scientist - for example the smith incarnating the metallurgical phylum in the production of heterogeneous assemblages capable of following the flow the phylum along a line of flight - inclines more towards the extraction of events from states of affairs in the very attempt to follow the phylum, diagramming the abstract machine of matter. The Royal scientist, in the service of the state apparatus, is involved with the overcoding of the assemblages of such a war machine, whose science could be said to be restricted to a 'plane of reference' and the extraction of variables for analyses from states of affairs by way of a partial observer. The itinerant scientist on the other hand seeks 'continual variation' which cannot be restricted to the plane of reference, the limitations of which are echoed in Guattari's four functions and the restricted role of the referent in the construction of a diagonal, and rather inscribes the plane of immanence.

The distinction between science and philosophy in *What is Philosophy?* ultimately boils down to the different between two types of multiplicity: '[C]oncepts and functions thus appear as two types of multiplicities or varieties whose natures are different'. If itinerant science inclines more towards the plane of immanence of matter-flow than towards its



overcoding or gridding, then it would seem, it is a 'transitional multiplicity' which challenges arborification in its production of rhizomatic connections. Insofar as music, and specifically modal jazz is bound up with multiplicity, it is this kind of multiplicity which it engenders, which again is not to say that it is without its arborescent connections. Whilst the connection between the itinerant scientist of the war machine and the scientist of *What is Philosophy?* remains somewhat uncertain, not least of all because this book seems more conservative in its exploration of science and even a little reluctant to recognize the 'crisis' that Attali diagnosed, one which brings complexity theory, for example, into much closer proximity with philosophy. What is much clearer is the relation of the scientific 'function' to the concepts, percepts and affects of the other planes.

If there is a difference between science and philosophy that is impossible to overcome, it is because proper names mark in one case a juxtaposition of reference and in the other a superimposition of layers: they are opposed to each other through all the characteristics of reference and consistency. But on both sides, philosophy and science (like art itself with its third side) include an *I do not know* that has become positive and creative, the condition of creation itself, and that consists in determining *by what one does not know* - as Galois said, "indicating the course of calculations and anticipating the results without ever being able to bring them about".<sup>93</sup>

Art and music then, along with science and philosophy, are marked equally by a specific enunciation, 'I do not know', an enunciation that evaporates from the surface of the event, whether it is actualized or counteractualized, and this enunciation is *exactly the one we find indexed to problematic affect*, as opposed to 'I feel', or 'I like', or 'I believe', etc. In the case of modal jazz, to the extent that the enunciation is connected to a specific use of the scientific function on the plane of composition and not on the plane of scientific reference, it marks a technical problem: how to move away from the tonal laws of European music and 'towards the immanent laws of jazz'.

There are indeed technical problems in art, and science may contribute toward their solution, but they are posed only as a function of aesthetic problems of composition that concern compounds of sensation and the plane to which they and their materials are necessarily linked.<sup>94</sup>

The *function* of the 'technical problem' is one therefore of *the creation of affects and percepts*. As such, the function of the proper name 'George Russell' is to mark the modal harmonic inscription of the plane of (musical) composition that - whilst taking up the uses of modality from other Thesis indexed to other proper names - seeks to create a *specific* universe for modality in jazz, and all that entails regarding the attempt to produce an *African-American* culture. As Deleuze and Guattari say of Kafka, we might say that 'Russell' operates as a tensor marking the transformations of modal jazz on the order of the 'Russell function' or, as one might say of Döppler, a the 'Russell effect', which leads one to conclude that - regardless of whether we can use the name to mark a concept.

### **Gesturing towards the Event: The Davis Effect and Becoming-Black**

*A good way of judging a piece of music with a text is to try out the different attitudes or gests with which the performer ought to deliver the individual sections: politely or angrily, modestly or contemptuously, approvingly or argumentatively, craftily or without calculation. For this the most suitable gests are as common, vulgar and banal as possible.*  
Bertolt Brecht<sup>95</sup>

*Sensorial/motorial hypothesis*  
*Gestures can conjoin sounds and sights. Take the infant as it learns to reach for a noise or a colour, and then to associate the two qualities of an object, using the gesture as confirmation: what is seen and heard can be located with the hands.*  
Thomas Lamarre<sup>96</sup>

*My mother said to me, "Miles, you could at least smile for the audience when they're clapping so hard for you, love what you are playing because its beautiful".*

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<sup>93</sup> Ibid., p.128.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid., p.196.

<sup>95</sup> Bertolt Brecht, 'On Gestic Music', trans. John Willett, from <http://www>.

<sup>96</sup> Thomas Lamarre, 'Diagram, Inscription, Sensation', in Massumi [ed.], *A Shock to Thought: Expression After Deleuze and Guattari*, p.160.



*I said, "What do you want me to be, an Uncle Tom?"*  
Miles Davis<sup>97</sup>

*The name "Signifying Monkey" shows [the hero] to be a trickster, "signifying" being the language of trickery, that set of words or gestures which arrives at "direction through indirection".*  
Roger D. Abrahams<sup>98</sup>

Another ballad of which Miles Davis was very fond is 'Autumn Leaves' from the poem 'Les feuilles mortes' by Jacques Prévert, written in 1945 and set to music by Joseph Kosma. As the quote used in the epigraph indicates, it is something of a lament, a song for estranged lovers. In 1960, Davis performed 'Les feuilles mortes', or 'Autumn Leaves' as it has come to be known in English, at L'Olympia in Paris. This was not by any means the first time Davis had performed this song. He is known to have played it as early as 1950 and famously performed it in Berlin in 1958 with Cannonball Adderley, the 'joyful' alto saxophonist he recorded with on *Kind of Blue*. However, what marks out the 1960 performance - at least in terms of its *recording* - is that it is a striking and exemplary sonorous inscription of a well-known Miles Davis performance trait: turning his back to the audience. We hear this very clearly when - at 1 minute and 20 seconds - the sound of the trumpet diminishes almost to inaudibility as it is moved away from the stage microphone. With the exception of a few slightly more audible notes, the trumpet remains distanced from the microphone until 1 minute and 47 seconds.

As with 'My Funny Valentine', both in 1956 and 1964, as well as 'Blue in Green', 'All Blues' and 'Flamenco Sketches' - three of the five tracks on the original Columbia release of *Kind of Blue* - Davis again uses the stemless Harmon mute. Once more the effect of the

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<sup>97</sup> Davis and Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography*, p.245.

<sup>98</sup> Cited in Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, p.74.

amplified mute, coupled with the 'lyrical' or even 'vocal' style of Davis's playing and his minimalist technical approach to the instrument is one that combines 'intimacy', and arguably seductiveness, with 'lament'. In the molar register, this channels affect along the lines of 'feeling' or 'mood' that enable the listener or the analyst to describe Davis's 'interpretation' as 'like melancholy', or as 'indigo'. In addition, and as before, the timbre of the muted trumpet as played by Davis is one that oscillates between mid-range, *sotto-voce* softness, and shrill, piercing visceral quality it acquires when played in the upper register, especially when it is played loud. As the contemporary jazz trumpeter Wynton Marsalis describes it, the sound is 'soft, but intense'.<sup>99</sup> However, whilst we may use this observation of Marsalis to jump headlong into a Deleuze-Guattarian rendering of this 'intensity', this will not primarily be the task here. This is partly because there remains considerable ground to cover in an increasingly short word-space, but also because by thinking about the combination of softness and 'intimacy' with 'intense' harshness, the argument gestures in another direction, one which has been mentioned at various points in this essay as important, but yet to be properly considered. As a result, we are headed in the direction of violence, or more specifically the dangers implicit in becoming, and moreover in Deleuze and Guattari's theorization of becoming. These dangers are ones that are anticipated in advance by Deleuze and Guattari but nevertheless may still have befallen their rendering of the of the concept in some measure which leads to a call for extra vigilance, or 'sobriety' in dealing with its potential and potential limitations.

Things are about to get even more complicated, because in asking this question of becoming we must also consider what the case of Davis's gesture contributes to such a

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<sup>99</sup> Burns, *Jazz*



process, with its potential and its dangers/limitations, and what this means for the status of the case in Deleuze and Guattari, in this project and in thinking further the relationship between the non-philosophy of (Miles Davis's) music and a materialist philosophy of immanence. As it turns out, the gesture helps a great deal in this regard, and in bringing the to the simultaneous analysis and (re-)construction of the case of Miles Davis under way here a lever for thinking more thoroughly the relationship between ethico-aesthetics and (micro)politics that aims to remain firmly within the remit of Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, and which succeeds in promoting the tasks of stratoanalysis/schizoanalysis.

With the question of Davis's gesture it is appropriate to commence by providing testimony to the ambiguity, and as we shall come on to see, profound ambivalence underlying its conceivable motivations. As before, this exercise is one that attempts to strategically negotiate the molar and molecular and will soon require a shift of register on the thesis's part, a shift towards the questioning of this very strategy through Deleuze, Guattari and Davis. However, beginning with a sounding-out of the aforementioned motivations, we can list a number of documentary accounts of Davis's in/famous gesture.

In Chapter 2 we encountered a characteristic example of Davis's 'attitude' in Ralph Gleason's account of his reticence regarding the value of writing about his music. In the same piece on the Blackhawk concert in 1961, just a year after the performance of 'Autumn Leaves' under consideration here, he writes of Davis's attitude on stage:

The debate over his onstage attitude has raged wherever he has appeared: Is it pretense? Is it real? His refusal to make announcements, his habit of leaving the

stage when others are soloing, his occasional turning of his back to the audience, are either vigorously defended or attacked, depending on one's point of view.<sup>100</sup>

In another article by Gleason, 'Jazzmen Not Vaudevillians', he elaborates by suggesting some of the possible motivations for such an ambiguous attitude:

He eschews the spotlight; never smiles, makes no announcements. Many people are annoyed when, at the close of his solo, Davis walks off the stage. The Davis syndrome in performance is free individual creation, always a major part of jazz, carried to the ultimate... Davis's music is as uncompromising as any in history. Sociologically, he has become a symbol of the contemporary Negro as well, winning his success solely on his merits with no bending to public taste, no concession to entertainment and absolutely no cultivation of 'contacts' or anyone likely to do him any good. In other words, no 'Uncle Tomming'.<sup>101</sup>

Ian Carr locates his citing of Gleason and his own embellishment of the account in his chapter entitled 'After Coltrane', marking the end of his collaboration with Coltrane in 1961, and the period where Davis's attitude attained its notoriety.

It was at this time that people were beginning to notice Miles's apparent obliviousness regarding audiences: his unwillingness to make announcements either of tunes or of the names of his musicians, and his persistent refusal to acknowledge applause. He had been behaving this way for years, of course, but now that so many people were aware of him, many having only recently discovered his music, his stage demeanour became the subject of comment.<sup>102</sup>

So, it was no new thing at this time, but what was new was the popularity of Davis. Whilst he had attained recognition and respect amongst the jazz community and its fans since his early outings with Parker and Gillespie, with the success of the modal phase encapsulated in the exceptionally popular *Kind of Blue*, his music was reaching wider audiences internationally as well as in the United States, such that relative newcomers to the scene were perturbed by his on-stage demeanour and behaviour:

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<sup>100</sup> Gleason, 'At the Blackhawk', p.83.

<sup>101</sup> Ralph J. Gleason, 'Jazzmen Not Vaudevillians', cited in Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.164.



There were also in-depth articles in French jazz magazines that same year, and one of them, in a long piece entitled, “Why So Mean, Miles?”, commented: “The behaviour of Miles Davis is not that of an ordinary star. It is that of a strong man who has decided to live without hypocrisy.”<sup>103</sup>

So, whilst the critics and commentators attempted to find legitimating grounds for such an attitude, audiences oftentimes remained perplexed.<sup>104</sup> In terms of the career and ultimately the ‘life’ of Davis, the shift towards increased popularity brought with it a shift in status and recognition with both ethical and political ramifications. This would happen again in 1970 with the release of *Bitches Brew*, and would bring with it even more controversy.

The ‘problem’ then, at least as far as Gleason is concerned, is accounted for politically in that Davis’s refusal to engage in any form of banter or *repartée* with the audience was an active and conscious aloofness calculated to distance Davis’s demeanour from those of some of his forebears:

As much as I love Dizzy and loved Louis “Satchmo” Armstrong, I always hated the way they used to laugh and grin for the audiences. I know *why* they did it - to make money and because they were entertainers as well as trumpet players. They had families to feed.<sup>105</sup>

Davis’s dismissal of Parker and Gillespie is perhaps a little too unequivocal given the ambiguity of his own attitude. There is an argument that the grinning and laughing was tantamount to a Signifyin(g) on white racist appropriations of African-American culture. For example, in the case of Louis ‘Satchel Mouth’ Armstrong his demeanour could have

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<sup>102</sup> Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.164.

<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> In actual fact, by the time of 1960-1 it was certain European audiences that were finding this a problem, in particular the British audience for Miles concert tour of 1960. French audiences, who were perplexed and angered by Davis’s antics in 1957 when he toured Paris whilst making the soundtrack to *L’Ascenseur pour l’échaffaud* had by the 1961 concerts, amongst which numbers the L’Olympia concert being discussed here, become quite used to it and had ceased to find it a problem.

been strategically cultivated as playful Signifyin(g) embodies: the Negro with the big white grin as the Monkey or trickster feigning compliance as the means to infiltrate the Lion's domain.<sup>106</sup> Davis, for his part, seems far more militant. As a musician of his generation there was a greater awareness of stratification and segmentation effected by the molar aggregates of white-dominated culture (Davis's relation to the capitalism that provides the immobile motor of capture demonstrates less awareness as shall be discussed briefly in the conclusion). It is almost as if his own attitude resembles - keeping with 'the calculating pockets of dark sarcasm and meanness that at times ruled his spirit'<sup>107</sup> - 'playing the Dozens' more than a merely playful form of Signifyin(g).<sup>108</sup>

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<sup>105</sup> Davis and Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography*, p.73.

<sup>106</sup> Henry Louis Gates Jr. cites Roger D. Abrahams, the literary critic, linguist and anthropologist as having provided an 'extensive' definition of the homonym Signifyin(g) which - for Gates - repeats with a signal difference its more dominant counterpart signifying, cf., Gates, *The Signifying Monkey*, pp.74-5:

1. Signifyin(g) "can mean any number of things."
2. It is a black term and a black rhetorical device.
3. It can mean the "ability to talk with great innuendo".
4. It can mean "to carp, cajole, needle, and lie".
5. It can mean "the propensity to talk around a subject, never quite coming to the point".
6. It can mean "making fun of a person or situation".
7. It can "also denote speaking with the hands and the eyes".
8. It is "the language of trickery, that set of words achieving Hamlet's 'direction through indirection'".
9. The Monkey "is 'signifier', and the Lion, therefore is the signified".

The complexity of the troping effects of Signifyin(g) go well beyond the confines of this essay, however, it is hoped that its mention might contribute something to a 'volcanic line' that might productively de-stratify the main body of this project. For an account of the repetition of difference as against that of identity in the Signifyin(g) of jazz, cf. *Ibid.*, p63: "There are so many examples of Signifyin(g) in jazz that one could write a formal history of its development on this basis alone. One early example: [...] Jelly Roll Morton's 1938 recording entitled "Maple Leaf Rag (A Transformation)" Signifies upon Scott Joplin's signature composition "Maple Leaf Rag", recorded in 1916 [...] Morton "embellishes the piece two-handedly, with a swinging introduction [...] Morton's piano imitates a "trumpet-clarinet right hand and a trombone-rhythm left hand. Morton's composition does not "surpass" or "destroy" Joplin's; it complexly *extends* and tropes figures present in the original'. It is worth noting that - despite the homonymic connection between signifying and Signifying, the latter tropes the former processually, and therefore could be productively engaged in the context of the materialist semiotics presented here.

<sup>107</sup> Cf., Greg Tate, 'Silence, Exile, Cunning' in Gary Charner, *The Miles Davis Companion* (London, New York, Sidney: Omnibus Press, 1996), p.236. This less 'Cool' side of Davis will be discussed in some more detail at the end of the chapter.

<sup>108</sup> Gates describes 'playing the Dozens' as a vernacular strategy by way of H. Rap Brown, distinct from Signifyin(g) which could be used disparagingly or affirmatively, can only be used disparagingly, and its rhetorical tenor is one of violence and destruction, cf., *The Signifying Monkey*, pp.72-3: [T]he dozens were an unrelentingly "mean game because what you try to do is totally destroy somebody else with words" [...] [T]he dozens were structured to make one's subject feel bad'. The 'Cool' of Davis and his 'meanness and



However, Gleason's account of the political motivations for Davis's attitude are not by any means the only ones. For example Carr's description differs markedly from that of

Gleason:

Where the bebop movement failed to get the status of the musicians elevated to that of artist rather than entertainer, Miles Davis was succeeding. Gleason's analysis, though illuminating and perceptive, nevertheless errs on the side of romanticism. Gleason [...] was fascinated by the trumpeter almost to the point of adulation. Quite clearly, Miles knew how to 'impose himself', to make his presence felt and to shape events as he wanted them, because he was aware of all the salient factors in any situation.<sup>109</sup>

Carr, attempting to be more pragmatic than Gleason and to survey more effectively from the investment underlying his subjectivity, asserts that Davis cultivated such an attitude in order to have control of a situation, to 'impose himself' and - implicitly - one that is to some extent motivated by entrepreneurial interests.

What did Davis himself make of his gesture of turning his back on the audience?

I could communicate with the band just by giving them a certain look. That look told them to play something different from what they had been playing, and after a while the music really started coming together. I listened to what everybody was playing in my band. I listen constantly and if anything is just a little off, I hear it right away and try to correct it on the spot while the music is happening. That's what I'm doing when I have my back turned to the audience - I can't be concerned with talking and bullshitting with the audience while I'm playing because the music is talking to them when everything is right. If the audience is hip and alert, they know when the music is right and happening. When that's the case, you let things groove and enjoy what's going on.<sup>110</sup>

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dark sarcasm' are perhaps embodied along the same lines as the relation between Signifyin(g) and playing the Dozens, with characteristic undecidability which itself might reflect a strategic use of these games or perhaps a more stratified tendency towards a failed becoming whereby the order-word of the gestural or the spoken is replaced by a more directly physical form of bodily inscription or cruelty, to be discussed shortly.

<sup>109</sup> Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.165.

<sup>110</sup> Davis and Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography*, p.346.

Davis therefore claims that he was not in any way seeking to goad or taunt his audience, but rather placing his entire focus on the music, and on exactly what the band members were doing at any given time. The claim also echoes Davis's objection to the 'laugh and grin' of Gillespie and Armstrong, in his description of 'bullshitting'. Despite the consummate professionalism that Davis perceives to be the reason for his attitude, there is something of an implicit presupposition to be found in the use of the word 'bullshitting' that suggests that - whether out of contempt or some other motivation - Davis's take on the role of the audience in auditory participation is that it should be of a commitment equal to that of the performers and that a failure to meet this demand renders it superficial, and perhaps even insulting.<sup>111</sup> As with so many of Davis's other traits, the endorsement of seemingly contradictory viewpoints compounds the futility of any attempt to fix an interpretation or intention more generally, and once again prompts an alternative mode of analysis which seeks a different path. Before doing this, there remains one other possible 'interpretation' of Davis's gesture. It is markedly different from the others in that - rather than suggest an arrogant or 'imposing' desire or motivation - in actuality suggests an extreme inwardness, or privation which, attributed generally as a key characteristic of Davis's personality by most writers and commentators, is supposedly encapsulated in his sound and in particular, in his use of the amplified Harmon mute. Davis, apparently a shy as a boy and as a young man, brought up in a very secure middle class professional family in the mid-West, and moving to New York in his twenties, developed a combination of personal insecurity and 'street Negro' aggressiveness. In Marcel Berlins' account of Davis's 1958 performance of 'Les feuilles mortes' tends very heavily in this direction:

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<sup>111</sup> The on-stage professionalism of Davis and its various 'stages' of development will be looked at briefly in the conclusion.



It is Miles Davis who delivers the sorrow, especially in his 1958 recording [...] This is Miles searching into his heart, blowing with quiet desperation. Every note penetrates the hidden emotions we do not want to surface. The track may be entitled “Autumn Leaves”, but Miles is playing and feeling “Les Feuilles Mortes”. And that is how it should be; for Miles Davis first heard it in Paris, sung by the love of his life, Juliette Gréco.<sup>112</sup>

Whilst it is certainly the case that the minimal sparseness of much of Davis’s playing and the nuanced subtlety of his timbre - whether with or without the Harmon mute - on many occasions throughout most of his career succeeded in using just a few notes to carry across the otherwise empty space of his playing, generating distancing effects, perhaps what we might call - following Deleuze and Guattari and thereby Alois Reigl - ‘haptic-acoustics’. In the reductive channelling of affect into the sensory-motor circuits of mood, feeling or emotion, such minimal sparseness could certainly be described as ‘inward’ or ‘introspective’. Such a view is compounded by the claim that Berlins makes that Davis first heard the song sung by Juliette Gréco on his first visit to Paris in 1949, and, with Davis having fallen in love both with the liberal, cosmopolitan attitude of the Left Bank scene which he frequented and with Gréco, an Existentialist compatriot of Sartre, both loves were seemingly brought into relief by the racism he experienced in New York on his return and all this collectively contributing to his subsequent heroin addiction which lasted from 1949 to 1953.

By implication, it is possible to argue with a degree of conviction and support that the 1960 performance at L’Olympia, and the dramatic turn-and-fade are somehow an indication of the ‘pain’ of lost love that Davis felt, in addition to the undeniable hurt caused him by the racism that he experienced, crystallized in the attack outside of Birdland in 1958, just two

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<sup>112</sup> Marcel Berlins, ‘Autumn Leaves’, in DeLisle [ed.], *Lives of the Great Songs*, p.80.

years earlier, and the pain that his physical ailments caused him most of the time.

However, to proceed any further down this path would be to fall foul of the redundancies it has attempted to strategically negotiate. This is the point at which it is once again necessary to shift register.

In his first version of the essay 'What is Epic Theatre?', Walter Benjamin provides a description of Brecht's conception of Epic theatre:

Epic theatre is gestural. The extent to which it can also be literary in the traditional sense is a separate issue. The gesture is its raw material and its task is the rational utilization of this material. The gesture has two advantages over the highly deceptive statements and assertions normally made by people and their many-layered and opaque actions. First, the gesture is falsifiable only up to a point; in fact, the more inconspicuous and habitual it is, the more difficult it is to falsify. Second, unlike people's actions and endeavours, it has a definable beginning and a definable end.<sup>113</sup>

So far in this section I have reverted as so often before to a register of interpretation, which in dealing with musicological factors and biographical details seems at times very difficult to avoid. It was said at the outset that this difficulty is one that would have to be negotiated as a problem of the relation between the molar statistical aggregates and the molecular movements that make up their immanent underside. This is something that I have also attempted to do throughout. At this present stage of the case, what is being dealt with is not so much the *music* of Miles Davis *qua* formations of expression/content, or even a musical or sonorous abstract machine. Instead, what is now at stake is more of the order of theatricality, a problem for the relation between molar and molecular that itself goes back to *Anti-Oedipus* and the problem of a 'theatre of the unconscious' versus the open system of a 'machinic unconscious'. In conducting this negotiation between molar and molecular



with a mind to making this very task the 'object' of the case, Miles Davis's on-stage attitude and Brecht's concept of the *gestus*, or *gest*, provide the means by which it is possible to proceed. A clue to how this might work is given in the quote from Benjamin: 'unlike people's actions and endeavours, it has a definable beginning and a definable end'.

The *gestus* in some instances embodies a relation to the social, and in other instances it operates at a remove from the social. As Brecht states,

Not all gests are social gests. The attitude of chasing away a fly is not yet a social gest, though the attitude of chasing away a dog may be one, for in-stance if it comes to represent a badly dressed man's continual battle against watchdogs. One's efforts to keep one's balance on a slippery surface result in a social gest as soon as falling down would mean 'losing face'; in other words, losing one's market value. The gest of working is definitely a social gest, because all human activity directed towards the mastery of nature is a social undertaking, an undertaking between men. On the other hand a gest of pain, as long as it is kept so abstract and generalized that it does not rise above a purely animal category, is not yet a social one. But this is precisely the common tendency of art: to remove the social element in any gest.<sup>114</sup>

To the extent that the 'gesture' of Miles Davis 'has a definable beginning and a definable end' and - whether interpreted as an expression of sorrow, mourning, pain, or anger - the fact that it has attained a status that indexes it to the social via the audience irrespective of the motivations that might be attributed to it, means that it is possible to begin considering it as an example of *gest* that is social. Returning to Benjamin's account, one finds that 'the more frequently we interrupt someone engaged in an action, the more gestures we obtain'.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>113</sup> Walter Benjamin, 'What is Epic Theatre? [First Version], in *Understanding Brecht*, trans. Anna Bostock, with an Introduction by Stanley Mitchell (London: Verso Books, 1984), p.3.

<sup>114</sup> Brecht, 'On Gestic Music', p.1.

<sup>115</sup> Benjamin, 'What is Epic Theatre?', p.3.

Davis's attitude on stage achieves such an effect and it is one effected through the movement of his body and its impact on the *bodies making up the audience*. The standard, socially acceptable action at a jazz concert, or even a Classical one, is for the audience to show its appreciation through applause. In jazz, this usually takes place - like a Classical concert - at the beginning and the end of a performance or a piece, but also involves applause *during* pieces after the completion of a solo. When he came to Britain in 1960, Davis was lambasted by the critics for his attitude. The New York Post followed him on his tour of Europe and - following his time in Britain - gave the following report:

Miles Davis packed his trumpet and took off for Paris, Stockholm and home, where the citizenry is less likely to be fuddled by his sophisticated approach to jazz ... Londoners were bothered by the fact that he seldom acknowledged applause.<sup>116</sup>

Resonant as this report is with the stereotypical characterization of British reserve, its importance lies elsewhere. Davis - in his refusal to respond to applause - shorted the action-reaction circuits of his audience's sensory-motor-schema.

Bergson calls this the sensorimotor system<sup>117</sup>:

[L]et us suppose that we have to make a decision. Collecting, organizing the totality of its experience in what we call its character, the mind causes it to converge upon actions in which we shall afterwards find, together with the past which is their matter, the unforeseen form which is stamped upon them by personality; but the action is not able to become real unless it succeeds in encasing itself in the actual situation, that is to say, in that particular assemblage of circumstances which is due to the particular position of the body in time and space.<sup>118</sup>

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<sup>116</sup> Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.170.

<sup>117</sup> Cf., Bergson, *Matter and Memory*, p.172-3

<sup>118</sup> Ibid.



This is a description of the 'sensori-motor equilibrium of the body'. Deleuze calls it a 'situation' in his synthesis of Bergson's materialist thought and Peirce's semiotics and pragmatics.

What begins as perception may be executed as an action (secondness); what cannot be converted into action occupies the interval as affection (firstness) what reconstitutes the whole of movement with respect to all aspects of the interval is relation (thirdness).<sup>119</sup>

For Deleuze as for Bergson, perception is primary in relation to action and affection, and in fact the perception-image as the relational One-all of an open world or 'universe' has action and affection resulting from its relational modifications. To some extent we have implicitly witnessed with the idea with Guattari's fourth function and with Deleuze and Guattari's use of the Leibniz-derived 'possible world' and the expressions of 'I' as linguistic index: that which emerges in the perceptual (visual or auditory) field - even if only a facial or musical trait - is indexed in some way to affect. In this instance, the presence of Peirce's influence forces a more specific definition of the term index which has hitherto been used in a more general way. For Peirce and here also for Deleuze, the Index is the second is the 'object' of his 'trichotomies' of the sign, and as such 'is determined by its dynamic object through the relation it has with it'.<sup>120</sup> In Deleuze's adapted use action becomes the index of perception as (quasi-)object, or action-image; the other terms of Peirce's schemata are adapted in like fashion: the 'felt qualities' of the Icon, are affective qualities of the kind we have already encountered: colour, texture, timbre, etc. and such constitute the firstness of the affection-image, again extracted from

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<sup>119</sup> Cf., D.N. Rodowick, *Gilles Deleuze's Time Machine* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 1997), pp.57-8:

<sup>120</sup> In the interests of brevity I have chosen to derive this description from that given by André Pierre Colombat in his excellent essay, 'Deleuze and Signs', which itself is derived from Todorov, Ducrot and

perception to the extent that it is the residue not converted into action; finally, the thirdness of Symbols are adapted to describe the relationality that constitutes all the images, and points most clearly to the difference between Peirce's and Deleuze's use of the schemata: for Peirce there remains a conception of consciousness that could be described as phenomenological in that it belongs to an 'Intepretant', whereas for Deleuze - via Bergson - and as was shown in chapter 2, consciousness is never 'of' something, it just is. This leads Deleuze to conceive the images in terms of their relational dynamics (movement-image) and their potential for creating '*durées*' or different temporalities. For Deleuze, the case par excellence is cinema, but that does not mean that there are not other cases that can make use of this highly pragmatic synthesis, including theatre, or in the present case, a theatrical 'rigging' of perception, affection, action and thought.<sup>121</sup>

As Deleuze actually says as early as *Difference and Repetition*:

[A] theatre of problems and always open questions which draws spectator, setting and characters into the real movement of an apprenticeship of the entire unconscious, the final elements of which remain the problems themselves.<sup>122</sup>

Bringing this back to the Brechtian and Benjaminian conception of the *gestus* or *gest* it is possible to discern the use that the Bergson-Peirce synthesis brings to the case of Miles Davis's attitude. If the *gestus* is about extracting certain traits from the course of action it is to the extent it enables the disruption of the normal course of perception, action and affection in order to extract percepts and affects from them, which somehow problematize such action. The thoughts and ideas of both Brecht and Benjamin must - for the purposes

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Deladelle, cf., *Deleuze and Literature*, Ian Buchanan and John Marks [eds.] (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), p.24.

<sup>121</sup> One of the virtues of Colombat's essay is that he recognizes this and - by way of Deleuze's astonishing non-philosophical re-rendering of Spinoza's Ethics - he attempts to think these images away from their cinematic embodiment towards a literary one.

<sup>122</sup> Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, p.192.



of the project - be brought into proximity with the Deleuze-Guattarian problem of 'becoming-minor'. In 'Foreword: The Kafka Effect', from *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, Réda Bensmaïa compares Deleuze and Guattari's approach to Kafka to that of Benjamin:

According to Deleuze and Guattari [...] minor literature is [...] always political, not only in the sense in which one speaks of politics, but specifically in the sense in which further activity is no longer related to a unified instance, to an autonomous subjective substance that would be the origin of the choices we make, of the tastes we have, and of the life we lead. In that sense, each and every gesture takes on a quasi-cosmic dimension, of the tastes we have, and of the life we lead. Benjamin says it well:

Kafka does not grow tired of representing the *gestus* in this fashion [...] Experiments have proved that a man does not recognize his own walk on the screen or his own voice on the phonograph. The situation of the subject in such experiments is Kafka's situation [...] <sup>123</sup>

The *gestus*, as the disruption of action then manifests itself in a variety of ways, such that its occurrence secundarizes any subject-object relation. Technology is capable of intervening in the process of disruption, as with the failure of a man, such as Ronald Reagan, to recognize himself on the screen, or with the failure of somebody to recognize their voice from a phonograph. Incidentally, both Benjamin and Adorno - at least at a stage in his thought - saw the liberatory potential of the phonograph for exposing the instrumental mechanisms that conditioned their manufacture, sale and consumption. <sup>124</sup> Deleuze, for his part, recognizes this potential in the creative potential of post-War cinema.

Furthermore, there is a linguistic and semiotic dimension to the *gestus*:

<sup>123</sup> Réda Bensmaïa, 'The Kafka Effect', in Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, p.xviii.

<sup>124</sup> For an incisive account of both Adorno and Benjamin on this topic, cf., Barbara Engh, 'After "His Master's Voice"', in *New Formations* 38: 1999, pp.54-63, and in particular p.54: 'Already in 1926, Adorno was writing that the most helpful thing about the phonograph was its failures. It's distortions, scratches and skips, its winding down, were an assertion of the inhuman, an interruption of the subject's instrumental

Benjamin [...] may have borrowed the notion from Brecht, but for him it referred above all to a space where the subject of the statement and the subject of enunciation can no longer be separated [...] It is impossible to separate the tool from the artisan, the reader as lexeograph from the scriptor as subscriptor, they are together as machine and rhizome, a network, an entangled not of movements and stops, of impulsions and immobilizations to experience interminably.<sup>125</sup>

The enunciative character of the *gestus* is one that - on Deleuze and Guattari's conception of enunciation in *A Thousand Plateaus* - once again upholds the relation between enunciation and the material factors involved in its execution: no more a separation between the two 'subjects' but an assembling of subjectivity in which they mark two virtual or incorporeal points which, at the level of corporeality are capable of emanating from the assemblage as evaporative surface effects or of inscribing directly the actions of bodies: *parallelism between 'machinic assemblage of bodies' and 'collective assemblage of enunciation'*. When it comes to the inscription of bodies by these virtual proceedings of subjectivation-subjection, it is again a question of the order-word assemblage, and Deleuze and Guattari liken it to Kafka's 'death sentence': '[E]very order-word, even a father's to his son, carries a little death sentence - a Judgment, as Kafka put it': reduced capacity to act.<sup>126</sup> In returning to the order-word assemblage, the problem is again one of interpellation, in that the re-working of Althusser's concept resides in the intensive collapsing of subject of statement into subject of enunciation which - at the level of corporeality - engenders privation, to which Deleuze and Guattari ascribe its own 'regime of signs', the regime of subjectification whose dispositional line is the 'line of passion' or 'passional line'. It also has an abstract machine that it shares with the 'regime of

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relation to the object, and an interruption too of the effectivity of the musical commodity in constituting the subject that seizes upon His Master's Voice as his or her own'.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid., p.xii.

<sup>126</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.76.



signifiante': black hole and white wall system, or faciality. Again, music provides the primary characterization of this regime and its proceedings: the 'Maritime Subject

Authoritarian Face' taken from Wagner's *Tristan and Isolde*:

This authoritarian face is in profile and spins towards the black hole. Or else there are two faces facing each other, but in profile to the observer, and their union is already marked by a limitless separation. Or else the faces turn away from each other but in profile to the observer, and their union is already marked by a limitless separation. Or else the faces turn away from each other, swept away by betrayal. Tristan, Isolde, Isolde, Tristan, in the boat carrying them to the black hole of betrayal and death.<sup>127</sup>

The passional line is therefore indexed (in the general sense) to an abstract machine of the face that is *authoritarian*. The black hole of subjectivation is not literally a 'black hole', of course, but it is real in that it marks the tendency of intensification towards a negative absolute deterritorialization: death, or abolition. Deleuze and Guattari consider the passional line authoritarian because it creates a doubled Cogito-built-for-two that gets carried towards the black hole.

Benveniste adopts a curious linguistic personology that is very close to the Cogito: the *You*, which can doubtless designate the person one is addressing, but more importantly, a point of subjectification on the basis of which each of us is constituted as a subject. The *I* as subject of enunciation, designating the person that utters and reflects its own use in the statement ("the empty non-referential sign"); this is the *I* appearing in propositions of the type "I believe, I assume, I think..." Finally, the *I* as the subject of enunciation, indicating a state for which a She or a He must always be substituted ("I suffer, I walk, I breathe, I feel...").

Insofar as this is a question of interpellation they say that:

Althusser clearly brings out this constitution of social individuals as subjects: he calls it interpellation {"Hey you, over there!") and calls the point of subjectification the Absolute Subject [...] This is not, however, a question of a linguistic operation, for a subject is never the condition of possibility of assemblages of enunciation. Subjectification is simply one such assemblage and designates a formalization of expression or a regime of signs rather than a condition internal to language. Neither

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<sup>127</sup> Ibid., p.184.

is it a question of a movement characteristic of ideology, as Althusser says: subjectification as a regime of signs or a form of expression is tied to an assemblage.<sup>128</sup>

So, to bring a number of the foregoing observations together, technology, or technical machines are capable of disrupting the subject-object relation and opening up to the social or the *socius*. In addition, the machinic assemblage of bodies and collective assemblage of enunciation bring the two subjects of language together - not as transcendently structured subjects in the strict sense - but as the assemblage of subjective tendencies or proceedings. Returning to Bensmaïa's observation, Benjamin's conception of Kafka's *gestus* is one of disruption that enables the survey of the material and semiotic constitution of subjectivity. It is this that brings the *gestus* into proximity with the political. However, the question of the direction taken on/in the (micro)political fabric of lines, segments and strata may serve to compound *in extremis* the ambiguities and uncertainties crystallized both in the case of Davis and those of Deleuze and Guattari. Let us continue with the present case.

To re-iterate, in attempting to grasp the *political* dimension of this *gestus* in the theatrical setting of Davis's turn, it is worth bringing together Brecht's, Benjamin's and Deleuze's thoughts on the matter, and this brings us back on to the problem of 'alienation', or more specifically the *Verfremdungseffekt*:

The *Verfremdungseffekt* or 'alienation effect' refers both to the separation of actor from character, or any of the Concrete/Abstract binaries, and to the audience's resulting disengagement with the locus. Brecht made its purpose explicit: "The aim of this effect, know as the alienation-effect, was to make the spectator adopt an attitude of inquiry and criticism in his approach to the [play's] incident".<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Ibid., p.130.



Whilst Davis might be playing at being an 'actor', and he did actually 'act' later on in his career,<sup>130</sup> a fact that contributes a key symptom to the fundamental ambiguity of his later life and work, not least of all in its relation to the spectacle, on stage at L'Olympia in 1960 he was a performing musician in a concert hall and not an actor in a theatre, so the question should be asked, to what extent does this effect the use being made of Brecht here? As should be clear from the earlier quote from 'On Gestic Music', Brecht did not perceive the *gestus* to be something restricted to the theatre, but one that could be theatrically rigged to bring out its social underpinning. He found a place for it in everyday life, in music and also in film.<sup>131</sup> For his part, Benjamin found it in the literary works of Kafka, so it would seem that there is indeed a precedent for employing it here, on condition of some further investigation.

When one compares the effect induced by Davis to the purpose Brecht attributes to the alienation-effect, or A-effect for short, it seems that the requirements are fulfilled.

Certainly there is no shortage of criticism or inquiry surrounding the phenomenon, as has been shown, and the audience certainly - even more than the critics - could not help but take a position on their initial encounter with it, which in numerous instances they proceeded to do. Brecht, following the Russian Formalist aesthetician Viktor Schlovsky might have called this 'strange-making' (*priem ostranneni*), or 'the subversion of our

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<sup>129</sup> Colin Connell, *Signs of Performance: An Introduction to Twentieth Century Theatre* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), p.102.

<sup>130</sup> Carr, *Miles Davis*, p.519: '[Miles] had an acting role in the film *Dingo*, and a playing role on its soundtrack. The perks of his comeback years, and greater fame, brought him many opportunities to have fun doing unaccustomed things and being paid for them. His acting role in the *Miami Vice* episode, and his visual and speaking role in the Japanese commercial for Van Aquavit, were prime examples'.

<sup>131</sup> Cf., Georg Höellering, *Kuhle Wampe, Or To Whom Does the World Belong*, the screenplay for which was written by Brecht

customary ideological view of an event/object, causing us to view it afresh'.<sup>132</sup> Following Deleuze and Guattari's take on ideology, this might be rendered as a de-stratification of the subjective stratum, a strategic use of the passional line at the point where it plugs into the 'indigo' and 'intimacy' of Davis's music, where his face - having doubled those of the audience in accordance with the stratified, territorialized order-word assemblage of institutionalized performance and its protocol of decorum - now turns away, betrays everyone and ruptures sensori-motor links to engender a problematic affective response: shock. Is the gesture of Davis the locus of Signifyin(g) here, or is he rapping, playing the Dozens. Can the selection be made?

However, there is another aspect to *gestus* to consider (there are actually several, including the gestic split, for which - unfortunately - there is insufficient space remaining to merit an investigation), and that is the question of how the investment of audience desire can be re-distributed - via the *gestus* - away from the consummation of the spectacle or entertainment that supports any ideological or stratified mobilization of desire towards the knowledge or identification of this situation. Regardless of what interpretation one might choose to give to Davis's account of his own behaviour onstage, there is doubtless a political dimension to the *gestus* as it is executed here and this is what now needs to be considered.

The problem with the 'minor' as it plays out in the present case is complicated by the fact that it cannot be considered in terms of a 'minor literature' as such, and to think of it as an example of a becoming-minor of language is problematic. The *gestus* can and indeed has

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<sup>132</sup> Connell, *Signs of Performance*, p,103.



been read quite extensively in terms of a theatrical semiotics. However, Deleuze and Guattari, in their simultaneous mixing and marginalizing of linguistics and semiotics as structural determinants means that this not a suitable path to take. However, the problem has to some extent already been solved in the very act of mixing/marginalizing on the order of a pragmatics, which - no less than it has enabled the consideration of musical and, more specifically instrumental musical examples - can be put to work in thinking about the becoming-minor engendered through the body of Miles Davis and through *gestus* of his on-stage attitude. Let us return to the glossematics of content/expression by means of a demonstration of this.

In *Kafka*, Deleuze and Guattari dedicate a chapter to the problem of content and expression which, for the record is something of a prototype for the work undertaken in *A Thousand Plateaus*, in particular in '10,000B.C.: The Geology of Morals'. Dealing with the literary work of Kafka, the authors challenge the canonical readings of his work that limit their account to negative theological or Oedipal psychoanalytic analyses and - in a characteristic move - attempt to promote Kafka as a writer of affirmation. The two approaches to Kafka's work are mapped in terms of content/expression relations and seek thereby to show that they are both present in the work, with the latter strategically geared towards the overcoming of the former. This is done by considering a recurrent motif in Kafka in which a particular content/expression relation emerges: the bent head/portrait-photo and straightened head/musical sound. The bent head is a form of content for Oedipalized or reterritorialized desire whose form of expression is the portrait-photo, and this specific

double-articulation of desire is equated in Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Kafka with the following characteristics:

[A] blocked, oppressed or oppressing, neutralized desire, with a minimum of connection, childhood memory, territoriality or reterritorialization.<sup>133</sup>

When the form of content is the straightened head, the form of expression is musical sound, and this time the double-articulation opens onto a line of deterritorialization:

[A] desire that straightens up or moves forward, and opens up to new connections, childhood block or animal block, deterritorialization.<sup>134</sup>

Davis's on-stage 'aloofness' might be read as embodying similar content/expression formations. For example, unlike Dizzy Gillespie who played head-up, trumpet-up with the bell itself bent upwards, inflated cheeks for all to see, Davis - notoriously tight-lipped in his playing - played with his head often facing down. Now, aloofness is an ambiguous term. Read in terms of distance it can be read as a symptom or sign of introspection or interiority, a situation of privation where memories become the *propria* of a sovereign subject, for example, the memories of one's 'own' childhood. As such, subjectivity follows a passional line, or falls into a 'black hole' of resonance, subject of statement and subject of enunciation collapse into one another and doubly-mark the body thus reducing its capacity to act. Aloofness, can also described the kind of distantiation that was encountered above, a strategic act of disruption which has the potential to 'open up to new connections'. This might indeed take the form of a 'sonorous bloc', which - not just coming from Davis's trumpet as itself the expression of a content - but from Davis's body as a content expressed in the turn from the audience, a *deterritorialized* refrain, produced

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<sup>133</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, p.5.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*



through a shift from the *heimlich* of a territorialized, domesticated listener towards the *unheimlich* of an opening out onto to an unpredictable outside. To recall the Leibnizian possible world of the previous chapter, there is a correspondence between an auditory field and a sonorous field through which can emerge traits of faciality such that ‘I am afraid’ is the meaning of ‘I’ as linguistic index, or musicality traits that can engender a similar utterance. However, as with Luciano Berio’s ‘*Visages*’, counterpointing faciality and musicality lines and simultaneously deterritorializing them produces a *generalized chromaticism*, the production of tensor-signs, taking both face (voice) and music along a line of flight in the direction of a molecularized sound-matter. This is in part how Deleuze and Guattari account for Kafka’s ‘sonority’:

It is certainly not a systematized music, a musical form, that interests Kafka (in his letters and in his diary, one finds nothing more than insignificant anecdotes about a few musicians). It isn’t a composed and semiotically shaped music that interests Kafka, but rather a pure sonorous material.<sup>135</sup>

Whilst Davis played with a bent head, and this could be rendered in terms of a melancholy ‘style’ in Deleuze’s sense of the word, his turn away from the audience might be substituted for the straightened head of Deleuze and Guattari’s *Kafka* as the form of content of a deterritorializing expression that takes the proceedings along a line of flight akin to Gregor Samsa’s becoming-animal in ‘The Metamorphosis’: ‘[S]ound intervenes at first as a faint whining that captures Gregor’s voice and blurs the resonance of words [...]’<sup>136</sup> Content/expression relations between the sound of the trumpet as it turns from the microphone and the body and face of Davis as they turn away from the audience are deterritorialized along a line of becoming. Gesture, or rather a *gestus*, intervenes in the

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<sup>135</sup> Ibid.

<sup>136</sup> Ibid., p.6.

form of a face-off, or a the turning-away of a countenance which - rather than produce a becoming-animal (although it might do, but this is not the main concern here), produces a different becoming-minor, what we might - following Deleuze and Guattari, but also Jeffrey T. Nealon - contentiously and problematically describe as a 'becoming-black'.

In a chapter from his book *Alterity Politics*, entitled '*Becoming-Black: Repetition and Difference in Baraka's Blues People and Reed's Mumbo Jumbo*', Jeffrey Nealon has ventured a cursory investigation of the relationship between difference and repetition in Deleuze's writing, Deleuze and Guattari's all-too-brief remarks in *A Thousand Plateaus* on 'becoming-black' and Amiri Baraka's, a.k.a. Leroi Jones's founding critical text *Blues People*, in which the observations of the latter provide the most pertinent and convincing parts of the essay, with the issue of becoming-black itself left somewhat undertheorized. Nealon's underlying thesis is that African American cultural traditions repeat difference rather than repeat the same. Whilst this is an argument that has also been put forward in this project, there is considerable work to be done in negotiating the thesis in its relation to the idea of becoming. Taking up Baraka's example-of-choice to illustrate the potential for using difference and repetition in relation to African American music, Nealon focuses on the 'willfully harsh, *anti-assimilationist* sound of bebop'<sup>137</sup>, and in particular, that of Charlie Parker. Taking the popular line of pitting constitutive difference against the secondarity of representation, Nealon states,

[W]hen Charlie Parker covers "White Christmas", for example, what you get is not so much a representation of Irving Berlin's vacuous classic, but what Deleuze calls "a-representation": a presentation that marks and "includes difference" rather than effacing it [...] repetition with a difference [...]<sup>138</sup>

<sup>137</sup> Amiri Baraka, cited in Jeffrey T. Nealon, *Alterity Politics*, p.118.

<sup>138</sup> Nealon, *Alterity Politics*, p.119.



So far so good, if only to the extent that it bears out the claims made in chapter two for the repetition of difference in Miles Davis's 1964 version of 'My Funny Valentine'. He continues,

[I]n *Blues People* [...] Baraka argues that "assimilation" has demanded the imposition onto black culture of a narrowing, reterritorialized "parochialism" [...] Benny Goodman is not crowned the King of Swing by mistake; his coronation is precisely one of the many complex, site-specific bulwarks against the becoming-black of America.<sup>139</sup>

Nealon draws on Baraka's account of the appropriative shift 'from verb to noun'<sup>140</sup>, and draws out more widely the implications of assimilation for 'Negro' subjectivity and the necessity for resistance or affirmation of the alienating effects in terms of 'separation'.

Again, the example given is that of bebop:

Baraka sees it as the project of bebop "to make that separation meaningful", to "restore jazz, in some sense, to its original separateness". The unique contribution of the beboppers was the fact that they "reinforced the social and historical alienation of the Negro in America, but in the Negro's terms".<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p.120.

<sup>140</sup> This highly important shift is marked by a change in the grammatical status of 'Blues' from the word's traditional African-American use as a verb to that of a noun, which names, and thereby effectively pegs it as something fixed, within definable boundaries. It is not the only term to be subject to enforced nominalization and as such supports the idea of a general tendency for the language of a dominant culture to appropriate the language of 'minor' culture. The term musicking is perhaps not to be found in most standard dictionaries for similar reasons, as its vagueness renders it excessive to use- and exchange-value. Alienation as conceived of by Baraka is hereby mirrored in the 'linguistic alienation' of Henri Gobard and his 'tetralinguistic [meta]model', as used by Deleuze and Guattari in *Kafka*, p.23: 'vernacular, maternal, or territorial language, used in rural communities or rural in its origins; a vehicular, urban, governmental, even worldwide language, a language of business, commercial exchange, bureaucratic transmission, and so on, a language of the first sort of deterritorialization; referential language, language of sense and of culture, entailing a cultural reterritorialization, mythic language, on the horizon of cultures, caught up in a spiritual or religious reterritorialization. The spatio-temporal categories of these languages differ sharply: vernacular language is here; vehicular language is everywhere; referential language is over there; mythic language is beyond'. This model is ultimately schematic, probably for a number of reasons, but of specific interest here is that elsewhere, Deleuze and Guattari describe the potential of myth for the creation of a war-machine (see conclusion). Nevertheless, this rectilinear schema might well show that vernacular has n-1 dimensions and is therefore capable of deterritorializing the other, more majoritarian poles of the referential, vehicular and possibly mythic. However, there shall shortly be occasion to speculate on what the potential price of a deterritorialized theory of language might be.

<sup>141</sup> Nealon, *Alterity Politics*, p.121.

Nealon extrapolates from this claim once again in terms of the play of repetition and difference:

[S]uch an “alienation” of “separateness” is, then, a *repetition* of mainstream segregation, but with an important *difference*: this is a repetition that reinscribes the forced segregation of blacks to create a deterritorialization, a line of flight for African American culture.<sup>142</sup>

Again, Nealon has taken an approach also to be found in this project, which is to bring together the play of difference and repetition with the dispositional and micropolitical assertion of the line of flight. However, in failing to provide a more detailed account of how this works in Deleuze-Guattarian terms, he has arguably invested more in the nomenclature than in how it might be put to more rigorous use, ironically perhaps, a repetition of the same. This is where problems emerge with Nealon’s account which potentially undermine the efficacy of his assertion of becoming-black.

For Nealon, as for Deleuze and Guattari, it is the rhetoric of black militants in the 1960s that provides the justification for stretching becoming across the production of African American and other ‘non-white’ subjectivities, whereas Deleuze and Guattari cite a slogan of the Black Panthers:

[O]ne reterritorializes, or allows oneself to be reterritorialized, on a minority as a state; but in a becoming, one is deterritorialized. Even blacks, as the Black Panthers said, must become-black.<sup>143</sup>

Nealon, for his part and no less sweepingly, once again cites Baraka:

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

<sup>143</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.291.



[A]s Baraka insists in “The Legacy of Malcolm X”, even “the Black Man must aspire to Blackness”: even prized nouns or identity categories must become-verb: whites must become-white, Asians must become-Asian, Latinas become-Latina.<sup>144</sup>

Whilst Nealon is attempting to stay faithful to a becoming-minor of majoritarian uses of language that he discerns in the observations of Baraka, in making the jump from such a becoming-minor to a becoming-black, etc., he is not only glossing the difficulties and dangers of such a jump, but in doing so he manages also to gloss the complexity of becoming as it is theorized by Deleuze and Guattari. As they state in ‘Year Zero: Faciality’, in *A Thousand Plateaus* there are ‘theorems’ of deterritorialization which more rigorously state how the process works, such that the least deterritorialized territories always reterritorialize on the most:

*First theorem:* One never deterritorializes alone; there are always at least two terms, hand-use object, mouth-breast, face-landscape. And each of the two terms reterritorializes on the other [...] *Second theorem:* The fastest of two elements or movements of deterritorialization is not necessarily the most intense or most deterritorialized. Intensity of deterritorialization must not be confused with speed of movement or development [...] *Third theorem:* It can even be concluded from this that the least deterritorialized reterritorializes on the most deterritorialized.<sup>145</sup>

There have been a good many instances so far given of the deterritorialization of (two or more) terms and as has been shown, speeds and slownesses are not to be confused with faster or slower. What is important here that has not been explicitly discussed is the third theorem, that the line of deterritorialization sweeps along all that is less deterritorialized: territories deterritorialize, strata de-stratify, and so on. So when it is a question of becoming, therefore, the same is at stake: *majoritarian becomes-minor*. What Nealon has missed here is that the third theorem of deterritorialization precludes ‘becoming-white’,

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<sup>144</sup> Nealon, *Alterity Politics*, p.121.

<sup>145</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.174.

because the becoming always tends in the direction of the elements that are most deterritorialized, and 'whiteness', like 'Man', are majoritarian *par excellence*, because it is by avoiding becoming that these molar statistical aggregates remain exactly what they are: *a repetition of the same*.

Black jazz musicians are [...] no less the ritual representatives of the community than are the bluesmen and gospel singers, and their task is in many ways even more important. Conversely, when white musicians play jazz, they are in almost a complementary situation in exploring the values of the black culture. How deeply they are able to do this will depend on the extent to which they are able to submit to the social and musical values they find there; it is in a sense even more difficult for them than for their black confrères, since as members of the socially dominant culture they have more to unlearn, and more intellectual baggage to dispose of, before they can enter fully into the engagement.<sup>146</sup>

So, on the basis of this theorem, coupled with the general theory of micropolitics and segmentarity states that - to the extent that segments occur everywhere they inhibit becoming, and so long as there are segmental binaries between White-black and also Man-woman, not to mention Adult-child, there is, on this theory at least, a strategic necessity for black people to become black, that is to say, to subvert the binary that restricts their heterogeneity and captures it through molar redundancies. It follows also, and perhaps no less controversially, that women must become-women for the same reason. To add to this contentiousness, it should be noted that because 'Man' is the central point in the 'arborescent schema of majority', and 'male' is the dominant point, that all becomings must first pass through a 'becoming-woman', or so the theory goes.

Nealon's 'hasty' reading runs the risk perhaps more than some others of indulging in acts of theoretical noodling, and this danger is probably nowhere greater than in the affirmation



of becoming, as was shown in chapter 2 with regard to the ambiguity of becoming-child, but is greater still when the tendency of becoming is towards -woman and -black. Whilst not without a degree of support from Baraka, Nealon's, and by proxy Deleuze and Guattari's claims for the idea of becoming-black needs further careful investigation.<sup>147</sup>

To compound Nealon's indiscretion he is unable to resist what is admittedly a tempting pun on Charlie Parker's musician's handle, 'Bird', or what 'we might call the "becoming-Bird" of [...] Baraka's discourse'. The idea of a transversal line between the improvisation techniques of Parker's bebop and the critical, theatrical and poetical writings of Baraka is not in itself necessarily a bad thing, and in actual fact might contribute a good deal to promote the philosophical intelligence embodied in the general intellect of jazz or African-American culture both ethically and politically at the same time as promoting a better understanding of the music's technical and social intricacies amongst non-musicians and white people. Yet whilst transversality is to some extent synonymous with becoming, it remains very difficult to speak of a becoming-black without running the risk of appropriating African-American or black culture in a way that serves to gratify the investment of the (white, usually male) theorist or philosopher and at the same time the risk of overcoding or axiomatizing its liberatory potential in a way that places in the service of dominant culture and capitalism.

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<sup>146</sup> Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, p.315. This might also be said of any attempt to make a refrain between (White, male-dominated, academic) theory and becoming-black, or becoming-woman.

<sup>147</sup> Nealon quotes Baraka as saying that "'Without dissent, the struggle, *the outside of the inside*, the aesthetic is neither *genuinely* Black nor Blue', cf., Nealon, *Alterity Politics*, p.129. This statement ostensibly reaffirms what Deleuze in his reading of Foucault claims for 'thought from the outside' as problematizing self-identical subjectivity and also the claims of Chernoff, Agawu and even Russell, for African and African-American subjectivity to connect with an immanent outside that simultaneously challenges the despotic overcodings of hegemonic - White-, Male-dominated - culture.

## Becoming-Black, Becoming-Woman and the Problem of Violence in Deleuze, Guattari and Davis

*Either ethics makes no sense at all, or this is what it means and has nothing else to say: not to be unworthy of what happens to us. To grasp whatever happens as unjust and unwarranted (it is always someone else's fault) is, on the contrary, what renders our sores repugnant - veritable resentment of the event.*  
Gilles Deleuze<sup>148</sup>

*The psychopathology which the poet makes his own is not a sinister little accident of personal destiny, or an individual, unfortunate accident. It is not the milkman's truck which has run over him and left him disabled. It is the horsemen of the Hundred Blacks carrying out their pogroms against their ancestors in the ghettos of Vilna.*  
Joe Bousquet<sup>149</sup>

*Nobody was ever able to show me where David Ruffin admitted to hitting Tammi Terrell n the head with a hammer, even though on the West Side of Detroit where I grew up we had all heard it from somebody who said it like they had the inside line on such things. And nobody was able to provide me with a quote from Bill Withers describing how he beat up Denise Nicholas when their marriage was grinding to a painfully public close although people tell me Jet covered the whole episode in great and gory detail. But Miles...well, I'll let the brother speak for himself...*  
Pearl Cleage<sup>150</sup>

This problem and the problem of Davis's attitude return us to that of the war machine, the passional line of subjectification and one final and Deleuze-Guattarian case: Shakespeare's

### *King Richard III:*

Richard III, the deformed, the twisted, whose ideal is to betray everything: he confronts Lady Anne in a face-off in which the two countenances turn away [...] [H]is ventures, including those with women, derive more from a war machine than from a State apparatus. He is the traitor, springing from the great nomads and their secrecy [...] The only one to guess is Lady Anne, fascinated, terrified, consenting.<sup>151</sup>

Betrayal, absolute betrayal, supposedly places Richard III on a line of flight. The turning-away of two countenances, his and that of Lady Anne, theatrically stages this betrayal. The

<sup>148</sup> Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p.149.

<sup>149</sup> Cited in *ibid.*, p.153.

<sup>150</sup> Pearl Cleage, 'Mad at Miles', in Charner, *The Miles Davis Companion*, pp.211-2.

<sup>151</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp.125-6.



passional line's abstract machine of faciality: black-hole/white-wall has been strategically surveyed, its stratum of subjectification-subjection has in the process become de-stratified as 'Richard' and the face-off marks a shift into the 'strategic zone', and access to the outside, or the event-horizon of the line of subjectification. When Miles Davis turns away there is also a betrayal, a face-off, between his face and the faces of the audience, a severing of the 'skewed axes of narrative vision' hitherto conjoining these faces that has to some extent served to lock their bodies (the audience members', and as was claimed earlier, arguably also that of Davis) within the strata of signifiacance and subjectification. It is furthermore possible to argue that the *gestus* of the turn has changed this setup and in doing so may be found to have engendered a 'pass-word', or an incorporeal transformation which has irreversibly changed the bodies of the audience in their relation to their immediate circumstances, but also in relation to their habitual associations of showmanship and entertainment, *dis*-positioning their aggregated investments through the tensor-sign of the *gestus*. So is this rigging of subjective proceeds tantamount to the creation of a war machine?

Well, this would probably be once again to overstate the case. An incorporeal transformation might have taken place, but 'the after-image of its dynamism' for most will have likely faded, stratified with the rigidification of the usual segments. It remains quite unclear just what the pragmatic efficacy of a war-machine might be beyond its theorization, which may be enough to warrant it as an act of philosophical deterritorialization with claims on ethical potential, but when it comes to its political efficacy, as indeed the political efficacy of a micropolitics of desire or 'molecular

revolution', the situation is less clear and - in the case of Richard III and arguably also that of Davis's attitude - what is symptomatized is not a creative liberation of material forces or tensor-signs so much as an appropriative dimension lodged in the cases of the war machine, as well as those of becoming.

A clue is to be found in the case of Richard III, in that surely the betrayal of everything is inclined to turn any line of flight into a line of abolition or death, which is the primary danger effecting the creative line, and also - as was shown - a danger of betrayal in relation to the abstract machine of the subjective authoritarian face. When a line of abolition occurs, the creative deterritorializations that may have taken place are themselves taken along a line of death or destruction. Whilst Deleuze and Guattari have in some measure selected this particular example because of its seismic disruption of subjectification proceedings and its challenge to despotic statecraft, what needs to be determined more clearly is whether the passional line has patched into a line of flight or a line of abolition, or whether it has plugged into a rigidly segment of Fear; perhaps it has become supple, its segments loosened but still functioning: Clarity; alternatively, it might bring the last two together in the assertion of Power (*pouvoir*). It is the job of stratoanalysis to work out which of the lines and dangers are in evidence, if it is capable, which begs the question: to what extent can it achieve this and at the same time determine the status of its own lines and segments?

Now, if the face-off between Richard and Anne, or any such similar betrayal is one in which the countenances turn away is to be considered affirmatively, it has to be thought of



as a 'dismantling of the face' insofar as it is a dismantling of the abstract machine of faciality, one which overcomes the limitations of the regimes of signification and subjectification by indeed connecting with a line of flight. Such a betrayal would be affirmative if and only if it is capable of making this connection with the outside, which means that the turn away is actually a turn towards, a turn away from the resonances of subjectification and the redundancies of signification but a turn towards, or survey of their outside. If the gesture of Miles Davis affirms itself it has to be along these lines, by challenging the interiority of subjectivity and the redundancies rendering the audience passive. From a Spinozist perspective, if the *conatus* is shared between the bodies in a way that they somehow come to survey their common notions, then what takes place in such an act is indeed ethical, in the sense that the privations of faith and love that reduce passionate subjectivity's capacity to act are overcome in a betrayal of everything that cuts a body off from its power (*puissance*), including the molarizing tendencies effecting one 'person's love for another.

However, at the risk of reading Deleuze and Guattari (and Davis) against the grain of their respective resistances to interpretation one might find another sign, but this time a sign of the dangers of articulating this ethical problem in terms of a politics of becoming. Just to re-iterate, Lady Anne, in her complicity with Richard is said to be 'fascinated, terrified, consenting'. These characteristics are more suggestive of a passivity that destines the woman (and women more generally) to circumstances of privation, not as essential characteristics of their being, but as *propria* posited of their being, most usually by men.

Read this way, it is as if Deleuze and Guattari, delighting in the murderous indiscretions of Richard are unable to see the trees for the rhizomes. In clarifying this problem in a way that shifts register one final time, it seems apt to turn to the work of Rosi Braidotti, whose sensitivity to the dangers and simultaneous affirmation of the potential marks her out in her own right as an exemplary user of Deleuze and Guattari. The problem, as she perceives it, is one that results from a male desire to appropriate the potential for a feminine subjectivity before it has had chance to become constituted in the first place. The danger of positing a becoming-woman, and doubtless also a becoming-black is that one risks capturing their potential by philosophically conceptualizing becomings as such, and thereby further risks placing them in the service of capitalism as well as power (*pouvoir*):

[T]hough Deleuze may praise the fragmentation of the subject, the flux of all identities based on the Phallus, the truth of the matter is, as I have argued elsewhere: one cannot deconstruct a subjectivity one has never been fully granted; one cannot diffuse a sexuality which has historically been defined as dark and mysterious.<sup>152</sup>

Whilst Braidotti wrote this work before much of the more useful work had been done in English on Deleuze and Guattari and their relation to feminism (including her own), and it does here pit a subjectivist feminism against a deterritorialization of gendered subjectivity, the argument remains highly pertinent, not as a necessary outcome of a philosophy of becoming, but certainly as a danger. Taking Deleuze's reading of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in *The Logic of Sense* she points to such a danger:

[T]he image of the girl becomes the sign of a subversive force operating within the system of meaning which leads her to the loss of personal identity, of the proper name. That Alice is a little girl, although she is engendered by a masculine imagination, is of no interest to Deleuze, who insists on making little girls' mode of reasoning a paradigm of his nomad thought: the sign of a subversion of the signifier, escape-lines, becoming-minority, the event, and deterritorialization. For Deleuze the

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<sup>152</sup> Rosi Braidotti, *Patterns of Dissonance: A Study of Women in Contemporary Philosophy* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1991), p.122.



question: “what is a little girl” becomes the ideal form of sabotage of the economy of meaning in discourse. The little girl stands for pre-oedipal, non-genital sexuality.<sup>153</sup>

This project practically began with the assertion of a necessary negotiation of molar and molecular, and the molecularization of gendered subjectivity still has a long way to go before it can be said to have completely done away with its molar dimension. Hasty and precipitous deterritorializations, including those of philosophy and theory, must be aware of this strategic problem. The implicit claim of men writing on women, as of white men writing on black culture, is assuming that they have a legitimate right to speak on their behalf. Whilst, as Braidotti herself elsewhere argues, and as Amiri Baraka has also claimed, the establishment of fixed, self-identical gendered or racialized subjects is not ultimately an end in itself, it is perhaps a strategic means to an end which - if neglected - can lead to appropriation on the order of a reassertion of male dominance that is tantamount to the infliction of violence:

[T]o emphasize the masculine incapacity to accept both the incompleteness of all thought and the parallel inability to believe that women not only speak but also have things to say amounts to denouncing “the death of man” as no more than a funeral mask concealing a new form of oppression of women. It is a case of appropriation, therefore of violence aimed at devaluing women’s expressions of the feminine.

In terms of the stratoanalytical and micropolitical dimensions of the Miles Davis case, where it directly impinges on such a problem, we must return to constitution of auditory libidinal investment, with which the chapter began.

Recall that the music of Monteverdi, as analysed by Susan McClary, posited a shift in the libidinal economy of musical subjectivities, resulting from a premeditated contrivance:

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<sup>153</sup> Ibid., p.124.

perpetual postponement, aided by the modal system of harmony, such that male desire would become unfulfilled whilst 'female' emotion would be expressed more openly and freely. In addition, there was a description of the ways in which the musical 'rhetoric' of seduction and lament when performed by men became emasculating and therefore - after a number of experiments - the task was left to women.

Miles Davis, with his 'tender', 'intimate' 'like melancholy', sound, made all the more so through the amplified Harmon mute, his contribution along with George Russell to the move away from European tonality towards an African-American modality, and the *gestus* of the turn might all be said - on the attempt to pragmatically deploy Deleuze and Guattari's work undertaken here - to constitute in his name a becoming-woman, and through a becoming-woman a becoming-minor, a becoming-black. All of this might also be said to contribute to restoring to his music subjectification proceedings that close off the lines of flight: childhood memories, interiority, passion. It might also be possible that the stakes are higher: power (*pouvoir*) and abolition.

Seduction and lament - emasculating they may be - but consider also the possibility that seduction in the appropriate circumstances becomes itself *a means to appropriate*. In sleeve shots from two of Davis's albums we find images of woman being beckoned by the bell of a trumpet: firstly, an image of Davis and the French actress Jeanne Moreau on the reverse of the sleeve for the CD release of the soundtrack to *L'Ascenseur pour l'échaffaud*, [see fig. 8] a seemingly well-humoured photographic out-take from the recording of the soundtrack in which Davis mock-serenades Moreau with the Harmon-mute held towards



her ear; secondly, on the sleeve to *Big Fun*, an album of material recorded in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a graphical illustration features on the main cover with a naked black woman standing as if about to be swallowed by the bell of a mutated (not muted) trumpet. The images and the time which separates them is illustrative for at least two reasons: firstly, in the early 1960s, Miles Davis made a conscious decision to have no more images of white women on his album sleeves, but only black women and, then and on numerous occasions after, not just black women but his wives; secondly, and following directly on from the first point, the images are both of women seemingly entranced or about-to-be seduced by the sound emanating from the horn. These images are possibly signs symptomizing the liberation of forces, of flight and deterritorialization, but they may also be signs of a debilitating *ressentiment*: the placement of women under patriarchal command, a combining of the rigid segment on a line of fear with the supple line of black holes and microfascisms. If indeed the lyrical sound of Davis's trumpet is akin to that of a singing voice, it is conceivable that the 'voice' of seduction is in the present instance a voice of control: His Master's Voice.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>154</sup> Cf., Engh, After 'His Master's Voice', p.59: 'Animals accompany the emergence of the gramophone, and the most prominent among them is Nipper the terrier who listens attentively to 'His Master' Voice' as it emerges from a gramophone, looking with perplexity into the horn, and who in early versions of the painting, is seated on the master's coffin'. Whilst the problem of the gramophone, like that of the phonograph is bound up with the production of aggregated (Deleuze and Guattari), reified (Adorno) or alienated (Benjamin) subjectivity, which is not primarily at issue at this precise moment, it is relevant in that auditory technologies, even the non-reproductive technology of the trumpet, have privileged relation to masculinity and male power. Another argument for the 'war machine' of jazz is to recall that many of the instruments-weapons used to innovate the idiom were cast-offs from the American Civil War.



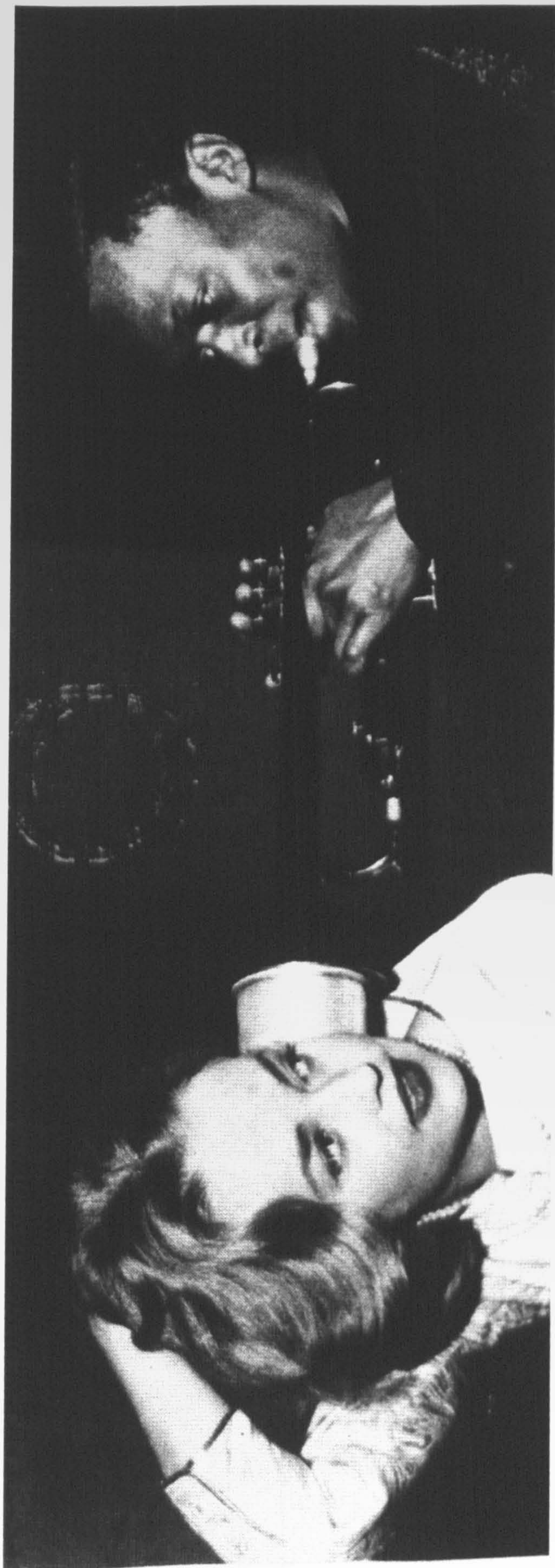


Fig 8.



Returning to the infamous British tour of 1960, Max Harrison wrote that

[T]he concerts revealed [...] the force with which high tones were attacked and sustained, and the controlled vehemence of some of the up-tempo phrasing showed that Davis's music has expanded its scope to the point where his mode of expression can be as violent as it is intense.<sup>155</sup>

Miles Davis, famous for his ambiguity, also became famous for his ambivalence, especially towards women and it is this part of the 'problem' of Miles Davis that few writers are wont to address. Perhaps unsurprisingly it has been left to a woman, Pearl Cleage, in highlighting the problem.

In a disturbing and challenging piece called 'Mad at Miles' she explores the difficult and sensitive problem of Davis's attitude where it pertained to women, and in particular, the highly publicized account he gave of his abuse of Cicely Tyson. One of the very many who came into possession of *Kind of Blue*, the intimate, seductive sound that has been such a point of discussion since chapter two takes on a modified inflection. In using a tape of the album to generate the 'sound walls' of her own territory or domicile, Cleage would use *Kind of Blue* to 'call someone in', usually a 'gentleman-caller' towards whom the circle would open a crack: a launching forth that would patch into a passional line:

[T]he Bohemian Woman Phase. The single again after a decade of married phase. The last time I had a date I was eighteen and oh, god, now I'm thirty phase. The in need of a current vision of who and what and why I am phase. The cool me out quick cause I'm hanging by a thread phase. For this frantic phase, Miles was perfect. Restrained, but hip. Passionate but cool. He became a permanent part of the seduction ritual. Chill the wine. Light the candles. Put on a little early Miles. Give the gentleman caller an immediate understanding of what kind of woman he was dealing with.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Cited in Carr, *Miles Davis: The Definitive Biography*, p.170.

<sup>156</sup> Pearl Cleage, 'Mad at Miles', pp.213-4.

What Cleage did not know at the time - and this is her refrain - was that

*[H]e was guilty of self-confessed violent crimes against women such that we ought to break his records, burn his tapes and scratch up his CDs until he acknowledges and apologizes and agrees to rethink his position on *The Woman Question*.*<sup>157</sup>

Aside from raising the issue of how best to deal with such flagrant and unrepentant abuse of women and in so doing suggesting in full knowledge of what they are, fascist tactics (fascism being a big problem to receive all to brief a consideration in the Coda to follow), Cleage's refrain draws out a particularly difficult problem that under-rehearsed theories of becoming-woman and becoming-black are likely to miss: the relationality of race and gender, or otherwise race and sexuality:

[W]hat if Kenny G was revealed to be kickboxing black men's asses all over the country [...]?

What if Kenny G wrote a book saying that sometimes he had to slap black men around a little just to make them cool out and leave him the fuck alone [...]?

What if Kenny G said this black man who saved his life and rescued his work and restored his mind pissed him off so bad one day he had to slap the shit out of him? [...]

Would Kenny G be the music we would play to center and calm ourselves?<sup>158</sup>

The anomalous image of Kenny G, the respectable white purveyor of 'jazz-lite' music living a duplicitous life in which squeaky-cleanliness divides the honours with racist thuggery is Cleage's darkly humorous attempt to locate an analogy appropriate to the duplicity of Davis, that between Cool and exceptionally cruel.<sup>159</sup> As has been made clear,

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<sup>157</sup> Ibid., p.214.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p.215.

<sup>159</sup> Interestingly, Deleuze distinguishes the 'trickster' of Elizabethan theatre from the 'traitor', with the former exemplifying the deceptive 'cruelty' of statecraft, allying the trickster to the segmentations of power, whilst as has been shown, the latter is perceived to embody the potential of a war machine, cf., Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p.41. On this definition the Signifyin(g) trickster is closer to the traitor of Deleuze. However, the main point here is that in describing the 'double-theft' of the traitor as being akin to the pick-up of the philosophy such that they both constitute war machines may not only be an example of theoretical noodling, but one which dangerously romanticizes the Elizabethan 'hero' and the philosopher alike, at the



where it concerns the problem of Miles Davis - whether his 'music' or his 'life' - most critics and writers have attempted to avoid dealing with it. The 'clams' and 'fluffs' of 'My Funny Valentine' might be '[L]apses, parapraxes, symptoms' that serve as 'indicators of new universes of reference capable of acquiring enough consistency to turn around the situation', but they might also be symptoms of something more sinister that the critics and writers have largely neglected, the piercing, visceral upper-register 'voice' and tight-lipped playing of Davis symptomatizing instead a sadism that extends beyond the confines of his music. Speaking of Cicely Tyson, Davis went on record to say the following:

[O]ne time we argued about one friend [...], and I just slapped the shit out of her. She called the cops and went down into the basement and was hiding there [...] I went down and told Cicely, "I told you to tell your friend not to call over here no more. Now if you don't tell him, I'm gonna tell him". She ran to the phone and called him up and told him, "Miles don't want me talking to you anymore". Before I knew it, I had slapped her again. So she never did pull that kind of shit on me again.<sup>160</sup>

Perhaps the decodings and deterritorializations in the 'seduction' and 'intimacy' of the music that Cleage played to open her domicile up to a 'gentleman caller' has turned out to be a sadistic desire for control and authority which, mirroring the castration anxiety of Monteverdi's contemporaries, making of any becoming-woman a segmental closure that oscillates between Fear and Clarity, between the rigid segment of masculine-feminine and the supple segment of microoedipuses and microfascisms that go beyond 'domestic squabble'. Certainly, the deliberate mistakes and inappropriate gestures that Davis might wilfully have inflicted on his listeners could point to how such decodings/ overcodings and deterritorializations/reterritorializations have forced a re-consideration of the ethical and

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same time as neglecting how this might be tantamount to appropriation, and therefore closer to the trickster as an arbiter of power than to a creative, experimental, *and ethical* thinker.

<sup>160</sup> Davis and Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography*, cited in *ibid.*, p.212.

political potential of jazz, but does the wilful infliction of physical violence turn the idea of his becomings-woman/-black onto a line of flight, lines of power or a line of destruction?

And what of Deleuze and Guattari's theory in all of this? Well, given that Deleuze said in *The Logic of Sense* that '[E]thics, if it means anything, means not to be unworthy of what happens to us', and whilst the work of Joe Bousquet might point to the affirmative potential that poetry offers to extract the incorporeal event from the tragic and the mundane, it is hard to imagine what philosophy or poetry could extract one for the name Cicely Tyson, at least in the present instance under consideration. 'Pop' philosophy may well be up against its limit, and Pop hardly seems the appropriate idiom for addressing the situation. Davis might have done a great deal in his music and his attitude to promote the potential for extracting an affirmative event, even an ethical and political event. We may have not even covered his most concerted or successful efforts (see Coda), but - at the risk of moralizing - it seems that theories of Deleuze-Guattarian becoming are presently insufficient for addressing these problems in a way that does not either render insidious the cases given, or even effect a violent appropriation, and - unless one is prepared to affirm the most thoroughgoing Nietzschean genealogical approach to this kind of problem, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy here seems at something of a loss.

Greg Tate - another of the few writers to have dealt with this part of the problem of Miles Davis - has succinctly encapsulated the difficulty to be negotiated. In doing so he quotes Amiri Baraka,

Baraka says black musical tradition implores us to sing and fight. I disagree. I think we'd do that anyway, just out of human necessity. What I do think it teaches us is



more Joycean in tenor: silence, exile, and cunning. Miles's music makes you think of Nat Turner, proud without being loud because it was about plotting insurrection [...] Miles's tight-lipped sound conveyed the gaiety of [Louis] Armstrong's wide vibrato while conjuring up the calculating pockets of dark sarcasm and meanness that at times ruled his spirit.

These qualities were nowhere more apparent than in his treatment of women [...] <sup>161</sup>

The experience of Pearl Cleage might have been - above that decisive turn - an incorporeal transformation, but if it was, it was definitely not affirmative. Unlike the nomad steppe, it is not quite so easy to give it a date. Cicely Tyson, one among several women that, during the period of his more pro-active militant tendencies Davis is known to have physically attacked may well be a tensor-sign from the perspective of a stratoanalysis, and if so, it has to be determined what the mixture of the lines might be, because it remains unclear whether the tendency conjoining the milieu components and territory of Tyson and those of Davis puts things on a line of abolition, with the passional 'Cogito-built-for-two' on its maritime voyage towards the Charybdis or 'black hole' of abolition; whether the lines of two segments have converged and we are dealing with an assertion of power: 'drums and trumpets' calling bodies to disciplinary attention, or whether something else is happening. Whilst it would be ill-advised to suggest a moralizing alternative to Deleuze (and Guattari's) 'ethical vision of the world', and doubtless there are in theory at least great potential for creating concepts, percepts, affects, etc., that might genuinely contribute to the overcoming of such hideous privations, but the problem remains perhaps what it always has been with Deleuze and Guattari: is it possible to make the selection, or is the world as it is too fast for the relative banality of such theorization? If this is the case, the theory might have to sober up even more than Deleuze, Guattari and many of their followers might have wished, or perhaps a completely different approach is needed, and

certainly it would be dangerous to join the rank and file who have tried to 'whitewash' Davis, or to ignore this kind of tremendously difficult problem more generally. It is a demand that should be made of theory that it attempt to say something worthwhile about male power and violence, and perhaps this is where an ethics of affirmation needs to risk the dangers of capture and appropriation and making a transversal link with an ethics of responsibility. Suffice to say that Richard III and Lady Anne might embody an event, but to put Miles Davis and Cicely Tyson in a boat to oblivion might just be pouring intellectual insult onto physical and psychological injury. Whatever the case, and to quote Meaghan Morris, 'crazy talk is not enough'.

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<sup>161</sup> Tate, 'Silence, Exile, Cunning', p.236.



## Conclusion

### **Coda: 1968-75A.D. The Geology of Miles, or a Prolegomena to Any Future Deleuze-Guattarian Pragmatics**

*Between '68 and '75, Macero and Miles [...] turned effects into instruments [...] [E]ffects are now acoustic prosthetics, audio extensions, sonic destratifiers.*  
Kodwo Eshun<sup>1</sup>

*CBS MEMORANDUM*

*FROM: IRVING J. TOWNSEND - TO: TEO MACERO - DATE: OCTOBER 24, 1968*  
*Miles Davis called [...] to tell me that would he like to purchase from Fender an electric piano, a guitar, bass and tom toms...*<sup>2</sup>

Returning to the account of existential territories and incorporeal universes of reference from chapter 3, and at the same time the problem of the war machine, it might be possible to produce a diagram of the numerous assemblages and their machinic heterogeneity as they constitute 'electric Miles' and which - as before - enables the tracking or following of the sonic phylum between and across the assemblages, territories and universes that that embody it. The diagram for modal jazz was complex and yet - provisional as it was - a more thorough mapping of modality would likely be surpassed in its complexity by one produced for this later phase of development, which would inevitably take up so many of the phylic convergences of the former phase at the same time as introducing a great many new ones. For this reason, only the most summary account can be given here, but one that should serve very well to illustrate the ambiguities and problems that persist.

To begin with, if one scrutinizes the art-work produced for Davis's albums during the transition to the electric phase, again there is a case for the idea that artefacts of cultural production - visual as well as musical ones - potentially embody not only overcodings and

<sup>1</sup> Eshun, *More Brilliant than the Sun*, p.6. Emphasis added.

<sup>2</sup> Printed in the sleeve notes to Miles Davis, *The Complete In a Silent Way Sessions* (Columbia, 2001).

capture, but are intersected by lines of flight or deterritorialization and decoding, and - following the period during the 1960s when Davis actively sought to take control of the images that would appear on the covers of his albums - the politicization of the art-work arguably takes a more radical turn. The issue of politics is one that shall be returned to in a moment, but - whatever the political import of these images - they certainly do embody something of the shift that can be found in the sonorous and auditory elements of the music. The more conventional photographic-based sleeve images from earlier periods are now replaced by more 'artificial', manipulated materials with the use of more painterly and graphic-based illustrations enabling a more flexible and experimental approach to image design that monadologically explicates and implicates the auditory dimensions of the music and provides an indication of the direction that is being taken. This indeed begins with *Miles in the Sky* and - suspended momentarily in the more conventional portrait image of Davis on the original sleeve for *In a Silent Way* - acquires a certain visual consistency with the cover of *Bitches Brew* (carried over into the cover of *Live-Evil* in 1971) followed by Yokoo's image for *Agharta* in 1975 [see figs.9-10]. This shift in the visual orientation of the art-work accompanying the auditory component also marks the cross-over to other styles including rock and soul (see for example the illustration for 1971's *On the Corner*, arguably Davis's most 'straight-ahead' rock and soul-influenced outing of the 1970s). The style of the images for *Bitches Brew* and *Live-Evil* is largely down to their creator, Abdul Mati Klarwein and *Agharta*'s cover owes its style to Tadanooori Yokoo. An important milieu component of the existential territories of electric Miles, the sleeve designs for this phase shall be examined in a little more detail shortly.



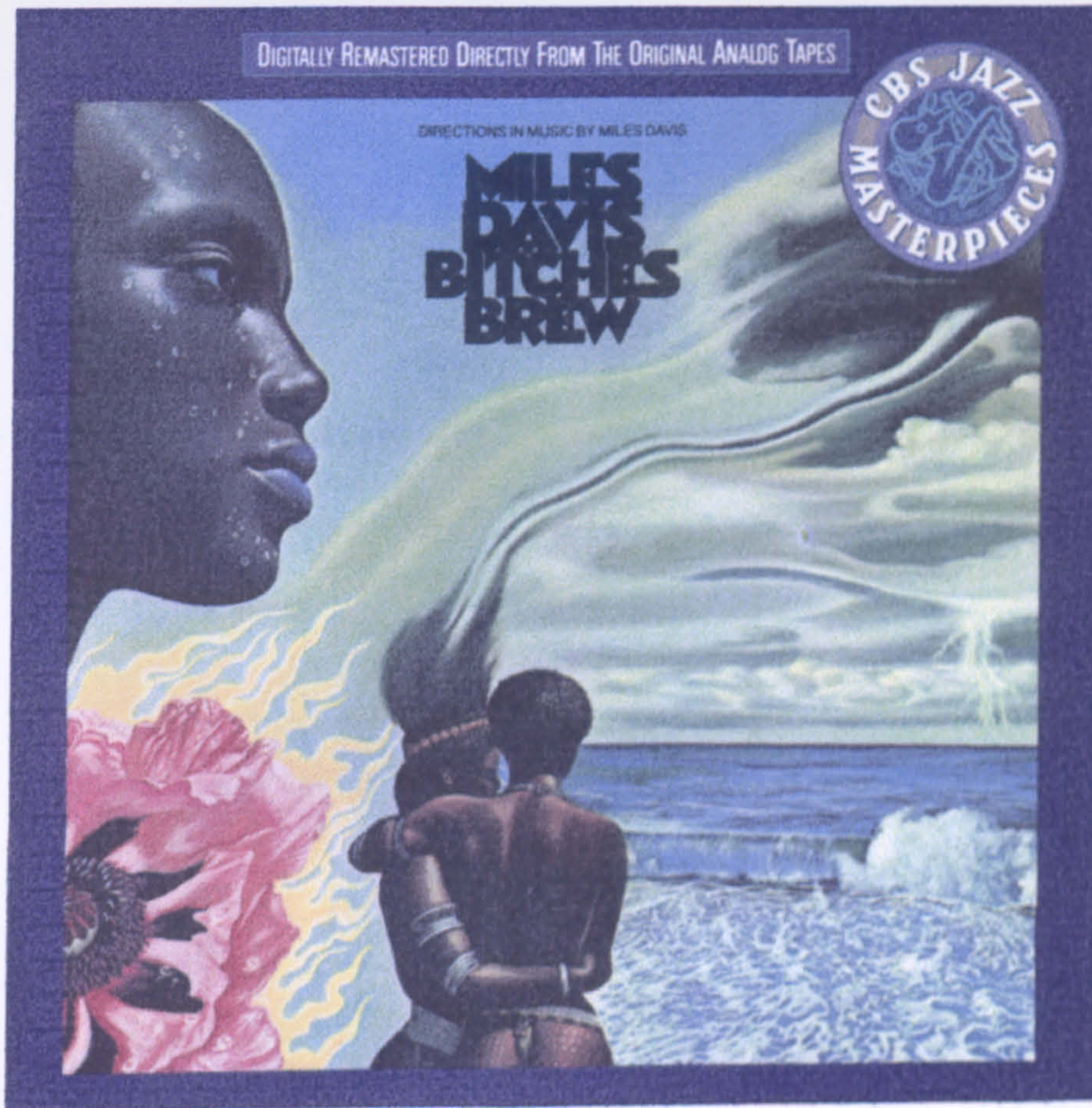


Fig. 9





Fig. 10



Firstly, it is necessary to elucidate a few more of the milieu components, their territorial aggregations and their deterritorializations. Returning to the sonorous and auditory elements, a number of components and their machinic interactions have already been mentioned: the trumpet-Harmon mute connection which - with its accompanying universe of reference of 'intimacy', 'instrospection' and 'seduction' - already deterritorialized in the 'mistakes' of the 1964 version of 'My Funny Valentine' and again in the on-stage gesture analysed in chapter 3 - become greatly more so through the proliferating extensions and warpings of the electric period: Rhodes piano-Echoplex-ring modulator, trumpet-Harmon mute-wah pedal-electronic delay, African percussion, sitar, and studio cut-and-splice, reinscribing the material to warp the already-distorted sound of its one-time spatio-temporal specificity. The territorial intersections expand greatly during this period, and so do the incorporeal universes of reference: *Agharta, Pangaea, Panthalassa*.

If the title of this 'Coda' seems to tenuously labour the pun on Deleuze and Guattari's plateau dates and names, it should be made clear before it is denounced as theoretical noodling that the universe of reference accompanying the myriad territories and milieus of this period - without recourse to theoretical mediation - *explicitly* enlists the vocabulary of geology. Album titles are very important, as they always were in the output of Miles Davis. The constant punning on 'Miles' that gave the names to a number of his most famous releases: *Miles Ahead*, 'Milestones', *Miles in the Sky*, served to mark the direction of his music, its 'untimeliness'<sup>3</sup>, and at the same time function as a marketing strategy to shift

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<sup>3</sup> To the extent that the electric period can be said to constitute an event, one that results from becomings that do not come from history but fall back into history, it might be described as 'untimely'. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari borrow the term 'Aternal' from Charles Péguy and implicitly ally it to Nietzsche's concept of the 'untimely'. Admittedly the description is one that pertains to the philosophical

records in numbers. By 1967 (after the somewhat anomalous title and image of *Miles Smiles* in 1966), the titles were also taking a modified line: *Nefertiti*, *Sorcerer*, *Bitches Brew* - tensor-signs for the new territorial counterpoints which - as was suggested in chapter 2 - potentially mark an undecidable transition towards a politicized becoming-minor (becoming-black, becoming-woman) and the appropriation of potentially female subjectivizing traits in the creation of a global 'woman' that is locked into the apparatus of capture and/or the segmentarities of power. Whatever the case ultimately, whether the selection is possible or not, the names of these albums do mark the direction that the universe of reference takes during the early 1970s, with the palindrome of *Live-Evil* and the mythical worlds-views of *Agharta*, and *Pangaea*, both albums recorded live at two concerts performed on the same day in Japan in 1975, and the last performances and recordings to be allied to the name 'Miles Davis' until 1980.

*Pangaea* the album is - like so many of the work from *In a Silent Way* onwards - comprised of very long tracks that combine motival and thematic materials from many of the other works produced over the period. The title of one of the two tracks from this album, 'Gondwana', takes its name from one of two 'supercontinents', Gondwana and Laurentia that, though their own 'stratoanalyses', modern geologists have supposedly discerned to have originally composed the landmasses of the Earth, with Gondwana

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event and so the parallel with Miles Davis once again rests on whether the music succeeds in surveying an abstract machine whereby the music can be said to have its own concept, cf., Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, pp.111-2. If it does have a concept, it is something akin to the 'power of the false' that Deleuze derives from Bergson and finds exemplified by the cinema of Orson Welles, cf., Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, pp.126-47. Here the issue of gravity returns, and according to Deleuze the power of the false de-centres and displaces the gravitational pull of the movement-image. If the electric period can be said to have succeeded where the modal war machine perhaps failed it is that it constantly de-centres all of the musical elements, harmony, melody, rhythm, timbre, and the mythologizing of this music through art-work and album-titles seems calculated to produce a fabulation.



containing what would later become the African continent, after millions of years of 'continental drift'. The other track on the album emphasizes this African connection, 'Zimbabwe'. 'Pangaea', is a name that has been given to the 'primordial continent into which all the present ones are ingeniously fitted in jigsaw fashion, its shores washed by the waves of 'Panthalassa'. To quote David Toop,

In his [Davis's] mind, this music was inspired by lost civilizations, united land masses, utopias of the mythical future and, as Kevin Whitehead suggests, continental drift.<sup>4</sup>

In terms of its sonority, the album *Pangaea*, with its two vast, sprawling, constantly shifting, monolithic chunks of music both reflects the ideas embodied in the work of geologists as explorations of sonorous matter, its capture and its deterritorialization, as part of and beyond its double-articulation. This is not to be understood allegorically either, but rather as a stratigraphic inscription of a number of recording surfaces in reciprocal presupposition: bodily surface or skin as surface of affect, the sense organs, but also the magnetic tape used in the recording process and its distribution as vinyl or CD, and the surface - interior and exterior - of the instruments and electronic devices, surfaces across which the breaks-flows of desiring production, technical production and social production all take place. However, the universe of reference that accompanies the existential territories composed of these milieus components potentially appeals no less to the mysticism that did so much to generate these mythological narratives of the Earth's history which carried over into the work of more 'positivistic' modern geology, and this is where one finds one of the greatest ambiguities of all, politically, ethically and aesthetically,

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<sup>4</sup> Toop, *Ocean of Sound*, p.100.

because these narratives were the ones that were appropriated and mobilized by Nazi survivalists to perpetuate the 'Aryan' myth of the 'master race'.<sup>5</sup>

To some extent this echoes the problem that was earlier diagnosed regarding the uses of music made by Deleuze and Guattari and the questionable 'sobriety' and 'rigour' of their own non-philosophical apprenticeship. In appealing for example to the work of Stockhausen,, they take his work to be an illustration of the 'Modern' moment, with his use of electronic machines to access the phylum of sound-matter. What they neglect, however, and what Guattari's work in *Chaosmosis* implicitly suggests to us, is that the sonorous phylum and the territories that embody its machinic heterogenesis are always accompanied by a universe of reference, and the universe that accompanies the music of Stockhausen and arguably all contributions to a 'Cosmic' refrain of this modern moment -

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<sup>5</sup> In a bizarre, disturbing and fascinating book, Jocelyn Godwin traces the history of solar and polar myths and the myths of hollow Earth as expounded in esoteric writings of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century including the work of H.P. Blavatsky, René Guénon and Louis Jallicot. This is where the myth of Agartha-Shambhala emerges, with Agartha supposedly being a world of meditation and peace whilst Shambhala was a city of violence. A quote from Godwin should illustrate quite clearly the ambivalence underlying this myth, cf. Jocelyn Godwin, *Arktos: Science, Symbolism and Nazi Survival* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1993), p.80: '[T]he myth was launched, and would be repeated by most of the French authors of the genre, even ones with a pretension to scholarship. Here is a baroque version from Jean-Claude Frère's *Nazisme et sociétés secrètes* (1974). After the cataclysm that made Hyperborea uninhabitable, perhaps 6000 years ago, the inhabitants migrated to the region now covered by the Gobi Desert and there founded a new seat: Agartha. People flocked from all directions to this "center of the world", which enjoyed 2,000 years of brilliant civilization. The another catastrophe occurred, its cause unknown: the surface of the region was devastated, but Agartha survived underground. Thither the great initiates traveled - Frère mentions Pythagoras, Apollonius of Tyana, and Jesus - to receive orders from the Masters of the World. The Aryan people migrated in two directions: one went north and west, hoping to return to their Hyperborean homeland and to conquer their lost territories. A second group went south, to the Himalayas, and there founded another secret center in underground caverns'. For Tadanoori Yokoo's illustration for the cover of *Agharta*. Kodwo Eshun gives a characteristically 'pop' account of this illustration and the work of Yokoo more generally in terms of Afrofuturism, returning to the idea of music (and art's) embodiment of future possibility, cf. Eshun, *More Brilliant than the Sun*, p.10 'In Yokoo's *Agharta* sleeve, the title forms a phonotron that blasts off from a city framed in lush foliage and a red liquid flux which arches out of the skyscrapers [...] Klarwein, Yokoo and [Robert] Springett [illustrator for the similarly 'cosmic' Herbie Hancock cover sleeve for *Crossings*] exemplify Afrodelia, anachronizing past and future into what Miles calls Yesternow [...] World 4 Art-Sound opens up the [...] collapsar, a slippage in time, is a collapsed star in which the times between what's to come and what hasn't happened yet implode and fold upon each other'. The ambivalence is one therefore of untimely becoming through a



of which there are many - has an ambivalent relation not only to utopia, but also to fascism, to which Stockhausen was sympathetic. To quote Toop quoting Stockhausen,

With mid-1960s tape pieces such as *Mixtur*, *Hymnen* and *Telemusick*, Stockhausen depicted global absorption and transmission: the passage of organic materials into the electronic domain; music, the performer and the composer as a satellite dish [...]. In his notes on *Telemusik*, composed in Tokyo as an electronic transformation of fragments of recorded music from Africa, the Amazon, Hungary, China, Vietnam, Bali and Japan, he wrote: "I wanted to come closer to an ever-recurring dream: to go a step forward towards writing, not 'my' music, but a music of the whole world, of all lands and races".<sup>6</sup>

Given that they dedicate sizeable sections of *A Thousand Plateaus* to a micropolitical and stratoanalytical analysis of fascism in both its molecular and molar dimensions, of how the line of flight might under given circumstances potentially turn into a line of abolition, destruction or 'suicide'<sup>7</sup>, it seems remarkable that in detailing the 'Modern' moment they seem to miss the connection. Their tripartite division between the three aspects, of course, is not to be taken as a punctual linear or teleological account of musical history, and there is scope for viewing the potential of the Modern aspect's reterritorialization on the more archaic aspects of the 'Classical' and 'Romantic' refrains: God-Creator and Universe; Artist-Hero and Natal. This problem is borne out by the Agharta legend as 'drowning in celestial radiances all visible distinctions of race in a single chromatic of light and sound, singularly removed from the usual notions of perspective and acoustics'.<sup>8</sup>

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strategic re-appropriation of the myth and the reterritorialization on the archaisms associated with racial purity.

<sup>6</sup> Toop, *Ocean of Sound*, p.101.

<sup>7</sup> The idea of Telegram 71 and the line of flight of Nazism constituting its own line of abolition or suicide is derived by Deleuze and Guattari from Paul Virilio, cf., Paul Virilio 'The Suicidal State'. In James der Derian [ed.], *The Virilio Reader* (Oxford and Cambridge MA: Blackwell, 1998), pp.40: 'Telegram 71: "If the war is lost, let the nation perish", in which Hitler decides to associate his efforts with those of his enemies in order to achieve the destruction of his own people by annihilating the last resources of his habitat [...]'

<sup>8</sup> Toop, *Ocean of Sound*, p.100.

This resonates both fascinatingly and disturbingly with the claims made for transversality, the chromaticism of the diagonal line and the potential for becoming-minor, but also the potential for the worst kinds of reterritorialization: on the myth of a master race. The dangers of such 'becomings' then is brought into stark relief, as the ethically and politically well-intended gesture, whether a theorization or enactment or both, may have this danger as one amongst several on its horizon.

On a more positive note however, there is a very rich seam of potential to be tapped in thinking about the relation between the universe of reference that is allied to the names of 'Agharta' and 'Pangaea' in relation to black politics. Stanley Crouch may have been one of the critics to draw attention to the 'sell-out' of Miles Davis and there are a number of observations to be made regarding the validity of this claim. However, a number of other writers and critics - including Amiri Baraka, Greg Tate and Kodwo Eshun - have pointed to the electric period as not actually reflecting the neo-conservatism of 1970s America, but as perhaps the most radical of the numerous phases of Davis's output. As was mentioned earlier in passing, the discourse of 'Afrofuturism' views the work of a number of black musicians, artists and writers of this period as embodying the potential for creating new forms of black subjectivity, which the contributions of Davis were in many ways geared towards producing. The turn towards Africa, not necessarily a case of nostalgia, could be viewed a strategic attempt to open up new lines of connection, both creative and politically charged, which would embrace the possibilities afforded by technological development, not just to change the music produced but to re-constitute the subjectivities invested in the auditory experiences afforded by the music itself. From this perspective, the introduction



of rock-based idiomatic features was not a sell-out at all, but rather a strategic mobilization of its territories and milieu components to challenge its increasingly hegemonic status and the active threat that it posed (and continues to pose) to any minoritarian cultural production. Returning to Henri Gobard's tetralinguistic schema, this strategy is one that uses the 'vernacular' pole as a 'cutting edge' of deterritorialization with some potential to sweep along the vehicular and referential poles in the plotting of a transversal line. Given the increasing power of the vehicular, or bureaucratic, corporate, informational and communication regulation of language, and all of the subjectivizing tendencies that it simultaneously creates and restricts, whatever forms of strategic appropriation might need to be taken should not be instantly dismissed as 'sell-out'. I have left out one of the poles, the mythic, and this is not by accident.

One of the things that complicates Gobard's schema in its relation to Deleuze and Guattari's thinking is that in *Kafka* they dismiss the mythic as reterritorializing, on religious language. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, right at the outset of '1227: Treatise on Nomadology, The War Machine' they follow a thesis from George Dumézil that points to the role that is played by myth in the creation of a war machine: '[A]xiom I: The war machine is exterior to the State apparatus. Proposition I: This exteriority is first attested to in mythology, epic, drama, and games'. We have encountered examples derived from games (Go, playing the Dozens, Signifyin(g)), and also - whilst not the kind of epic or dramatic productions that the plateau takes for its case - there has also been instances 'epic' and 'dramatic' qualities or tendencies in the case of this project. What has largely been left out of the frame is any example of the mythological potential for surveying

exteriority, and it is in this period of the late 1960s and early-to-mid 1970s that this potential can be witnessed. It is not just Miles Davis, but also Herbie Hancock's 'World 4' Trilogy: *Mwandishi*, *Sextant* and *Crossings*, George Russell's *Electronic Sonata for Souls Loved By Nature*, and - perhaps the most untimely and ambiguous of all the contributors to Afrofuturism: Sun Ra and his Solar Myth Arkestra.<sup>9</sup> The universe of reference, and any re-singularizing potential that it carries along with it, might contribute to the production of a Cosmic Refrain. David Toop's invocation of 'utopia' is - as with most of his writing - without a rigorous theoretical working through of its ideas. To put such a claim to the test, one would do well to consult Deleuze and Guattari at the point in their work where the concept of 'utopia' is deployed, in the section of *What is Philosophy?* called 'Geophilosophy'.

Here Deleuze and Guattari take care to distinguish between 'authoritarian utopias, or utopias of transcendence and immanent, revolutionary, libertarian utopias'. The latter conception of Utopia is derived in part from the work of Ernst Bloch and tantalizing parallels are drawn briefly with the 'Negative Dialectics' of Adorno. An immanent utopia, unlike a transcendent one, functions as part of the 'Modern' moment, relative to its milieu and both as part of and against the immanence of capitalist society and the archaisms of reterritorialization. What needs to be explored in some detail, in the present case, but also

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<sup>9</sup> Sun Ra perhaps embodies these ambivalences and uncertainties more than any other jazz musician: pushing cross-over way beyond the point of commercial acceptability, Sun Ra combined many different styles and performed usually with huge big-band line-ups including choir and orchestra as well as a highly eclectic range of instruments, acoustic and electronic, to produce the strangest musical affects, and the mythical universe that accompanied the music was one of interstellar space travel and the solar myth, whose history is also explored in the work of Jocelyn Godwin in relation to esoteric thought and Nazi survivalism, cf Godwin, *Arktos*, p.155: 'René Guénon's [...] told of a very early Hyperborean culture which was forced to leave the North and disperse into Asia and Europe, in much the same way as the "Aryan Race" is supposed to



in any case of the concept of immanent Utopia is whether it can ultimately work against the archaisms and the reterritorializations of capitalism or whether or not, as with the example of the war machine, the potential for an affirmation of utopia is always already anticipated and caught up in these tendencies.

For example, if one takes the existential territories of electric Miles and the fusion or 'fission'<sup>10</sup> music of the 1970s and its mythic universe of Agharta, the phylic connections do not just cut across the musical assemblages of the past or the prospective ones of the future (P-funk, Hiphop, Drum n' Bass, etc.) but connects with the territories and universes of black militancy during the 1960s and 1970s, for example the Nation of Islam and - if one accepts Attali's proposition regarding the embodiment in music of the potential for societal and cultural transformation - then the music of this period can be viewed as a diagramming of the connections across these various assemblages and their lines of flight. From this perspective, the invocation of Agharta, Pangaea and Gondwana point to the potential for a re-singularization of African-American subjectivity which, in its deployments of technology and of the dominant cultural production or rock and mainstream popular music attempts to make itself immanent to the movements of capitalism. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is philosophy that does this best of all:

[I]t is with utopia that philosophy becomes political and takes the criticism of its own time to its highest point. Utopia does not split off from infinite movement: etymologically it stands for absolute deterritorialization but always at the critical point at which it is connected with the present relative milieu, and especially with the forces stifled by this milieu.<sup>11</sup>

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have done [...] Guénon writes of the corresponding transition from the Primordial tradition of Hyperborea to the Atlantean tradition: a change from a fundamentally polar tradition to a solar one'.

<sup>10</sup> The name 'fission' is given to the electric jazz of Miles Davis and Teo Macero by Kodwo Eshun, cf. *More Brilliant than the Sun*, p.5.

<sup>11</sup> Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, pp.99-100.

However, given that it connects more broadly with the wider circuits of materiality and culture, experimental music along the lines of 'electric' miles might point to its potential for activating a mythical fabulation that connects directly to to sound-matter and thereby produces a deterritorialized universe for which the 'people are missing', and on the virtual horizon of which might be the potential for counter-actualizing the present in a gesture towards the untimely incarnation of absolutely deterritorialized subjectivities, or the people yet to come.<sup>12</sup>

Again, one both wonders whether the claim for philosophy is something that could be equally made of music such as that being discussed here and that its connective potential in some ways surpasses that of philosophy 'proper' Either way, the present relative milieu here is that of a capitalist *socius*, itself profoundly capable of deterritorialization but, as was indicated towards the beginning of this project, this is only to the extent that it locks the movement into an axiomatic, or differential relationality between labour and commodities. This is the other and perhaps more obvious major danger of any attempt to produce a diagram, as part of the relative milieu, of the utopian potential for subjective or societal transformation, whether this is attempted through philosophy or non-philosophy. In a way, as with so many things that have been encountered in this essay, it is a problem that one render as a Spinozist question: is any attempt to survey a common notion always already thwarted by the privations of a society that is eminently more efficient in putting

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p.108: '[W]e lack resistance to the present [...] [A]rt and philosophy converge at this point: the constitution of an earth and a people that are lacking in the correlate of creation'.



common notions in the service of these privations, consigning such attempts to the first kind of knowledge with its inadequate ideas and its minimal capacity to act?

And what of the other lines that have been encountered, such as those of subjectification, or the passional line of abolition? This question returns us to the sleeve images of the electric period and the problem of faciality. As was noted before, the shift away from the use of photographic portraits, firstly of white women, then of black women and of Miles Davis himself, could possibly be regarded as marking a strategic shift away from the stratum of subjectification through the face-portrait as a form of expression that leads the viewer/listener towards privation, or interiority, serving to mark the 'identity' of the celebrity as a global person distinct from, and eminently superior to, the global person who looks at the image and unconsciously performs the identification. The images from the covers of *Bitches Brew* and *Live-Evil* are markedly different from their predecessors for the reasons mentioned above, but also because they arguably effect a de-facing or a deterritorialization of the face.

It can be seen by observing these sleeve images that - through the expanded potential of painting and graphic illustration - the restrictions of the portrait-photo have been challenged in a way that the face/landscape of formed content and expression has been deterritorialized such that it enters into a zone of indiscernibility that enables a survey of the black-hole/white-wall system of faciality, challenging the redundancies of signification and the resonance of subjectification-subjection. The deterritorialized face-landscape could arguably be described as a visual composition that symptomatizes a 'clinch' of forces

through which the face-landscape lines of the cover connect with a line of flight towards a becoming-other or becoming-minor where the order-word of white, male dominance is incorporeally transformed such that the assemblage and its interpellation is problematized, and a trajectory is followed whereby the sensory affect of a more territorialized portrait-photo gives way to a problematic affect of faciality.

All of this is arguable perhaps. But it can also be argued that the head that indiscernibly enters into a relation with the sky does not constitute a probe-head<sup>13</sup> or anything of the sort, but rather constitutes a reterritorialization of face/landscape traits that does little if anything to suspend the functioning of its abstract machine, and perhaps only provides the most vicarious reprieve from a more standardized 'celebrity' iconography that may do more to promote a fascination of a more dubiously fetishistic kind, especially on the part of the many non-African American, non-jazz fans who bought this record in droves (including, it must be said, the owner of the copy used for the illustration in the present case). All this demonstrates the undecidability affecting the relationality of the face, especially when Deleuze and Guattari, and few users of their work have considered what problems a black face might cause both for the abstract machine of *black hole/white wall*, the danger again being that there is a reversibility between the poles of the dyad that - rather than make of it a strategic dualism - turn it into a means of rendering redundant or overcoding black subjectivity altogether so that the black holes and white walls of signifiante and subjectification effect a black face in the same way as they do a white one, which is surely very problematic.

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<sup>13</sup> 'Probe-heads' are the cutting edges of deterritorialization effecting the abstract machine of the face. cf. Deleuze and Guattari, pp.190-1.



It is time to return to that other aspect of Miles Davis's *modus operandum* during the 1970s, and that is his altered stage-demeanour. With his growing audiences he started to play much bigger venues, often supporting rock outfits, and - with his greatly expanded band - he would stay on stage for the duration of his concerts and would often conduct the other musicians, using hand-gestures to tell them what to play. This in a way is not new, given that Davis - as was shown earlier - had always been verbally demanding of his musicians and would often seemingly play the Dozens to strategically avoid repetitions of the same or 'clichés'. During this period he would seem to do this in a much more theatrical way that doubtless contributed to the 'continental drift' of the enhanced 'live' performances such as those to be heard on *Pangaea* or *Agharta* arguably rendering sonorous the forces of the Cosmos, in a generalized 'de-population', a line which would be followed without any concern for form, a drift which is sonorously very much in evidence. However, there is also the argument that the archaic territoriality of the Artist-hero has fallen back on (*se rabat sur*) the assemblage and overcoded it, with Davis's gestures now being less examples of a *gestus* that provokes or challenges such established territoriality so much as simply gestures without the same connection to the social, thereby supporting Brecht's contention that art strives as much as it can to avoid socializing the gesture. To the extent that it has can be found to have a connection to the social, it is more along the lines argued by Eugene Holland in his admittedly highly schematic but nevertheless useful distinction between the overcoding of the orchestra and the conductor and the 'schizophrenia' of improvised jazz.

The best concrete illustration of the process of schizophrenia I know of is improvisational jazz. Whenever references are made here (as in *Anti-Oedipus*) to

schizophrenia as the principle of freedom or the realization of universal history, readers should think of jazz, which represents a fulfilment of the process of schizophrenia [...] Jazz musicians [...] rarely use a score, and continually depart from well-known melodies in their improvised solos [...] [S]ymphony orchestras can only hope their performances rise to the genius of the composer whose work they are performing: the hope their content lives up to the pre-existing phrase. In jazz, by contrast, the past enables rather than constrains the present: the improvised performance always exceeds the pre-existing musical composition of structure in complexity, nuance and originality: the whole point is that content go beyond the phrase'<sup>14</sup>

As such, depopulation would be less the order of the day than an assertion of power, the suppleness of the linear connections barely holding together the drifting music becoming segmentalized in a way that reverts to an individual-collective relation that is more akin to the 'Romantic' refrain of Deleuze and Guattari, rather than the Cosmic refrain of bodies-instruments that might otherwise be said to constitute 'electric Miles'. One could do worse than recall an observation made by Elias Canetti regarding the orchestra conductor:

[T]here is no more obvious expression of power than the performance of a conductor. Every detail of his public behaviour throws light on the nature of power. Someone who knew nothing about power could discover all its attributes, one after the other, by careful observation of a conductor [...] He has the power of life and death over the voices of the instruments; one long silent will speak again at his command. Their diversity stands for the diversity of mankind; an orchestra is like an assemblage of different types of men. The willingness of his members to obey him makes it possible for the conductor to transform them into a unit, which he then embodies.<sup>15</sup>

There is a clear indication at this time that Davis is becoming more of a public show man, and that he is playing to the 'crowd', but rather than making a gesture as a means to frustrate or disrupt the investments constituting the audience's subjectivities there is a case for saying that he is now attempting to control them:

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<sup>14</sup> Holland, *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus*, p.xi.

<sup>15</sup> Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart (London and Southampton: Corgis Press, 1962), p.395-6.



The immobility of the audience is as much part of the conductor's design as the obedience of the orchestra. They are under a compulsion to keep still [...] Victory and defeat become the framework within which his spiritual economy is ordered. Apart from these nothing counts; everything that the lives of other men contain is for him transformed into victory or defeat.<sup>16</sup>

Whilst Davis was always concerned about success, it had never been at the cost of making the 'mistake' as a improvising composer who would insist on launching forth into experiment and the demands made of the other musicians were executed most often, though not always, to produce unconventional music. The music of the electric period is some of the most heavily improvised, 'free' music that Davis ever worked on, close in some ways to the 'free jazz' of Ornette Coleman, but one has to wonder whether his stage demeanour was any longer the calculated controversial or vulgar gesture, or rather instead an oppressed or oppressing embodiment of power, thus patching the lines of flight transforming territory and universe into the segmentarity of power. This also has to remain open as a problem without resolution, given that the music being produced and 'conducted' by Davis's hand was about as far removed from that of 'dead Masters' as music is ever likely to get, and there remains the possibility that this is just another example of Signifyin(g) or playing the Dozens.

The ambiguity of the gesture during this time is maximal in its relation to Capitalism and the 'spectacle'. The problem of celebrity as part of the restricted milieu of Capitalism begs the question of how capable artists might be of resisting capture. By the time of the 1970s this had doubtless become more difficult than at any point prior in modern Capitalist history as the axiomatic relationality between social machines, technical machines and

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<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

desiring-machines had become more 'cynical', insidious and enslaving than it had at any time previously. When one looks back to the modal phase and *Kind of Blue*, one can see how deftly Davis negotiated popularity and success with innovation in a way that - whilst the line of flight of modal jazz was perhaps predestined to capture by Capitalism and its machinery of archaic reterritorialization, it is eminently more uncertain to what extent he achieved this during the electric period. His altered stage demeanour seemed more in keeping with the 'star' persona than previously, and - it should not be forgotten that rock music has by this stage succeeded greatly in turning controversy into a commodity - and the challenge was therefore much greater. Christopher Small captures the ambiguity well, with specific reference to Davis:

In each generation there is a handful of artists, such as Miles Davis, David Bowie and the pack-joker Malcolm McClaren, who manage (or are given permission?) to avoid typing and becoming trapped in an image - if, indeed, their shape-shifting does not become, as Bowie's seems sometimes in danger of doing, an image in itself and marketed as such.<sup>17</sup>

As Guy Debord suggests, the spectacle tends towards an increasing ubiquity, and the star system functions in order to render art and artists impotent as their potential is subsumed by the systematic banalization of their social function. To quote Small again,

The star system, in fact, completely dominates the arts of western industrial societies; it functions effectively to distance the majority of people from their own creativity by using talented people to act out fantasies of creativity, as well as of 'power and vacations'. The star, in fact, as Debord suggest, is chosen to do the living on behalf of his or her fans. The image of success is as shallow as the whole business is fraudulent; the star's life, simply by reason of his or her stardom, is in its own way as narrow, as confined and anxiety-ridden as that of any fan. To turn a musician into a star is thus to defuse any challenge his or her *musicking* may pose to conventional values [...]<sup>18</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Small, *Music of the Common Tongue*, p.415.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p.414.



This would then reinforce the claim made using the sleeve images that the music and its accompanying sleeve 'art' has become banal, evacuated of any potential to generate an incorporeal transformation and that it has fallen into the service of a privation whose production of surplus value of flux-code serves to reproduce subjectivities that are completely cut off from their capacity to act. The achievements of African-American *musicking*, and the rhythms of subjectivation it sets in motion, it would seem, are in no way resistant to the banalizing effects of the star system and the spectacle. In 1986, the same year as he appeared in an episode of *Miami Vice*, Miles Davis made a commercial for the car manufacturer Honda:

[T]hat one commercial got me more recognition than anything else I have ever done.<sup>19</sup>

As was stated in the last chapter, Deleuze and Guattari themselves became aware of this problem and attempted to address it in *What is Philosophy?*. In fact, this book in many ways sets itself up as manifesto for re-appropriating concept creation from advertising companies. The extent to which philosophy, for all the potential that they might afford it to survey best the immanence that provides the immobile motor of 'Integrated World Capitalism' is perhaps the most pressing of all the questions facing its place in the world, both inside and outside of academia, and a philosophical pragmatics that implores those who encounter it to 'do it', might find that the tensor-sign marking the most effective deterritorializations to have resulted from such a slogan are not the ones that fell from the pens of Deleuze and Guattari.

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<sup>19</sup> Davis and Troupe, *Miles: The Autobiography*, p.366.

In 1975 Miles Davis's disintegrating body and subjectivity that had made so many breakthroughs finally broke-down. He returned to music in 1980, with his trumpet and Harmon mute. The sensory affects of 'intimacy', 'indigo' and 'seduction' eventually also returned, but by this time the problematic affects were being more effectively rendered using another disintegrating body: Ronald Reagan's. In 1996 a book was published theorizing business practices in the age of 'Performance Management'. Its title: *Jamming, The Art and Discipline of Business Creativity*, and its model: 'the discursive riffs taken from improvisational jazz music'.

#### **If This Is Your Tune, There May Be Several Ways to Play It**

*Deleuze's [...] death by suicide describes a macabre parallel to the fate he foretells for all desiring-machines [...]. If we are to honour this final will and testament, then we must resist the desire to fetishize him, and we must set out to investigate the difference produced through the repetition of his life and his death.*  
Daniel W. Conway<sup>20</sup>

In his 'Foreword' to *A Thousand Plateaus*, Brian Massumi draws a stratigraphic parallel between the book itself and a record in order to ask the question: '[H]ow should *A Thousand Plateaus* be played?', and this is a question which is not limited to the book itself, as it can be opened out to ask more general questions about the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari and to ask also whether the stratigraphy of non-philosophy needs philosophy or theory to stratoanalyze it. Keeping with Massumi's parallel, it would seem that - if *A Thousand Plateaus* is equivalent to a record - there are several ways in which to play it. As such, in attempting to address the foregoing questions at the same time as drawing together the results of this project, it seems appropriate to expand on Massumi's

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<sup>20</sup> Daniel W. Conway, 'Tumbling Dice: Gilles Deleuze and the Economy of *Répétition*', in Ansell Pearson [ed.], *Deleuze and Philosophy*, pp.88-9.



parallel to try and discern the ways in which it has hitherto been played and the ways in which it might be played in the future.

At the outset of this project, it was shown that Deleuze and Guattari perceive their procedure as one of 'pick-up', or 'cut-up'. To draw another stratigraphic parallel, one might say that this procedure is a form of 'sampling', in which inscriptions of a material surface are manipulated to generate transformation both audibly and incorporeally by placing the fragments of strata that have been sampled in a new, more de-stratified relation to one another. This method, one of *bricolage* and rigorous anexactitude, takes its fragments from the strata formed as 'disciplines' and re-combines them in a way that is intra-disciplinary. In *What is Philosophy?* these various fragments are given names which make them specific to their disciplines but make them capable of a deterritorialization: functions, prospects, percepts and affects, that enables them to be lifted from their more usual planes of inscription: science, logic and art, in order to place them on a plane of consistency that puts them to philosophical use.

Another way that it might be played is like a synthesizer, patching different lines into one another in order to maximize connectability and continuous variation, and one that - philosophically speaking - seeks to minimize presupposition at the same time as enabling a survey of the immanent complexity of material and semiotic processes. This synthesizer hereby functions as an 'abstract-machine' of thought, a challenge to the epistemologically grounded assertion of a transcendental apperceiving subject towards a subjectivity created and modulated through a knowledge-practice that is transcendental, with immanent criteria

and which deals with the conditions of existence rather than ahistorical possibility. Using this thought-synthesizer to survey immanent complexity in this way in principle at least makes it a means for producing a diagrammatic map that is 'immanent to the territory'.

The inscriptions by and of a composite human body are not separate from these surfaces of inscription or their incorporeal transformations, but both effect and are affected, materially and semiotically, by participation in the connections and variations that are taking place. The subjectivity that accompanies the body that listens to the record or reads the book is, on this account, not something separate, but something that is created in the very process of the listening. This process is that of the refrain: where it pertains to music, there can be greater or smaller refrains, wide or narrow latitude for affective increase; as it pertains to philosophy, it becomes the end of philosophy itself: to produce a hyper-complex refrain which makes of thought-synthesis and knowledge-practice an ethics. In plotting a transversal line between philosophical thought-synthesis and non-philosophical *musicking*, combining listening, performing, composing and producing, amongst other aspects, philosophy is producing a more-or-less complex refrain whose success is indexed to an increase in or otherwise of ethical capacity. This task, in the language of Spinoza, is one of accessing the 'common notion'. Music, for its part, is potentially capable of producing its own diagrammatic procedures, its own diagonal line that allows a glimpse of the processes constituting it. If music does this, then it enters into a zone of indiscernibility with philosophy and may have the potential to create concepts: *musicking* as knowledge-practice. Whether listening, performing, producing or composing, or any of these in combination, music may thereby have the capacity to disorient the relation between the



faculties of Reason and their privations, by taking them along a line of flight and thereby connecting them with a field of exteriority, or an outside (of) thought: the strategy of a war machine. This would be to hazard an improvisation, or launch forth into a refrain, capable of deterritorializing itself to an increasingly higher power and in doing so enabling the double-articulations of strata, formed contents and expressions, to be surveyed in their relationality: de-stratification. *Musicking* bodies might thereby be capable of overcoming the order-word of the social *dispositif* and creating the pass-word of its *dis*-positioning, effecting an incorporeal transformation of their relations and a challenge to the privations of their investments as separate from one another: music as transversality. To the extent that philosophy hazards an improvisation, one might call this an 'uncoordinated leap'.

None of this is ultimately given. It might have been shown to be possible, but there are many things that in principle or in fact that pose an obstacle to realization. To take samples from different disciplines, a procedure of *bricolage*, has a number of its own risks and dangers. Firstly, there is the risk that it is used without sufficient rigour and without the necessary anexactitude, and that as a result it approximates an exercise in dilettantism more than one of philosophical thought and action. Such a making do is in danger of getting overly-happy with banality and, rather than enter into a becoming-child of the philosopher, substitutes an infantilism, a fetishism of ideas whereby the investment is constituted by the seduction of nomenclature.

The same risks go for playing philosophy and non-philosophy like a thought-synthesizer. Patching different lines, trajectories and orientations together without sufficient sobriety

will 'scramble' or 'efface all the lines', a danger that Deleuze and Guattari ironically fall prey to in their choice of John Cage's prepared piano pieces to illustrate this very danger. As such, thought-synthesis gives way to theoretical noodling. Again this is a fetishism, a 'cult of the machine', as Adorno would call it, and one whose conceptual persona becomes the radio-ham, caught within their privatized subjectivity and only imagining that they are connecting to the social fabric, when really they remain caught within the confines of territoriality, or of the domicile, vicariously tweaking their milieu components. One wonders whether the Richard Lindner illustration<sup>21</sup> at the opening of *Anti-Oedipus* was a wise choice, and it certainly has not done much to dispel the accusations of techno-fetishism.

The relation between philosophy and non-philosophy itself remains both problematic and contentious. Badiou's contention that the concept does not need a case has been shown to be somewhat limited. His refusal to address the collaborative works of Deleuze and Guattari is in part to miss the contribution that Guattari made to taking philosophical pragmatics beyond the confines of the academic institution, into psychiatry and politics, where analytic, artistic and political machines combine their potential. This goes some way to diffusing the accusation of aristocratic asceticism that Badiou levels at Deleuze, at the same time as demonstrating, through a conceptual development such as transversality, that there are very real effects that cut across the virtual and the actual, and do not just leave philosophers trapped within the simulacra of Univocal being. The stoicism of Deleuze in the *Logic of Sense*, is one that very much involves the incorporeal transformation that inscribes bodies, generates sense, but also enables events to be extracted from those

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<sup>21</sup> Richard Lindner, *Boy With Machine*, cover insert to Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*.



bodies. However, this stoicism brings with a danger that does approximate it to an asceticism of a kind that challenges its claim on any political potential and also has the great danger of rendering its ethical orientation one that is bound up with resignation and with the violence of appropriation. This is the primary danger of a philosophy of the event or one of becoming.

This danger is also one that potentially bears out Badiou's claim that there in fact is no One-all that connects virtual multiplicities to a single plane of Univocal being. It is one that is implicit in the limited success of the cases, both in this project and arguably in a project such as *A Thousand Plateaus*, of embellishing philosophical concepts in a way that risks endorsing Badiou's contention that the case thereby serves to proliferate simulacra which might connect one concept to another but does not connect philosophy to its cases so much as to efface or appropriate them. Such appropriation would place the case in the service of the concept distorting the former in a way that makes it subservient to the concept. This is a problem starkly borne out by the encounters in this project with becoming-woman and becoming-black, where the violence of the case does not transversally connect philosophy to non-philosophy so much as to provide an allegory for the violence of philosophical appropriation whereby philosophy, as the preserve of a white, educated and mostly male elite, seeks inadvertently to consolidate its status by laying illegitimate claim to a becoming, whether a becoming-black or -woman of a white, male (molar Man), or whether the becoming-black or -woman of black people and women, equating molar manhood with any minoritarian subjectivity that refuses to let go of its claim to autonomy or independence, even if this itself is strategic.

In order to try and overcome this problem, a more thoroughgoing Spinozist ethical physics of the body would be of considerable value, and the negotiation of the molar and the molecular needs to be carefully undertaken to insure that, strategically, the relationality of bodies of different sex- and gender- orientation are respected in their status as global persons and that an attempt is made to plot a transversal line between and across different conceptions of subjectivity and even identity in a way that does not wink out any process lines, but rather attempts to connects them, in the search for a common-notion that increases the capacity to act of as many (human) bodies as is possible, an ethical and strategic move because it would increase those bodies' capacity - not just to act - but to persist in acting without so easily falling prey to privation, to appropriation or violence.

Additionally it seems that a Spinozist-Deleuzian ontology might itself be part of the problem, because in positing the primacy of heterogeneous materiality as the ontological non-basis of thought might - immantizing the relation between nature and culture - might serve to exacerbate appropriation and violence (consider the political leanings of the ethologists), such that, for example, the concept of the war machine which - on the face of its is extremely interesting, creative and full of affirmative potential - actually does more to level political potential by having it perpetually follow a matter-flow that ends up sending constitutive difference, of race and gender in particular, on a proverbial wild-goose chase. This concern echoes that of Howard Caygill in relation to Deleuze's attempt to synthesize



biology and philosophy which he views as in danger of constituting 'a sentimentalized nature and a brutalized ethics and politics'.<sup>22</sup>

So what of the privation or otherwise of the 'intellectual' who ventures a survey of immanence from within the order-word assemblage of academia? What scope is there for a *dis*-positioning of investment here, the generation of pass-words rather than order-words, of a problematization of knowledge and thought with pretensions to an ethical apprenticeship? What this project has perhaps shown clearly if nothing else is that there is a degree of scope for launching forth towards the world or the outside, or for making an uncoordinated leap in thought that has a limited degree of creative latitude. If this is comparable to the jazz practices and innovations that have been considered, the territory and milieus components of institutional knowledge-production have the scope for producing limited variations on a theme, whether in philosophy or in cultural studies, a refrain that is perhaps less deterritorialized than more so. The reasons for this, anticipated in the introduction to the project are doubtless due to the requirements of academic production to maintain a relation to 'good sense', to call upon the methods of interpretation, analysis and exposition that - as with their use by musicologists and music writers - inevitably place constraints upon their 'object' and must do so if a coherent argument is to be produced. The procedure at work here was an attempt to negotiate the relation between these molar constraints and the molecular undercurrents or chromatic underside in a way that combines a more conventional analytic approach with one that is more synthetic than analytic in the restricted sense, using the theoretical resources and a

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<sup>22</sup> Howard Caygill, 'Topologies of Selection: The Limits of Deleuze's Bio-Philosophy', in Pearson [ed.], *Deleuze and Philosophy*, p.161.

case-study in such a way that 'passage precedes position'. Brian Massumi, who coined this expression, has made very effective use of this as we have seen and, following Braidotti's observations regarding his approach, there is indeed a degree of scope for a more affirmative relation to academic knowledge production that is not so beholden to 'dead masters'. A full-blown experimental and pragmatic construction of the case as deployed by the Massumi would not have realistically been possible here as it would always have been necessary to lay a groundwork that might enable such construction, a groundwork which in the end constituted the bulk of the project. To venture straight into such an experiment would be to depart too greatly from the requirements of an academic order-word assemblage. The problems of Deleuze, Guattari and Miles Davis outlined in this essay may not have found the creative solutions that these names would warrant to the extent that the 'archaisms' of interpretation and explanation remain factors, something that all three would denounce as restrictive and even perhaps despotic, but it has been pursued throughout with a mind to promoting irresolution, with a mind to taking these ideas along new lines and trajectories in the future.

Iain Hamilton Grant, one of the more 'Nietzschean' reader of Deleuze and Guattari went so far as to denounce Massumi's appeal to 'schizoanalysis' as too analytic, academic and safe, a sanitized rendering of processuality that indexes Deleuze and Guattari to the policing mechanisms of academic production in a way that reflects what he considers to be their own hypocrisy in attempting to negotiate the molar and the molecular.<sup>23</sup> For Grant, there is ultimately just machinism, independent of any life-forms, including the human, a

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<sup>23</sup> Iain Hamilton Grant, 'At the Mountains of Madness': The Demonology of the New Earth and the Politics of Becoming', in *ibid.*, p.111n2.



matter-flow that has need of nothing and therefore any attempt to follow it in a way that ethically or politically enhances organic life, in particular that of the human. To try and have your molecular cake and eat it as part of a statistical aggregate is not an option according to Grant. So does this render the work of Massumi and the attempt undertaken here to be hypocritical and worthless?

The cold, geological time of an anarcho-materialist approach to Deleuze and Guattari may rescue them from this danger, but such 'post-human' renderings of their work, taken to the letter, would seemingly only add to the privations of thought and action such that one perhaps ends up making a quantum leap between the first kind of Spinozist knowledge and the third, which Spinoza's work seems to preclude as a possibility. It also seems to go hand-in-hand with postmodern apathy about the possibility of ethical or political change. Furthermore, whilst the banalization of thought and action that poses such a threat to this kind of philosophy risks making its haecceities<sup>24</sup>, its speeds and slownesses<sup>25</sup> tortuously redundant at the behest of Capitalisms 'dromological'<sup>26</sup> superiority is a possibly the greatest one facing the work, it is hard to see how waiting for the Body of Capital to hit the zero degree of its Body without Organs does anything other than promote violence, 'hastening the desiring-machines towards their end'. A return to 'humanism' through Deleuze and Guattari, an option suggested implicitly by Guattari in *Chaosmosis* and explicitly by Hardt and Negri in *Empire*, is perhaps not the best way to go either. Keith

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<sup>24</sup> 'Haecceity' is a term derived by Deleuze and Guattari from the philosophy of Duns Scotus, and describes the 'this-ness' of a given mode of individuation, cf. *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.261: '[T]here is a mode of individuation very different from that of a person, subject, thing or substance. We reserve the name haecceity for it. A season, a winter, a summer, an hour, a date have a perfect individuality lacking nothing, even though this individuality is different from that of a thing or subject'.

<sup>25</sup> On speeds and slowness as distinct from faster and slower, cf., *ibid.*, p.56.

Ansell Pearson in his readings of Nietzsche and Deleuze provides perhaps the most sober and pragmatic suggestion: not post-humanism nor humanism, but the transhuman, or a perpetual self-overcoming which enhances this life, this world, and those who inhabit it. To invoke Spinoza one final time, perhaps it is by seeking a common notion - and not necessarily one that is grounded in a materialist ontology of process - that the human can increase its capacity to act, making ever-greater connections in a way that does not wink out process lines, but that connects them, in a way that strengthens the relationality between bodies, thought and action, with a mind to collectively taking this further. Perhaps this is beyond the scope of academia after all, or restricts it to one amongst many sites of mediation. Guattari's work in particular might in this regard provide so many rich possibilities for the future. Certainly, in asking 'why Deleuze and Guattari?', cultural studies is - in principle at least - in a strong position to take their work forward. Sure, it may have to throw in its lot with those who are not willing to sacrifice all to Nietzschean posthumanism, and may have thereby compromised the intensity of Deleuze-Guattarian thought, but perhaps this is the price that has to be paid to rescue their work from 'hasty' readers who are unquestioning of the value of their concepts and their procedures. In asking 'how?', one can continue to develop their pragmatics along new lines, responding to the objections of more astute criticisms from the likes of Badiou and to a lesser extent Hardt and Negri in order to make such a pragmatics more rigorous and less 'angelic' or incorporeal. This is maybe a task more for philosophy than cultural studies. However, in combining the why and the how of Deleuze and Guattari, there may be a way of taking their work forward that reduces the risk of hasty theoretical noodling and (techno)fetishism

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<sup>26</sup> A term derived from the work of Paul Virilio, a method deployed by Virilio and derived from the Greek word '*dromos*', meaning 'a race', cf., Der Derian [ed.], 'Introduction', *The Virilio Reader*, p.6.



at the same time as dispelling the no-less hasty blanket dismissals of so many of their detractors, with a mind to opening up transversal lines of connection. Whether the thought of Deleuze and Guattari can help us to achieve this, or whether banality destines it to inevitable reterritorialization stopping its progress remains an open question. All that remains for now is to embrace its irresolution.

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