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A Method to the Madness: The Revolutionary Marxist Method of Deleuze and Guattari

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Abstract

In this article, Andrew Culp looks to how Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari flip Marxism on its head. He makes the case by drawing on Marx's own distinction between the dialectical mode of presentation and research-based mode of inquiry that went into writing *Capital*, which leads him to consult the prefaces and afterwords to *Capital* in addition to Marxist feminists who discuss the book's sensational style. Culp then argues that Deleuze and Guattari's most significant contribution to Marxism is a methodological one, as found in their critical and clinical anthropology, which outlines the universal history of capitalism (diagrammed by Culp in an included chart). The result, he

maintains, frees images of radical change from dialectics, liberal democracy, markets, or production as engines of revolution. In their place, he locates a new critique of political economics based on the destruction of economics itself by way of a revolution of the outside.

Keywords

Marxism, Deleuze and Guattari, Feminism, Anthropology, Revolution

Introduction

The most common categorization of Deleuze and Guattari's political thought is to describe them as post-68 thinkers. What does this entail? "1968" broadly stands in history as a year of global protest, revolt, and revolution. As such, it serves to periodize a number of political, social, and intellectual traditions. The year began aflame as the race riots of the Long, Hot Summer of 1967 and the hippie's Summer of Love in the United States flowed into January's Tet Offensive in Vietnam. By March and April, protests began and many transformed into outright revolt or even revolution before the end of the year, with flashpoints in Mexico, Senegal, Italy, Czechoslovakia, the United States, and elsewhere. In France, the student occupations of the March 22 Movement escalated by May into a nationwide general strike accompanied by pitched battles in the streets that took six weeks to subside. In sum, 1968 became a year that changed the world.

The '60s served as a turning point for Marxism in particular. As Fredric Jameson has argued, the 1960s was the period when the "natives" of the third world finally "became human" in the eyes of their oppressor, as did subjects in the first world who had been treated as external ("minorities, marginals, and women")—provoking a crisis in established categories and giving rise to new Marxisms (Jameson 1984: 178–86). These totally new formations would have baffled Marx, who could never have predicted the rise of Maoism, Situationism, or the Black Panthers. This is why Marxism must be seen as a living tradition and not just further clarifications of a genius thinker. It is through the work of its many contributors that Marxism remains relevant. So even when there are acolytes willing to affirm that "Marx was right (all along)", the many twists and turns of capitalism have demanded new critiques of political economy, sometimes

leading to incompatible approaches. Yet an even greater absence has provided the ongoing need for additional Marxist theorization: Marx's lack of a comprehensive theory of politics. He instead treats politics as an open question, leaving only practical knowledge by way of his historical writing, journalism, correspondence, and public remarks on the politics of his day.

One might ask: Is Deleuze and Guattari's *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* an update (for the '68 generation), a new politics (for a new people), or something else? Antonio Negri asked Deleuze a version of this question in an interview published in 1990, a time when many post-68 thinkers had turned away from Marxism. Deleuze concludes his response to Negri's initial question by invoking May '68, leading Negri to probe further, to which he declares the event as "a demonstration, an irruption, of a becoming in its pure state" that was revolutionary (Deleuze and Negri 1995: 169–71). Precisely what was revolutionary about it was further clarified by Guattari, who, in a separate interview, notes how the events of May '68 blew apart the ability to separate out struggles of workers in the factory from the sick in hospitals and students in the university (and others) (Guattari 2009: 143). If the site of struggle is no longer limited to the factory, then what keeps Deleuze and Guattari Marxists? Deleuze responds by saying that "I think Félix Guattari and I have remained Marxists, in our two different ways" because "we think any political philosophy must turn on the analysis of capital-ism and the ways it has developed" (Deleuze and Negri 1995: 171). From Deleuze's perspective, then, the minimum requirement for remaining Marxist is to retain capitalism as a key component to a transcendental inquiry into something's conditions of emergence—an approach Guattari says Marxism uses, "not to know how the situation in concentration camps could have been improved, but what was the process that led to them" (2009: 144).

Deleuze continues his interview with Negri by suggesting that *A Thousand Plateaus* has three main directions, each of them elaborations on Marxist problems (Deleuze and Negri 1995: 171–72). First, a society is defined by its lines of flight (as differentiated from Marxist contradictions). Second, a revolutionary subject found in minorities (as differentiated from Marxist classes). Third, a revolutionary politics based on movements that take up, occupy, and excrete new space-times (as differentiated from Marxist productive forces). Such audacious claims are heretical enough to make even the most ecumenical Marxist blush. But upon closer inspection, each can be tied back to controversies central to Marxism. First, what does it mean for Marxism that its philosophical heritage draws on Hegel? Second, although the industrial proletariat typifies capitalist exploitation, what would make them the subject of revolution? Third, are the productive forces of the economy solely responsible for creating the conditions for revolution?

Making Sense of Capital

Let us, for a moment, follow the path of Ann Cvetkovich, who argues that *Capital* should be read as a novel in the genre of Victorian sensation fiction—“the quintessential novel-with-a-secret” whereby the secret is “not only the structuring principle” of the plot but also “its origin, and its subject” (Cvetkovich 1992; Pykett 2011: 4–5, 14).¹ These novels gained their name for both their sensational content, which dragged the middle class into matters of bigamy, murder, theft, forgery, and insanity that were otherwise reserved for the exploits of aristocrats, and the moral outrage they drew from critics. What better genre to define *Capital* than one of secrecy, mystery, and violence? The allegorical secret Cvetkovich finds in Marx’s own sensational book binds together two things: first, a melodramatic account of the process by which the worker’s body is exploited; and second, a chronicle of violence centered on the secrets of production (as well as a brief glimpse into the domestic sphere that Leopoldina Fortunati would later call “the arcane of reproduction” [Fortunati 1996]).

Capital can be read as a mystery novel strewn with dead bodies. The opening chapter provides a clue, the commodity, which exudes a mysterious aura. A crime has been committed, but we can’t see it until we leave the realm of exchange and enter what Marx calls the “hidden abode” of production, the factory. There we might be tempted to conclude, once the overworked, endangered, and exploited bodies of the workers start appearing, that the capitalist did it, and the worker is the victim. On the other hand, we also learn that the secret behind the capitalist’s ability to make a profit from selling commodities is the production of surplus value, and that the work, not the capitalist, did it. The crime is that the capitalist takes the credit for the job. Uncovering the secret of capitalism is a difficult process because the bodies of the workers keeping disappearing, to be replaced by objects or commodities. If the worker is a victim, he’s a secret victim because his exploitation is hidden by the sensational allure generated by money, capital, and commodities. (Cvetkovich 1992: 173)

Marx uncovers the secret of exploitation simultaneously through the notions of surplus value, exchange value, use value, primitive accumulation, and others that abstractly map out the circuit of production as well as a literal account of the sensations of working conditions that demonstrates how “the flesh, blood, nerves, and muscles of the worker give life

¹ For another reading of *Capital* as Victorian fiction, see Anna Kornbluh’s “On Marx’s Victorian Novel” (2010), which demonstrates the importance of using textual strategies that reveal the significance of Marx’s use of personification and metalepsis.

to the system of production but leave the body itself dead with fatigue and sensory deprivation” (Ibid.: 183). Or as Deleuze says about abstraction and sensation, through bone and flesh (2003: 34).

Perhaps a sensational reading of Marx’s retrospective feelings toward *Capital* can offer similar insights into the secrets of its flesh and bone. In his foreign prefaces and afterword to the first volume, one can feel Marx’s frustration seep onto the page. He is pained by how difficult the first chapter (on the secret of the commodity) is to read compared to the rest of the book (Marx 1990c [1872]: 104). The French preface reads like a note from a private investigator to a frustrated client dissatisfied by a lack of progress (Ibid.). In it, Marx writes in response to a suggestion to publish *Capital* in serialized form, which the letter writer held would make it more accessible to the working class (“a consideration which to me outweighs everything else,” Marx admits outright in an attempt to garner sympathy [Ibid.]). Marx pleads his case. He argues that the French public, with “immediate questions that have aroused their passions,” would too eagerly abandon *Capital* if it was not laid out before them all at once (Ibid.). He begs consideration for the “rather arduous” first chapters, which the readers—“to be feared,” “always impatient to come to a conclusion”—“may be disheartened” if unable to immediately skip ahead to later chapters. Borrowing a phrase from Euclid, he concludes the letter with an appeal to patience because there can be no shortcuts: “there is no royal road to science” (Ibid.).

If the French preface is an apology in the form of a letter, then the German preface is a brief manual to shepherd the reader (Marx 1990b [1867]: 89–93). In it, Marx is far less sensational. Early on, he warns the reader on how to navigate early hazards with the even hand of a guide. “Beginnings are always difficult,” he opens an early paragraph, as the first chapter “will therefore present the greatest difficulty” (Ibid.: 89). The rest of the preface, he dedicates to helping the reader understand the role certain elements of the book play—what to make of his reliance on statistics, how to understand why he included history, how to take his use of conceptual personae as the personification of economic categories. Yet even at his most practical, Marx feels compelled to insert asides laced with melodrama about evils, monsters, and the “prejudices of so-called popular opinion” (Ibid.: 93). In one particularly dramatic moment, he points an accusatory finger at German readers, stating that if they shrug their shoulders at the working conditions for English laborers or convince themselves that things are not so bad where they are, then then they are the problem (Ibid.: 90).

Marx’s preoccupation with *Capital*’s difficulty turns confessional in the lengthy postface to the second German edition (Marx 1990d [1873]: 94–103). In his first full paragraph, he keeps a list of the many textual changes he has made to the first chapter, which includes a complete revi-

sion of Section 3 on “The Form of Value” (Ibid.: 94). Like many diarists, he prematurely runs out of steam before he is complete and offers the excuse that “it would be pointless to go into all the partial changes,” choosing instead to air pedantic concerns about translation and publishing (Ibid.). He then congratulates himself on the novelty of his approach to economics, taking score of his intellectually impoverished peers in Germany, England, and France. Marx dedicates the final third to something that was clearly irritating him: book reviews that fail to understand his method (Ibid.: 95–98). Juxtaposing a series of them, he finds one that calls *Capital* too metaphysical, one that praises it as eminently analytic, one that rebukes it as “Hegelian sophistry,” while another applauds its realism but ultimately denounces it as too German–dialectical in presentation (Ibid.: 99–102). In between reiterations of his method, he concludes with venomous attacks on contemporary Hegelians as “the ill–humored, arrogant, and mediocre epigones” who “will drum dialectics even into the heads of the upstarts of the new Holy Prussian–German Empire” (Ibid.: 102, 103).

An important distinction emerges in Marx’s moments of exasperation. He suggests to the reader that the rapport between his mode of inquiry and mode of presentation is more complicated than it might appear at first (in response to a reviewer who labeled each as realistic and German–dialectical, respectively) (Ibid.: 102). A moment later, he expands on the distinction with a startling admission:

Of course the method of presentation must differ in form from that of inquiry. The latter has to appropriate the material in detail, to analyse its different forms of development and to track down their inner connection. Only after this work is done can the real movement be appropriately presented. If this is done successfully, if the life of the subject–matter is now reflected back in the ideas, then it may appear as if we have before us an a priori construction (Ibid.: 102).

It is here that Marx shows us the process that made *Capital* (a consequence of us delving into his own hidden abode of production). All Marx’s pleading, guiding, and confessing revolve around a secret: that *Capital*’s mode of inquiry and mode of presentation are not one and the same. Curiously, though, in Marx’s inability to stop scrutinizing the book, he never makes excuses for its concepts, only its mode of presentation; in particular, the first chapter. What, then, does Marx’s self-doubt about the first chapter reveal? *Capital*’s mode of presentation is itself like the commodity–form in that it has a final product that appears to be the result of an automatic process that in fact has a twofold character. For him, the “arduous” first chapter on commodities that sets out to unveil “the mystical character of the commodity,” itself requires a set of conjuring tricks (Marx 1990d [1873]: 104; Marx 1990a [1867]:164). What initially appears to be a

simple reflection of his ‘scientific’ inquiry into the hidden movements of capitalism comes with its own dose of “magic and necromancy” (1990a [1867]: 169). But what Marx obscures is not capitalism but the process through which it is meant to be undone.

From Inside Marx’s Head

How can Marx’s *Capital* be read otherwise? One method follows from Louis Althusser’s attention to reading influenced by Marx’s flipping Hegel “right side up again” after noticing that the dialectic has Hegel “standing on his head” (Althusser 2005: 89–90). Althusser’s goal is to investigate what Marx means by reworking the dialectic to “discover the rational kernel within the mystical shell” (Marx 1990d [1873]: 103). His result is a fully materialist dialectic and all that it entails. Most importantly, such a reading is meant to take Marx at his word when, in his preliminary notes on Feuerbach, he wrote that “the philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is to *change* it” (Marx 1998 [1845]: 571). There is one clear way to take this mode of reading to its logical conclusion: by inverting *Capital*.

By way of example, consider Antonio Negri’s *Marx Beyond Marx* (1991). Given as a series of lectures in 1978 at the invitation of Althusser, Negri works against the propensity of Marxists to treat Marx “as a professor and not as a militant” (Negri 1991: xv). He does this by bypassing *Capital* to instead focus on the earlier work of the *Grundrisse*. Early on in the first lecture, Negri justifies this choice by arguing that the supposedly objective character of *Capital* creates a blockage to revolutionary action (Ibid.: 8). In contrast, the *Grundrisse* functions as “a *political text*” by bringing together “an appreciation of the revolutionary possibilities created by the ‘imminent crisis’” with “the theoretical will to adequately synthesize the communist actions of the working class faced with this crisis” (Ibid.). Negri’s reading takes the putatively objective appearance of economic forces as a representation of the antagonistic struggle between capitalism and the working class. The centrality of antagonism leads him to use Marx to argue that the working class develops power autonomously from capital (Ibid.: 100), thus making it an agent of catastrophe whose growth brings about the crises of capitalism (Ibid.: 101–04), in part through the refusal to work, which grows inversely to the law of value (Ibid.: 166). This leads him to a “refusal and inversion of all dialectic,” a “Marx who demystifies himself as well,” a “Marx beyond Marx” (Ibid. 168). His proposal is a formulation of working-class power as “the antagonistic and subjective process of the suppression of work,” and a communism that is “the destruction of capital in every sense of the word” (Ibid.: 168–69, italics modified). The result of such a political reading is an emphasis

on direct conflict against capitalism, even if through indirect means.

Another example of an alternative reading of Marx is Harry Cleaver's *Reading Capital Politically* (2005). He proposes in the introduction that there are three ways in which Marx is usually read: as political economy, philosophically, and politically. He then argues that both political economy and philosophy take the perspective of capital (Cleaver 2005: 31–58). The alternative to ideological readings, he claims, is a political reading as a strategic approach that takes the perspective of the working class and their struggles (Ibid.: 58). Instances he draws on are CLR James and Raya Dunayevskaya's Johnson–Forest Tendency, the post-Trotskyite French group *Socialism ou Barbarie*, and the Italian New Left (Ibid.: 59–77). What unites all of the approaches is their starting point: the self-organized activity of the working class that struggles against its very existence as a class. Incorporating this into his reading of the commodity-form, theories of value, and labor, Cleaver deftly identifies the political struggle hidden by the perspective of capital. Quite insightfully, Cleaver also includes feminists who challenge orthodox Marxist readings of *Capital* that either marginalize or outright exclude the question of reproduction. The work of Italian Marxist feminists such as Mariarosa Dalla Costa (along with American Selma James), Leopoldina Fortunati, and Silvia Federici is dedicated to uncovering the “other” hidden abode relegated to the domestic sphere, further highlight the importance of reading capital politically—a tendency within Marxism that has fortunately expanded in the recent years. Such a political reading then highlights the forms of resistance immanent to capital's development.

Years later, Cleaver would address *Capital's* mode of presentation head on, choosing to invert that as well. Read Part VIII first, beginning with the violent history of so-called primitive accumulation²—a reading strategy that has been adopted by a variety of Marxists from the “heretic” Italian tradition. In a rather straightforward way, it resolves Marx's incessant anxiety about leading *Capital* with the difficult first chapters. Flipping Marx back onto his feet by beginning with the concrete history of capitalism's “bloody appropriations” also allows one to leave the early chapters for later. But more importantly, it replaces Marx's idealist suture of his mode of inquiry to mode of presentation with an arrangement informed by a properly materialist concept of history. For as Marx and Engels write in *The German Ideology*, “these abstractions in themselves, divorced from real history, have no value whatsoever,” leading them to propose a method “in direct contrast to German philosophy which descends from heaven to earth” in which the materialist ascends “from earth to

² Cleaver chose to teach *Capital* in this order at the University of Texas. His class study guide and other materials are available online: <http://la.utexas.edu/users/hcleaver/357k/357ksg.html>

heaven” (Marx and Engels 1998 [1845]: 43, 42). This rearrangement follows Marx’s own materialist method of moving from the concrete to the abstract, falling in line with Marx’s critique of the idealism in the Hegelian dialectic, presenting Marx’s chapters “coquetted with the mode of expression peculiar to” Hegel at the end as an abstract summation of his inquiry (Marx 1990 [1867]: 103).

No work exemplifies the consequence of this alternative reading better than Silvia Federici’s *Caliban and The Witch* (2004), which denounces capitalism through its violent origins, understanding early modern witch hunts as brutal struggles over the role of women’s bodies in the transition to capitalism during early primitive accumulation. The secret uncovered by these readers is less the fetishism of the commodity and more the violence of capitalism—how it suddenly appears automatic or even natural by disappearing into what Marx calls a “silent compulsion” (Marx 1990a [1867]: 899). As a political point, they advance *Capital’s* transformation into a sensational work. Their readings expand from the vivid details Marx provides of “bloody legislation” imposed on peasants after separating them from the livelihood provided by the feudal common lands was not enough to force them to work. Contributions often result from adding to the cast of characters Marx addresses, such as vagabonds and others who resisted early factory work, resulting in laws demanding they be “tied to the cart-tail and whipped until the blood streams from their bodies,” branded to mark their offense, and sometimes executed (Marx 1999: 896).

There are no doubt trade-offs that arise from reading capitalism through the “original sin” of primitive accumulation. Most notably, it messes up the analytic clarity of Marx’s intention in *Capital* to show that capitalism is nothing but the systematic exploitation of the working class, and that in its ideal conditions, it can do so without resorting to cheating, theft, or direct violence, and even with the worker as a willing participant—a crucial lever for criticizing liberal notions of contract and consent. Yet in replacing the bloodless concepts of right for the long history of bloodstained struggles, such accounts challenge Marx’s implied judgment in *Capital* that “words and concepts provide better information” for unraveling the mystery of social relations under capitalism (Cvetkovich 1992: 174). In the abstract terms of his project, then, the controversy rages. What perspective would best aid us in as completing Marx’s still unfinished private investigation, guidebook, or confession? MCM’ or CMC?³

³ Deleuze and Guattari’s “third way” seeks to rectify this problem by approaching capitalism from its outside, as I will discuss below, because, “From a standpoint within the capitalist mode of production, it is very difficult to say who is the thief and who the victim, or even where the violence resides. That is because the worker is born entirely naked and the capitalist objectively ‘clothed,’ an independent owner. That which gave the worker and the capitalist this form eludes us because it operated in other modes of production. It is a violence that posits itself as preaccomplished, even

A Critical–Clinical Anthropology

Deleuze and Guattari provide an even more sensational account of capital because of their interest in the body. They choose neither the heavenly perch of capitalism nor the earthly muck of the working class. Rather, their focus is on the social body, that of packs, tribes, masses, and peoples. They treat the body as militant cultural physicians seeking to diagnose the maladies of their time. This leads them to occupy the station of what Nietzsche calls “the philosopher as cultural physician” (Nietzsche 1979: 69). Their diagnostic role is essentially critical, for in his pessimism, Nietzsche argues that the creative acts of philosophers have “never drawn the people” to a cause (Ibid.: 71). Philosophers only act on culture in three ways: to preserve it, to remove restraints on it, or to destroy it. The consequence is that the philosopher acts as solvent, serving as a destructive force “regarding all that is positive”—hence being most useful “in times of chaos or degeneration,” which is to say, “when there is *a lot to be destroyed*” (Ibid.: 72).

The methods of the cultural physician explain Deleuze and Guattari’s own approach. They claim as their guide the slogan of the great cultural physician RD Laing: “the point is to provoke a breakthrough not a breakdown” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 131–33). How might one occur? Every age gets the precise disease it deserves, they contend (Ibid.: 33). “It is not a question of a way of life,” they further clarify, but the underlying processes that open psychological terms onto a political and social register (Ibid.: 34). Cases that result in an individual clinical diagnosis or even hospitalization are not their focus, as they represent tragic limit cases for when a particular body is unable to cope with a process to which everyone is subjected (Ibid.: 317–22, 362–63, 379–80). As such, their social psychology is concerned with how a whole people catch a case of fascism, or how schizophrenia underwrites trade deals, as well as a breakthrough that holds the ability to eradicate the disease at its source.

The epidemiological method Deleuze and Guattari develop for studying capitalism is a radicalization of the very method Marx himself prescribes. Marx’s role is cemented not through the secret of the commodity but the schizophrenic, whose illness Deleuze and Guattari see as defining the capitalist era. They use the mystery of the schizophrenic to rework Marx’s great formula for the tendency of the rate of profit to fall and the increase in the absolute quantity of surplus value (Ibid.: 34). The initiation of new circuits of production bear the signature symptoms of schizophrenia, with its drive toward creative production free and detached from

though it is reactivated everyday. This is the place to say it, if ever there was one: *the mutilation is prior, preestablished*. However, these analyses of Marx should be enlarged upon” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 447).

any particular outcome or product; whereas the limits established by the privatization of wealth bears the mark of psychological repression, with the authority of states, nations, and families flooding back in to define people through abstract quantities. Yet this dual movement does not emerge fully formed. As Marx says of *Capital*, when the standpoint changes, so do the stories' dramatis personae (Cvetkovich 1992: 181–182). As such, Deleuze and Guattari open up the same critical anthropological line Marx does with Adam Smith's defense of capitalism through human's "natural propensity to truck, barter, and exchange"—"we began by defining [the schizophrenic] as *Homo natura*, and lo and behold, he has turned out to be *Homo historia*" (Smith 2000 [1776]: 14; Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 21).

In their search for *Homo historia*, Deleuze and Guattari return to a path well trodden by Marx and Engels. Under the label "universal history," which Marx takes from Hegel, Deleuze and Guattari similarly contend that all history can be retroactively understood by way of capitalism. The rules for such universal history, they say, were developed by Marx, namely that it must be retrospective, contingent, singular, ironic, and critical (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 140). Yet in spite of their ostensible affinity with Hegelian history, Deleuze and Guattari remain skeptical toward the dialectical presentation of *Capital* and its implied politics of the working class transforming into a party in-and-for-itself. They are instead drawn to advances in anthropology, as Friedrich Engels was in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (2010 [1884]), by way of their contemporaries, especially the structural anthropology of Claude Lévi-Strauss and his students.

Retrospectively viewed from an anthropological gaze, Deleuze and Guattari determine that there are three clinical types of people that lead to the outbreak of capitalism: "savages," "barbarians," and "civilized men" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 140, 192, 222). All three figures bear their name ironically, for the system of social coding that defines them afflicts each with a distinctive condition that tells a different story. Deleuze and Guattari give these accounts in flesh and bone—through the representational systems of cruelty, terror, and axiomatization, as well as the abstract machines of primitive, despotic, civilized territorialization. Following the imperative "All means of life must circulate!," the "savage" are those perverse people who intentionally live without a state, satisfying their social needs only after a perverse journey through a complex patchwork of kinship and affiliation. The conditions of this relative equality is enforced through social prohibition against direct appropriation of the means of life, which forces desire through twisted paths that makes them satisfy their desires perversely. Following the imperative "Everything is owed to the despot!," the "barbarians" are those paranoid people who live under the transcendent authority of a despot, a tapestry of different ways

of life unified by royal decrees from on high. Their desire is forged through a sovereign Other and their subjectivity founded in response to a Voice made absent through writing. Given the despot's power over life and death, their existence is defined by a paranoid relationship to arbitrary authority. Following the ascetic imperative "Infinite labor to pay the infinite debt!", the "civilized men" are those simultaneously neurotic and schizophrenic people whose social codes are in the process of being "torn asunder" by capitalism, conditioning them to participate in meaningless work merely to secure their means of subsistence. On the one hand, they embody the role of the schizophrenic by compulsively engaging in creative production for its own sake, while on the other, social authorities place them back into a family that implies certain relations of power and joyless neurotic accumulation.

Performing their own inversion of Marx, Deleuze and Guattari argue that societies are not defined by their mode of production but by their mode of prevention—placing into relief the traditional Marxist method for characterizing societies (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 428–29). They do not ask the ontological question of what makes something what it is; but its inverse, that of the differential event, which is to say: *What prevents it from transforming into something else?* The result is a study of a social formation's mode of anti-production. Anti-production here is not the antithesis to production, as in the destruction of circuits of production. Rather, anti-production is the sum of the restrictions put on productive activity to guarantee that production occurs in a certain way. As such, anti-production sets the the conditions under which any given mode of production operates. Inverting the forces and relations of productions studied by Marxists, Deleuze and Guattari outline the forces and relations of anti-production that constitute the perverse "savage," paranoid "barbarian," and neurotic/schizophrenic "civilized men."

The primitive territorial machine is animated by forces of anti-production that establish kinship relations co-extensive with the whole social field (leaving no place for individuals or a public/private dichotomy), and relations of anti-production that form new alliances through the prohibition against directly appropriating what is obtained by one's family (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 166, 146). The effect of the forces and relations of the "savage" mode of anti-production is the incitement to delay consumption (within the family) by instead securing the means of life through others (alliances who provide yours in return as "open, mobile, finite blocks of debt" (Ibid.: 190), which makes the ritualistic circulation of the means of life clinically perverse in the Freudian sense. Productivity is limited because all goods are only temporarily accumulated, deemed temporarily valuable by a group until they are shared with others in collective ritual.

The despotic territorial machine rules through forces of anti-production that realign allegiances upward through the political domination of conquest and rituals of sovereign excess, and relations of anti-production that establish a hierarchical caste system through law. The effect of the forces and relations of the “barbarian” mode of anti-production is a system of tribute that incites production for payment to an absolute sovereign who acts as the head of a family that owns everything and to whom everything is owed. As a mode of anti-production, it permits only activity that brings glory to the sovereign, who subordinates all value to what they can waste in lavish ceremonies, monuments, and other wearable items such as medals. A single standard of value is imposed from above by sovereign right as part of their transcendent monopoly over life and death, making paranoia a shared social condition.

The capitalist territorial machine grows through forces of anti-production that make it imperative to reinvest surplus into any productive activity whatsoever, and relations of anti-production that operate through quantitative debts established through the privatized family and capital. The effect of the forces and relations of the “civilized” mode of anti-production is the internalization of consumption within productivity so that it serves as internal stimulus to absorb overproduction, encourage new circuits of production, and pay back debts owed for past investment. Schizophrenia predominates as quantitative calculation uses the cash nexus to replace the qualitative systems of meaning and belief that code society, resulting in a proliferation of activity for accumulation—whatever dwindling amount of belief that remains is justified through cynicism or false piety, as faith becomes purely contingent through the strategic reversals of the market. Neuroticism also circulates to justify the privatization of the immense wealth created from the ongoing expansion of productive activity, with psychiatric and other authorities using the neurotic family to generalize the conditions of private property.

For Deleuze

	Perverse "Savage" <i>"All Means of Life Must Circulate"</i>	Paranoid King <i>"Everything is Owed to the Despot"</i>	Neurotic Family & Schizophrenic Capitalism <i>"Asceticism: Infinite Labor to Pay the Infinite Debt"</i>
Imperative			
Forces of Anti-Production	*Kinship Relations Co-Extensive w/ Whole Social Field (no individual or public/private) *Debt Relations	*(Undisguised) Political Domination, Conquest *Glorious Expenditure	Capitalist Imperative to Reinvest
Relations of Anti-Production	Prohibition as Prescription/Prescription	Law as Caste System (Caste-Ration)/ Extraction of Tribute	Lack as Economic-not-Personal
Process	*Filiation (Internal Stock)-Alliance (External Debt) Tension + Motor of Circulation *Exclusive Use of Disjunctive Synthesis (filialive) Interrupts Direct Appropriation	Monotheistic Re-Aligning 'Upward' of Alliance-Debt System	Anti-production as Internal Stimulus to Consumption to Avoid Crises of Over-Production
Incest	Incitement to Make Connections w/ Others	Ubiquitous & Inevitable, but Exclusive Prerogative of Despot to Justify Glorious Expenditure	"Dirty Little Secret." Prohibits Biological Incest
Examples:	*Bush Paranoid (Nomadic Hunter) + Village Pervert (Stocking Encampment) *Ritualistic Expenditure / Potlach	*Desert Paranoid (Despotic) + Town Perverts (Caste System) *Glorious Expenditure	Subordination of Anti-Production Produces "Death Instinct"
System of Inscription	System of Cruelty	System of Terror	System of Adornatization
Coding	Code Branded into Flesh of Body (tattooing, scarification) Against Temptation	Over-Code is the Written Decree of the Voice of the Despot (voice made absent thru writing)	Freeing Codes + Power's Recoding on Factitious Codes = Socialized Production + Private Ownership/Management [*Deter: of Capital-Stock/Labor for New Production Process (Revolutionize/Socialize Productive Forces) *Reterr Actualizes Power Component of Capitalism - Limits Productive Forces/Directs Expenditure to Reproduction]
Form of Writing	Connotation -- Community Ritual Connecting Inscription to Voice, Overseen by Gaze of Authority	Subordination -- Interpreting the Absent Voice (of writing) Under the Threat of Death	Cynicism & (False) Plety -- Decoding Cynicism + Recoding: Pretend Belief in Something Unnecessary.
Organs	Belong to Group, Place/Function Established Through Connotation	Belong to Despot, Affords Power over Life/Death, Caste System	Belong to "Private Sphere," for the Purpose of Human Reproduction within Privatized Family
Representing Representation	Alliance-Debt System (+Male Homosexuality)	Royal Incest (Separates Despot from Regular People)	Oedipus
Displaced Represented	Incest Taboo	Common Incest	Oedipus
(Repressed) Representative of Desire	Life Itself & Means of Life ("Germinal Flux")	Resistance & Rebellion, Masses Defend Selves From Despot	Oedipus
Oedipus	Displaced (Myth) *SAVABERY	Repressed (Tragedy) *BARBARISM	Representative (Dream) *CIVILIZED MEN
Socius	EARTH	DESPOT	CAPITAL
Surplus Value	SV OF CODE -- TEMPORARY ACCUMULATION OF GOODS THE COLLECTIVE DEEMS VALUABLE	SV OF CODE -- SINGLE TRANSCENDENT STANDARD OF VALUE, IMPOSED FROM ABOVE (MONEY) --> "GLORIOUS EXPENDITURE"	SV OF FLOW -- CONJOIN UNQUALIFIED FLOWS IN MARKET VIA MONEY (ALLIANCE CAPITALISM = ARBITRAGE, TRADE (MERCHANT) FILIATIVE CAPITALISM = MONEY BEGETS MONEY (INDUSTRIAL))
Desire	DESIRE AS RELATION TO OBJECTS OF VALUE DESIGNATED BY COLLECTIVE RITUAL	(LACANIAN) DESIRE AS DESIRE OF THE OTHER'S (DESPOT'S) DESIRE = POWER SOCIETY DESIRE, REACTIVE	DESIRE SEGREGATED FROM SOCIETY, PLACED IN FAMILY WHERE IT IS PROHIBITED --> ASCETIC SUBJECTIVITY (ABNEGATION, IDENTITY, DEFERRAL, WORK)
Debt	*COLLECTIVELY OWED TO EARTH *SPORADIC/RECIPROCAL, IMMANENT TO KINSHIP SYSTEM (BLOOD + MARRIAGE) *OPEN, MOBILE, FINITE BLOCKS OF DEBT	*SUBORDINATE PEOPLE OWE DESPOT *INFINITE DEBT (UNI-DIRECTIONAL) *MONOPOLY OVER LIFE & DEATH/THREAT OF DEATH	*ABSORBS OVER-PRODUCTION *INFINITE DEBT TO CAPITAL AS SOURCE/GROUND OF FUTURE PRODUCTION *INFINITE DEBT OWED TO OWNER FOR PAST INVESTMENT
Coding	LOCAL CODES	LOCAL CODES + IMPERIAL OVERCODING	QUANTIFIED FLOWS, RESULTING FROM DE-CODING + MINIMAL CODE
	CODING (QUALITATIVE: MEANING, BELIEF, CUSTOM)	OVER-CODING (QUALITATIVE: INFINITE)	AXIOMATIC (QUANTITATIVE FLOW; DECODED) + BARE MINIMUM CODE
Deterritorialized Flows	CONNECTION	DISJUNCTION	CONJUNCTION
State	LATENT, BUT WARDED OFF	CONCRETIZED ABSTRACTION, TRANSCENDENT UNITY	SUBSERVIENT, IMMANENT MODEL OF REALIZING AXIOMATIC; "REGULATOR OF DECODED AND AXIOMATIZED FLOWS"

Upon closer inspection, Deleuze and Guattari's rather limited diagnostic manual carefully intervenes in a number of theoretical debates. For instance, they historically situate key concepts of the two Jacques, Lacan and Derrida. Desire of the Other and writing-as-presence, they argue, are entirely correct theoretical systems (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 202–03; 213–14). This is not a denunciation of them, it just affords them the same status as the classical economists, who Marx stood on their head through the critical method of explaining the conditions from which their concepts emerged, through inversion. The only issue is that they emerge as processes despotically wielded by monotheistic sovereigns in feudal societies. Lacan's Desire as the desire of the Other is a structure of desire singular to people living under a despot whose own desire forms an ideal in which they are all invested (Ibid.: 206). Similarly, writing-as-presence serves the bureaucratic function of circulating the despotic signifiers of a sovereign throughout their domain by way of writing (Ibid.: 202–09). We see this curiously play out in both the Jacques' reaction to May '68. Lacan famously denounces the radicals as neurotic children in search of father, arguing that "What you aspire to as revolutionaries is a new master. You will get one!" (1987: 126). Derrida, in marking his distance from the events, notes that despite his participation in the first general assembly on Ulm Street, he was "reserved, even anxious" in the face of others' "enthusiasm of finally 'liberated' speech" in which he never believed (Derrida and Ewald 1995: 280). The consequence of Deleuze and Guattari's critical inquiry is not to return the insult but to return them to their conditions of emergence, revealing their theories to be aristocratic relics of an obsolete age. Why? Because "writing has never been capitalism's thing," to the point where they hold that "capitalism is profoundly illiterate" (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 240). Revolutionary struggle against capitalism, then, has little to do with the Jacques' signifying concerns about sovereign law, the transgression of social prohibition, or responses to a heavenly hail, except through the "nostalgia for, and the necessity of" despotic archaisms revived by ironic radicals, pearl-clutching liberals, and fascist conservatives looking for temporary refuges from capitalist uncertainty (Ibid.: 260).

To the Limit

Upping the reading ante: How should we read Deleuze? By not taking on the perspective of capital (MCM') or the working class (CMC), perhaps we should generalize Deleuze's Marxist philosophy as a philosophy of movement.⁴ He shares this with Marx and Engels, who declare in *The*

⁴ An argument made by David Lapoujade in *Aberrant Movements* (2017).

German Ideology that communism is not as a state of affairs but “the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things,” whose conditions are set by a “now existing premise” (Marx and Engels 1998 [1845]: 57). The importance of movement also plays a crucial role in how Deleuze and Guattari define capitalism. Echoing Marx and Engels from *The Communist Manifesto* (“all that is solid melts into air” [2012: 38]), Deleuze and Guattari hold that the interior edge of capitalism is established through the decoding of former social systems, which renders them as raw materials to be used as abstract inputs for new circuits of production (1983: 222–25). Initially, the overcoming of limits proceeds through the basic operation of formal subsumption whereby non-capitalist forms of production are taken over by capitalists. However, capitalism gains its own angular momentum when it imposes internal limits to overcome, such as the introduction of the advanced machines that drive the inorganic half of the much-talked-about “tendency of the rate of profit to fall.” It is in the creation of unqualified flows such as abstract labor through the process of dispossession that Deleuze and Guattari come to define capitalism in rather fundamental terms: as a system that poses its own limits only in order to overcome them.

Deleuze and Guattari’s three-part typology is the result of approaching capitalism as a matter of movement and not perspective. They provide an account of capital not as an ontology of being but an anthropology of becoming. As they suggest in the introductory chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*, too often philosophy confuses the question by asking *est* (is) instead of *et* (and)—as a result, they replace sociological inquiry into the fact of something’s existence with the revolutionary philosophical task of imagining its potential (for variation) (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 25). How does this serve a “universal history of capitalism”? To a certain extent, it shares characteristics of Negri’s subjective antagonism and Cleaver’s internal resistance, though lacking Negri’s analytic precision for identifying specific weak spots for disruption and Cleaver’s concrete history that inspires participation in a long heritage of struggles. Deleuze and Guattari proceeded by way of a philosophical method motivated by the “virtual,” by which they mean an investigation into what is “real without being actual, ideal without being abstract” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 156). As such, they do not limit themselves to any particular state of affairs (*Ibid.*: 33–34). Rather, they “ascend” from a concrete state of affairs without seeking to represent reality, and instead work to fulfill the philosophical purpose of offering a fresh orientation to the world for the purpose of pushing past it—in particular, to launch new struggles against capitalism every time a previous one is betrayed (*Ibid.*: 100). As with the schizophrenic movement of capitalism, which is constantly inventing new realities by cracking open existing ones, Deleuze and Guattari find something utopian in highlighting thresholds, limits, and breaking points (*Ibid.*: 159).

The philosophical method of differentiation offers an alternative to the strategic avenues traditional Marxists outline for revolution. What is that differential method? It is not the so-called rationalist approaches “where the abstract is given the task of explaining,” by seeking out concrete moments that confirm what they already held true about an abstraction (Deleuze and Parnet 2007: vii). Nor is it the dialectic of contradiction, which looks for abstractions that contain difference only in the abstract. Rather, Deleuze is interested in difference that makes a difference, which is to say, how something concretely transforms into something else. As a method, he “traces lines” to see how they “become entangled, connect, bifurcate, avoid or fail to avoid the foci” (Ibid.: viii). The point is not to dig into their past to identify what they were or are, the goal is to locate its potential to deform into something distinctly different—a difference “the way in which a river, a climate, an event, a day, an hour of the day, is individualized” (Ibid.).

The method of differentiation stands in contrast to the Marxist political economic enterprise of prediction. The failure of Marxism to marry political economy with politics may lie in its attempt to find *the* primary contradiction (in a recent book, David Harvey [2015] suggests that there are exactly seventeen contradictions of capitalism). The forty-hour work week, social insurance, Keynesianism, Ford’s productivist bargain, the minimum wage, neoliberalism, financialization, the green revolution, and forays into universal basic income all complicate the path to revolution outlined by Marx. It is not that they cannot be accounted for, but they reveal how the development of capitalism is not on a path toward perfection. Rather, they can all be explained as developments of the capitalist mode of anti-production, which seeks to direct all means of escaping valorization back into a circuit of production. The general lesson to be taken here? Specific breaking points in capital are subject to cooptation. Deleuze and Guattari’s contribution to Marxism, then, is not found in their ability to refine political economic analysis. Rather, the starting point of Deleuze and Guattari’s Marxism is capitalism’s astounding capacity for recuperation, which is to say, its ability to produce difference in a way that ultimately prevents differences that make a difference.

While bearing a resemblance in terms of style, concept, or attribution, there are a variety of approaches that fall short because they fail to take the philosophy of movement and differentiation embedded in Deleuze and Guattari’s anthropological method into account.

In the name of *dialectics*, there are some traditional Marxists that take capitalist contradictions as providing two paths for the revolutionary downfall of capitalism. First, that downward pressure on wages will eventually immiserate the working class, with their impoverishment hitting such intense lows that accumulation collapses the structure or the prole-

tariat will rebel out of necessity.⁵ Second, that constant development of the capitalist forces of production will eventually hit an internal threshold within itself that it becomes a conservative force and a more advanced system of production will take its place.⁶ Deleuze and Guattari pessimistically assess the potential of these abstract contradictions to materialize. They instead suggest that we imagine that there is no ceiling or floor to capitalism, no crossover point due to extreme abundance or crisis (“you ain’t seen nothing yet”). What they mean, in part, is that there is no internal limit that capitalism cannot overcome—no Keynesian cross of immiseration to hang ourselves on, no crisis of accumulation or rate of profit that cannot be displaced, no misery so bad that people refuse to bear it. It drew them to argue less than a year after *Anti-Oedipus* that they “no longer want to talk about schizoanalysis, because that would amount to protecting a particular type of escape, schizophrenic escape” (Deleuze 2004: 280). This is not to say that people do not resist, revolt, or run away, for they always have. But social-psychological investments in capitalism can overcome matters of political economics, for believers are enough to bring it back to life even after its own collapse—as illustrated in the 1970s slogan “it is easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism” (implying that capitalism could still survive ecological catastrophe or disasters of a global scale) and the “too big to fail” slogans used to bail out financial institutions after the collapse of 2008 (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 279–380). The point is that the end of capitalism will not come through autodestruction, it must be dislodged.

In the name of *liberal democracy*, there are some democratic pluralists who have stripped Deleuze and Guattari of their revolutionary Marxism in favor of capitalist values consistent with liberalism.⁷ Such approaches require an incredibly selective use of citation, as Deleuze and Guattari are quite clear on this point, frequently echoing Marx’s vehe-

⁵ The “immiseration thesis” first introduced by Marx and reiterated by Engels in terms of the crisis theory of underconsumption (often attributed to Rosa Luxemburg) is still the matter of contentious debate. See Karl Kautsky’s refutation of Eduard Bernstein’s attempt to target the “dialectical scaffolding” of immiseration—not altogether different from David Harvey’s later dialectical notion of “the spatial fix” (Kautsky 1910; Bernstein 1909: 212; Harvey 1981). Further debate exists over the consequences of immiseration, whether it leads to the slowdown of production and an abatement of expanded accumulation, “produces” the proletarian gravediggers of capitalism, or both.

⁶ The most notable contemporary proponents of this position adhere to the Maoist line on ‘the concrete development of the productive forces,’ though it is also the basis for the popularly maligned “stagist” argument whereby communism can only arrive after the full development of previous stages, first capitalism, and then socialism.

⁷ The most prominent liberal Deleuzians are Paul Patton—whose recent work has sought to unify Deleuze and Rawls—and Johns Hopkins-based William E. Connolly and Jane Bennett, as well as their students, especially Nicholas Tampio.

ment critique of liberalism and democracy. “Except in ideology, there has never been a humane, liberal, paternal, etc., capitalism,” they claim, as its cruelty and terror is even worse than in societies defined by their cruelty or terror (Ibid.: 373). Why? Every wage hike results in an overall harsher form of exploitation as it ultimately expands capitalism—“let’s create the New Deal; let’s cultivate and recognize strong unions; let’s promote participation, the single class” (Ibid.). As such, quality of life improvements simply reproduce capitalism’s interior limits, multiplying overall spaces of exploitation and neglect. And even if this was not true, the peaceful coexistence of multiple worlds under the same system of exploitation is no testament to greatness; rather, it points to the greatest form of despotism to have ever existed. Such an arrangement subjugates preconscious investments to the interests of capitalism, forming the state-capitalist standpoint as that from which all other interests can be derived (Ibid.: 374–76). In short, capitalism solicits a Stockholm syndrome-like identification with the oppressor similar to that which Freud sees in frenzied crowds—a fascism that answers the famous question from *Anti-Oedipus*: How did the masses, at a certain point, begin desiring their own oppression? (Freud 1959). Driving the point home, Deleuze and Guattari declare that “there is no metaphor here: the factories are prisons, they do not resemble prisons, they *are* prisons” (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 374).

In the name of *markets*, there are those so allergic to Deleuze and Guattari’s Marxism that they construct a whole empire out of a few references to Fernand Braudel. Thinkers such as Manuel DeLanda claim that there is a Braudelian strand to Deleuze and Guattari, which finds in the central argument of Braudel’s multi-volume history of capitalism that actually existing capitalism tends to be an antimarket force (DeLanda 1997; DeLanda 1998). The ground they stand on is quite thin, as Braudel appears in *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* only a scant half-dozen times, always to bolster points about geography or the history of technology. Admittedly, Marx and Engels do argue in *The Communist Manifesto* that capitalism is a revolutionary force. They even respect its power to challenge previously unquestioned social systems, but still argue for its defeat, for it necessitates exploitation as a mode of production that requires the systematic extraction of surplus value to operate. Deleuze and Guattari’s own affirmation of the revolutionary–schizophrenic pole of capitalism in *Anti-Oedipus* might encourage others to think that the market might contain the revolutionary forces latent to capitalism—capitalists have always promised creativity, innovation, and prosperity. Yet this misunderstands Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of capitalism, as more competitive markets would only perfect anti-production as an internal stimulus to capitalist production. This is why Deleuze and Guattari do not associate markets with the revolutionary pole of capitalism. “Money and the market, capitalism’s true police,” they say in *Anti-Oedipus* (1983: 239).

Further expanding on the point in *A Thousand Plateaus*, they insist that markets are predicated on the state, which brings them into existence through the addition and subtraction of governing axioms (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 461–63), and that there is only a single worldwide market that causes all states to converge on a single form (Ibid.: 436–37, 464–66). Markets come to define the action of the neurotic–paranoid pole of capitalism, which operates by redirecting anything that might escape back into a productive circuit of capitalist production. It thus forms the ultimate form of asceticism, which is to say, work for work’s sake.

In the name of *production*, there are those who have suggested Deleuze and Guattari are liberal Marxists who think the problem with capitalism is that it is not creative enough.⁸ One variety are those “monopoly capitalism” Marxists who affirm the capitalist principles of competition, work, technical innovation, commodity production, and the accumulation of wealth, but argue that they will only be realized through socialist means. Another are the post-Althusserians who claim that there is not one monolithic capitalism but many capitalisms, some better than others. This makes them odd bedfellows with Hyman Minsky, who liked to say that as with many pickles offered by the Heinz Company, capitalism comes in fifty-seven varieties, “and that this very variety of capitalism is responsible for the resilience of capitalism” (Minsky 1991: 10). Furthermore, there are those “post-capitalists” who argue that capitalism should not be antagonized; instead, the social fabric of communities is based in ostensibly non-capitalist social relations and simply need to be elevated at the expense of formal capitalist ones. Some of these interpretations can be blamed on the excesses of postmodernism, which for a time lead to a method that never saw a term it did not want to pluralize, problematize, complexify, or multiply—a funny betrayal of Deleuze and Guattari’s preference for the elegance of a single plane with a limited amount of abstract figures that survey an infinite amount of variations, variables, and varieties and not the pedantic death by a thousand distinctions without a difference (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 202–03). The real trouble is, of course, that productivists act as stewards of the capitalist theory of value rather than its gravediggers. Weighing in on this controversy in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze argues against *Homo laborans* Marxists who would argue that productive activity is what makes humans what they are. Against the productivists, they contend that that it takes the violence of the state to make productivity into a mode (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 428–29). The consequence is that the revolutionary horizon for them is

⁸ This is a view broadly supported by the early scholars of *Rethinking Marxism*, in particular, J.K. Gibson-Graham, whose feminist approach to capitalism is not to topple it but to diminish its importance by fostering more-and-more non-capitalist forms that take its place (Gibson-Graham 1996; 2006).

not an improvement in human productivity but the negation of the capitalism form of value itself through the abolition of production as a mode of life.

Revolution: Or, a Chronicle of the Outside

The ultimate task, reading revolution, is the most difficult. As Cvetkovich concludes in *Mixed Feelings*, while there are sensationalist elements to *Capital*, Marx's theorization of the violence of capitalism ultimately reveals the limits of the genre of the sensationalist novel (Cvetkovich 1992: 173). Capitalism incorporates elements of violence essential to precapitalist social formations, many written directly on the body through cruelty and terror. But as an abstract system of exploitation, capitalism's violence is written through an abstract quantitative system of inscription that marks bodies quite differently ("questioning the extent to which sensationalized objects or persons reveal the truth of social relations under capitalism" [Ibid.: 174]). Cvetkovich and Marx are joined by Negri, Cleaver, Federici and others in wondering how certain readings of *Capital* might lead to a radical politics. Even as philosophers, they express the primacy of the political through declarations such as "politics precedes being" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 203). But there is no specific political program for Deleuze and Guattari, as they are explicitly against the programmatism of party politics (2004: 279–280). Fortunately, *Anti-Oedipus* is explicitly revolutionary in its aim, though with an appeal to the revolutionary potential of art and science (1983: 368–72). In turn, the two subsequent books *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* do not mark a waning of their revolutionary fervor. Across their writing on the state in all three volumes, for instance, Deleuze and Guattari have nothing but ire—except perhaps for a few remarks about defending axioms statist in the nomadology, which they then repudiate in their critique of majoritarian democracy in *What is Philosophy?*.

Following the same materialist method they use to establish a critical orientation toward Derrida and Lacan, Deleuze and Guattari flip Hegel on his head by arguing that the world does not operate dialectically—states do. They describe a whole series of dialectical operations of state violence: the social recognition of subjects, consensual contracts and legal authority, the seemingly opposed liberal–authoritarian poles of sovereignty, work as productive activity. As a result, they call the state an "apparatus of capture" that distorts any politics seized by its dialectical net (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 424–73). Additionally, the two new concepts of lines of flights and nomadology extend Deleuze and Guattari's method of studying limits through the revolutionary processes in which those limits are overcome. The critical insight of the second volume of *A*

Thousand Plateaus is that the ultimate challenge to capitalism as an apparatus of capture exterior to it (Ibid.: 354–55). The topology of this move is important. It stands in contrast to the “inside–out” model common to most Marxist political theorization, whether that be the expansion of working-class power within the factory, the rise of a vanguard party who seizes the reigns of the bourgeois state, the growth of productive forces until capitalism becomes a fetter, or less concrete crises theories.

Deleuze and Guattari’s model of revolution is thus found in the force of an *outside*. Though in affinity with them, it does not necessarily link up with to the refusal of work offered by Negri or the long history of working-class struggles of Cleaver. The contrast continues through two dominant refrains: first, the much–repeated slogan that “there is no outside,” and second, Michel Foucault’s theory of power that takes power and resistance as immanent terms. The alternative to both is to cast a line to the outside. As much as capital is able to colonize social space, its brute mathematical calculus and reliance on abstract juridical categories is a leaky sieve with an exteriority that is populated by nomads, minorities, and their war machines. Social democratic axioms can be added to account for more people, or inversely, follow the libertarian practice of subtracting axioms to create a wider set of conditions favorable to capital. Yet like the weather, there is always a certain point at which there are too many divergent series for the math to catch up.⁹ This is the other reason why Deleuze and Guattari suggest that societies are not best identified through a mode of production but defined as how they prevent lines of escape. It is not just that there are things that can escape any given social formation, but according to Deleuze’s philosophy of movement, the only thing that we know for certain is they are always leaking in every direction like “runoffs, as when you drill a hole in a pipe,” as “there is no social system that does not leak from all directions” (Ibid.: 204). Its ability to manage energy, population, food, and cities will only worsen—a reality attested to by the catastrophe of global climate change, the billions living in global slums, vast food shortages despite surplus production, and skyrocketing urban rents (Ibid.: 468–69). But with destabilization comes opportunity, or as the recent slogan goes: capitalism is crisis. The question of the outside is then a question of exteriority. Although capitalism thrives from being both cause and solution to crisis, it only does so at the limit of its ability to do so—hence Marx affording it the unique quality of self-criticism.

In many ways, the politics of the outside can be reverse engineered from state politics. The role of the state under capitalism is related to Carl Schmitt’s elaboration on the *katechon*, the figure of “the restrainer” in his political theology, who holds back chaos to prevent revolutionary trans-

⁹ Edward N Lorenz put weather forecasting’s mathematical limit at a few weeks in his 1965 paper “A Study of the Predictability of a 28-variable Atmospheric Model.”

formation (Schmitt 2006: 59–62). As restrainer, it works to prevent those differences that would provoke a qualitative shift into a different social form. While sovereignty “only reigns over what it is capable of internalizing, of appropriating locally,” it is tamed by capitalism’s path to the outside (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 360). The purpose of the state under capitalism is not to prevent chaotic movement; precisely the opposite, it is there to place the charges that cause violent explosions of flows, and it sticks around to help feed into new circuits of production. It encourages disintegration relative to its capacity to direct the energy it unleashes into productive activity. Put another way, the state is a “model of realization” that enforces certain actualizations of the virtual potential of deterritorialization while other are never effectuated (Ibid.: 454–56). The state is thus made subservient to capitalism’s functions as a difference-engine, helping it draw in chaos at its exterior limit to strengthen its overall operations. In sum, the state encourages production in its capacity as restrainer against revolutionary events.

Revolutionary rupture comes from the need for fresh air (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 2, 334). It begins by realizing that the outside attests to life outside capitalism. Such life is often born out of tragic circumstance, as biopolitical governance meters out punishment by withholding the abstract legal protections of the state and restricting from the means of life offered by capitalism—always accompanied by the sneering suggestion that nothing survives without it. First and foremost, Deleuze and Guattari’s nomadology is a chronicle of forms of life that thrive in the absence of the state and capital. The open spaces of pastoral nomads, the galloping war machine of the nomads of the steppe, and the itinerant nomads of the desert all speak to life on the outside.

This is not to say that a revolutionary voyage to the outside means an end to politics. Yet it stands in contrast to Slavoj Žižek’s deliciously obscene “repeating Lenin” (2007), which does not look to Lenin as a figure of discipline or organization. It is not the Lenin of *The State and Revolution* that interests Žižek but the motivations behind *How Is It To Be Done?* For this, Žižek calls Lenin a voluntarist ‘of the best sort’—that of the “art of intervention” (Žižek 2007: 83). For Žižek, revolution is never realized in the perfect material conditions outlined by political economy, but in moments where everything appears to be lost. Those unable to seize these unexpected moments call the daring, perceptive, or stubborn voluntarists. For some, even without the strong decisionism of Schmitt or Alain Badiou, this is where Žižek aligns with the politics of Deleuze and Guattari. *A Thousand Plateaus* has been taken as a reference point by political movement figures “subscribing to a logic that Deleuze and Guattari describe as rhizomatic (open, mutable, horizontal, spontaneously organized)” (Nunes 2015: 97). Rosi Braidotti proposes an even more action-oriented politics, arguing through Deleuze’s reading of Spinoza that an

affirmative politics of joy is essential for “putting the active back into activism” (Braidotti 2009: 42).

But what if Deleuze and Guattari’s politics are precisely the opposite—which is to say, anti-decisionist to the core? As François Zourabichvili has argued, Deleuze is radically *involuntarist* (Zourabichvili 2012: 85–88). Thought is not wielded as an activist’s tool that brings a subject into self-possession, fortifies the will, and swings everyone into action. “What is called thinking” is the disappointment of powerlessness, the effect of a violence of that deprives us of the ability to muster an “I” (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 55). Thinking is also the result of a fatigue of making ourselves “prisoners of the relative horizon” imposed by an image of thought that hems in the future (Ibid.: 49). Just as Nietzsche observes, the cultural physician lacks the power to raise a flag for others to rally around. All that remains is their ability to destroy what is positive—to leave us with the most open-ended future possible, one where the future ceases to resemble the present. Circling back to Marx and the question of the working class, perhaps the point is then not to provide the means for raising the consciousness of the proletariat through self-affirmation to make it into a political organ; but rather, to assist working people in negating their own conditions so that together, they become the class of its own abolition. This position can be summarized in the Marxist slogan: “Self-abolition not self-affirmation!”

Revolution ultimately has more to do with time than space; by which I mean, it is an event rather than a place or a relation. My recent book *Dark Deleuze* (Culp 2016) explores the politics of the outside. The outside here is the outside of Maurice Blanchot’s ‘great refusal’ and operates according to Deleuze’s philosophical approach to posing problems. To be brief, my own proposal is that in moments when we realize that there is something intolerable about the world, yet we feel absolutely paralyzed to act, we are shocked from the outside in the terrible realization that we have not yet thought. And it is in that cataclysmic moment that we are finally able to think and act anew. Only then do we remain radically open to a future. For as Deleuze outlines in his three syntheses on time, the future is most radical when it acts as a solvent on both the past and the present. The key to maintain such an open future is to avoid the lure of solutionism. For solutionists have taken the bait of besting one’s opponent by becoming like them only better, as the Soviet Union did by trying to outproduce the capitalist world—a failure that always comes from applying an “abstract general solution” that happens when we “forget” the problem” (Deleuze 1994: 163). The path ahead of us is a new type revolution. A revolutionary event that “evicts” the capitalist forces and relations of anti-production (Aarons 2012: 11–12). The role of militant thought here is not to provide the right predictive models, follow the arc of history, or to muster the will. It is not to provide the right image of the future or even to guide creative

action. Rather, it is to identify and denounce the forces of prevention as the intolerable agents of our perpetual present. Such a future was already written on the wall on May '68, *L'économie est blessée, qu'elle crève*.

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