

This new collection of essays has been translated from two of Guattari's most influential works, *Psychanalyse et transversalité* and *La Révolution moléculaire*.

Politics, philosophy, linguistics, psychoanalysis, sociology all have their particular partisans. Here Guattari fights for intellectual mobility, proposing to break down these discipline barriers and to bring their languages together to confront some of the crucial issues of post-Marxist European politics. Attacking the English tendency towards micro-specialism, he offers us a quirky, tough and exciting analysis of recent developments in Europe. An analysis that pushes forward the radical debate of people like Foucault, Roland Barthes and Baudriard.

Best-known for *L'Anti-Oedipe* which he wrote with Gilles Deleuze, Guattari set out as a psychoanalyst in the Lacan school. He has been politically involved for many years and played a major role in the events of May 1968. *Molecular Revolution* will be of enormous interest to those involved in the revolution begun by R. D. Laing and David Cooper, and to everyone interested in the new wave of European thought.

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FÉLIX GUATTARI

MOLECULAR REVOLUTION

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FÉLIX GUATTARI



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### 4 Introduction

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

DAVID COOPER

## Sepulchre for an Oedipus Complex<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

\*

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Transversality<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

What is the obstacle that the 'old determinants of anxiety' come up against and that prevent their altogether disappearing?<sup>2</sup> Whence this persistence, this survival of neurotic anxieties once the situations that produced them are past, and in the absence of any 'situation of danger'? A few pages earlier, Freud reaffirms that anxiety precedes repression: the anxiety is caused by an external danger, it is *real*; but that external danger is actually evoked and determined by the instinctual internal danger: 'It is true that the boy felt anxiety in the face of a demand by his libido – in this instance anxiety at being in love with his mother.'<sup>3</sup> Thus it is the internal danger that lays the ground for the external. In terms of reality, the renunciation of the beloved object correlates with the acceptance of the loss of the member, but the 'castration complex' itself cannot be got rid of by such a renunciation. For in effect it implies the introduction of an additional term in the situational triangulation of the Oedipus complex, so that there can be no end to the threat of castration which will continually reactivate what Freud calls the 'unconscious need for punishment'.<sup>4</sup> Castration and punishment, whose position had remained precarious because of the 'principle of ambivalence' governing the choice of the various part objects, are thus irreversibly caught up in the working of the social signifiers. Henceforth, the authority of this *social reality* will base its survival on the establishment of an irrational morality in which punishment

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

3. *ibid.*, p. 118.

4. *ibid.*, p. 141.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## The Group and the Person<sup>1</sup>

### A fragmented balance-sheet

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Take one hard-liner, Louis Althusser:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

8. UNEF: Union Nationale des Étudiants de France.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Take two other examples:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Anti-Psychiatry and Anti-Psychoanalysis<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

3. Group for Information about Prisons.

4. Group for Information about Mental Hospitals.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Mary Barnes, or Oedipus in Anti-Psychiatry<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

slightest pretext to cart off any over-excited inmate to the mental hospital.<sup>4</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Money in the Analytic Exchange<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Psychoanalysis and the Struggles of Desire<sup>1</sup>

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

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

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

These two struggles need not be mutually exclusive:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

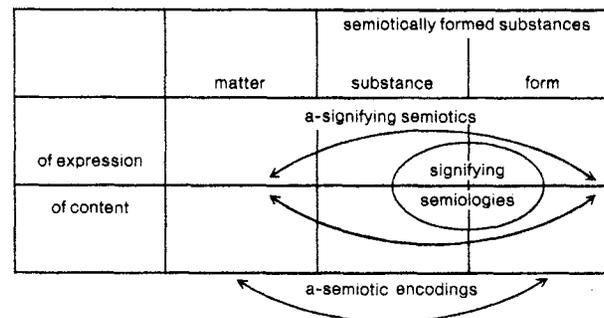
From intensities that might mean many things, we have thus come to invest punitive social values with the promotion of the castration complex. In point of fact, the closing-in of psychoanalysis upon the Oedipal triangle represents a kind of attempt to escape from that drive to abolish desire that leads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

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

## The Role of the Signifier in the Institution<sup>1</sup>

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

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



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

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

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

Let me once again summarize my suggested classification.<sup>2</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Towards a Micro-Politics of Desire<sup>1</sup>

### Introduction

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Desire Minorities, Psychoanalysis and Semiotics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### The Signs Pervade even Physical Fluxes

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 1. Non-semiotic 'natural' chains of encoding

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

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

### 2. Semiologies of signification

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### 3. Collective organizations of a-signifying semiotics

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### Semiotics with $n$ articulations

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) the system of signification based on the duality of signifier and signified;
- (2) the system of representation based on the duality of substance and form;
- (3) the articulation of both these systems as a mode of subjectivation that prevents any direct contact with the reference – that is, the intensive multiplicity of material intensities.

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

attempt to prevent the ever more threatening proliferation of abstract machines from the central machinic stem.<sup>14</sup>

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### The Power Relationships within the Utterance

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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