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Chaosmosis

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On the production of subjectivity

My professional activities in the field of psychotherapy, like my political and cultural engagements, have led me increasingly to put the emphasis on subjectivity as the product of individuals, groups and institutions.

Considering subjectivity from the point of view of its production does not imply any return to traditional systems of binary determination — material infrastructure/ideological superstructure. The various semiotic registers that combine to engender subjectivity do not maintain obligatory hierarchical relations fixed for all time. Sometimes, for example, economic semiotisation becomes dependent on collective psychological factors — look at the sensitivity of the stock exchange to fluctuations of opinion. Subjectivity is in fact plural and polyphonic — to use Mikhail Bakhtin's expression. It recognises no dominant or determinant instance guiding all other forms according to a univocal causality.

At least three types of problem prompt us to enlarge the definition of subjectivity beyond the classical opposition between individual subject and society, and in so doing, revise the models of the unconscious currently in circulation: the irruption of

subjective factors at the forefront of current events, the massive development of machinic productions of subjectivity and, finally, the recent prominence of ethological and ecological perspectives on human subjectivity.

Subjective factors have always held an important place in the course of history. But it seems that with the global diffusion of the mass media they are beginning to play a dominant role. We will only give a few brief examples here. The immense movement unleashed by the Chinese students at Tiananmen Square obviously had as its goal the slogans of political democratisation. But it is equally certain that the contagious affective charges it bore far surpassed simple ideological demands. A whole lifestyle, collective ethic and conception of social relations (derived largely from Western images) were set into motion. And in the long run tanks won't be able to stop it! As in Hungary or Poland, collective existential mutation will have the last word! All the same, large movements of subjectivation don't necessarily develop in the direction of emancipation. The massive subjective revolution which has been developing among the Iranian people for more than ten years is focused on religious archaisms and generally conservative social attitudes — particularly with regard to the position of women (this is a sensitive issue in France, because of the events in the Maghreb and the repercussions of these repressive attitudes to women in the area of immigration).

In the Eastern bloc, the fall of the Iron Curtain didn't happen as the result of armed insurrection but through the crystallisation of an immense collective desire annihilating the mental substrate of the post-Stalin totalitarian system. This is a phenomenon of extreme complexity, since it intermingles emancipatory aspirations with retrogressive, conservative — even fascist — drives of a nationalistic, ethnic and religious nature. In this upheaval, how will the populations of central

Europe and the Eastern bloc overcome the bitter deception the capitalist West has reserved for them until now? History will tell us — admittedly a History full of unpleasant surprises but, why not — about a subsequent renewal of social struggles! By contrast, how murderous the Gulf War will have been! One could almost speak of genocide, since this war led to the extermination of many more Iraqis (counting all ethnic groups) than there were victims of the bombs dropped at Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945. With the passage of time it seems clear that what was at stake was an attempt to bring the Arab populations to heel and reclaim world opinion: it had to be demonstrated that the Yankee way of subjectivation could be imposed by the combined power of the media and arms.

Generally, one can say that contemporary history is increasingly dominated by rising demands for subjective singularity — quarrels over language, autonomist demands, issues of nationalism and of the nation, which, in total ambiguity, express on the one hand an aspiration for national liberation, but also manifest themselves in what I would call conservative reterritorialisations of subjectivity. A certain universal representation of subjectivity, incarnated by capitalist colonialism in both East and West, has gone bankrupt — although it's not yet possible to fully measure the scale of such a failure. Today, as everyone knows, the growth of nationalism and fundamentalism in Arab and Muslim countries may have incalculable consequences not only on international relations, but on the subjective economies of hundreds of millions of individuals. It's the whole problematic of disarray as well as the mounting demands of the Third World, the countries of the South, which are thus stamped with an agonising question mark.

As things stand, sociology, economic science, political science and legal studies appear poorly equipped to account for

this mixture of archaic attachments to cultural traditions that nonetheless aspire to the technological and scientific modernity characterising the contemporary subjective cocktail. Traditional psychoanalysis, for its part, is hardly better placed to confront these problems, due to its habit of reducing social facts to psychological mechanisms. In such conditions it appears opportune to forge a more transversalist conception of subjectivity, one which would permit us to understand both its idiosyncratic territorialised couplings (Existential Territories) and its opening onto value systems (Incorporeal Universes) with their social and cultural implications.

Should we keep the semiotic productions of the mass media, informatics, telematics and robotics separate from psychological subjectivity? I don't think so. Just as social machines can be grouped under the general title of Collective Equipment, technological machines of information and communication operate at the heart of human subjectivity, not only within its memory and intelligence, but within its sensibility, affects and unconscious fantasies. Recognition of these machinic dimensions of subjectivity leads us to insist, in our attempt at redefinition, on the heterogeneity of the components leading to the production of subjectivity. Thus one finds in it: 1. Signifying semiological components which appear in the family, education, the environment, religion, art, sport ... 2. Elements constructed by the media industry, the cinema, etc., 3. A-signifying semiological dimensions that trigger informational sign machines, and that function in parallel or independently of the fact that they produce and convey significations and denotations, and thus escape from strictly linguistic axiomatics. The different currents of structuralism have given neither autonomy nor specificity to this a-signifying regime, although authors like Julia Kristeva or Jacques Derrida have shed some light on the relative autonomy of this sort of component. But in general, the a-signifying econo-

my of language has been reduced to what I call sign machines, to the linguistic, signification economy of language. This tendency is particularly clear with Roland Barthes who equates the elements of language and narrative segments with figures of Expression, and thus confers on linguistic semiology a primacy over all other semiotics. It was a grave error on the part of the structuralist school to try to put everything connected with the psyche under the control of the linguistic signifier! Technological transformations oblige us to be aware of both universalising and reductionist homogenisations of subjectivity and of a heterogenetic tendency, that is to say, of a reinforcement of the heterogeneity and singularisation of its components. Thus "computer-aided design" leads to the production of images opening on to unprecedented plastic Universes — I am thinking, for example, of Matta's work with the graphic palette — or to the solution of mathematical problems which would have been quite unimaginable a few years ago. But then again, we should be on guard against progressivist illusions or visions which are systematically pessimistic. The machinic production of subjectivity can work for the better or for the worse. There exists an anti-modernist attitude which involves a massive rejection of technological innovation, particularly as it concerns the information revolution. It's impossible to judge such a machinic evolution either positively or negatively; everything depends on its articulation within collective assemblages of enunciation. At best there is the creation, or invention, of new Universes of reference; at the worst there is the deadening influence of the mass media to which millions of individuals are currently condemned. Technological developments together with social experimentation in these new domains are perhaps capable of leading us out of the current period of oppression and into a post-media era characterised by the reappropriation and resingularisation of the use of media. (Access to data-banks, video

libraries, interactivity between participants, etc.)

The same movement towards a polyphonic and heterogenetic comprehension of subjectivity leads us to consider certain aspects of contemporary research into ethology and ecology. Daniel Stern, in *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*,¹ has notably explored the pre-verbal subjective formations of infants. He shows that these are not at all a matter of "stages" in the Freudian sense, but of levels of subjectivation which maintain themselves in parallel throughout life. He thus rejects the overrated psychogenesis of Freudian complexes, which have been presented as the structural "Universals" of subjectivity. Furthermore, he emphasises the inherently trans-subjective character of an infant's early experiences, which do not dissociate the feeling of self from the feeling of the other. A dialectic between "sharable affects" and "non-sharable affects" thus structures the emergent phases of subjectivity. A nascent subjectivity, which we will continually find in dreams, *délire*, creative exaltation, or the feeling of love...

Social ecology and mental ecology have found privileged sites of exploration in the experiences of institutional psychotherapy. I am obviously thinking of the clinic at La Borde, where I have worked for a long time; everything there is set up so that psychotic patients live in a climate of activity and assume responsibility, not only with the goal of developing an ambience of communication, but also in order to create local centres for collective subjectivation. Thus it's not simply a matter of remodelling a patient's subjectivity — as it existed before a psychotic crisis — but of a production *sui generis*. For example, certain psychotic patients, coming from poor agricultural backgrounds, will be invited to take up plastic arts, drama, video, music, etc., whereas until then, these universes had been unknown to them. On the other hand, bureaucrats and intel-

lectuals will find themselves attracted to material work, in the kitchen, garden, pottery, horse riding club. The important thing here is not only the confrontation with a new material of expression, but the constitution of complexes of subjectivation: multiple exchanges between individual-group-machine. These complexes actually offer people diverse possibilities for recomposing their existential corporeality, to get out of their repetitive impasses and, in a certain way, to resingularise themselves. Grafts of transference operate in this way, not issuing from ready-made dimensions of subjectivity crystallised into structural complexes, but from a creation which itself indicates a kind of aesthetic paradigm. One creates new modalities of subjectivity in the same way that an artist creates new forms from the palette. In such a context, the most heterogeneous components may work towards a patient's positive evolution: relations with architectural space; economic relations; the co-management by patient and carer of the different vectors of treatment; taking advantage of all occasions opening onto the outside world; a processual exploitation of event-centred "singularities" — everything which can contribute to the creation of an authentic relation with the other. To each of these components of the caring institution there corresponds a necessary practice. We are not confronted with a subjectivity given as in-itself, but with processes of the realisation of autonomy, or of autopoiesis (in a somewhat different sense from the one Francisco Varela gives this term²).

Let us now examine an example of the use of the psyche's ethological and ecological resources in the domain of family psychotherapy. We are borrowing this example from a movement which, around Mony Elkaim, is attempting to free itself from the grip of systemic theories that circulate in Anglo-Saxon countries and in Italy.³ Here also the inventiveness of treat-

ment distances us from scientific paradigms and brings us closer to an ethico-aesthetic paradigm. Therapists get involved, take risks and put their own fantasms into operation, creating a paradoxical climate of existential authenticity accompanied by a playful freedom and simulacra. Family therapy produces subjectivity in the most artificial way imaginable. This can be observed during training sessions, when the therapists improvise psychodramatic scenes. Here, the scene implies a layering of enunciation: a vision of oneself as concrete embodiment; a subject of enunciation which doubles the subject of the statement and the distribution of roles; a collective management of the game; an interlocution with observers commenting on the scene; and finally, video which through *feedback* restores the totality of these superposed levels. This type of performance favours the relinquishment of a "realist" attitude which would apprehend the lived scenes as actually embodied in family structures. This multi-faceted theatrical aspect allows us to grasp the artificial and creative character of the production of subjectivity. It should be emphasised that the video is always within sight of the therapists. Even when the camera is switched off, they develop the habit of observing certain semi-otic manifestations which would escape normal observation. The ludic face-to-face encounter with patients and the acceptance of singularities developed in this sort of therapy distinguishes it from the attitude of the traditional psychoanalyst with an averted gaze, and even from classical psychodrama.

Whether one considers contemporary history, machinic semi-otic productions, the ethology of infancy, or social and mental ecology, we witness the same questioning of subjective individuation, which certainly survives, but is wrought by collective assemblages of enunciation. At this stage, the provisional definition of subjectivity I would like to propose as the most encom-

passing would be: "The ensemble of conditions which render possible the emergence of individual and/or collective instances as self-referential existential Territories, adjacent, or in a delimiting relation, to an alterity that is itself subjective." We know that in certain social and semiological contexts, subjectivity becomes individualised; persons, taken as responsible for themselves, situate themselves within relations of alterity governed by familial habits, local customs, juridical laws, etc. In other conditions, subjectivity is collective — which does not, however, mean that it becomes exclusively social. The term "collective" should be understood in the sense of a multiplicity that deploys itself as much beyond the individual, on the side of the socius, as before the person, on the side of preverbal intensities, indicating a logic of affects rather than a logic of delimited sets.

The conditions of production sketched out in this redefinition thus together imply: human inter-subjective instances manifested by language; suggestive and identificatory examples from ethology; institutional interactions of different natures; machinic apparatuses (for example, those involving computer technology); incorporeal Universes of reference such as those relative to music and the plastic arts. This non-human pre-personal part of subjectivity is crucial since it is from this that its heterogenesis can develop. It would be to misjudge Deleuze and Foucault — who emphasised the non-human part of subjectivity — to suspect them of taking anti-humanist positions! That's not the issue. Rather, it's a question of being aware of the existence of machines of subjectivation which don't simply work within the "the faculties of the soul," interpersonal relations or intra-familial complexes. Subjectivity does not only produce itself through the psychogenetic stages of psychoanalysis or the "mathemes" of the Unconscious; but also in the large-scale social machines of language and the mass media — which cannot be described as human. A certain bal-

ance still needs to be struck between structuralist discoveries — which are certainly not unimportant — and their pragmatic application, so as not to flounder in the social abandon of post-modernism.

With his concept of the Unconscious Freud postulated the existence of a hidden continent of the psyche, where instinctual, affective and cognitive options in large part would be played out. Today we can't dissociate the theories of the Unconscious from the psychoanalytic, psychotherapeutic, institutional and literary practices which make reference to it. The Unconscious has become an institution, "Collective Equipment" understood in a broadest sense. One finds oneself rigged out with an unconscious the moment one dreams, *délires*, forgets or makes a slip of the tongue ... Freudian discoveries — which I prefer to call inventions — have undoubtedly enriched the ways we can approach the psyche. I am certainly not speaking pejoratively of invention! In the same way that Christians invented a new form of subjectivation (courtly chivalry and romanticism, a new love, a new nature) and Bolshevism a new sense of class, the various Freudian sects have secreted new ways of experiencing — or even of producing — hysteria, infantile neurosis, psychosis, family conflict, the reading of myths, etc. The Freudian Unconscious has itself evolved in the course of its history: it has lost the seething richness and disquieting atheism of its origins and, in its structuralist version, has been recentered on the analysis of the self, its adaptation to society, and its conformity with a signifying order.

My perspective involves shifting the human and social sciences from scientific paradigms towards ethico-aesthetic paradigms. It's no longer a question of determining whether the Freudian Unconscious or the Lacanian Unconscious provide scientific

answers to the problems of the psyche. From now on these models, along with the others, will only be considered in terms of the production of subjectivity — inseparable as much from the technical and institutional apparatuses which promote it as from their impact on psychiatry, university teaching or the mass media ... In a more general way, one has to admit that every individual and social group conveys its own system of modelising subjectivity; that is, a certain cartography — composed of cognitive references as well as mythical, ritual and symptomatological references — with which it positions itself in relation to its affects and anguishes, and attempts to manage its inhibitions and drives.

Psychoanalytic treatment confronts us with a multiplicity of cartographies: that of the analyst and analysand, and of the family, the neighbourhood, etc. It is the interaction of these cartographies that will provide regimes to the different assemblages of subjectivation. None of them, whether fantasmatic, delirious or theoretical, can be said to express an objective knowledge of the psyche. All of them are important insofar as they support a certain context, a certain framework, an existential armature of the subjective situation. Our question here is not simply of a speculative order, but is posed in very practical ways: how appropriate are concepts of the Unconscious, offered to us on the psychoanalytic "market," to actual conditions of the production of subjectivity? Should they be transformed, should new ones be invented? This question of modelisation (more exactly of psychological metamodelisation) leads to an evaluation of the usefulness of these cartographic instruments — these concepts from psychoanalysis, systems theory, etc. Do we use them as a grid for an exclusive universal reading, with scientific claims, or as partial instruments, in combination with others, the ultimate criterion being of a functional order? What processes unfold in a consciousness affected by the

shock of the unexpected? How can a mode of thought, a capacity to apprehend, be modified when the surrounding world itself is in the throes of change? How are the representations of an exterior world changed when it is itself in the process of changing? The Freudian Unconscious is inseparable from a society attached to its past, to its phallocratic traditions and subjective invariants. Contemporary upheavals undoubtedly call for a modelisation turned more towards the future and the emergence of new social and aesthetic practices. The devaluation of the meaning of life provokes the fragmentation of the self-image: its representations become confused and contradictory. Faced with these upheavals the best attitude would be to envisage the work of cartography and psychological modelisation in a dialectical relation with the individuals and groups concerned; the crucial thing is to move in the direction of co-management in the production of subjectivity, to distrust suggestion and the attitudes of authority which occupy such a large place in psychoanalysis, in spite of the fact that it claims to have escaped them.

A long time ago I renounced the Conscious-Unconscious dualism of the Freudian topoi and all the Manichean oppositions correlative to Oedipal triangulation and to the castration complex. I opted for an Unconscious superposing multiple strata of subjectivation, heterogeneous strata of variable extension and consistency. Thus a more "schizo" Unconscious, one liberated from familial shackles, turned more towards actual praxis than towards fixations on, and regressions to, the past. An Unconscious of Flux and of abstract machines rather than an Unconscious of structure and language. I don't, however, consider my "schizoanalytic cartographies"⁴ to be scientific theories. Just as an artist borrows from his precursors and contemporaries the traits which suit him, I invite those who read me to take or reject my concepts freely. The important thing is not the

final result but the fact that the multicomponential cartographic method can co-exist with the process of subjectivation, and that a reappropriation, an autopoiesis, of the means of production of subjectivity can be made possible.

Of course, I am not equating either psychosis to the work of art or the psychoanalyst to the artist! I am only emphasising that the existential registers concerned here involve a dimension of autonomy of an aesthetic order. We are faced with an important ethical choice: either we objectify, reify, "scientifise" subjectivity, or, on the contrary, we try to grasp it in the dimension of its processual creativity. Kant established that the judgement of taste involved subjectivity and its relation to the other in a certain attitude of "disinterestedness."⁵ But it is not enough to designate the categories of disinterestedness and freedom as the essential dimension of the unconscious aesthetic without clarifying their active mode of insertion into the psyche. How do certain semiotic segments achieve their autonomy, start to work for themselves and to secrete new fields of reference? It is from such a rupture that an existential singularisation correlative to the genesis of new coefficients of freedom will become possible. This detachment of an ethico-aesthetic "partial object" from the field of dominant significations corresponds both to the promotion of a mutant desire and to the achievement of a certain disinterestedness. Here I would like to establish a bridge between the concept of a partial object (object "a" as theorised by Lacan) that marks the autonomisation of the components of unconscious subjectivity, and the subjective autonomisation relative to the aesthetic object. At this point we rediscover a problematic highlighted by Mikhail Bakhtin in his first theoretical essay⁶ of 1924: the function of enunciative appropriation of aesthetic form by the autonomisation of cognitive or ethical content and the realisation of this content in an aesthetic object — what I will call a partial enunciator. I am

attempting to draw the psychoanalytic partial object that is adjacent to the body — the point of coupling of the drive — towards a partial enunciation. The expansion of the notion of partial object, to which Lacan contributed with the inclusion of the gaze and the voice in the object “a”, needs to be followed up. This entails expanding the category to cover the full range of nuclei of subjective autonomisation relative to group subjects, and to instances of the production of subjectivity (machinic, ecological, architectural, religious, etc.). Bakhtin described a transference of subjectivation operating between the author and the contemplator of a work of art — the “spectator” in Marcel Duchamp’s sense. According to Bakhtin, in this movement the “consumer” in some way becomes co-creator; the aesthetic form only achieving this result through the device of an isolating or separating function of such a kind that the expressive material becomes formally creative. The content of the work of art detaches itself from its connotations that are as much cognitive as aesthetic: “isolation or detachment relates not to the material, not to the work as thing, but to its significance, to its content, which is freed from certain necessary connections with the unity of nature and the unity of the ethical event of being.”⁷ There is thus a certain type of fragment of content that “takes possession of the author” to engender a certain mode of aesthetic enunciation. In music, for example, as Bakhtin emphasises, isolation and invention cannot be axiologically related to the material: “It is not the sound of acoustics that is isolated, and not the mathematical number of the compositional order that is made up. What is detached and fictively irreversible is the event of striving, the axiological tension, which actualises itself thanks to that without any impediment, and becomes consummated.”⁸ In the domain of poetry, in order to detach itself, autonomise itself, culminate itself, creative subjectivity will tend to seize upon:

1. the sonority of the word, its musical aspect;
2. its material significations with their nuances and variants;
3. its verbal connections;
4. its emotional, intonational and volitional aspects;
5. the feeling of verbal activity in the active generation of a signifying sound, including motor elements of articulation, gesture, mime; the feeling of a movement in which the whole organism together with the activity and soul of the word are swept along in their concrete unity.

And it is this last aspect, declares Bakhtin, that encompasses all the others.⁹

These penetrating analyses can lead to an extension of our approach to partial subjectivation. Equally, we find with Bakhtin the idea of irreversibility of the aesthetic object and implicitly the idea of autopoiesis — notions truly necessary to the analysis of Unconscious formations, pedagogy, psychiatry, and more generally to a social field devastated by capitalist subjectivity. Thus it is not only in the context of music and poetry that we see the work of such fragments detached from content, fragments which I place in the category of “existential refrains.” The polyphony of modes of subjectivation actually corresponds to a multiplicity of ways of “keeping time.” Other rhythmic are thus led to crystallise existential assemblages, which they embody and singularise.

The simplest examples of refrains delimiting existential Territories can be found in the ethology of numerous bird species. Certain specific song sequences serve to seduce a sexual partner, warn off intruders, or announce the arrival of predators.¹⁰ Each time this involves marking out a well-defined functional space. In archaic societies, it is through rhythms, chants, dances, masks, marks on the body, ground and totems, on ritual occasions and with mythical references, that other kinds of collective existential Territories are circumscribed.¹¹ One finds

these sorts of refrains in Greek Antiquity with the “nomes” that constituted, in a way, the “signature tunes” the banners and seals for professional associations. But we all familiar with such crossings of subjective thresholds triggered by a catalysing temporal module that plunges us into sadness or indeed, into an ambience of gaiety and excitement. What we are aiming at with this concept of refrain aren’t just massive affects, but hyper-complex refrains, catalysing the emergence of incorporeal Universes such as those of music or mathematics, and crystallising the most deterritorialised existential Territories. This type of transversalist refrain evades strict spatio-temporal delimitation. With it, time ceases to be exterior in order to become an intensive nucleus [*foyer*] of temporalisation. From this perspective, universal time appears to be no more than a hypothetical projection, a time of generalised equivalence, a “flattened” capitalistic time; what is important are these partial modules of temporalisation, operating in diverse domains (biological, ethological, socio-cultural, machinic, cosmic...), and out of which complex refrains constitute highly relative existential synchronies.

To illustrate this mode of production of polyphonic subjectivity, where a complex refrain plays a dominant role, consider the example of televisual consumption. When I watch television, I exist at the intersection: 1. of a perceptual fascination provoked by the screen’s luminous animation which borders on the hypnotic,¹² 2. of a captive relation with the narrative content of the program, associated with a lateral awareness of surrounding events (water boiling on the stove, a child’s cry, the telephone...), 3. of a world of fantasies occupying my daydreams. My feeling of personal identity is thus pulled in different directions. How can I maintain a relative sense of unicity, despite the diversity of components of subjectivation that pass through me? It’s a question of the refrain that fixes me in front

of the screen, henceforth constituted as a projective existential node. My identity has become that of the speaker, the person who speaks from the television. 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. The different components conserve their heterogeneity, but are nevertheless captured by a refrain which couples them to the existential Territory of my self. In the case of neurotic identity, sometimes the refrain develops into a “hardened” representation, for example, an obsessive ritual. If for any reason this machine of subjectivation is threatened, the whole personality may implode; this occurs in psychosis where the partial components move off on delirious, hallucinatory lines.... The paradoxical concept of a complex refrain will enable us, in psychoanalytic treatment, to refer an interpretive event, no longer to Universals or mathemes, nor to preestablished structures of subjectivity, but rather to what I call a constellation of Universes. This does not involve Universes of reference in general, but incorporeal domains of entities we detect at the same time that we produce them, and which appear to have been always there, from the moment we engender them. Here is the real paradox of these Universes: they are given in the creative moment, like a *hecceity* freed from discursive time — nuclei of eternity lodged between instants. What’s more, over and above the elements of the situation (familial, sexual, conflictual), they involve accounting for the projection of all the lines of virtuality opening up from the event of their appearance. Take a simple example: a patient in the course of treatment remains stuck on a problem, going around in circles, and coming up against a wall. One day he says, without giving it much thought: “I’ve been thinking of taking up driving lessons again, I haven’t dri-

ven for years"; or, "I feel like learning word processing." A remark of this kind may remain unnoticed in a traditional conception of analysis. However, this kind of singularity can become a key, activating a complex refrain, which will not only modify the immediate behaviour of the patient, but open up new fields of virtuality for him: the renewal of contact with long lost acquaintances, revisiting old haunts, regaining self-confidence.... In this, a rigid neutrality or non-intervention would be negative; it's sometimes necessary to jump at the opportunity, to approve, to run the risk of being wrong, to give it a go, to say, "yes, perhaps this experience is important." Respond to the event as the potential bearer of new constellations of Universes of reference. This is why I have opted for pragmatic interventions orientated towards the construction of subjectivities, towards the production of fields of virtualities which wouldn't simply be polarised by a symbolic hermeneutic centered on childhood.

In this conception of analysis, time is not something to be endured; it is activated, orientated, the object of qualitative change. Analysis is no longer the transferential interpretation of symptoms as a function of a preexisting, latent content, but the invention of new catalytic nuclei capable of bifurcating existence. A singularity, a rupture of sense, a cut, a fragmentation, the detachment of a semiotic content — in a dadaist or surrealist manner — can originate mutant nuclei of subjectivation. Just as chemistry has to purify complex mixtures to extract atomic and homogeneous molecular matter, thus creating an infinite scale of chemical entities that have no prior existence, the same is true in the "extraction" and "separation" of aesthetic subjectivities or partial objects, in the psychoanalytic sense, that make an immense complexification of subjectivity possible — harmonies, polyphonies, counterpoints, rhythms

and existential orchestrations, until now unheard and unknown. An essentially precarious, deterritorialising complexification, constantly threatened by a reterritorialising subsidence; above all in the contemporary context where the primacy of information fluxes that are machinically engendered threaten to lead to a generalised dissolution of old existential Territorialities. In the early phases of industrial society the "demonic" still continued to flower, but since then mystery has become a rarer and rarer commodity. One need only evoke the desperate quest of Witkiewicz to grasp an ultimate "strangeness of being" which literally appeared to slip between his fingers. In these conditions, the task of the poetic function, in an enlarged sense, is to recompose artificially rarefied, resingularised Universes of subjectivation. For them, it's not a matter of transmitting messages, investing images as aids to identification, patterns of behaviour as props for modelisation procedures, but of catalysing existential operators capable of acquiring consistence and persistence.

This poetic-existential catalysis that we find at work in the midst of scriptural, vocal, musical or plastic discursivities engages quasi-synchronously the enunciative crystallisation of the creator, the interpreter and the admirer of the work of art, like analyst and patient. Its efficiency lies in its capacity to promote active, processual ruptures within semiotically structured, signification and denotative networks, where it will put emergent subjectivity to work, in Daniel Stern's sense. When it is effectively triggered in a given enunciative area — that is, situated in a historical and geo-political perspective — such an analytico-poetic function establishes itself as a mutant nucleus of auto-referentiality and auto-valorisation. This is why we must always consider it in two ways: 1. as a molecular rupture, an imperceptible bifurcation capable of overthrowing

the framework of dominant redundancies, the organisation of the "already classified" or, if one prefers, the classical order. 2. in the way that it selects certain segments of these very chains of redundancy, to confer on them the a-signifying existential function I have just evoked, thereby "refraining" them and producing virulent, partial fragments of enunciation operating as "shifters" of subjectivation. The quality of the base material matters little here, as one can see in repetitive music or Butoh dance, which, as Marcel Duchamp would have wished, are turned entirely towards "the spectator." What does matter is the mutant rhythmic impetus of a temporalisation able to hold together the heterogeneous components of a new existential edifice.

Beyond the poetic function, the question of the apparatuses of subjectivation presents itself. And, more precisely, what must characterise them so that they abandon seriality — in Sartre's sense — and enter into processes of singularisation which restore to existence what we might call its auto-essentialisation. With the fading antagonisms of the Cold War, we enter a period when serious threats, posed by our productivist society to the human species, appear more distinctly. Our survival on this planet is not only threatened by environmental damage but by a degeneration in the fabric of social solidarity and in the modes of psychical life, which must literally be re-invented. The refoundation of politics will have to pass through the aesthetic and analytical dimensions implied in the three ecologies — the environment, the *socius* and the psyche. We cannot conceive of solutions to the poisoning of the atmosphere and to global warming due to the greenhouse effect, or to the problem of population control, without a mutation of mentality, without promoting a new art of living in society. We cannot conceive of international discipline in this domain without solving the problem of hunger and hyperinflation in the Third World. We cannot conceive of a collective recomposition of the

socius, correlative to a resingularisation of subjectivity, without a new way of conceiving political and economic democracies that respect cultural differences — without multiple molecular revolutions. We cannot hope for an amelioration in the living conditions of the human species without a considerable effort to improve the feminine condition. The entire division of labour, its modes of valorisation and finalities need to be rethought. Production for the sake of production — the obsession with the rate of growth, whether in the capitalist market or in planned economies — leads to monstrous absurdities. The only acceptable finality of human activity is the production of a subjectivity that is auto-enriching its relation to the world in a continuous fashion. The productive apparatuses of subjectivity can exist at the level of megapoles as easily as at the level of an individual's language games. And to learn the intimate workings of this production, these ruptures of meaning that are auto-foundational of existence — poetry today might have more to teach us than economic science, the human sciences and psychoanalysis combined.

That contemporary social transformations happen on a large scale by a relatively progressive mutation of subjectivity, or in the moderately conservative fashion one sees in the Eastern bloc, or in the clearly reactionary, indeed neo-fascistic manner in the Middle East, and that, at the same time, such changes can take place on a molecular level, microphysical in Foucault's sense, in political activity, in analytic treatment, in establishing an apparatus changing the life of the neighbourhood, the way a school or psychiatric institution functions — the synergy of these two processes calls for a departure from structuralist reductionism and a refoundation of the problematic of subjectivity. A partial subjectivity — pre-personal, polyphonic, collective and machinic. Fundamentally, the question of enunciation gets decentered in relation to that of human

individuation. Enunciation becomes correlative not only to the emergence of a logic of non-discursive intensities, but equally to a pathic incorporation-agglomeration of these vectors of partial subjectivity. Thus it involves rejecting the habitually universalising claims of psychological modelisation. The so-called scientific content of psychoanalytic or systemic theories (as well as mythological or religious modelising, or even the mythological models of systematic *délire*...) are essentially valuable for their existentialising function, that is, for the production of subjectivity. In these conditions, theoretical activity is reorientated towards a metamodelisation capable of taking into account the diversity of modelising systems. In particular it involves situating the concrete incidence of capitalistic subjectivity (the subjectivity of generalised equivalence) within the context of the continued development of the mass media, Collective Equipment and the information revolution — a subjectivity which seems likely to blot out, with its greyness, the faintest traces and last recesses of the planet's mysteries.

So we are proposing to decentre the question of the subject onto the question of subjectivity. Traditionally, the subject was conceived as the ultimate essence of individuation, as a pure, empty, prereflexive apprehension of the world, a nucleus of sensibility, of expressivity — the unifier of states of consciousness. With subjectivity we place the emphasis instead on the founding instance of intentionality. This involves taking the relation between subject and object by the middle and foregrounding the expressive instance (or the interpretant of the Peircean triad). Hereafter, this is where the question of Content will reside. Content participates in subjectivity by giving consistency to the ontological quality of Expression. It is in this reversibility of Content and Expression where what I call the existentialising function resides. Thus, we will start with the primacy of enunciative

substance over the couplet of Expression and Content.

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,¹³ 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 or 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. There is a difficulty in that Hjelmslev himself used the category of substance in a tripartite division between matter, substance and form relating on one hand to Expression and on the other to Content. With Hjelmslev, the connection between Expression and Content is realised at the level of the form of Expression and form of Content, which he identified with each other. This common and commuting form is a bit strange but it represents, in my opinion, a brilliant intuition, posing the question of the existence of a formal machine, transversal to every modality of Expression and Content. There is then, a bridge, a transversality between on one side the machine of phonemic and syntagmatic discursivity of Expression proper to language, and on the other, the division of semantic unities of Content (for example, the way classification of colours or animal categories is established). I call this common form a deterritorialised machine, an abstract machine. The notion of an abstract semiotic machine isn't new: we find it in Chomsky who postulates its existence at the root of language. But this concept, this Expression/Content opposition — as well as the Chomskian concept of the abstract machine — remained too bound up with language. For our part, we would

Expression/Content
Hjelmslev
multiplicity of expressive instances

like to resituate semiology within the scope of an expanded, machinic conception which would free us from a simple linguistic opposition between Expression/Content, and allow us to integrate into enunciative assemblages an indefinite number of substances of Expression, such as biological codings or organisational forms belonging to the socius. From this perspective, the question of enunciative substance should also be outside the framework of Hjelmslev's tripartite division, matter-substance-form (form casting itself "like a net" over matter, thereby engendering the substance of Expression and Content). It would involve shattering the concept of substance in a pluralistic manner, and would promote the category of substance of Expression not only in semiology and semiotics, but in domains that are extra-linguistic, non-human, biological, technological, aesthetic, etc. The problem of the enunciative assemblage would then no longer be specific to a semiotic register but would traverse an ensemble of heterogeneous expressive materials. Thus a transversality between enunciative substances which can be, on one hand, linguistic, but on the other, of a machinic order, developing from "non-semiotically formed matter," to use another of Hjelmslev's expressions. Machinic subjectivity, the machinic assemblage of enunciation, agglomerates these different partial enunciations and installs itself, as it were, before and alongside the subject-object relation. It has, moreover, a collective character, it is multi-componential, a machinic multiplicity. Finally, it includes incorporeal dimensions, which perhaps constitutes its most problematic aspect, and one that Noam Chomsky only touches on in his attempt to make use of the Medieval concept of Universals.

Expressive, linguistic and non-linguistic substances install themselves at the junction of discursive chains (belonging to a finite, preformed world, the world of the Lacanian Other) and incorporeal registers with infinite, creationist virtualities

(which have nothing to do with Lacanian "mathemes"). It is in this zone of intersection that subject and object fuse and establish their foundations. It concerns a given that phenomenologists have addressed when they demonstrate that intentionality is inseparable from its object and involves a "before" in the discursive, subject-object relation. Some psychologists have focused on the relations of empathy and transitivity in infancy and psychosis. Lacan, in his early works, when still influenced by phenomenology, evoked the importance of this type of phenomenon. Generally, one can say that psychoanalysis is born at this point of object-subject fusion that we see at work in suggestion, hypnosis and hysteria. It is an attempt at reading subjective transitivity that is at the origin of Freudian theory and practice. Moreover, anthropologists, since the era of Lévi-Bruhl, Prieziuski, etc., have shown that in archaic societies, there was what they call "participation," a collective subjectivity investing a certain type of object, and putting itself in the position of an existential group nucleus. In studies on new forms of art (like Deleuze's on cinema) we will see, for example, movement-images and time-images constituting the seeds of the production of subjectivity. We are not in the presence of a passively representative image, but of a vector of subjectivation. We are actually confronted by a non-discursive, pathic knowledge, which presents itself as a subjectivity that one actively meets, an absorbant subjectivity given immediately in all its complexity. We can trace this intuition to Bergson, who shed light on the non-discursive experience of duration by opposing it to a time cut up into present, past and future, according to spatial schemas. It is true that this pathic subjectivity, before the subject-object relation, continues to self-actualise through energetico-spatio-temporal coordinates, in the world of language and through multiple mediations; but what allows us to grasp the force involved in the production of sub-

Bergson duration vs. past present future

jectivity is the apprehension through it of a pseudo-discursivity, a detournement of discursivity, which installs itself at the foundation of the subject-object relation, in a subjective pseudo-mediation.

This pathic subjectivation, at the root of all modes of subjectivation, is overshadowed in rationalist, capitalistic subjectivity which tends to systematically circumvent it. Science is constructed by bracketing these factors of subjectivation, which achieve Expression only when certain discursive links are put outside of signification. Freudianism, although impregnated with scientism, can, in its early stages, be characterised as a rebellion against a positivist reductionism which tended to do without these pathic dimensions. In Freudianism the symptom, the lapsus or joke are conceived as detached objects allowing a mode of subjectivity, which has lost its consistency, to find the path to a "coming into existence." The symptom through its own repetitiveness functions like an existential refrain. The paradox resides in the fact that pathic subjectivity tends to be constantly evacuated from relations of discursivity, although discursive operators are essentially based on it. The existential function of assemblages of enunciation consists in this utilisation of links of discursivity to establish a system of repetition, of intensive insistence, polarised between a territorialised existential Territory and deterritorialised incorporeal Universes — two metapsychological functions we can describe as onto-genetic. The Universes of referential value confer their own texture on machines of Expression articulated in machinic Phylums. Complex refrains, beyond the simple refrains of territorialisation, restates the singular consistency of these Universes. (For example, the pathic apprehension of harmonic resonances based on the diatonic scale deploys the "foundation" of consistency of polyphonic music, just as in another context the apprehension of the possible concatenation of numbers and

algorithms deploys the foundation of mathematical idealities.) The abstract machinic consistency which is thus conferred on assemblages of enunciation resides in the layering and ordering of partial levels of existential territorialisation. What's more, the complex refrain functions as an interface between actualised registers of discursivity and non-discursive Universes of virtuality. It is the most deterritorialised aspect of the refrain, its dimension of incorporeal Universes of value which takes control of the most territorialised strata. It does this through a movement of deterritorialisation that develops fields of the possible, tensions in value, relations of heterogeneity, of alterity, of becoming other. The difference between these Universes of value and Platonic Ideas is that the former do not have a fixed character. They involve constellations of Universes, within which a component can affirm itself over others and modify the initial referential configuration and dominant mode of valorisation. (For example, we can see throughout the course of Antiquity the primacy of a military machine based on metal weapons affirming itself over the despotic State machine, the writing machine, the religious machine, etc.) The crystallisation of such constellations can be "overtaken" during the course of historical discursivity, but never wiped out since it is an irreversible rupture in the incorporeal memory of collective subjectivity. Thus we are situated totally outside the vision of a Being moving unchanged through the universal history of ontological formations. There are singular incorporeal constellations which belong to natural and human history and at the same time escape them by a thousand lines of flight. The moment mathematical Universes started to appear, it is no longer possible to act as though the abstract machines which support them had not always existed everywhere and for all time and as though they do not project themselves onto future possibles. We can no longer act as though polyphonic music

had not been invented for the rest of time, both past and future. Such is the first stratum of ontological consistency of this function of existential subjectivation, which is situated within the perspective of a certain axiological creationism.

The second is the embodiment of these values in the irreversibility of the being-there of existential Territories, which confer their character of autopoiesis and singularity on to the zones of subjectivation. In the logic of discursive ensembles which dictates the domains of Fluxes and machinic Phylums, there is always a separation between the poles of subject and object. The truth of a proposition answers to the law of the excluded middle; each object appears in a relationship of binary opposition with a "foundation." Whereas in pathic logic, there is no extrinsic global reference that can be circumscribed. The object relation is destabilised, and the functions of subjectivation are put into question. An incorporeal universe is not supported by coordinates embedded in the world, but by ordinates, by an intensive ordination coupled for better or worse to these existential Territories. Territories which claim to encompass, in a single movement, the sum of everyday existence but which are in fact only based on derisory refrains, indexing if not their vacuity then at least the degree zero of their ontological intensity: thus Territories never given as object but always as intensive repetition, as piercing existential affirmation. And I repeat, this operation is effected through the borrowing of semiotic links, detached and diverted from their signifying and coding tasks. Here, an expressive instance is based on a matter-form relation, which extracts complex forms from a chaotic material.

The logic of discursive sets finds a kind of desperate fulfilment in Capital, the Signifier, and Being with a capital B. Capital is the referent for the generalised equivalence between labour and goods; the Signifier the capitalistic referent for semi-

ological expression, the great reducer of ontological polyvocality. The true, the good, the beautiful are "normalising" categories for processes which escape the logic of circumscribed sets. They are empty referents, they create a void, they install transcendence in the relations of representation. To choose Capital, the Signifier or Being, is to participate in a similar ethicopolitical option. Capital smashes all other modes of valorisation. The Signifier silences the infinite virtualities of minor languages and partial expressions. Being is like an imprisonment which blinds us to the richness and multivalence of Universes of value which, nevertheless, proliferate under our noses. There is an ethical choice in favour of the richness of the possible, an ethics and politics of the virtual that decorporealises and deterritorialises contingency, linear causality and the pressure of circumstances and significations which besiege us. It is a choice for processuality, irreversibility and resingularisation. On a small scale, this redeployment can turn itself into the mode of entrapment, of impoverishment, indeed of catastrophe in neurosis. It can take up reactive religious references. It can annihilate itself in alcohol, drugs, television, an endless daily grind. But it can also make use of other procedures that are more collective, more social, more political ...

In order to question dualist oppositions, such as Being-being or Subject-Object, and systems of Manichean bipolar valorisations, I have proposed the concept of ontological intensity. It implies an ethico-aesthetic engagement with the enunciative assemblage, both in actual and virtual registers. But another element of the metamodelisation proposed here resides in the collective character of machinic multiplicities. There is no personological totalisation of the different components of Expression, or the self-enclosed totalisation of Universes of reference, either in the sciences, the arts or in society. There is an

agglomeration of heterogeneous factors of subjectivation. Machinic segments refer to a detotalised, deterritorialised mecanosphere, to an infinite play of interface. There is no Being already installed throughout temporality. This questioning of dual, binary relations (Being-being, or Conscious-Unconscious) implies a questioning of semiotic linearity — which always seems to be beyond question. Pathic expression is not placed in a relation of discursive succession in order to situate the object on the basis of a clearly delimited referent. Here we are in a register of co-existence, of crystallisation of intensity. Time does not exist as an empty container (a conception which remains at the root of Einsteinian thought). The relations of temporalisation are essentially those of machinic synchrony. There is a deployment of axiological ordinates, without the constitution of a referent exterior to this deployment. Here we are before the relation of “extensionalising” linearity, between an object and its representative mediation within an abstract machinic complex.

Will we say of the incorporeal and virtual part of assemblages of enunciation that it is *in voce* according to a “terminist,” nominalist viewpoint, which makes semiotic entities the tributaries of a pure subjectivity; or will we say that they are *in re* within the framework of a realist conception of the world, subjectivity being only an illusory artefact? But maybe it's necessary to affirm both these positions concurrently: the domain of virtual intensities establishing itself prior to distinctions being made between the semiotic machine, the referred object and the enunciative subject. It's from a failure to see that machinic segments are autopoietic and ontogenetic that one endlessly makes universalist reductions to the Signifier and to scientific rationality. Machinic interfaces are heterogenetic; they summon the alterity of the points of view we might have on them and, as a consequence, on the systems of metamodelling which allow us to account, in one way or another, for the

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fundamentally inaccessible character of their autopoietic nuclei. We need to free ourselves from a solitary reference to technological machines and expand the concept of machine so as to situate the machine's adjacence to incorporeal Universes of reference. Note that the categories of metamodelling proposed here — Fluxes, machinic Phylums, existential Territories, incorporeal Universes — are only of interest because they come in fours and allow us to break free of tertiary descriptions which always end up falling back into dualisms. The fourth term stands for an *n*th term: it is the opening onto multiplicity. What distinguishes metamodelling from modelling is the way it uses terms to develop possible openings onto the virtual and onto creative processuality.

- 1 Daniel Stern, *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, Basic Books, New York, 1985. See later pp.65-6.
- 2 Francisco Varela, *Autonomie et Connaissance*, Le Seuil, Paris, 1989. [This is a revised French edition of *Principles of Biological Autonomy*, North Holland Press, New York, 1979.]
- 3 Mony Elkaim, *If You Love Me, Don't Love Me*, Basic Books, New York, 1990.
- 4 Félix Guattari, *Cartographies schizoanalytiques*, Galilée, Paris, 1989.
- 5 "Of all these three kinds of delight (in the agreeable, the beautiful, and the good), that of taste in the beautiful may be said to be the one and only disinterested and free delight; for, with it, no interest, whether of sense or reason extorts approval." Immanuel Kant, *The Critique of Judgement*, trans. James Creed Meredith, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1982, p.49.
- 6 Mikhail Bakhtin, "Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art," in *Art and Answerability: Early Philosophical Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*, edited by Michael Hoquist and Vadim Liapunov, University of Texas Press, Austin, 1990.
- 7 Ibid., p.306.
- 8 Ibid., p.307.
- 9 Ibid., p.307.

- 10 Félix Guattari, *L'Inconscient machinique*, Recherche, Paris, 1979.
- 11 See the role of dreams in the mythical cartographies of Australian Aborigines. Barbara Glocewski, *Les Rêveurs du désert*, Plon, Paris, 1989.
- 12 For a re-examination of hypnosis and suggestion, see Léon Chertok and Isabelle Stengers, *A Critique of Psychoanalytic Reason: Hypnosis as a Scientific Problem from Lavoisier to Lacan*, trans. Martha N Evans, Stanford University Press, Stanford, 1992.
- 13 Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, trans. Francis J. Whitfield, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1969); *Language: an introduction*, Wisconsin University Press, Madison, 1970; *Essais linguistiques*, Minuit, Paris, 1971; *Nouveaux Essais*, PUF, Paris, 1985.

2

Machinic heterogenesis

Common usage suggests that we speak of the machine as a subset of technology. We should, however, consider the problematic of technology as dependent on machines, and not the inverse. The machine would become the prerequisite for technology rather than its expression. Machinism is an object of fascination, sometimes of délire, about which there's a whole historical "bestiary." Since the origin of philosophy, the relationship between man and machine has been the object of interrogation. Aristotle thought that the goal of techne was to create what nature found impossible to accomplish. Being of the order of "knowledge" and not of "doing," techne interposes a kind of creative mediation between nature and humanity whose status of intercession is a source of perpetual ambiguity. "Mechanist" conceptions of the machine empty it of everything that would enable it to avoid a simple construction *partes extra partes*. "Vitalist" conceptions assimilate the machine to living beings; unless it is living beings that are assimilated to machines. The "cybernetic" perspective developed by Norbert Wiener¹ envisages living systems as particular types of machines equipped with the principle of feedback. More recent "systemic" conceptions (Humberto Maturana

and Francisco Varela) develop the concept of autopoiesis (auto-production), reserving it for living machines. Following Heidegger, a philosophical fashion entrusts *techne* — in its opposition to modern technology — with the mission of “unmasking the truth” that “seeks the true in the exact.” Thus it nails *techne* to an ontological plinth — to a *grund* — and promises its character of processual opening.

Through these positions, we will attempt to discern various levels of ontological intensity and envisage machinism in its totality, in its technological, social, semiotic and axiological avatars. And this will involve a reconstruction of the concept of machine that goes far beyond the technical machine. For each type of machine, we will pose a question, not about its vital autonomy — it's not an animal — but about its singular power of enunciation: what I call its specific enunciative consistency. The first type of machine we are going to consider is the material apparatus. They are made by the hand of man — itself taken over by other machines — according to conceptions and plans which respond to the goals of production. These different stages I will call finalised, diagrammatic schemas. But already this montage and these finalisations impose the necessity of expanding the limits of the machine, *stricto sensu*, to the functional ensemble which associates it with man. We will see that this implies taking into account multiple components:

- material — material and energy components
- semiotic, diagrammatic and algorithmic components (plans, formulae, equations and calculations which lead to the fabrication of the machine);
- components of organs, influx and humours of the human body;
- (cognitive social) — individual and collective mental representations and information;
- affective — investments of desiring machines producing a subjectivity adjacent to these components;

— abstract machines installing themselves transversally to the machinic levels previously considered (material, cognitive, affective and social).

When we speak of abstract machines, by “abstract” we can also understand “extract” in the sense of extracting. They are montages capable of relating all the heterogeneous levels that they traverse and that we have just enumerated. The abstract machine is transversal to them, and it is this abstract machine that will or will not give these levels an existence, an efficiency, a power of ontological auto-affirmation. The different components are swept up and reshaped by a sort of dynamism. Such a functional ensemble will hereafter be described as a machinic assemblage. The term assemblage does not imply any notion of bond, passage, or anastomosis between its components. It is an assemblage of possible fields, of virtual as much as constituted elements, without any notion of generic or species' relation. In this context, utensils, instruments, the most basic tools and the least structured pieces of a machine acquire the status of a proto-machine.

Let us take an example. If we take a hammer apart by removing its handle, it is still a hammer but in a “mutilated” state. The “head” of the hammer — another zoomorphic metaphor — can be reduced by fusion. It will then cross a threshold of formal consistency where it will lose its form; this machinic gestalt works moreover as much on a technological plane as on an imaginary level, to evoke the dated memory of the hammer and sickle. We are simply in the presence of metallic mass returned to smoothness, to the deterritorialisation which precedes its appearance in a machinic form. To go beyond this type of experiment — comparable to the piece of Cartesian wax — let us attempt the inverse, to associate the hammer with the arm, the nail with the anvil. Between them they maintain relations of syntagmatic linkage. And their “collective dance”

can bring to life the defunct guild of blacksmiths, the sinister epoch of ancient iron mines, the ancestral use of metal-rimmed wheels ... Leroi-Gourhan emphasised that the technical object was nothing outside of the technical ensemble to which it belonged. It is the same for sophisticated machines such as robots, which will soon be engendered by other robots. Human action remains adjacent to their gestation, waiting for the breakdown which will require its intervention: this residue of a direct act. But doesn't all this suggest a partial view, a certain taste for a dated period of science fiction? Curiously, in acquiring more and more life, machines demand in return more and more abstract human vitality: and this has occurred throughout their evolutionary development. Computers, expert systems and artificial intelligence add as much to thought as they subtract from thinking. They relieve thought of inert schemas. The forms of thought assisted by computer are mutant, relating to other musics, other Universes of reference.²

It is, then, impossible to deny the participation of human thought in the essence of machinism. But up to what point can this thought still be described as human? Doesn't technico-scientific thought fall within the province of a certain type of mental and semiotic machinism? What we need here is a distinction between on the one hand semiologies that produce significations, the common currency of social groups — like the "human" enunciation of people who work with machines — and on the other, a-signifying semiotics which, regardless of the quantity of significations they convey, handle figures of expression that might be qualified as "non-human" (such as equations and plans which enunciate the machine and make it act in a diagrammatic capacity on technical and experimental apparatuses). The semiologies of signification play in keys with distinctive oppositions of a phonematic or scriptural order which transcribe enunciations into materials of signifying

expression. Structuralists have been content to erect the Signifier as a category unifying all expressive economies: language, the icon, gesture, urbanism or the cinema, etc. They have postulated a general signifying translatability for all forms of discursivity. But in so doing, have they not misunderstood the essential dimension of machinic autopoiesis? This continual emergence of sense and effects does not concern the redundancy of mimesis but rather the production of an effect of singular sense, even though indefinitely reproducible.

This autopoietic node in the machine is what separates and differentiates it from structure and gives it value. Structure implies feedback loops; it puts into play a concept of totalisation that it itself masters. It is occupied by inputs and outputs whose purpose is to make the structure function according to a principle of eternal return. It is haunted by a desire for eternity. The machine, on the contrary, is shaped by a desire for abolition. Its emergence is doubled with breakdown, catastrophe — the menace of death. It possesses a supplement: a dimension of alterity which it develops in different forms. This alterity differentiates it from structure, which is based on a principle of homeomorphism. The difference supplied by machinic autopoiesis is based on disequilibrium, the prospection of virtual Universes far from equilibrium. And this doesn't simply involve a rupture of formal equilibrium, but a radical ontological reconversion. The machine always depends on exterior elements in order to be able to exist as such. It implies a complementarity, not just with the man who fabricates it, makes it function or destroys it, but it is itself in a relation of alterity with other virtual or actual machines — a "non-human" enunciation; a proto-subjective diagram.

This ontological reconversion dismisses the totalising scope of the concept of the Signifier. Because the signifying entities

which operate the diverse mutations of the ontological referent — that makes us move from the Universe of molecular chemistry to the Universe of biological chemistry, or from the acoustic world to the world of polyphonic and harmonic music — are not the same. Of course, lines of signifying decoding, composed of discrete figures — binarisable, syntagmatisable and paradigmatisable — sometimes appear in one Universe or another. And we can have the illusion that the same signifying network occupies all these domains. It is, however, totally different when we consider the actual texture of these Universes of reference. They are always stamped with the mark of singularity. From acoustics to polyphonic music, there is a divergence of constellations of expressive intensity. They involve a certain pathic relationship, and convey irreducibly heterogeneous ontological consistencies. We thus discover as many types of deterritorialisation as traits of expressive materials. The signifying articulation hanging over them — in its indifferent neutrality — is incapable of imposing itself as a relation of immanence to machinic intensities, to this non-discursive, auto-enunciating, auto-valorising, autopoietic node. It does not submit to any general syntax of the procedures of deterritorialisation. No couplet — Being-being, Being-Nothingness, being-other — can claim the status of an ontological binary digit. Machinic propositions elude the ordinary games of discursivity and the structural coordinates of energy, time and space.

Yet an ontological transversality does nonetheless exist in them. What happens at a level of the particulate-cosmic is not without relation to the human soul or events in the socius. But not according to harmonic universals of the Platonic type (*Sophist*). The composition of deterritorialising intensities is incarnated in abstract machines. We should bear in mind that there is a machinic essence which will incarnate itself in a

technical machine, and equally in the social and cognitive environment connected to this machine — social groups are also machines, the body is a machine, there are scientific, theoretical and information machines. The abstract machine passes through all these heterogeneous components but above all it heterogenises them, beyond any unifying trait and according to a principle of irreversibility, singularity and necessity. In this respect the Lacanian signifier is struck with a double lack: it is too abstract in that it makes heterogeneous, expressive materials translatable, it lacks ontological heterogenesis, it gratuitously uniformises and syntaxises diverse regions of being, and, at the same time, it is not abstract enough because it is incapable of taking into account the specificity of these machinic autopoietic nodes, to which we must now return.

Francisco Varela characterises a machine by "the set of inter-relations of its components independent of the components themselves."³ The organisation of a machine thus has no connection with its materiality. He distinguishes two types of machines: "allopoietic" machines which produce something other than themselves, and "autopoietic" machines which engender and specify their own organisation and limits. Autopoietic machines undertake an incessant process of the replacement of their components as they must continually compensate for the external perturbations to which they are exposed. In fact, the qualification of autopoietic is reserved by Varela for the biological domain: social systems, technical machines, crystalline systems, etc., are excluded. This is the sense of his distinction between allopoiesis and autopoiesis. But autopoiesis, which uniquely defines autonomous entities — unitary, individuated and closed to input/output relationships — lacks characteristics essential to living organisms, like the fact that they are born, die and survive through genetic phylums. Autopoiesis deserves to be rethought in terms of

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evolutionary, collective entities, which maintain diverse types of relations of alterity, rather than being implacably closed in on themselves. In such a case, institutions and technical machines appear to be allopoietic, but when one considers them in the context of the machinic assemblages they constitute with human beings, they become ipso facto autopoietic. Thus we will view autopoiesis from the perspective of the ontogenesis and phylogenesis proper to a mecanosphere superposed on the biosphere.

The phylogenetic evolution of machinism is expressed, at a primary level, by the fact that machines appear across "generations," one suppressing the other as it becomes obsolete. The filiation of previous generations is prolonged into the future by lines of virtuality and their arboreal implications. But this is not a question of a univocal historical causality. Evolutionary lines appear in rhizomes; datings are not synchronic but heterochronic. Example: the industrial "take off" of steam engines happened centuries after the Chinese Empire had used them as children's toys. In fact, these evolutionary rhizomes move in blocks across technical civilisations. A technological innovation may know long periods of stagnation or regression, but there are few cases in which it does not "restart" at a later date. This is particularly clear with military technological innovations: they frequently punctuate long historical periods that they stamp with the seal of irreversibility, wiping out empires for the benefit of new geopolitical configurations. But, and I repeat it, this was already true of the most humble instruments, utensils and tools which don't escape this phylogenesis. One could, for example, dedicate an exhibition to the evolution of the hammer since the Iron Age and conjecture about what it will become in the context of new materials and technologies. The hammer that one buys today at the supermarket is, in a way, "drawn out" on a phylogenetic line of infinite, virtual extension.

It is at the intersection of heterogeneous machinic Universes, of different dimensions and with unfamiliar ontological textures, radical innovations and once forgotten, then reactivated, ancestral machinic lines, that the movement of history singularises itself. Among other components, the Neolithic machine associates the machine of spoken language, machines of hewn stone, agrarian machines based on the selection of grains and a village proto-economy. The writing machine will only emerge with the birth of urban megamachines (Lewis Mumford) correlative to the spread of archaic empires. Parallel to this, the great nomadic machines constituted themselves out of the collusion between the metallurgic machine and new war machines. As for the great capitalistic machines, their foundational machinisms were prolific: urban State machines, then royal machines, commercial and banking machines, navigation machines, monotheist religious machines, deterritorialised musical and plastic machines, scientific and technical machines, etc.

The question of the reproducibility of the machine on an ontogenetic level is more complex. Maintaining a machine's operability — its functional identity — is never absolutely guaranteed: wear and tear, fine balance, breakdowns and entropy demand a renewal of its material components, its energy and information components, the latter able to be lost in "noise." Equally, the maintenance of a machinic assemblage's consistency demands that the element of human action and intelligence involved in its composition must also be renewed. The man-machine alterity is thus inextricably linked to a machine-machine alterity which operates in relations of complementarity or agonistic relations (between war machines) or again in the relations of parts or apparatuses. In fact, the wear and tear, accident, death and resurrection of a machine in a new copy or model are part of its destiny and can become central to

its essence in certain aesthetic machines (the "compressions" of César, the "metamechanics," the happening machines, the delirious machines of Jean Tinguely). The reproducibility of the machine is not a pure programmed repetition. The scansions of rupture and indifferentiation, which uncouple a model from any support, introduce their own share of both ontogenetic and phylogenetic difference. It is in this phase of passage to a diagrammatic state, a disincarnate abstract machine, that the "supplements of the soul" of the machinic node are distinguished from simple material agglomerates. A heap of stones is not a machine, whereas a wall is already a static proto-machine, manifesting virtual polarities, an inside and outside, an above and below, a right and left ... These diagrammatic virtualities take us beyond Varela's characterisation of machinic autopoiesis as unitary individuation, with neither input nor output; they direct us towards a more collective machinism without delimited unity, whose autonomy accommodates diverse mediums of alterity. The reproducibility of the technical machine differs from that of living beings, in that it is not based on sequential codes perfectly circumscribed in a territorialised genome. Obviously every technological machine has its own plans for conception and assembly. But while these plans keep their distance from the machine, they also move from one machine to another so as to constitute a diagrammatic rhizome which tends to cover the mecosphere globally. The relations of technological machines between themselves, and the way their respective parts fit together, presuppose a formal serialisation and a certain perdition of their singularity — stronger than that of living machines — correlative to a distance between the machine manifested in energetico-spatio-temporal coordinates and the diagrammatic machine which develops in more deterritorialised coordinates.

This deterritorialising distance and loss of singularity needs to be related to a reciprocal smoothing of the materials constitutive of the technical machine. Of course, singular rough patches belonging to these materials can never be completely abolished but they must only interfere with the machine's "play" if they are required to do so by its diagrammatic functioning. Let us examine these two aspects of machinic separation and smoothing, taking an apparently simple machinic apparatus — the couple formed by a lock and its key. Two types of form, with ontologically heterogeneous textures are at work here: 1) materialised, contingent, concrete and discrete forms, whose singularity is closed in on itself, embodied respectively in the profile Fl of the lock and by the profile Fk of the key. Fl and Fk never quite coincide. They evolve through time, due to wear and oxidation, but both forms must stay within the framework of a separation-type limit beyond which the key would cease to be operational; 2) "formal," diagrammatic forms, subsumed within this separation-type, which appear as a continuum including the whole range of profiles Fl, Fk, compatible with the effective operation of the lock.

One quickly notices that the machinic effect, the passage to the possible act, is entirely concerned with the second type of form. Although ranged across the most restrained separation-type limit possible, these diagrammatic forms appear infinite in number. In fact, it is a matter of an integral of forms Fk, Fl.

This infinite integral form doubles and smooths the contingent forms Fl and Fk which only have value machinically inasmuch as they belong to it. A bridge is thus established "above" the concrete, authorised forms. I call this operation deterritorialised smoothing and it applies as much to the normalisation of the machine's constitutive materials as it does to their "digital" and functional description. Ferric ore which has been insufficiently worked, or deterritorialised, retains irregularities from

the milling of the original material, which would distort the ideal profiles of the lock and key. The smoothing of the material has to remove excessive aspects of contingency from it, and make it behave in a way that accurately moulds the formal imprints extrinsic to it. We should add that this moulding — in a way comparable to photography — should not be too evanescent and should conserve a properly sufficient consistency. Here again we find a separation-type phenomenon, putting into play a theoretical diagrammatic consistency. A lead or golden key risks bending in a steel lock. A key that is changed into a liquid or gaseous state immediately loses its pragmatic efficiency and departs from the field of the technical machine.

This phenomenon of a formal threshold can be found at all levels of intra- or inter-machine relations, and in particular with the existence of spare parts. The components of the technical machine are thus like the units of a currency, and this has become more evident since computers started to be used in their conception and design. These machinic forms, these smoothings of material, of a separation-type limit between parts and their functional adjustments, would suggest that form takes precedence over consistency and over material singularities — the technological machine's reproducibility appearing to dictate that each of its elements fit into a pre-established definition of a diagrammatic order. Charles Sanders Peirce, who described the diagram as an "icon of relation" and assimilated it to the function of algorithms, proposed a broader vision that is worth developing further in the present perspective. Here, the diagram is conceived as an autopoietic machine which not only gives it a functional and material consistency, but requires it to deploy its diverse registers of alterity, freeing it from an identity locked into simple structural relations. The machine's proto-subjectivity installs itself in Universes of virtuality which extend far beyond its existential territoriality. Thus

we refuse to postulate a formal subjectivity intrinsic to diagrammatic semiotisation, for example, a subjectivity "lodged" in signifying chains according to the well-known Lacanian principle: "a signifier represents the subject for another signifier." For the machine's diverse registers, there is no univocal subjectivity based on cut, lack or suture, but there are ontologically heterogeneous modes of subjectivity, constellations of incorporeal Universes of reference which take the position of partial enunciators in multiple domains of alterity, or more precisely, domains of alterification.

We have already encountered a certain number of these registers of machinic alterity:

- the alterity of proximity between different machines and between different parts of the same machine;
- the alterity of an internal, material consistency;
- the alterity of formal, diagrammatic consistency;
- the alterity of the evolutionary phylum;
- the agonistic alterity between machines of war, whose prolongation we could associate with the "auto-agonistic" alterity of desiring machines which tend towards their own collapsus and abolition.

Another form of alterity which has only been approached very indirectly, is the alterity of scale, or fractal alterity, which establishes a play of systematic correspondences between machines at different levels.⁴ We are not, however, in the process of drawing up a universal table of forms of machinic alterity because, in truth, their ontological modalities are infinite. They organise themselves into constellations of incorporeal Universes of reference with unlimited combinatories and creativity.

Archaic societies are better equipped than White, male, capitalistic subjectivities to produce a cartography of this multivalence of alterity. With regard to this, we could refer to Marc

machinic alterity

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Augé's account of the heterogeneous registers relating to the fetish object Legba in African societies of the Fon. The Legba comes to being transversally in:

- a dimension of destiny;
- a universe of vital principle;
- an ancestral filiation;
- a materialised god;
- a sign of appropriation;
- an entity of individuation;
- a fetish at the entrance to the village, another at the portal of the house and, after initiation, at the entrance to the bedroom...

The Legba is a handful of sand, a receptacle, but it's also the expression of a relation to others. One finds it at the door, at the market, in the village square, at crossroads. It can transmit messages, questions, answers. It is also a way of relating to the dead and to ancestors. It is both an individual and a class of individuals; a name and a noun. "Its existence corresponds to the obvious fact that the social is not simply of a relational order but of the order of being."⁵ Marc Augé stresses the impossible transparency and translatability of symbolic systems. "The Legba apparatus [...] is constructed on two axes. One is viewed from the exterior to the interior, the other from identity to alterity. Thus being, identity and the relation to the other are constructed, through fetishistic practice, not only on a symbolic basis but also in an openly ontological way."⁶

Contemporary machinic assemblages have even less standard univocal referent than the subjectivity of archaic societies. But we are far less accustomed to the irreducible heterogeneity, or even the heterogenetic character, of their referential components. Capital, Energy, Information, the Signifier are so many categories which would have us believe in the ontological homogeneity of referents (biological, ethological, economic, phonological, scriptural, musical, etc.)

In the context of a reductionist modernity, it is up to us to rediscover that for every promotion of a machinic intersection there corresponds a specific constellation of Universes of value from the moment a partial non-human enunciation has been instituted. Biological machines promote living Universes which differentiate themselves into vegetable becomings, animal becomings. Musical machines establish themselves against a background of sonorous Universes which have been constantly modified since the great polyphonic mutation. Technical machines install themselves at the intersection of the most complex and heterogeneous enunciative components. Heidegger, who turned the world of technology into a kind of malefic destiny resulting from a movement of distancing from being, used the example of a commercial plane on a runway: the visible object conceals "what and how it is." It unveils itself "only as standing-reserve inasmuch as it is ordered to insure the possibility of transportation" and to this end, "it must be in its whole structure and in every one of its constituent parts on call for duty, i.e., ready for take-off".⁷ This interpellation, this "ordering" which reveals the real as "standing-reserve" is essentially operated by man and understood in terms of a universal operation, travelling, flying ... But does this "standing-reserve" of the machine really reside in an already-there, in terms of eternal truths, revealed to the being of man? In fact the machine speaks to the machine before speaking to man and the ontological domains that it reveals and secretes are, on each occasion, singular and precarious.

Let us reconsider the example of a commercial plane, this time not generically but using the technologically dated model baptised as the Concorde. The ontological consistency of this object is essentially composite; it is at the intersection, at the point of constellation and pathic agglomeration of Universes each of which have their own ontological consistency, traits of

intensity, their ordinates and coordinates, their specific machinisms. Concorde simultaneously involves:

- a diagrammatic Universe with plans of theoretical "feasibility";
- technological Universes transposing this "feasibility" into material terms;
- industrial Universes capable of effectively producing it;
- collective/imaginary Universes corresponding to a desire sufficient to make it see the light of day;
- political and economic Universes leading, amongst other things, to the release of credit for its construction ...

But the bottom line is that the ensemble of these final, material, formal and efficient causes will not do the job! The Concorde object moves effectively between Paris and New York but remains nailed to the economic ground. This lack of consistency of one of its components has decisively fragilised its global ontological consistency. Concorde only exists within the limited reproducibility of twelve examples and at the root of a possibilist phylum of future supersonics. And this is hardly negligible!

Why are we so insistent about the impossibility of establishing the general translatability of diverse referential and partial enunciative components of assemblage? Why this lack of reverence towards the Lacanian conception of the signifier? Precisely because this theorising which stems from structural linguistics forbids us from entering the real world of the machine. The structuralist signifier is always synonymous with linear discursivity. From one symbol to another, the subjective effect happens without any other ontological guarantee. As opposed to this, heterogeneous machines, as envisaged from our schizonanalytical perspective, do not produce a standard being at the mercy of a universal temporalisation. To clarify this point we should establish some distinctions between the different forms of semiological, semiotic and coded linearity:

- the codings of the "natural" world, which operate on several

spatial dimensions (for example those of crystallography) and which do not imply the extraction of autonomised operators of coding;

- the relative linearity of biological codings, for example, the double helix of DNA which, starting from four basic chemical radicals, develops equally in three dimensions;
- the linearity of pre-signifying semiologies, which develop on relatively autonomous, parallel lines, even if the phonological chains of spoken language appear to always overcode all the others;
- the semiological linearity of the structural signifier which imposes itself despotically over all the other modes of semiotisation, expropriates them and even tends to make them disappear within the framework of a communicational economy dominated by informatics (please note: informatics in its current state, since this state of things is in no way definitive);
- the superlinearity of a-signifying substances of expression, where the signifier loses its despotism. The informational lines of hypertexts can recover a certain dynamic polymorphism and work in direct contact with referent Universes which are in no way linear and, what is more, tend to escape a logic of spatialised sets.

The indicative matter of a-signifying semiotic machines is constituted by "point-signs"; these on one hand belong to a semiotic order and on the other intervene directly in a series of material machinic processes. Example: a credit card number which triggers the operation of a bank auto-teller. The a-signifying semiotic figures don't simply secrete significations. They give out stop and start orders but above all activate the "bringing into being" of ontological Universes. Consider for a moment the example of the pentatonic musical refrain which, with only a few notes, catalyses the Debussyst constellation of multiple

call the
owns!

hyletic
material

hope
well
maybe
but
in
practice
not?

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., and on the sonorous mutation triggered by Stravinsky, his presence in the work of Proust...

We can clearly see that there is no bi-univocal correspondence between linear signifying links or archi-writing, depending on the author, and this multireferential, multidimensional machinic catalysis. The symmetry of scale, the transversality, the pathic non-discursive character of their expansion: all these dimensions remove us from the logic of the excluded middle and reinforce us in our dismissal of the ontological binarism we criticised previously. A machinic assemblage, through its diverse components, extracts its consistency by crossing ontological thresholds, non-linear thresholds of irreversibility, ontological and phylogenetic thresholds, creative thresholds of heterogenesis and autopoiesis. The notion of scale needs to be expanded to consider fractal symmetries in ontological terms. What fractal machines traverse are substantial scales. They

traverse them in engendering them. But, and this should be noted, the existential ordinates that they "invent" were always already there. How can this paradox be sustained? It's because everything becomes possible (including the recessive smoothing of time, evoked by René Thom) the moment one allows the assemblage to escape from energetico-spatio-temporal coordinates. And, here again, we need to rediscover a manner of being of Being — before, after, here and everywhere else — without being, however, identical to itself; a processual, polyphonic Being singularisable by infinitely complexifiable textures, according to the infinite speeds which animate its virtual compositions.

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whence
something
?

relativity ontological
enunciative

The ontological relativity advocated here is inseparable from an enunciative relativity. Knowledge of a Universe (in an astro-physical or axiological sense) is only possible through the mediation of autopoietic machines. A zone of self-belonging needs to exist somewhere for the coming into cognitive existence of any being or any modality of being. Outside of this machine/Universe coupling, beings only have the pure status of a virtual entity. And it is the same for their enunciative coordinates. The biosphere and mecosphere, coupled on this planet, focus a point of view of space, time and energy. They trace an angle of the constitution of our galaxy. Outside of this particularised point of view, the rest of the Universe exists (in the sense that we understand existence here-below) only through the virtual existence of other autopoietic machines at the heart of other bio-mecospheres scattered throughout the cosmos. The relativity of points of view of space, time and energy do not, for all that, absorb the real into the dream. The category of Time dissolves in cosmological reflections on the Big Bang even as the category of irreversibility is affirmed. Residual objectivity is what resists scanning by the infinite variation of

physics
cosmol.

x, t, en.

real/dream

Time
does not dissolve in Big Bang
but as M⁴

fantasies!
on
scale / points of view constitutable upon it. Imagine an autopoietic entity whose particles are constructed from galaxies. Or, conversely, a cognitivity constituted on the scale of quarks. A different panorama, another ontological consistency. The mecanosphere draws out and actualises configurations which exist amongst an infinity of others in fields of virtuality. Existential machines are at the same level as being in its intrinsic multiplicity. They are not mediated by transcendent signifiers and subsumed by a univocal ontological foundation. They are to themselves their own material of semiotic expression. Existence, as a process of deterritorialisation, is a specific inter-machinic operation which superimposes itself on the promotion of singularised existential intensities. And, I repeat, there is no generalised syntax for these deterritorialisations. Existence is not dialectical, not representable. It is hardly livable!

desiring machines / Desiring machines which break with the great interpersonal and social organic equilibria, which invert orders, play the role of the other as against a politics of auto-centering on the self. For example, the partial drives and perverse polymorphic investments of psychoanalysis don't constitute an exceptional and deviant race of machines. All machinic assemblages harbour — even if in an embryonic state — enunciative zones which are so many desiring proto-machines. To clarify this point we need to extend our transmachinic bridge and understand the smoothing of the ontological texture of machinic material and diagrammatic feedbacks as so many dimensions of intensification that take us beyond the linear causalities of the capitalistic apprehension of machinic Universes. We also need to abandon logics based on the principles of the excluded middle and sufficient reason. Through this smoothing there appears a being beyond, a being-for-the-other which gives consistency to an existent beyond its strict delimitation, here and

now. The machine is always synonymous with a nucleus constitutive of an existential Territory against a background of a constellation of incorporeal Universes of reference (or value). The "mechanism" of this turning around of being consists in the fact that some of the machine's discursive segments do not only play a functional or signifying role, but assume the existentialising function of pure intensive repetition that I have called the refrain function. The smoothing is like an ontological refrain, and thus, far from apprehending a univocal truth of being through techne — as Heideggerian ontology would have it — it is a plurality of beings as machines which give themselves to us the moment we acquire the pathic and cartographic means of reaching them. The manifestations — not of Being, but of multitudes of ontological components — are of the order of the machine. And this, without semiological mediation, without transcendent coding, directly as "being's giving of itself," as giving. Acceding to such a "giving" is already to participate ontologically in it as a full right. The term right does not occur here by chance, since at this proto-ontological level it is already necessary to affirm a proto-ethical dimension. The play of intensity of the ontological constellation is, in a way, a choice of being not only for self, but for the whole alterity of the cosmos and for the infinity of times.

If there's choice and freedom at certain "superior" anthropological stages, it's because we will also find them at the most elementary strata of machinic concatenations. But the notions of elements and complexity are susceptible here to being brutally inverted. Those that are most differentiated and undifferentiated coexist within the same chaos which, at infinite speed, plays its virtual registers — one against the other and one with the other. The machinic-technical world, at the "terminal" of which present-day humanity structures itself, is barricaded by

horizons of constants and the limitation of the infinite velocities of chaos (the speed of light, the cosmological horizon of the Big Bang, Planck's constant and the elementary quantum of action in quantum physics, the impossibility of going below absolute zero...). But, this very same world of semiotic constraints is doubled, tripled and infinitised by other worlds which under certain conditions seek only to bifurcate out of their Universes of virtuality and engender new fields of the possible.

Just as scientific machines constantly modify our cosmic frontiers, so do the machines of desire and aesthetic creation. As such, they hold an eminent place within assemblages of subjectivation, themselves called to relieve our old social machines which are incapable of keeping up with the efflorescence of machinic revolutions that shatter our epoch.

Rather than adopting a reticent attitude with respect to the immense machinic revolution sweeping the planet (at the risk of destroying it) or of clinging onto traditional systems of value — with the pretence of re-establishing transcendence — the movement of progress, or if one prefers, the movement of process, will endeavour to reconcile values and machines. Values are immanent to machines. The life of machinic Fluxes is not only manifested through cybernetic feedback; it is also correlative to a promotion of incorporeal Universes stemming from an enunciative Territorial incarnation, from a valorising consciousness of being. Machinic autopoiesis asserts itself as a non-human for-itself through zones of partial proto-subjectivation and it deploys a for-others under the double modality of a "horizontal" eco-systemic alterity (the machinic systems position themselves in a rhizome of reciprocal dependence) and phylogenetic alterity (situating each actual machinic stasis at the conjunction of a passéist filiation and a Phylum of future mutations). All systems of value — religious, aesthetic, scientific, ecosophic... — install themselves at this machinic interface

between the necessary actual and the possibilist virtual. Thus Universes of value constitute incorporeal enunciators of abstract machinic complexions compossible with discursive realities. The consistency of these zones of proto-subjectivation is then only assured inasmuch as they are embodied, with more or less intensity, in nodes of finitude, Territories of chaomic grasping, which guarantee, moreover, their possible recharging with processual complexity. Thus a double enunciation: finite, territorialised and incorporeal, infinite.

Nevertheless, these constellations of Universes of value do not constitute Universals. The fact that they are tied into singular existential Territories effectively confers upon them a power of heterogenesis, that is, of opening onto singularising, irreversible processes of necessary differentiation. How does this machinic heterogenesis, which differentiates each colour of being — which makes, for example, from the plane of consistency of a philosophical concept a world quite different from the plane of reference of the scientific function or the plane of aesthetic composition — end up being reduced to the capitalistic homogenesis of generalised equivalence, which leads to all values being valued by the same thing, all appropriative territories being related to the same economic instrument of power, and all existential riches succumbing to clutches of exchange value? The sterile opposition between use value and exchange value will here be relinquished in favour of an axiological complexion including all the machinic modalities of valorisation: the values of desire, aesthetic values, ecological, economic values ... Capitalistic value which generally subsumes the ensemble of these machinic surplus values, proceeds with a reterritorialising attack, based on the primacy of economic and monetary semiotics, and corresponds to a sort of general implosion of all existential Territories. In fact, capitalistic value is neither separate nor tangential to systems of valorisation; it constitutes

Bandrillard
Symbolic
Exchange
Death
(S. M.)
capital always
to recover
control.

their deathly heart, corresponding to the crossing of the ineffable limit between a controlled, chaomic deterritorialisation — under the aegis of social, aesthetic and analytical practices — and a vertiginous collapse into the black hole of the aleatory, understood as a paroxysmically binary reference, implacably dissolving the whole consistency of Universes of value which would claim to escape capitalistic law. It is thus only abusively that one could put economic determinations in a primary position with respect to social relations and productions of subjectivity. Economic law, like juridical law, must be deducted from the ensemble of Universes of value, for whose collapse it continually strives. Its reconstruction, from the scattered debris of planned economies and neo-liberalism and according to new ethico-political finalities (ecosophy) calls for, in contradistinction, an untiring renewal of the consistency of machinic assemblages of valorisation.

- 1 Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics, or, Control and communication in the animal and the machine*, Technology Press, Cambridge, Mass., 1948.
- 2 Cf. Pierre Lévy, *Les Technologies de l'intelligence*, La Découverte, Paris, 1990, *Plissé fractal. Ideographie dynamique* (memoire d'habilitation à diriger des recherches en sciences de l'information et de la communication) et *L'idéographie dynamique*, La Découverte, Paris, 1991.
- 3 F. Varela op. cit.
- 4 Leibniz, in his concern to render homogeneous the infinitely large and the infinitely small, thought that the living machine, which he assimilated to a divine machine, continued to be a machine in its smallest parts until infinity (which would not be the case with a machine made by the art of men), in *Monadologie*, pp.178-9, Delagrave, Paris, 1962.
- 5 M. Augé, "Le fétiche et son objet" in *L'Objet en psychanalyse*, presented by Maud Mannoni, Denoël, "L'espace analytique," Paris, 1986.

6 Ibid.

7 Martin Heidegger, *Basic Writings*, edited by David Farrell Krell, Harper, San Francisco, 1977, p.298.