territoriality. And the impossibility of writing in German is the deterritorialization of the German population itself, an oppressive minority that speaks a language cut off from the masses, like a "paper language" or an artificial language: this is all the more true for the Jews who are simultaneously a part of this minority and excluded from it, like "gypsies who have stolen a German child from its crib." In short, Prague German is a deterritorialized language, appropriate for strange and minor uses. (This can be compared in another context to what blacks in America today are able to do with the English language.)

The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political. In major literatures, in contrast, the individual concern (familial, marital, and so on) joins with other no less individual concerns, the social milieu serving as a mere environment or a background; this is so much the case that none of these Oedipal intrigues are specifically indispensable or absolutely necessary but all become as one in a large space. Minor literature is completely different; its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary, indispensable, magnified, because a whole other story is vibrating within it. In this way, the family triangle connects to other triangles—commercial, economic, bureaucratic, juridical—that determine its values. When Kafka indicates that one of the goals of a minor literature is the "purification of the conflict that opposes father and son and the possibility of discussing that conflict," it isn't a question of an Oedipal phantasm but of a political program. "Even though something is often thought through calmly, one still does not reach the boundary where it connects up with similar things, one reaches the boundary soonest in politics, indeed, one even strives to see it before it is there, and often sees this limiting boundary everywhere. . . . What in great literature goes on down below, constituting a not indispensable cellar of the structure, here takes place in the full light of day, what is there a matter of passing interest for a few, here absorbs everyone no less than as a matter of life and death."[2]

The third characteristic of minor literature is that in it everything takes on a collective value. Indeed, precisely because talent isn't abundant in a minor literature, there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that would belong to this or that "master" and that could be separated from a collective enunciation. Indeed, scarcity of talent is in fact beneficial and allows the conception of something other than a literature of masters; what each author says individually already constitutes a common action, and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren't in agreement. The political domain has contaminated every statement [*énoncé*]. But above all else, because collective or national consciousness is "of-

ten inactive in external life and always in the process of break-down," literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation. It is literature that produces an active solidarity in spite of skepticism; and if the writer is in the margins or completely outside his or her fragile community, this situation allows the writer all the more the possibility to express another possible community and to forge the means for another consciousness and another sensibility; just as the dog of "Investigations" calls out in his solitude to *another science*. The literary machine thus becomes the relay for a revolutionary machine-to-come, not at all for ideological reasons but because the literary machine alone is determined to fill the conditions of a collective enunciation that is lacking elsewhere in this milieu: *literature is the people's concern.*[3] It is certainly in these terms that Kafka sees the problem. The message doesn't refer back to an enunciating subject who would be its cause, no more than to a subject of the statement [*sujet d'énonce*] who would be its effect. Undoubtedly, for a while, Kafka thought according to these traditional categories of the two subjects, the author and the hero, the narrator and the character, the dreamer and the one dreamed of.[4] But he will quickly reject the role of the narrator, just as he will refuse an author's or master's literature, despite his admiration for Goethe. Josephine the mouse renounces the individual act of singing in order to melt into the collective enunciation of "the immense crowd of the heros of [her] people." A movement from the individuated animal to the pack or to a collective multiplicity—seven canine musicians. In "The Investigations of a Dog," the expressions of the solitary researcher tend toward the assemblage [*agencement*] of a collective enunciation of the canine species even if this collectivity is no longer or not yet given. There isn't a subject; *there are only collective assemblages of enunciation,* and literature expresses these acts insofar as they're not imposed from without and insofar as they exist only as diabolical powers to come or revolutionary forces to be constructed. Kafka's solitude opens him up to everything going on in history today. The letter K no longer designates a narrator or a character but an assemblage that becomes all the more machine-like, an agent that becomes all the more collective because an individual is locked into it in his or her solitude (it is only in connection to a subject that something individual would be separable from the collective and would lead its own life).

The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation. We might as well say that minor no longer designates specific literatures but the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature. Even he who has the misfortune of being born in the country of a

great literature must write in its language, just as a Czech Jew writes in German, or an Ouzbekian writes in Russian. Writing like a dog digging a hole, a rat digging its burrow. And to do that, finding his own point of underdevelopment, his own patois, his own third world, his own desert. There has been much discussion of the questions "What is a marginal literature?" and "What is a popular literature, a proletarian literature?" The criteria are obviously difficult to establish if one doesn't start with a more objective concept—that of minor literature. Only the possibility of setting up a minor practice of major language from within allows one to define popular literature, marginal literature, and so on.[5] Only in this way can literature really become a collective machine of expression and really be able to treat and develop its contents. Kafka emphatically declares that a minor literature is much more able to work over its material.[6] Why this machine of expression, and what is it? We know that it is in a relation of multiple deterritorializations with language; it is the situation of the Jews who have dropped the Czech language at the same time as the rural environment, but it is also the situation of the German language as a "paper language." Well, one can go even farther; one can push this movement of deterritorialization of expression even farther. But there are only two ways to do this. One way is to artificially enrich this German, to swell it up through all the resources of symbolism, of oneirism, of esoteric sense, of a hidden signifier. This is the approach of the Prague school, Gustav Meyrink and many others, including Max Brod.[7] But this attempt implies a desperate attempt at symbolic reterritorilization, based in archetypes, Kabbala, and alchemy, that accentuates its break from the people and will find its political result only in Zionism and such things as the "dream of Zion." Kafka will quickly choose the other way, or, rather, he will invent another way. He will opt for the German language of Prague as it is and in its very poverty. Go always farther in the direction of deterritorialization, to the point of sobriety. Since the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it. Arrive at a perfect and unformed expression, a materially intense expression. (For these two possible paths, couldn't we find the same alternatives, under other conditions, in Joyce and Beckett? As Irishmen, both of them live within the genial conditions of a minor literature. That is the glory of this sort of minor literature—to be the revolutionary force for all literature. The utilization of English and of every language in Joyce. The utilization of English and French in Beckett. But the former never stops operating by exhilaration and overdetermination and brings about all sorts of worldwide reterritorializations. The other proceeds by dryness and sobriety, a willed poverty, pushing deterritorialization to such an extreme that nothing remains but intensities.)

How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the major language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities, the problem of a minor literature, but also a problem for all of us: how to tear a minor literature away from its own language, allowing it to challenge the language and making it follow a sober revolutionary path? How to become a nomad and an immigrant and a gypsy in relation to one's own language? Kafka answers: steal the baby from its crib, walk the tightrope.

Rich or poor, each language always implies a deterritorialization of the mouth, the tongue, and the teeth. The mouth, tongue, and teeth find their primitive territoriality in food. In giving themselves over to the articulation of sounds, the mouth, tongue, and teeth deterritorialize. Thus, there is a certain disjunction between eating and speaking, and even more, despite all appearances, between eating and writing. Undoubtedly, one can write while eating more easily than one can speak while eating, but writing goes further in transforming words into things capable of competing with food. Disjunction between content and expression. To speak, and above all to write, is to fast. Kafka manifests a permanent obsession with food, and with that form of food par excellence, in other words, the animal or meat—an obsession with the mouth and with teeth and with large, unhealthy, or gold-capped teeth.[8] This is one of Kafka's main problems with Felice. Fasting is also a constant theme in Kafka's writings. His writings are a long history of fasts. The Hunger Artist, surveyed by butchers, ends his career next to beasts who eat their meat raw, placing the visitors before an irritating alternative. The dogs try to take over the mouth of the investigating hound by filling it with food so that he'll stop asking questions, and there too there is an irritating alternative: "They would have done better to drive me away and refuse to listen to my questions. No, they did not want to do that; they did not indeed want to listen to my questions, but it was because I asked these questions that they did not want to drive me away." The investigating hound oscillates between two sciences, that of food—a science of the Earth and of the bent head ("Whence does the Earth procure this food?")—and that of music which is a science of the air and of the straightened head, as the seven musical dogs of the beginning and the singing dog of the end well demonstrate. But between the two there is something in common, since food can come from high up and the science of food can only develop through fasting, just as the music is strangely silent.

Ordinarily, in fact, language compensates for its deterritorialization by a reterritorialization in sense. Ceasing to be the organ of one of the senses, it becomes an instrument of sense. And it is sense, as a correct sense, that pre-

sides over the designation of sounds (the thing or the state of things that the word designates) and, as figurative sense, over the affection of images and metaphors (those other things that words designate under certain situations or conditions). Thus, there is not only a spiritual reterritorialization of sense, but also a physical one. Similarly, language exists only through the distinction and the complementarity of a subject of enunciation, who is in connection with sense, and a subject of the statement, who is in connection, directly or metaphorically, with the designated thing. This sort of ordinary use of language can be called extensive or representative—the reterritorializing function of language (thus, the singing dog at the end of the "Investigations" forces the hero to abandon his fast, a sort of re-Oedipalization).

Now something happens: the situation of the German language in Czechoslovakia, as a fluid language intermixed with Czech and Yiddish, will allow Kafka the possibility of invention. Since things are as they are ("it is as it is, it is as it is," a formula dear to Kafka, marker of a state of facts), he will abandon sense, render it no more than implicit; he will retain only the skeleton of sense, or a paper cutout.

Since articulated sound was a deterritorialized noise but one that will be reterritorialized in sense, it is now sound itself that will be deterritorialized irrevocably, absolutely. The sound or the word that traverses this new deterritorialization no longer belongs to a language of sense, even though it derives from it, nor is it an organized music or song, even though it might appear to be. We noted Gregor's warbling and the ways it blurred words, the whistling of the mouse, the cough of the ape, the pianist who doesn't play, the singer who doesn't sing and gives birth to her song out of her nonsinging, the musical dogs who are musicians in the very depths of their bodies since they don't emit any music. Everywhere, organized music is traversed by a line of abolition—just as a language of sense is traversed by a line of escape—in order to liberate a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form.[9] This language torn from sense, conquering sense, bringing about an active neutralization of sense, no longer finds its value in anything but an accenting of the word, an inflection: "I live only here or there in a small word in whose vowel. . . . I lose my useless head for a moment. The first and last letters are the beginning and end of my fishlike emotion."[10] Children are well skilled in the exercise of repeating a word, the sense of which is only vaguely felt, in order to make it vibrate around itself (at the beginning of *The Castle,* the schoolchildren are speaking so fast that one cannot understand what they are saying). Kafka tells how, as a child, he repeated one of his father's expressions in order to make it take flight on a line of non-sense: "end of the month, end of the month."[11] The proper name, which has no sense in itself, is particularly

propitious for this sort of exercise. *Milena,* with an accent on the *i*, begins by evoking "a Greek or a Roman gone astray in Bohemia, violated by Czech, cheated of its accent," and then, by a more delicate approximation, it evokes "a woman whom one carries in one's arms out of the world, out of the fire," the accent marking here an always possible fall or, on the contrary, "the lucky leap which you yourself make with your burden."[12]

It seems to us that there is a certain difference, even if relative and highly nuanced, between the two evocations of the name Milena: one still attaches itself to an extensive, figurative scene of the fantasmatic sort; the second is already much more intensive, marking a fall or a leap as a threshold of intensity contained within the name itself. In fact, we have here what happens when sense is actively neutralized. As Wagenbach says, "The word is master; it directly gives birth to the image." But how can we define this procedure? Of sense there remains only enough to direct the lines of escape. There is no longer a destination of something by means of a proper name, nor an assignation of metaphors by means of a figurative sense. But *like* images, the thing no longer forms anything but a sequence of intensive states, a ladder or a circuit for intensities that one can make race around in one sense or another, from high to low, or from low to high. The image is this very race itself; it has become becoming—the becoming-dog of the man and the becoming-man of the dog, the becoming-ape or the becoming-beetle of the man and vice versa. We are no longer in the situation of an ordinary, rich language where the word dog, for example, would directly designate an animal and would apply metaphorically to other things (so that one could say "like a dog").[13] *Diaries,* 1921: "Metaphors are one of the things that makes me despair of literature." Kafka deliberately kills all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification, no less than all designation. Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor. There is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only a distribution of states that is part of the range of the word. The thing and other things are no longer anything but intensities overrun by deterritorialized sound or words that are following their line of escape. It is no longer a question of a resemblance between the comportment of an animal and that of a man; it is even less a question of a simple wordplay. There is no longer man or animal, since each deterritorializes the other, in a conjunction of flux, in a continuum of reversible intensities. Instead, it is now a question of a becoming that includes the maximum of difference as a difference of intensity, the crossing of a barrier, a rising or a falling, a bending or an erecting, an accent on the word. The animal does not speak "like" a man but pulls from the language tonalities lacking in signification; the words themselves are not "like" the animals but in their own way climb about, bark and roam around, being properly linguistic dogs, insects, or

mice.[14] To make the sequences vibrate, to open the word onto unexpected internal intensities—in short, an asignifying *intensive utilization* of language. Furthermore, there is no longer a subject of the enunciation, nor a subject of the statement. It is no longer the subject of the statement who is a dog, with the subject of the enunciation remaining "like" a man; it is no longer the subject of enunciation who is "like" a beetle, the subject of the statement remaining a man. Rather, there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage.

How does the situation of the German language in Prague—a withered vocabulary, an incorrect syntax—contribute to such a utilization? Generally, we might call the linguistic elements, however varied they may be, that express the "internal tensions of a language" *intensives* or *tensors*. It is in this sense that the linguist Vidal Sephiha terms intensive "any linguistic tool that allows a move toward the limit of a notion or a surpassing of it," marking a movement of language toward its extremes, toward a reversible beyond or before.[15] Sephiha well shows the variety of such elements which can be all sorts of master-words, verbs, or prepositions that assume all sorts of senses; prenominal or purely intensive verbs as in Hebrew; conjunctions, exclamations, adverbs; and *terms that connote pain*.[16] One could equally cite the accents that are interior to words, their discordant function. And it would seem that the language of a minor literature particularly develops these tensors or these intensives. In the lovely pages where he analyzes the Prague German that was influenced by Czech, Wagenbach cites as the characteristics of this form of German the incorrect use of prepositions; the abuse of the pronominal; the employment of malleable verbs (such as *Giben*, which is used for the series "put, sit, place, take away" and which thereby becomes intensive); the multiplication and succession of adverbs; the use of pain-filled connotations; the importance of the accent as a tension internal to the word; and the distribution of consonants and vowels as part of an internal discordance. Wagenbach insists on this point: all these marks of the poverty of a language show up in Kafka but have been taken over by a creative utilization for the purposes of a new sobriety, a new expressivity, a new flexibility, a new intensity.[17] "Almost every word I write jars up against the next, I hear the consonants rub leadenly against each other and the vowels sing an accompaniment like Negroes in a minstrel show."[18] *Language stops being representative in order to now move toward its extremities or its limits.* The connotation of pain accompanies this metamorphosis, as in the words that become a painful warbling with Gregor, or in Franz's cry "single and irrevocable." Think about the utilization of French as a spoken language in the films of Godard. There too is an accumulation of stereotypical adverbs and conjunctions that form the base of all the phrases—a strange poverty that

makes French a minor language within French; a creative process that directly links the word to the image; a technique that surges up at the end of sequences in connection with the intensity of the limit "that's enough, enough, he's had enough," and a generalized intensification, coinciding with a panning shot where the camera pivots and sweeps around without leaving the spot, making the image vibrate.

Perhaps the comparative study of images would be less interesting than the study of the functions of language that can work in the same group across different languages—bilingualism or even multilingualism. Because the study of the functions in distinct languages alone can account for social factors, relations of force, diverse centers of power, it escapes from the "informational" myth in order to evaluate the hierarchic and imperative system of language as a transmission of orders, an exercise of power or of resistance to this exercise. Using the research of Ferguson and Gumperz, Henri Gobard has proposed a tetralinguistic model: vernacular, maternal, or territorial language, used in rural communities or rural in its origins; a vehicular, urban, governmental, even worldwide language, a language of businesses, commercial exchange, bureaucratic transmission, and so on, a language of the first sort of deterritorialization; referential language, language of sense and of culture, entailing a cultural reterritorialization; mythic language, on the horizon of cultures, caught up in a spiritual or religious reterritorialization. The spatiotemporal categories of these languages differ sharply: vernacular language is *here;* vehicular language is *everywhere;* referential language is *over there;* mythic language is *beyond.* But above all else, the distribution of these languages varies from one group to the next and, in a single group, from one epoch to the next (for a long time in Europe, Latin was a vehicular language before becoming referential, then mythic; English has become the worldwide vehicular language for today's world).[19] What can be said in one language cannot be said in another, and the totality of what can and can't be said varies necessarily with each language and with the connections between these languages.[20] Moreover, all these factors can have ambiguous edges, changing borders, that differ for this or that material. One language can fill a certain function for one material and another function for another material. Each function of a language divides up in turn and carries with it multiple centers of power. A blur of languages, and not at all a system of languages. We can understand the indignation of integrationists who cry when Mass is said in French, since Latin is being robbed of its mythic function. But the classicists are even more behind the times and cry because Latin has even been robbed of its referential cultural function. They express regret in this way for the religious or educational forms of powers that this language exercised and that have now been re-

placed by other forms. There are even more serious examples that cross over between groups. The revival of regionalisms, with a reterritorialization through dialect or patois, a vernacular language—how does that serve a worldwide or transnational technocracy? How can that contribute to revolutionary movements, since they are also filled with archaisms that they are trying to impart a contemporary sense to? From Servan-Schreiber to the Breton bard to the Canadian singer. And that's not really how the borders divide up, since the Canadian singer can also bring about the most reactionary, the most Oedipal of reterritorializations, oh mama, oh my native land, my cabin, olé, olé. We would call this a blur, a mixed-up history, a political situation, but linguists don't know about this, don't want to know about this, since, as linguists, they are "apolitical," pure scientists. Even Chomsky compensated for his scientific apoliticism only by his courageous struggle against the war in Vietnam.

Let's return to the situation in the Hapsburg empire. The breakdown and fall of the empire increases the crisis, accentuates everywhere movements of deterritorialization, and invites all sorts of complex reterritorializations—archaic, mythic, or symbolist. At random, we can cite the following among Kafka's contemporaries: Einstein and his deterritorialization of the representation of the universe (Einstein teaches in Prague, and the physicist Philipp Frank gives conferences there with Kafka in attendance); the Austrian dodecaphonists and their deterritorialization of musical representation (the cry that is Marie's death in *Wozzeck*, or Lulu's, or the echoed *si* that seems to us to follow a musical path similar in certain ways to what Kafka is doing); the expressionist cinema and its double movement of deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the image (Robert Wiene, who has Czech background; Fritz Lang, born in Vienna; Paul Wegener and his utilization of Prague themes). Of course, we should mention Viennese psychoanalysis and Prague school linguistics.[21] What is the specific situation of the Prague Jews in relation to the "four languages"? The vernacular language for these Jews who have come from a rural milieu is Czech, but the Czech language tends to be forgotten and repressed; as for Yiddish, it is often disdained or viewed with suspicion—it *frightens*, as Kafka tells us. German is the vehicular language of the towns, a bureaucratic language of the state, a commercial language of exchange (but English has already started to become indispensable for this purpose). The German language—but this time, Goethe's German—has a cultural and referential function (as does French to a lesser degree). As a mythic language, Hebrew is connected with the start of Zionism and still possesses the quality of an active dream. For each of these languages, we need to evaluate the degrees of territoriality, deterritorialization, and reterritorialization. Kafka's own situation: he is

one of the few Jewish writers in Prague to understand and speak Czech (and this language will have a great importance in his relationship with Milena). German plays precisely the double role of vehicular and cultural language, with Goethe always on the horizon (Kafka also knows French, Italian, and probably a bit of English). He will not learn Hebrew until later. What is complicated is Kafka's relation to Yiddish; he sees it less as a sort of linguistic territoriality for the Jews than as a nomadic movement of deterritorialization that reworks German language. What fascinates him in Yiddish is less a language of a religious community than that of a popular theater (he will become patron and impresario for the traveling theater of Isak Lowy).[22] The manner in which Kafka, in a public meeting, presented Yiddish to a rather hostile Jewish bourgeois audience is completely remarkable: Yiddish is a language that frightens more than it invites disdain, "dread mingled with a certain fundamental distaste"; it is a language that is lacking a grammar and that is filled with vocables that are fleeting, mobilized, emigrating, and turned into nomads that interiorize "relations of force." It is a language that is grafted onto Middle-High German and that so reworks the German language from within that one cannot translate it into German without destroying it; one can understand Yiddish only by "feeling it" in the heart. In short, it is a language where minor utilizations will carry you away: "Then you will come to feel the true unity of Yiddish and so strongly that it will frighten you, yet it will no longer be fear of Yiddish but of yourselves. Enjoy this self-confidence as much as you can!"[23]

Kafka does not opt for a reterritorialization through the Czech language. Nor toward a hypercultural usage of German with all sorts of oneiric or symbolic or mythic flights (even Hebrew-ifying ones), as was the case with the Prague school. Nor toward an oral, popular Yiddish. Instead, using the path that Yiddish opens up to him, he takes it in such a way as to convert it into a unique and solitary form of writing. Since Prague German is deterritorialized to several degrees, he will always take it farther, to a greater degree of intensity, but in the direction of a new sobriety, a new and unexpected modification, a pitiless rectification, a straightening of the head. Schizo politeness, a drunkenness caused by water.[24] He will make the German language take flight on a line of escape. He will feed himself on abstinence; he will tear out of Prague German all the qualities of underdevelopment that it has tried to hide; he will make it cry with an extremely sober and rigorous cry. He will pull from it the barking of the dog, the cough of the ape, and the bustling of the beetle. He will turn syntax into a cry that will embrace the rigid syntax of this dried-up German. He will push it toward a deterritorialization that will no longer be saved by culture or by myth, that will be an absolute deterritorialization, even if it is slow, sticky, coagulated.

To bring language slowly and progressively to the desert. To use syntax in order to cry, to give a syntax to the cry.

There is nothing that is major or revolutionary exept the minor. To hate all languages of masters. Kafka's fascination for servants and employees (the same thing in Proust in relation to servants, to their language). What interests him even more is the possibility of making of his own language—assuming that it is unique, that it is a major language or has been—a minor utilization. To be a sort of stranger *within* his own language; this is the situation of Kafka's Great Swimmer.[25] Even when it is unique, a language remains a mixture, a schizophrenic mélange, a Harlequin costume in which very different functions of language and distinct centers of power are played out, blurring what can be said and what can't be said; one function will be played off against the other, all the degrees of territoriality and relative deterritorialization will be played out. Even when major, a language is open to an intensive utilization that makes it take flight along creative lines of escape which, no matter how slowly, no matter how cautiously, can now form an absolute deterritorialization. All this inventiveness, not only lexically, since the lexical matters little, but sober syntactical invention, simply to write like a dog (but a dog can't write—exactly, exactly). It's what Artaud did with French—cries, gasps; what Celine did with French, following another line, one that was exclamatory to the highest degree. Celine's syntactic evolution went from *Voyage* to *Death on the Credit Plan*, then from *Death on the Credit Plan* to *Guignol's Band*. (After that, Celine had nothing more to talk about except his own misfortunes; in other words, he had no longer any desire to write, only the need to make money. And it always ends like that, language's lines of escape: silence, the interrupted, the interminable, or even worse. But until that point, what a crazy creation, what a writing machine! Celine was so applauded for *Voyage* that he went even further in *Death on the Credit Plan* and then in the prodigious *Guignol's Band* where language is nothing more than intensities. He spoke with a kind of "minor music." Kafka, too, is a minor music, a different one, but always made up of deterritorialized sounds, a language that moves head over heels and away.) These are the true minor authors. An escape for language, for music, for writing. What we call "pop"—pop music, pop philosophy, pop writing—*Wörterflucht*. To make use of the polylingualism of one's own language, to make a minor or intensive use of it, to oppose the oppressed quality of this language to its oppressive quality, to find points of nonculture or underdevelopment, linguistic Third-World zones by which a language can escape, an animal enters into things, an assemblage comes into play. How many styles or genres or literary movements, even very small ones, have only one single dream: to assume a major function in language, to offer

themselves as a sort of state language, an official language (for example, psychoanalysis today, which would like to be a master of the signifier, of metaphor, or wordplay). Create the opposite dream: know how to create a becoming-minor. (Is there a hope for philosophy, which for a long time has been an official, referential genre? Let us profit from this moment in which antiphilosophy is trying to be a language of power.)

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Nomad Art: Space

The Aesthetic Model: Nomad Art

Several notions, both practical and theoretical, are suitable for defining nomad art and its successors (barbarian, Gothic, and modern). First, "close-range" vision, as distinguished from long-distance vision; second, "tactile," or rather "haptic" space, as distinguished from optical space. *Haptic* is a better word than *tactile* since it does not establish an opposition between two sense organs but rather invites the assumption that the eye itself may fulfill this nonoptical function. It was Aloïs Riegl who, in some marvelous pages, gave fundamental aesthetic status to the couple, *close vision–haptic space*. But for the moment we should set aside the criteria proposed by Riegl (then by Wilhelm Worringer, and more recently by Henri Maldiney), and take some risks ourselves, making free use of these notions.[1] It seems to us that the smooth is both the object of a close vision par excellence and the element of a haptic space (which may be as much visual or auditory as tactile). The striated, on the contrary, relates to a more distant vision, and a more optical space—although the eye in turn is not the only organ to have this capacity. Once again, as always, this analysis must be corrected by a coefficient of transformation according to which passages between the striated and the smooth are at once necessary and uncertain, and

all the more disruptive. The law of the painting is that it be done at close range, even if it is viewed from relatively far away. One can back away from a thing, but it is a bad painter who backs away from the painting he or she is working on. Or from the "thing" for that matter. Cézanne spoke of the need to *no longer see* the wheat field, to be too close to it, to lose oneself without landmarks in smooth space. Afterward, striation can emerge: drawing, strata, the earth, "stubborn geometry," the "measure of the world," "geological foundations," "everything falls straight down." . . . The striated itself may in turn disappear in a "catastrophe," opening the way for a new smooth space, and another striated space. . . .

A painting is done at close range, even if it is seen from a distance. Similarly, it is said that composers do not hear: they have close-range hearing, whereas listeners hear from a distance. Even writers write with short-term memory, whereas readers are assumed to be endowed with long-term memory. The first aspect of the haptic, smooth space of close vision is that its orientations, landmarks, and linkages are in continuous variation; it operates step by step. Examples are the desert, steppe, ice, and sea, local spaces of pure connection. Contrary to what is sometimes said, one never sees from a distance in a space of this kind, nor does one see it from a distance; one is never "in front of," any more than one is "in" (one is "on." . .). Orientations are not constant but change according to temporary vegetation, occupations, and precipitation. There is no visual model for points of reference that would make them interchangeable and unite them in an inertial class assignable to an immobile outside observer. On the contrary, they are tied to any number of observers, who may be qualified as "monads" but are instead *nomads* entertaining tactile relations among themselves. The interlinkages do not imply an ambient space in which the multiplicity would be immersed and which would make distances invariant; rather, they are constituted according to ordered differences that give rise to intrinsic variations in the division of a single distance.[2] These questions of orientation, location, and linkage enter into play in the most famous works of nomad art: the twisted animals have no land beneath them; the ground constantly changes direction, as in aerial acrobatics; the paws point in the opposite direction from the head, the hind part of the body is turned upside down; the "monadological" points of view can be interlinked only on a nomad space; the whole and the parts give the eye that beholds them a function that is haptic rather than optical. This is an animality that can be seen only by touching it with one's mind, but without the mind becoming a finger, not even by way of the eye. (In a much cruder fashion, the kaleidoscope has exactly the same function: to give the eye a digital function.) Striated space, on the contrary, is defined by the requirements of long-distance vision: constancy of orienta-

tion, invariance of distance through an interchange of inertial points of reference, interlinkage by immersion in an ambient milieu, constitution of a central perspective. It is less easy to evaluate the creative potentialities of striated space, and how it can simultaneously emerge from the smooth and give everything a whole new impetus.

The opposition between the striated and the smooth is not simply that of the global and the local. For in one case, the global is still relative, whereas in the other the local is already absolute. Where there is close vision, space is not visual, or rather the eye itself has a haptic, nonoptical function: no line separates earth from sky, which are of the same substance; there is neither horizon nor background nor perspective nor limit nor outline or form nor center; there is no intermediary distance, or all distance is intermediary. Like Eskimo space.[3] In a totally different way, in a totally different context, Arab architecture constitutes a space that begins very near and low, placing the light and the airy below and the solid and heavy above. This reversal of the laws of gravity turns *lack of direction* and negation of volume into constructive forces. There exists a nomadic absolute, as a local integration moving from part to part and constituting smooth space in an infinite succession of linkages and changes in direction. It is an absolute that is one with becoming itself, with process. It is the absolute of passage, which in nomad art merges with its manifestation. Here the absolute is local, precisely because place is not delimited. If we now turn to the striated and optical space of long-distance vision, we see that the relative global that characterizes that space also requires the absolute, but in an entirely different way. The absolute is now the horizon or background, in other words, the Encompassing Element without which nothing would be global or englobed. It is against this background that the relative outline or form appears. The absolute itself can appear in the Encompassed, but only in a privileged place well delimited as a center, which then functions to repel beyond the limits anything that menaces the global integration. We can see clearly here how smooth space subsists, but only to give rise to the striated. The desert, sky, or sea, the Ocean, the Unlimited, first plays the role of an encompassing element, and tends to become a horizon: the earth is thus surrounded, globalized, "grounded" by this element, which holds it in immobile equilibrium and makes Form possible. Then to the extent that the encompassing element itself appears at the center of the earth, it assumes a second role, that of casting into the loathesome deep, the abode of the dead, anything smooth or nonmeasured that may have remained.[4] The striation of the earth implies as its necessary condition this double treatment of the smooth: on the one hand, it is carried or reduced to the absolute state of an encompassing horizon, and on the other it is expelled from the relative encom-

passed element. Thus the great imperial religions need a smooth space like the desert, but only in order to give it a law that is opposed to the *nomos* in every way, and converts the absolute.

This perhaps explains for us the ambiguity of the excellent analyses by Riegl, Worringer, and Maldiney. They approach haptic space under the imperial conditions of Egyptian art. They define it as the presence of a horizon-background; the reduction of space to the plane (vertical and horizontal, height and width); and the rectilinear outline enclosing individuality and withdrawing it from change. Like the pyramid-form, every side a plane surface, against the background of the immobile desert. On the other hand, they show how in Greek art (then in Byzantine art, and up to the Renaissance), an optical space was differentiated from haptic space, one merging background with form, setting up an interference between the planes, conquering depth, working with cubic or voluminous extension, organizing perspective, and playing on relief and shadow, light and color. Thus at the very beginning they encounter the haptic at a point of mutation, in conditions under which it already serves to striate space. The optical makes that striation tighter and more perfect, or rather tight and perfect in a different way (it is not associated with the same "artistic will"). Everything occurs in a striated space that goes from empires to city-states, or evolved empires. It is not by chance that Riegl tends to eliminate the specific factors of nomad or even barbarian art; or that Worringer, when he introduces the idea of Gothic art in the broadest sense, relates it on the one hand to the Germanic and Celtic migrations of the North, and on the other to the empires of the East. But between the two were the nomads, who are reducible neither to empires they confronted nor the migrations they triggered. The Goths themselves were nomads of the steppe, and with the Sarmatians and Huns were an essential vector of communication between the East and the North, a factor irreducible to either of these two dimensions.[5] On one side, Egypt had its Hyksos, Asia Minor its Hittites, China its Turco-Mongols; and on the other, the Hebrews had their Habiru, the Germans, Celts, and Romans their Goths, the Arabs their Bedouins. The nomads have a specificity that is too hastily reduced to its consequences, by including them in the empires or counting them among the migrants, assimilating them to one or the other, denying them their own "will" to art. Again, there is a refusal to accept that the intermediary between the East and the North had its own absolute specificity, that the intermediary, the interval, played exactly this substantial role. Moreover, it does not have that role in the guise of a "will"; it only has a becoming, it invents a "becoming-artist."

When we invoke a primordial duality between the smooth and the striated, it is in order to subordinate the differences between "haptic" and

"optic," "close vision" and "distant vision" to this distinction. Hence we will not define the haptic by the immobile background, by the plane and the contour, because these have to do with an already mixed state in which the haptic serves to striate, and uses its smooth components only in order to convert them to another kind of space. The haptic function and close vision presuppose the smooth, which has no background, plane, or contour, but rather changes in direction and local linkages between parts. Conversely, the developed optical function is not content to take striation to a new level of perfection, endowing it with an imaginary universal value and scope; it is also capable of reinstating the smooth, liberating light and modulating color, restoring a kind of aerial haptic space that constitutes the unlimited site of intersection of the planes.[6] In short, the smooth and the striated must be defined in themselves before the relative distinctions between haptic and optical, near and distant, can be derived.

This is where a third couple enters in: "abstract line–concrete line" (in addition to "haptic-optical," "close-distant"). It is Worringer who accorded fundamental importance to the abstract line, seeing it as the very beginning of art or the first expression of an artistic will. Art as abstract machine. Once again, it will doubtless be our inclination to voice in advance the same objections: for Worringer, the abstract line seems to make its first appearance in the crystalline or geometrical imperial Egyptian form, the most rectilinear of forms possible. It is only afterward that it assumes a particular avatar, constituting the "Gothic or Northern line" understood very broadly.[7] For us, on the other hand, the abstract line is fundamentally "Gothic," or rather, nomadic, not rectilinear. Consequently, we do not understand the aesthetic motivation for the abstract line in the same way, or its identity with the beginning of art. Whereas the rectilinear (or "regularly" rounded) Egyptian line is negatively motivated by anxiety in the face of all that passes, flows, or varies, and erects the constancy and eternity of an In-Itself, the nomad line is abstract in an entirely different sense, precisely because it has a multiple orientation and passes *between* points, figures, and contours: it is positively motivated by the smooth space it draws, not by any striation it might perform to ward off anxiety and subordinate the smooth. The abstract line is the affect of smooth spaces, not a feeling of anxiety that calls forth striation. Furthermore, although it is true that art begins only with the abstract line, the reason is not, as Worringer says, that the rectilinear is the first means of breaking with the nonaesthetic imitation of nature upon which the prehistoric, savage, and childish supposedly depend, lacking, as he thinks they do, a "will to art." On the contrary, if prehistoric art is fully art it is precisely because it manipulates the abstract, though nonrectilinear, line: "Primitive art begins with the abstract, and even the pre-

figurative. . . . Art is abstract from the outset, and at its origin could not have been otherwise."[8] In effect, the line is all the more abstract when writing is absent, either because it has yet to develop or only exists outside or alongside. When writing takes charge of abstraction, as it does in empires, the line, already downgraded, necessarily tends to become concrete, even figurative. Children forget how to draw. But in the absence of writing, or when peoples have no need for a writing system of their own because theirs is borrowed from more or less nearby empires (as was the case for the nomads), the line is necessarily abstract; it is necessarily invested with all the power of abstraction, which finds no other outlet. That is why we believe that the different major types of imperial lines—the Egyptian rectilinear line, the Assyrian (or Greek) organic line, the supraphenomenal, encompassing Chinese line—convert the abstract line, rend it from its smooth space, and accord it concrete values. Still, it can be argued that these imperial lines are contemporaneous with the abstract line; the abstract line is no less at the "beginning," inasmuch as it is a pole always presupposed by any line capable of constituting another pole. The abstract line is at the beginning as much because of its historical abstraction as its prehistoric dating. It is therefore a part of the originality or irreducibility of nomad art, even when there is reciprocal interaction, influence, and confrontation with the imperial lines of sedentary art.

The abstract is not directly opposed to the figurative. The figurative as such is not inherent to any "will to art." In fact, we may oppose a figurative line in art to one that is not. The figurative, or imitation and representation, is a consequence, a result of certain characteristics of the line when it assumes a given form. We must therefore define those characteristics first. Take a system in which transversals are subordinated to diagonals, diagonals to horizontals and verticals, and horizontals and verticals to points (even when there are virtual). A system of this kind, which is rectilinear or unilinear regardless of the number of lines, expresses the formal conditions under which a space is striated and the line describes a contour. Such a line is inherently, formally, representative in itself, even if it does not represent anything. On the other hand, *a line that delimits nothing, that describes no contour,* that no longer goes from one point to another but instead passes between points, that is always declining from the horizontal and the vertical and deviating from the diagonal, that is constantly changing direction, a mutant line of this kind that is without outside or inside, form or background, beginning or end and that is as alive as a continuous variation—such a line is truly an abstract line, and describes a smooth space. It is not inexpressive. Yet is true that it does not constitute a stable and symmetrical *form of expression* grounded in a resonance of points and a conjunction of lines. It is nev-

ertheless accompanied by *material traits of expression,* the effects of which multiply step by step. This is what Worringer means when he says that the Gothic line (for us, the nomadic line invested with abstraction) has the power of expression and not of form, that it has repetition as a power, not symmetry as form. Indeed, it is through symmetry that rectilinear systems limit repetition, preventing infinite progression and maintaining the *organic* domination of a central point with radiating lines, as in reflected or star-shaped figures. It is free action, however, which by its essence unleashes the power of repetition as a *machinic* force that multiplies its effect and pursues an infinite movement. Free action proceeds by disjunction and decentering, or at least by peripheral movement: disjointed polythetism instead of symmetrical antithetism.[9] Traits of expression describing a smooth space and connecting with a matter-flow thus should not be confused with striae that convert space and make it a form of expression that grids and organizes matter.

Worringer's finest pages are those in which he contrasts the abstract with the organic. The organic does not designate something represented, but above all the form of representation, and even the feeling that unites representation with a subject (*Einfühlung,* "empathy"). "Formal processes occur within the work of art which correspond to the natural organic tendencies in man."[10] But the rectilinear, the geometrical, cannot be opposed to the organic in this sense. The Greek organic line, which subordinates volume and spatiality, takes over from the Egyptian geometrical line, which reduced them to the plane. The organic, with its symmetry and contours inside and outside, still refers to the rectilinear coordinates of a striated space. The organic body is prolonged by straight lines that attach it to what lies in the distance. Hence the primacy of human beings, or of the face: We are this form of expression itself, simultaneously the supreme organism and the relation of all organisms to metric space in general. The abstract, on the contrary, begins only with what Worringer presents as the "Gothic" avatar. It is this nomadic line that he says is mechanical, but in free action and swirling; it is inorganic, yet alive, and all the more alive for being inorganic. It is distinguished both from the geometrical and the organic. It raises "mechanical" relations to the level of *intuition.* Heads (even a human being's when it is not a face) unravel and coil into ribbons in a continuous process; mouths curl in spirals. Hair, clothes . . . This streaming, spiraling, zigzagging, snaking, feverish line of variation liberates a power of life that human beings had rectified and organisms had confined, and which matter now expresses as the trait, flow, or impulse traversing it. If everything is alive, it is not because everything is organic or organized but, on the contrary, because the organism is a diversion of life. In short, the life in question is in-

organic, germinal, and intensive, a powerful life without organs, a body that is all the more alive for having no organs, everything that passes *between* organisms ("once the natural barriers of organic movement have been overthrown, there are no more limits").[11] Many authors have wished to establish a kind of duality in nomad art between the ornamental abstract line and animal motifs, or more subtly, between the speed with which the line integrates and carries expressive traits, and the slowness or fixity of the animal matter traversed, between a line of flight without beginning or end and an almost immobile swirling. But in the end everyone agrees that it is a question of a single will, or a single becoming.[12] This is not because the abstract engenders organic motifs, by chance or by association. Rather, it is precisely because pure animality is experienced as inorganic, or supraorganic, that it can combine so well with abstraction, and even combine the slowness or heaviness of a matter with the extreme speed of a line that has become entirely spiritual. The slowness belongs to the same world as the extreme speed: relations of speed and slowness between elements, which surpass in every way the movement of an organic form and the determination of organs. The line escapes geometry by a fugitive mobility at the same time as life tears itself free from the organic by a permutating, stationary whirlwind. This vital force specific to the abstraction is what draws smooth space. The abstract line is the affect of smooth space, just as organic representation was the feeling presiding over striated space. The haptic-optical, near-distant distinctions must be subordinated to the distinction between the abstract line and the organic line; they must find their principle in a general confrontation of spaces. The abstract line cannot be defined as geometrical and rectilinear. What then should be termed *abstract* in modern art? A line of variable direction that describes no contour and delimits no form. . . .[13]

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Cinema and Space: The Frame

We will start with very simple definitions, even though they may have to be corrected later. We will call *the determination of a closed system, a relatively closed system which includes everything which is present in the image*—sets, characters and props—*framing*. The frame therefore forms a set which has a great number of parts, that is of elements, which themselves form subsets. It can be broken down. Obviously these parts are themselves in image [*en image*]. This is why Jakobson calls them object-signs, and Pasolini "cinemes." However this terminology suggests comparisons with language (cinemes would be very like phonemes, and the shot would be like a moneme) which do not seem necessary.[1] For, if the frame has an analogue, it is to be found in an information system rather than a linguistic one. The elements are the data [*données*], which are sometimes very numerous, sometimes of limited number. The frame is therefore inseparable from two tendencies: toward saturation or toward rarefaction. The big screen and depth of field in particular have allowed the multiplication of independent data, to the point where a secondary scene appears in the foreground while the main one happens in the background (Wyler), or where you can no longer even distinguish between the principal and the secondary (Altman). On the other hand, rarefied images are produced, either when the whole accent is placed on a single object (in Hitchcock, the glass of milk lit from the inside,

in *Suspicion;* the glowing cigarette end in the black rectangle of the window in *Rear Window*) or when the set is emptied of certain subsets (Antonioni's deserted landscapes; Ozu's vacant interiors). The highest degree of rarefaction seems to be attained with the empty set, when the screen becomes completely black or completely white. Hitchcock gives an example of this in *Spellbound,* when another glass of milk invades the screen, leaving only an empty white image. But, from either side—whether rarefaction or saturation—the frame teaches us that the image is not just given to be seen. It is legible as well as visible. The frame has the implicit function of recording not merely sound information, but also visual information. If we see very few things in an image, this is because we do not know how to read it properly; we evaluate its rarefaction as badly as its saturation. There is a pedagogy of the image, especially with Godard, when this function is made explicit, when the frame serves as an opaque surface of information, sometimes blurred by saturation, sometimes reduced to the empty set, to the white or black screen.[2]

In the second place, the frame has always been geometrical *or* physical, depending on whether it constitutes the closed system in relation to chosen coordinates or in relation to selected variables. The frame is therefore sometimes conceived of as a spatial composition of parallels and diagonals, the constitution of a receptacle such that the blocs [*masses*] and the lines of the image which come to occupy it will find an equilibrium and their movements will find an invariant. It is often like this in Dreyer; Antonioni seems to go to the limit of this geometric conception of the frame which preexists that which is going to be inserted within it (*Eclipse*).[3] Sometimes the frame is conceived as a dynamic construction in act [*en acte*], which is closely linked to the scene, the image, the characters and the objects which fill it. The iris method in Griffith, which isolates a face first of all, then opens and shows the surroundings; Eisenstein's researches inspired by Japanese drawing, which adapt the frame to the theme; Gance's variable screen which opens and closes "according to the dramatic necessities," and like a "visual accordion"—from the very beginning attempts were made to test dynamic variations of the frame. In any case framing is limitation.[4] But, depending on the concept itself the limits can be conceived in two ways, mathematically or dynamically: either as preliminary to the existence of the bodies whose essence they fix, or going as far as the power of existing bodies goes. For ancient philosophy, this was one of the principal features of the opposition between the Platonists and the Stoics.

The frame is also geometric or physical in another way—in relation to the parts of the system that it both separates and brings together. In the first case, the frame is inseparable from rigid geometric distinctions. A very fine

image in Griffith's *Intolerance* cuts the screen along a vertical which corresponds to a wall of the ramparts of Babylon; whilst on the right one sees the king advancing on a higher horizontal, a high walk on the ramparts; on the left the chariots enter and leave, on a lower horizontal, through the gates of the city. Eisenstein studied the effects of the golden section on cinematographic imagery; Dreyer explored horizontals and verticals, symmetries, the high and the low, alternations of black and white; the expressionists developed diagonals and counterdiagonals, pyramidal or triangular figures which agglomerate bodies, crowds, places, the collision of these masses, a whole paving of the frame "which takes on a form like the black and white squares of a chess-board" (Lang's *The Nibelungen* and *Metropolis*).[5] Even light is the subject of a geometrical optic, when it is organized with shadows into two halves, or into alternating rays, as is done by one expressionist tendency (Wiene, Lang). The lines separating the great elements of nature obviously play a fundamental role, as in Ford's skies: the separation of earth and sky, the earth pushed down to the base of the screen. But it also involves water and earth, or the slender line which separates air and water, when water hides an escapee in its depths, or drowns a victim at the limit of the surface (Le Roy's *I am a Fugitive from a Chain Gang* and Newman's *Sometimes a Great Notion*). As a general rule, the powers of nature are not framed in the same way as people or things, and individuals are not framed in the same way as crowds, and subelements are not framed in the same way as terms, so that there are many different frames in the frame. Doors, windows, box office windows, skylights, car windows, mirrors, are all frames in frames. The great directors have particular affinities with particular secondary, tertiary, etc. frames. And it is by this dovetailing of frames that the parts of the set or of the closed system are separated, but also converge and are reunited.

On the other hand, the physical or dynamic conception of the frame produces imprecise sets which are now only divided into zones or bands. The frame is no longer the object of geometric divisions, but of physical gradations. The parts of the set are now intensive parts, and the set itself is a mixture which is transmitted through all the parts, through all the degrees of shadow and of light, through the whole light-darkness scale (Wegener, Murnau). This was the expressionist optic's other tendency, although some directors, both inside and outside expressionism, participate in both. It is the hour when it is no longer possible to distinguish between sunrise and sunset, air and water, water and earth, in the great mixture of a marsh or a tempest.[6] Here, it is by degrees of mixing that the parts become distinct or confused in a continual transformation of values. The set cannot divide into parts without qualitatively changing each time: it is neither divisible nor

indivisible, but "dividual" [*dividuel*]. Admittedly this was already the case in the geometric conception—there the dovetailing of frames indicated the qualitative changes. The cinematographic image is always dividual. This is because, in the final analysis, the screen, as the frame of frames, gives a common standard of measurement to things which do not have one—long shots of countryside and close-ups of the face, an astronomical system and a single drop of water—parts which do not have the same denominator of distance, relief, or light. In all these senses the frame insures a deterritorialization of the image.

In the fourth place, the frame is related to an angle of framing. This is because the closed set is itself an optical system which refers to a point of view on the set of parts. Of course, the point of view can be—or appear to be—bizarre or paradoxical: the cinema shows extraordinary points of view—at ground level, or from high to low, from low to high, etc. But they seem to be subject to a pragmatic rule which is not just valid for the narrative cinema: to avoid falling into an empty aestheticism they must be explained, they must be revealed as normal and regular—either from the point of view of a more comprehensive set which includes the first, or from the point of view of an initially unseen, not given, element of the first set. In Jean Mitry we find a description of a sequence which is exemplary here (Lubitsch's *The Man I Killed*); the camera, in a lateral midheight traveling shot, shows a row of spectators seen from behind and tries to glide to the front, then stops at a one-legged man whose missing leg provides a vista on the scene—a passing military parade. It thus frames the good leg, the crutch, and, under the stump, the parade. Here we have an eminently bizarre angle of framing. But another shot shows another cripple behind the first, one with no legs at all, who sees the parade in precisely this way, and who actualizes or accomplishes the preceding point of view.[7] It can therefore be said that the angle of framing was justified. However, this pragmatic rule is not always valid, or even when it is valid, it is not the whole story. Bonitzer has constructed the interesting concept of "deframing" [*décadrage*] in order to designate these abnormal points of view which are not the same as an oblique perspective or a paradoxical angle, and refer to another dimension of the image.[8] We find examples of this in Dreyer's cutting frames; faces cut by the edge of the screen in *The Passion of Joan of Arc*. But, we see it even more in empty spaces like those of Ozu, which frame a dead zone, or in disconnected spaces as in Bresson, whose parts are not connected and are beyond all narrative or more generally pragmatic justification, perhaps tending to confirm that the visual image has a legible function beyond its visible function.

There remains the out-of-field [*hors-champ*]. This is not a negation; nei-

ther is it sufficient to define it by the noncoincidence between two frames, one visual and the other sound (for example, in Bresson, when the sound testifies to what is not seen, and "relays" the visual instead of duplicating it).[9] The out-of-field refers to what is neither seen nor understood, but is nevertheless perfectly present. This presence is indeed a problem and itself refers to two new conceptions of framing. If we return to Bazin's alternative of mask or frame, we see that sometimes the frame works like a mobile mask according to which every set is extended into a larger homogeneous set with which it communicates, and sometimes it works as a pictorial frame which isolates a system and neutralizes its environment. This duality is most clearly expressed in Renoir and Hitchcock; in the former space and action always go beyond the limits of the frame which only takes elements from an area; in the latter the frame "confines all the components," and acts as a frame for a tapestry rather than one for a picture or a play. But, if a partial set only communicates formally with its out-of-field through the positive characteristics of the frame and the reframing, it is nonetheless true that a system which is closed—even one which is very closed up—only apparently suppresses the out-of-field, and in its own way gives it an even more decisive importance.[10] All framing determines an out-of-field. There are not two types of frame only one of which would refer to the out-of-field; there are rather two very different aspects of the out-of-field, each of which refers to a mode of framing.

The divisibility of content means that the parts belong to various sets, which constantly subdivide into subsets or are themselves the subset of a larger set, on to infinity. This is why content is defined both by the tendency to constitute closed systems and by the fact that this tendency never reaches completion. Every closed system also communicates. There is always a thread to link the glass of sugared water to the solar system, and any set whatever to a larger set. This is the first sense of what we call the out-of-field: when a set is framed, therefore seen, there is always a larger set, or another set with which the first forms a larger one, and which can in turn be seen, on condition that it gives rise to a new out-of-field, etc. The set of all these sets forms a homogeneous continuity, a universe or a plane [*plan*] of genuinely unlimited content. But it is certainly not a "whole," although this plane or these larger and larger sets necessarily have an indirect relationship with the whole. We know the insoluble contradictions we fall into when we treat the set of all sets as a whole. It is not because the notion of the whole is devoid of sense; but it is not a set and does not have parts. It is rather that which prevents each set, however big it is, from closing in on itself, and that which forces it to extend itself into a larger set. The whole is therefore like thread that traverses set and gives each one the possibility, which is neces-

sarily realized, of communicating with another, to infinity. Thus the whole is the open, and relates back to time or even to spirit rather than to content and to space. Whatever their relationship, one should therefore not confuse the extension of sets into each other with the opening of the whole which passes into each one. A closed system is never absolutely closed; but on the one hand it is connected in space to other systems by a more or less "fine" thread, and on the other hand it is integrated or reintegrated into a whole which transmits a duration to it along this thread.[11] Hence, it is perhaps not sufficient to distinguish, with Burch, a concrete space from an imaginary space in the out-of-field, the imaginary becomes concrete when it in turn passes into a field, when it thus ceases to be out-of-field. In itself, or as such, the out-of-field already has two qualitatively different aspects: a relative aspect by means of which a closed system refers in space to a set which is not seen, and which can in turn be seen, even if this gives rise to a new unseen set, on to infinity; and an absolute aspect by which the closed system opens onto a duration which is immanent to the whole universe, which is no longer a set and does not belong to the order of the visible.[12] *Deframings [décadrages] which are not "pragmatically" justified refer to precisely this second aspect as their raison d'être.*

In one case, the out-of-field designates that which exists elsewhere, to one side or around; in the other case, the out-of-field testifies to a more disturbing presence, one which cannot even be said to exist, but rather to "insist" or "subsist," a more radical elsewhere, outside homogeneous space and time. Undoubtedly these two aspects of the out-of-field intermingle constantly. But, when we consider a framed image as a closed system, we can say that one aspect prevails over the other, depending on the nature of the "thread." The thicker the thread which links the seen set to other unseen sets, the better the out-of-field fulfills its first function, which is the adding of space to space. But, when the thread is very fine, it is not content to reinforce the closure of the frame or to eliminate the relation with the outside. It certainly does not bring about a complete isolation of the relatively closed system, which would be impossible. But, the finer it is—the further duration descends into the system like a spider—the more effectively the out-of-field fulfills its other function, which is that of introducing the transspatial and the spiritual into the system which is never perfectly closed. Dreyer made this into an ascetic method: the more the image is spatially closed, even reduced to two dimensions, the greater is its capacity to *open itself* on to a fourth dimension which is time, and on to a fifth which is spirit, the spiritual decision of Jeanne or Gertrud.[13] When Claude Ollier defines Antonioni's geometric frame, he not only says that the awaited character is not yet visible (the first function of the out-of-field) but also that

he is momentarily in a zone of emptiness, "white on white which is impossible to film," and truly invisible (the second function). And, in another way, Hitchcock's frames are not content to neutralize the environment, to push the closed system as far as possible and to enclose the maximum number of components in the image; at the same time they make the image into a *mental image*, open (as we will see) on to a play of relations which are purely thought and which weave a whole. This is why we said that there is always out-of-field, even in the most closed image. And that there are always simultaneously the two aspects of the out-of-field: the actualizable relation with other sets, and the virtual relation with the whole. But in the one case the second relation—the most mysterious—is reached indirectly, on to infinity, through the intermediary and the extension of the first, in the succession of images; in the other case it is reached more directly, in the image itself, and by limitation and neutralization of the first.

Let us summarize the results of this analysis of the frame. Framing is the art of choosing the parts of all kinds which became part of a set. This set is a closed system, relatively and artificially closed. The closed system determined by the frame can be considered in relation to the data that it communicates to the spectators: it is "informatic," and saturated or rarefied. Considered in itself and as limitation, it is geometric or dynamic-physical. Considered in the nature of its parts, it is still geometric or physical and dynamic. It is an optical system when it is considered in relation to the point of view, to the angle of framing: it is then pragmatically justified, or lays claim to a higher justification. Finally, it determines an out-of-field, sometimes in the form of a larger set which extends it, sometimes in the form of a whole into which it is integrated.

21

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Cinema and Time

A purely optical and sound situation does not extend into action, any more than it is induced by an action. It makes us grasp, it is supposed to make us grasp, something intolerable and unbearable. Not a brutality as nervous aggression, an exaggerated violence that can always be extracted from the sensory-motor relations in the action-image. Nor is it a matter of scenes of terror, although there are sometimes corpses and blood. It is matter of something too powerful, or too unjust, but sometimes also too beautiful, and which henceforth outstrips our sensory-motor capacities. *Stromboli:* a beauty which is too great for us, like too strong a pain. It can be a limit-situation, the irruption of the volcano, but also the most banal, a plain factory, a wasteland. In Godard's *Les carabiniers* the girl militant recites a few revolutionary slogans, so many clichés; but she is so beautiful, of a beauty which is unbearable for her torturers who have to cover up her face with a handkerchief. And this handkerchief, lifted again by breath and whisper ("Brothers, brothers, brothers . . ."), itself becomes unbearable for us the viewers. In any event something has become too strong in the image. Romanticism had already set out this aim for itself: grasping the intolerable or the unbearable, the empire of poverty, and thereby becoming visionary, to produce a means of knowledge and action out of pure vision.[1]

Nevertheless, are there not equal amounts of fantasy and dreaming in

what we claim to see as there are of objective apprehending? Moreover, do we not have a subjective sympathy for the unbearable, an empathy which permeates what we see? But this means that the unbearable itself is inseparable from a revelation or an illumination, as from a third eye. Fellini has strong sympathies with decadence, only insofar as he prolongs it, extends its range, "to the intolerable," and reveals beneath the movements, faces, and gestures a subterranean or extraterrestrial world, "the tracking shot becoming a means of peeling away, proof of the unreality of movement," and the cinema becoming, no longer an undertaking of recognition [*reconnaisance*], but of knowledge [*connaisance*], "a science of visual impressions, forcing us to forget our own logic and retinal habits."[2] Ozu himself is not the guardian of traditional or reactionary values, he is the greatest critic of daily life. He picks out the intolerable from the insignificant itself, provided that he can extend the force of a contemplation that is full of sympathy or pity across daily life. The important thing is always that the character or the viewer, and the two together, become visionaries. The purely optical and sound situation gives rise to a seeing function, at once fantasy and report, criticism and compassion, whilst sensory-motor situations, no matter how violent, are directed to a pragmatic visual function which "tolerates" or "puts up with" practically anything, from the moment it becomes involved in a system of actions and reactions.

In Japan and Europe, Marxist critics have attacked these films and their characters for being too passive and negative, in turn bourgeois, neurotic or marginal, and for having replaced modifying action with a "confused" vision.[3] And it is true that, in cinema, characters of the trip/ballad are unconcerned, even by what happens to them: whether in the style of Rossellini, the foreign woman who discovers the island, the bourgeoise woman who discovers the factory; or in the style of Godard, the Pierrot-le-fou generation. But it is precisely the weakness of the motor-linkages, the weak connections, that are capable of releasing huge forces of disintegration. These are the characters with a strange vibrance in Rossellini, strangely well informed in Godard and Rivette. In the West as in Japan, they are in the grip of a mutation, they are themselves mutants. On the subject of *Two or Three Things* . . . , Godard says that *to describe* is to observe mutations.[4] Mutation of Europe after the war, mutation of an Americanized Japan, mutation of France in 1968: it is not the cinema that turns away from politics, it becomes completely political, but in another way. One of the two women strollers in Rivettes's *Pont du Nord* has all the characteristics of an unforeseeable mutant: she has at first the capacity of detecting the Maxes, the members of the organization for enslaving the world, before going through a metamorphosis inside a cocoon, then being drafted into their ranks. Similarly with the ambi-

guity of the *Petit soldat*. A new type of character for a new cinema. It is because what happens to them does not belong to them and only half concerns them, because they know how to extract from the event the part that cannot be reduced to what happens: that part of inexhaustible possibility that constitutes the unbearable, the intolerable, the visionary's part. A new type of actor was needed: not simply the nonprofessional actors that neorealism had revived at the beginning, but what might be called professional nonactors, or, better, "actor-mediums," capable of seeing and showing rather than acting, and either remaining dumb or undertaking some never-ending conversation, rather than of replying or following a dialogue (such as, in France, Bulle Ogier or Jean-Pierre Léaud).[5]

Neither everyday nor limit-situations are marked by anything rare or extraordinary. It is just a volcanic island of poor fishermen. It is just a factory, a school. . . . We mix with all that, even death, even accidents, in our normal life or on holidays. We see, and we more or less experience, a powerful organization of poverty and oppression. And we are precisely not without sensory-motor schemata for recognizing such things, for putting up with and approving of them and for behaving ourselves subsequently, taking into account our situation, our capabilities and our tastes. We have schemata for turning away when it is too unpleasant, for prompting resignation when it is terrible and for assimilating when it is too beautiful. It should be pointed out here that even metaphors are sensory-motor evasions, and furnish us with something to say when we no longer know what do to: they are specific schemata of an affective nature. Now this is what a cliché is. A cliché is a sensory-motor image of the thing. As Bergson says, we do not perceive the thing or the image in its entirety, we always perceive less of it, we perceive only what we are interested in perceiving, or rather what it is in our interest to perceive, by virtue of our economic interests, ideological beliefs, and psychological demands. We therefore normally perceive only clichés. But, if our sensory-motor schemata jam or break, then a different type of image can appear: a pure optical-sound image, the whole image without metaphor, brings out the thing in itself, literally, in its excess of horror or beauty, in its radical or unjustifiable character, because it no longer has to be "justified," for better or for worse. . . . The factory creature gets up, and we can no longer say "Well, people have to work. . . ." *I thought I was seeing convicts:* the factory is a prison, school is a prison, literally, not metaphorically. You do not have the image of a prison following one of a school: that would simply be pointing out a resemblance, a confused relation between two clear images. On the contrary, it is necessary to discover the separate elements and relations that elude us at the heart of an unclear image: to show *how and in what sense* school is a prison, housing estates are examples of prostitution,

bankers killers, photographs tricks—literally, without metaphor.[6] This is the method of Godard's *Comment ça va:* not being content to enquire if "things are OK" or if "things are not OK" between two photos, but "how are things" [*comment ça va*] for each one and for the two together. This was the problem with which volume 1 ended: tearing a real image from clichés.

On the one hand, the image constantly sinks to the state of cliché: because it is introduced into sensory-motor linkages, because it itself organizes or induces these linkages, because we never perceive everything that is in the image, because it is made for that purpose (so that we do not perceive everything, so that the cliché hides the image from us. . .). Civilization of the image? In fact, it is a civilization of the cliché where all the powers have an interest in hiding images from us, not necessarily in hiding the same thing from us, but in hiding something in the image. On the other hand, at the same time, the image constantly attempts to break through the cliché, to get out of the cliché. There is no knowing how far a real image may lead: the importance of becoming visionary or seer. A change of conscience or of heart is not enough (although there is some of this, as in the heroine's heart in *Europe 51,* but, if there were nothing more, everything would quickly return to the state of cliché, other clichés would simply have been added on). Sometimes it is necessary to restore the lost parts, to rediscover everything that cannot be seen in the image, everything that has been removed to make it "interesting." But sometimes, on the contrary, it is necessary to make holes, to introduce voids and white spaces, to rarify the image, by suppressing many things that have been added to make us believe that we are seeing everything. It is necessary to make a division or make emptiness in order to find the whole again.

What is difficult is to know in what respect an optical and sound image is not itself a cliché, at best a photo. We are not thinking simply of the way in which these images provide more cliché as soon as they are repeated by authors who use them as formulas. But is it not the case that the creators themselves sometimes have the idea that the new image has to stand up against the cliché on its own ground, make a higher bid than the postcard, add to it and parody it, as a better way of getting over the problem (Robbe-Grillet, Daniel Schmid)? The creators invent obsessive framings, empty or disconnected spaces, even still lifes: in a certain sense they stop movement and rediscover the power of the fixed shot, but is this not to resuscitate the cliché that they aim to challenge? Enough, for victory, to parody the cliché, not to make holes in it and empty it. It is not enough to disturb the sensory-motor connections. It is necessary to *combine* the optical-sound image with the enormous forces that are not those of a simply intellectual consciousness, nor of the social one, but of a profound, vital intution.[7]

Pure optical and sound images, the fixed shot and the montage-cut, do define and imply a beyond of movement. But they do not strictly stop it, neither in the characters nor even in the camera. They mean that movement should not be perceived in a sensory-motor image, but grasped and thought in another type of image. The movement-image has not disappeared, but now exists only as the first dimension of an image that never stops growing in dimensions. We are not talking about dimensions of space, since the image may be flat, without depth, and through this very fact assumes all the more dimensions or powers which go beyond space. Three of these growing powers can be briefly summarized. First, while the movement-image and its sensory-motor signs were in a relationship only with an indirect image *of* time (dependent on montage), the pure optical and sound image, its opsigns and sonsigns, are directly connected to a time-image which has subordinated movement. It is this reversal which means that time is no longer the measure of movement but movement is the perspective of time: it constitutes a whole cinema of time, with a new conception and new forms of montage (Welles, Resnais). In the second place, at the same time as the eye takes up a clairvoyant function, the sound as well as visual elements of the image enter into internal relations which means that the whole image has to be "read," no less than seen, readable as well as visible. For the eye of the seer as of the soothsayer, it is the "literalness" of the perceptible world which constitutes it like a book. Here again all reference of the image of description to an object assumed to be independent does not disappear, but is now subordinated to the internal elements and relations which tend to replace the object and to delete it where it does appear, continually displacing it. Godard's formula, "it isn't blood, it's some red," stops being only pictural and takes on a sense specific to the cinema. The cinema is going to become an analytic of the image, implying a new conception of cutting, a whole "pedagogy" which will operate in different ways; for instance, in Ozu's work, in Rossellini's late period, in Godard's middle period, or in the Straubs. Finally, the fixity of the camera does not represent the only alternative to movement. Even when it is mobile, the camera is no longer content sometimes to follow the characters' movement, sometimes itself to undertake movements of which they are merely the object, but in every case it subordinates description of a space to the functions of thought. This is not the simple distinction between the subjective and the objective, the real and the imaginary, it is on the contrary their indiscernibility which will endow the camera with a rich array of functions, and entail a new conception of the frame and reframings. Hitchcock's premonition will come true: a camera-consciousness which would no longer be defined by the movements

it is able to follow or make, but by the mental connections it is able to enter into. And it becomes questioning, responding, objecting, provoking, theorematizing, hypothesizing, experimenting, in accordance with the open list of logical conjunctions ("or," "therefore," "if," "because," "actually," "although," . . .), or in accordance with the functions of thought in a *cinéma-vérité,* which, as Rouch says, means rather truth of cinema [*vérité du cinéma*].

This is the triple reversal which defines a beyond of movement. The image had to free itself from sensory-motor links; it had to stop being action-image in order to become a pure optical, sound (and tactile) image. But the latter was not enough: it had to enter into relations with yet other forces, so that it could itself escape from a world of clichés. It had to open up to powerful and direct revelations, those of the time-image, of the readable image and the thinking image. It is in this way that opsigns and sonsigns refer back to "chronosigns," "lectosigns," and "noosigns."[8]

Antonioni, considering the evolution of neorealism in relation to *Outcry,* said that he was tending to do without a bicycle—De Sica's bicycle, naturally. Bicycleless neorealism replaces the last quest involving movement (the trip) with a specific weight of time operating inside characters and excavating them from within (the chronicle).[9] Antonioni's art is like the intertwining of consequences, of temporal sequences and effects which flow from events out-of-field. Already in *Story of a Love Affair* the investigation has the result, of itself, of provoking the outcome of a first love affair, and the effect of making two oaths of murder ring out in the future and in the past. It is a whole world of chronosigns, which would be enough to cast doubt on the false evidence according to which the cinematographic image is necessarily in the present. If we are sick with Eros, Antonioni said, it is because Eros is himself sick; and he is sick not just because he is old and worn out in his content, but because he is caught in the pure form of a time which is torn between an already determined past and a deadend future. For Antonioni, there is no other sickness than the chronic. Chronos is sickness itself. This is why chronosigns are inseparable from lectosigns, which force us to read so many symptoms in the image, that is, to treat the optical and sound image like something that is also readable. Not only the optical and the sound, but the present and the past, and the here and the elsewhere, constitute internal elements and relations which must be deciphered, and can be understood only in a progression analogous to that of a reading: from *Story of a Love Affair,* indeterminate spaces are given a scale only later on, in which Burch calls a "continuity grasped through discrepancy" [*raccord à appréhension décalée*], closer to a reading than to a perception.[10] And later, Antonioni the colorist would be able to treat variations of colors as symptoms, and mono-

chrome as the chronic sign which wins a world, thanks to a whole play of deliberate modifications. But *Story of a Love Affair* already exhibits a "camera autonomy" when it stops following the movement of the characters or directing its own movement at them, to carry out constant reframings as functions of thought, noosigns expressing the logical conjunctions of sequel, consequence, or even intention.

22

Painting and Sensation

There are two ways of transcending figuration (whether illustrative or narrative): toward abstract form or toward figure. Cézanne alluded to the way toward figure by the term ***sensation.*** Figure is the sensible form related to sensation; it acts immediately on the nervous system which is of the flesh. Abstract form on the other hand is directed to the brain, and acts through the brain, closer to the bone. Certainly Cézanne did not invent the path of sensation in painting, but he gave it an unprecedented status. Sensation is the opposite of the facile, the ready-made, and the cliché, but also of the "sensational," the spontaneous, etc. One face of sensation is turned toward the subject (the nervous system, vital movement, "instinct," "temperament," an entire vocabulary which is common to both naturalism and Cézanne); the other face is turned toward the object ("the fact," the place, the event). Or rather, sensation has no faces at all, it is indissolubly both things, it is being-in-the-world, in the phenomenological sense. At the same time, I ***become*** in sensation, and something ***happens*** through sensation, one through the other and one in the other.[1] And, in the last analysis, it is the same body which, being both subject and object, gives and receives sensation. As a spectator, I experience sensation only by entering the painting and by having access to the unity of the sensing and the sensed. This is Cézanne's lesson that goes beyond impressionism: sensation is not the

"free" or disembodied play of light and color (impressions), rather sensation is in the body, even if this is the body of an apple. Color and sensation are in the body, and not in the sky. Sensation is that which is painted. That which is painted in the painting is the body, not insofar as it is represented as object but insofar as it is lived as experiencing a particular sensation (what Lawrence, in discussing Cézanne, called "the being-apple [*l'être pommesque*] of the apple").[2]

This is the general thread that links Bacon to Cézanne: *to paint sensation* or, as Bacon says, using words that closely resemble Cézanne's, to record the fact. "It's a very, very close and difficult thing to know why some paint comes across directly onto the nervous system."[3] We might say that there are only obvious differences between these two painters: Cézanne's world as landscape and still lives, even before the portraits that are treated as landscapes; and the inverse hierarchy in Bacon, which gives up still lives and landscapes.[4] The world of nature for Cézanne and the world as artifact for Bacon. But precisely, should not these very obvious differences be ascribed to "sensation" and "temperament," in other words, should they not be inscribed within that which links Bacon to Cézanne, or within that which is common to both? When Bacon speaks of sensation, he means two things that are very close to what Cézanne meant. Negatively, he says that form as it relates to sensation (figure) is the opposite of form as it relates to an object that the form is supposed to represent (figuration). According to Valéry's words, sensation is that which is directly transmitted and which avoids the detour and the boredom of a story to be told.[5] And positively, Bacon continually says that sensation is that which passes from one "order" to another, from one "level" to another, or from one "domain" to another. This is why sensation is the master of deformations or rather the agent of bodily deformations. In this respect, we can make the same criticism of figurative and of abstract painting: they pass through the brain, they do not act directly upon the nervous system, they do not have access to sensation, they do not liberate the figure—all of this as a result of the fact that they remain at *one and the same level.*[6] They can bring about transformations or form but they do not achieve bodily deformations. We will have the opportunity to see exactly how much Cézannian Bacon is, even more so than if he were a disciple of Cézanne.

What does Bacon mean in his interviews when he speaks of "orders of sensation," "sensitive levels," "sensible domains," or "moving sequences"? We might initially believe that a specified sensation corresponds to each order, level, or domain: each sensation would thus be one term in a sequence or in a series. For example, Rembrandt's series of self-portraits carries us along into different sensible domains.[7] And it is true that painting, and es-

pecially Bacon's painting, proceeds through series: series of crucifixions, series of the pope, series of portraits, series of self-portraits, series of the mouth, of the mouth which screams or smiles. . . . Moreover, the series can be one of simultaneity, as in the case of the triptychs that make at least three orders or levels coexist. The series can be closed when it has a contrasting composition, but it can be open when it is continued or continuable beyond three.[8] All of this is true. But the point is that it would not be true if there were not something else as well which already applies to each painting, figure, or sensation.

Each painting or figure is a moving sequence or a series (and not only one term within a series). Each sensation is at diverse levels, of different orders or in several domains. Therefore, there are not sensations of different orders but, rather, different orders of one and the same sensation. It is characteristic of sensation to encompass a constitutive difference of level and a plurality of constituting domains. Every sensation and every figure is already an "accumulated" or "coagulated" sensation like a figure in limestone.[9] Hence the irreducibly synthetic character of sensation. We can ask henceforth where this synthetic character comes from, by virtue of which each material sensation has several levels, orders, or domains. What are these levels and what makes up their sensing and sensed unity?

A first response must obviously be rejected. That which would make up the material and synthetic unity of sensation would be the represented object, or the thing which is figured. This is theoretically impossible since figure is opposed to figuration. But even if we observe practically, as Bacon does, that something is nevertheless figured (for example, a screaming pope), this secondary figuration rests on the neutralization of every primary figuration. Bacon himself formulates this problem, which concerns the inevitable retention of a practical figuration at the moment when figure affirms its intention to break away from the figurative. We will see how he resolves this problem. In any case, Bacon has always wanted to eliminate the "sensational," that is, the primary figuration of that which provokes a violent sensation. This is what the following expression means: "I wanted to paint the scream more than the horror." When he paints the screaming pope, there is nothing that causes horror, and the curtain in front of the pope is not only a way of isolating and shielding him from view; it is rather the way in which the pope himself sees nothing and screams *in the presence of the invisible*. Being neutralized, the horror is multiplied because it is induced from the scream, and not vice versa. Certainly, it is not easy to renounce the horror, or the primary figuration. It is sometimes necessary to turn against our own instincts and to renounce our experience. Bacon carries all the violence of Ireland with him, as well as the violence of Nazism and the violence

of war. He goes through the horror of the crucifixions, and especially of the fragment of crucifixion, of the head-meat or of the bleeding suitcase. But when he judges his own paintings, he turns away from all those that are too "sensational," because the figuration that subsists in them reconstitutes, albeit secondarily, a scene of horror, and from then on reintroduces a story to be told: even bullfights are too dramatic. As soon as horror is present, a story is reintroduced, and we botched the scream. In the last analysis, the maximum of violence will be in the sitting or crouching figures which are not undergoing any torture or brutality, to whom nothing visible is happening and which realize even better the power of the painting. The reason for this is that violence has two very different meanings: "When talking about the violence of paint, it's nothing to do with the violence of war."[10] To the violence of that which is represented (the sensational, the cliché) the violence of sensation is opposed. The latter is identical with its direct action upon the nervous system, the levels through which it passes and the domains which it traverses: being itself figure, it owes nothing to the nature of the object which is figured. It is as in Artaud: cruelty is not what we believe, and it depends less and less on that which is represented.

A second interpretation must also be rejected, which would confuse the levels of sensation, that is, the valencies of sensation, with an ambivalence of feeling. Sylvester suggests at one moment that "since you talk about recording different levels of feeling in one image . . . you may be expressing at one and the same time a love and a hostility towards them . . . both a caress and an assault." To which, Bacon responds that this is "too logical. I don't think that's the way things work. I think it goes to a deeper thing: how do I feel I can make this image more immediately real to myself? That's all."[11] In fact, the psychoanalytic hypothesis of ambivalence has not only the disadvantage of localizing sensation in the spectator who looks at the painting; even if we presuppose an ambivalence of figure itself, it would involve feelings that the figure would experience in relation to the represented things or in relation to a story being told. Now there are no feelings in Bacon's work. There is nothing but affects, that is, "sensations" and "instincts" according to the formula of naturalism. And sensation is that which determines the instinct at a particular moment, just as the instinct is the passage from one sensation to another, the search for the "best" sensation (not the most agreeable, but the one that fills the flesh at a particular moment of its descent, contraction, or dilation).

There is a third, more interesting hypothesis. This is the motor hypothesis. The levels of sensation would be like arrests or snapshots of motion synthetically recomposing the movement in its continuity, speed, and violence: for example, synthetic cubism, futurism, or Duchamp's *Nude*. And it

is true that Bacon is fascinated by the decompositions of movement in Muybridge and makes use of them as his material. It is also true that he obtains in his work violent movements of great intensity, such as the 180 degree turn of George Dyer's head towards Lucian Freud. And more generally, Bacon's figures are often frozen in the middle of a strange stroll: for example, *Man carrying a child* or the *Van Gogh*. The insulation of the figure, the circle and the parallelepiped, themselves become motors, and Bacon does not renounce the project that a mobile sculpture would achieve more easily: in this case, the contour or base can be moved along the armature so that the figure goes for a daily "stroll."[12] But it is precisely the nature of this stroll that can inform us of the status of movement in Bacon's work. Never have Beckett and Bacon been closer to each other, and this is a stroll after the fashion of the strolls of Beckett's characters, who also trundle along without departing from their circle or parallelepiped. It is the stroll of the paralytic child and his mother clinging onto the edge of the balustrade in a curious race for the handicapped. It is the about-face of *The Turning Figure*. It is George Dyer's bicycle ride, which resembles closely that of Moritz's hero: "the vision was limited to the small piece of ground that he could see around him . . . the end of all things seemed to him to be at the end of his race *toward a certain point*." Therefore, even when the contour is displaced, movement is less this displacement than the amoebian exploration through which figure surrenders itself to the contour. Movement does not explain sensation; it is rather explained by the elasticity of sensation, by its *vis elastica*. According to Beckett's or Kafka's law, there is immobility beyond movement: beyond standing up, there is sitting down, and beyond sitting down, lying down in order to be finally dissipated. The true acrobat is the one who is immobile within the circle. The large feet of the figures often do not lend themselves to walking; they are almost clubfeet (and armchairs sometimes seem to resemble shoes for clubfeet). In short, it is not movement that explains the levels of sensation; rather levels of sensation explain that which subsists of movement. And, in fact, Bacon is not exactly interested in movement, although his painting makes movement very intense and violent. But, in the last analysis, it is a movement in one place or a spasm that reveals an entirely different problem characteristic of Bacon: *the action of invisible forces on the body* (hence, the bodily deformations for which this more profound cause is responsible). In the 1973 triptych the movement of translation occurs between two spasms, between two movements of contraction in one place.

There may still be another, "phenomenological," hypothesis. The levels of sensation would really be sensible domains referring to different sensory organs; but precisely each level, each domain would have a way of referring

to others, independently of their common represented object. Between a color, a taste, a touch, a smell, a noise, a weight, there would be an existential communication that would constitute the (nonrepresentative) moment of "pathos" of *the* sensation. For example, in Bacon's *Bullfights* we hear the hoofbeats of the animal; in the 1976 triptych we touch the quivering of the bird that plunges into the place where the head should be, and each time that meat is represented, we touch it, smell it, eat it, weigh it, just like in Soutine's work; and the portrait of Isabel Rawthorne causes a head to emerge to which ovals and features are added in order to widen the eyes, enlarge the nostrils, lengthen the mouth, and mobilize the skin in a joint exercise of all organs at once. It is thus the painter's task to *make us see* a kind of original unity of the senses and to make a multisensible figure appear visibly. But this operation is only possible if the sensation of a particular domain (here, visual sensation) directly seizes a vital power that overflows all domains and traverses them. This power is rhythm, which is deeper than vision, hearing, etc. And rhythm appears as music when it invests the auditory level, and as painting when it invests the visual level.

This is the "logic of the senses" as Cézanne said, which is neither rational, nor cerebral. The ultimate then is the relation between rhythm and sensation, which places in each sensation the levels and domains through which it passes. And this rhythm runs through a painting as it runs through music. It is diastole-systole: the world that captures me by closing in on me, the "ego" that opens to the world and opens the world to itself.[13] It is said of Cézanne that he placed a precisely vital rhythm in visual sensation. Must we say the same thing about Bacon, with his coexistence of movements when the flat tint closes on figure and when figure contracts or rather expands in order to rejoin the flat tint, to the point of merging with it? Could it be that Bacon's artificial and closed world reveals the same vital movement as Cézanne's nature? These are not empty words, when Bacon declares that he is cerebrally pessimistic, but nervously optimistic, with an optimism that only believes in life.[14] Is this the same temperament as Cézanne's? Bacon's formula would then be figuratively pessimistic, yet figurally optimistic.

Trans. Constantin Boundas and Jacqueline Code

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The Diagram

We do not listen enough to what painters say. They say that the painter is *already* in the canvas. Here, he encounters all the figurative and probabilistic data that occupy and preoccupy the canvas. An entire battle occurs in the canvas between the painter and his data. There is thus preparatory work that fully belongs to painting and that nevertheless precedes the act of painting. This preparatory work may take the form of sketches, but not necessarily, and even sketches do not replace it (Bacon, like many contemporary painters, does not make sketches). This preparatory work is invisible and silent, but nevertheless very intense. Therefore, the act of painting emerges as an *après-coup* (hysteresis) in relation to this work.

What is this act of painting? Bacon defines it as follows: making marks at random (brushstrokes-lines); cleaning, sweeping, or wiping places or areas (daubs-color); throwing paint at varied angles and speeds. Now this act (or acts) presuppose that there are already figurative data on the canvas (and also within the painter's head) that are more or less virtual or more or less actual. These data will be precisely demarcated, cleaned, swept, and wiped, or covered over, by the act of painting. For example, we lengthen a mouth, we make it go from one side of the head to the other; we clean part of a head with a brush, a scrubbing brush, a sweeping brush, or a rag. This is what Bacon calls a *Diagram;* it is as if, all of a sudden, we introduced a Sahara, a

Sahara region in the head; it is as if we stretched over it a rhinoceros skin seen through a microscope; it is as if we tore apart two parts of the head by means of an ocean; it is as if we changed the unit of measurement and replaced figurative units with micrometric or even cosmic units.[1] A Sahara, a rhinoceros skin, this is the diagram suddenly stretched out. It is like a *catastrophe* happening unexpectedly to the canvas, inside figurative or probabilistic data.

It is like the emergence of another world. For these marks or brushstrokes are irrational, involuntary, accidental, free, and random. They are nonrepresentative, nonillustrative, and nonnarrative. No longer are they significative or signifying: they are asignifying features. They are features of sensation, but of confused sensations (the confused sensations we bring with us when we are born, as Cézanne said). And above all, they are manual features. It is here that the painter works with a rag, brushes, scrubbing brush, or sweeping brush: it is here that he throws paint with his hands.[2] It is as if the hand assumed an independence and passed into the service of other forces, tracing marks that no longer depend on our will or on our vision. These almost blind, manual marks reveal the intrusion of another world into the visual world of figuration. To some extent, they remove the painting from the optical organization that already governed it, and made it figurative in advance. The painter's hand is interposed in order to shake its own dependence and to break up the sovereign, optical organization: we can no longer see anything, as in a catastrophe or chaos.

This is the act of painting or the turning point of the painting. There are indeed two ways in which the painting can fail, once visually and once manually. We can remain entangled in figurative data and in the optical organization of representation, but we can also fail with the diagram, spoil it, overload it to such an extent that it is rendered inoperative (this is another way of remaining within the figurative: we will have mutilated or mistreated the cliché).[3] The diagram is thus the operative set of lines and areas, of asignifying and nonrepresentative brushstrokes and daubs of color. And the operation of the diagram, its function, as Bacon says, is to "suggest." Or, more rigorously, it is the introduction of "possibilities of fact": an expression that resembles Wittgenstein's language.[4] Brushstrokes and daubs of color must break away from figuration all the more since they are destined to give us figure. This is why they themselves are not sufficient; they must be "utilized": they outline possibilities of fact, but do not yet constitute a fact (pictorial fact). In order to be converted into fact, in order to evolve into figure, they must be reinjected into the visual whole; but thus, precisely, under the influence of these marks, the visual whole is no longer that of an optical or-

ganization; it would give the eye a different power, as well as an object which would no longer be figurative.

The diagram is the operative set of brushstrokes and daubs of color, lines, and areas. For example, the diagram of Van Gogh: it is the set of straight and curved cross-hatchings that raises and lowers the ground, twists the trees, makes the sky palpitate and that assumes a particular intensity from 1888 onward. We cannot only differentiate diagrams but also date the diagram of a painter, because there is always a moment when the painter confronts it more directly. The diagram is indeed a chaos, a catastophe, but also a seed of order and of rhythm. It is a violent chaos in relation to the figurative data, but it is a seed of rhythm in relation to the new order of painting: as Bacon says, it "unlock[s] areas of sensation."[5] The diagram completes the preparatory work and begins the act of painting. There is no painter who does not make this experiment of the chaos-seed where she no longer sees anything and risks floundering: the breakdown of visual coordinates. This is not a psychological experiment but a properly pictorial experiment, although it can have a great influence on the psychic life of a painter. Here, the painter faces the greatest dangers for her work and for herself. It is a kind of experiment always recommended by different painters: Cézanne's "abyss" or "catastrophe" and the possibility that this abyss will make room for rhythm; Paul Klee's "chaos," the vanishing "gray point," and the possibility that this gray point will "leap over itself" and open up dimensions of sensation.[6] Of all the arts, painting is undoubtedly the only one that necessarily and "hysterically" integrates its own catastrophe and is constituted therefore as a flight forward. In the other arts, the catastrophe is only associated. But the painter moves through catastrophe, he embraces chaos and attempts to leave it behind. Where painters differ is in their manner of embracing this nonfigurative chaos, in their evaluation of the pictorial order to come, and of the relation of this order with this chaos. In this respect, we could perhaps distinguish three great paths: each one groups very different painters together but also designates a "modern" function of painting or states what painting claims to bring to "modern man" (why is there still painting today?).

Abstraction would be one of these paths, but a path that reduces the abyss or chaos, as well as the manual, to a minimum: it proposes an asceticism or spiritual salvation. By means of an intense spiritual effort, it is elevated above figurative data, but it also makes chaos a mere stream we must cross in order to discover the abstract and signifying forms. Mondrian's square emerges from the figurative (landscape) and leaps over chaos. From this leap, it retains a kind of oscillation. Such an abstraction is essentially

seen. We would like to say, about abstract painting, the same thing that Péguy said about Kantian morality: it has pure hands, but it does not have hands. Abstract forms belong to a new, purely optical space that no longer even needs to be subordinate to manual or tactile elements. They are distinguished, in fact, from uniquely geometric forms by "tension": tension is that which internalizes in the visual the manual movement that describes the form and the invisible forces that determine it. It is that which makes form a purely visual transformation. Thus, the abstract optical space no longer requires the tactile connotations that were still being organized by classical representation. But then it follows that abstract painting, on the basis of great formal oppositions, develops a symbolic *code* rather than a diagram. It replaces the diagram with a code. This code is "digital," not in the sense of manual but in the sense of a finger that counts. "Digits" are indeed units that visually group together terms in opposition. For example, according to Kandinsky, vertical-white-activity, horizontal-black-inertia, etc. Hence, there emerges a conception of binary choice that is opposed to random choice. Abstract painting has pursued extensively the development of such a properly pictorial code (Herbin's "plastic alphabet," where the distribution of forms and colors can be carried out according to the letters of a word). The code is responsible for answering the question of painting today: what is it that can save man from the abyss, that is, the external tumult and the manual chaos? This amounts to opening a spiritual state for the man of the future without hands and to giving him a pure, internal, optical space made up perhaps exclusively of the horizontal and the vertical. "Modern man seeks tranquility because he is deafened by the outside."[7] The hand is reduced to the finger that presses on an internal optical keyboard.

A second path, which has often been called abstract expressionism or informal art, proposes an entirely different response in the antipodes. This time, the abyss or chaos is deployed to a maximum degree. Being a bit like a map that is as big as the country, the diagram merges with the entire painting, and the entire painting is the diagram. Optical geometry breaks down in favor of a line that is exclusively manual. The eye finds it difficult to follow. In fact, the incomparable discovery of this kind of painting is one of a line (and a daub of color) that does not form a contour, which demarcates nothing, either internal or external, either concave or convex: Pollock's line, Morris Louis's daub of color. It is the northern daub of color, the "gothic line": the line does not run from one point to another, but rather passes *between* the points, continually changes direction, and attains a power superior to *1*, becoming adequate to the entire surface. We understand that, from this point of view, abstraction remains figurative since its line still demar-

cates a contour. If we seek the forerunners of this new path and of this radical way of escaping the figurative, we will find them each time that an old great painter ceases painting things in order "to paint between things."[8] Turner's last watercolors already conquer not only the forces of impressionism but also the power of an explosive line without contour that makes painting itself become an unequaled catastrophe (instead of illustrating catastrophe romantically). Is it not also one of the most phenomenal constants of painting that is isolated and selected here? For Kandinsky, there were nomadic lines without contour next to abstract geometric lines; and for Mondrian, the unequal thickness of the two sides of the square opened up a virtual diagonal without contour. But with Pollock, this brushstroke-line and color-daub reach the limit of their function: no longer the transformation of the form but rather a decomposition of the matter that yields to us its lineaments and granulations. Thus, painting becomes a catastrophe-painting and a diagram-painting at the same time. This time, it is at the closest point to catastrophe, and in absolute proximity, that modern man finds rhythm: we can easily see to what extent the response to the question of a "modern" function of painting is different from that of abstraction. Now internal vision no longer provides infinity but rather the extension of an *all-over* manual power from one edge of the painting to the other.

In the unity of the catastrophe and the diagram, man discovers rhythm as matter and material. The painter no longer has as his instruments the paintbrush and the easel, which used to translate the subordination of the hand to the demands of an optical organization. The hand is liberated, using sticks, sponges, rags, and syringes: such is action painting, the "frenetic dance" of the painter around the painting, or rather in the painting, which is not stretched onto the easel but rather nailed unstretched onto the floor. A conversion of the horizon to the ground has taken place: the optical horizon has entirely reverted to a tactile ground. The diagram expresses all painting at once, that is, the optical catastrophe and the manual rhythm. And the current evolution of abstract expressionism completes this process by actualizing what was still only a metaphor in Pollock's work: (1) the extension of the diagram to the spatial and temporal totality of the painting (displacement of the "*avant-coup*" and the "*après-coup*"); (2) the abandonment of any visual sovereignty, and even of any visual control, over the painting in the process of being created (blindness of the painter); (3) development of lines that are "more" than lines, surfaces that are "more" than surfaces or, conversely, volumes that are "less" than volumes (Carl André's plane sculptures, Ryman's fibers, Barré's laminated works, Bonnefoi's strata).[9]

It is even more curious that the American critics, who have analyzed so extensively this abstract expressionism, have defined it by the creation of a purely and exclusively optical space, characteristic of "modern man." It seems that this is a quarrel over words, an ambiguity of words. What is meant, in fact, is that the pictorial space has lost all its imaginary, tactile referents that allowed us, in classical three-dimensional representation, to see depths and contours, forms and grounds. But these tactile referents in classical representation expressed a relative subordination of the hand to the eye, of the manual to the visual. In liberating a space that is taken (wrongly) to be purely optical, the abstract expressionists, in fact, only reveal an exclusively manual space, defined by the plane surface of the canvas, the "impenetrability" of the scene, the "gesturality" of the color. This space is imposed upon the eye as a completely foreign power in which the eye finds no peace.[10] We are no longer confronted with tactile referents of vision, but, since it is the manual space of that which is seen, we are faced with a violent act upon the eye. We could almost say it is abstract painting that produces a purely optical space and suppresses tactile referents in favor of an eye of the mind: it suppresses the task of directing the hand that the eye retained in classical representation. But action painting does something entirely different: it overturns this classical subordination, it subordinates the eye to the hand, it imposes the hand upon the eye, and it replaces the horizon with a ground.

One of the most profound tendencies of modern painting is the tendency to abandon the easel. For the easel was a decisive element not only in the retention of a figurative appearance, not only in the relation of the painter with nature (the quest for motif), but also in the demarcation (frame and edges) and in the internal organization of the scene (depth, perspective . . .). Now what counts today is less the fact—does the painter still have an easel?—than the tendency and the diverse ways in which the tendency is realized. In the abstractions of Mondrian, the painting ceases to be an organism or an isolated organization, in order to become a division of its own surface that must create relations with the divisions of the "room" where it will be placed. It is in this sense that Mondrian's painting is by no means decorative, but rather architechtonic, and that it abandons the easel in order to become mural painting. Pollock and others explicitly impugn the easel in an entirely different manner: this time, they create "all-over" paintings by rediscovering the secret of the Gothic line (in Worringer's sense), by restoring an entire world of equal probabilities, by tracing lines that go from one edge of the painting to the other and that begin and continue outside the frame, and by opposing the power of a mechanical repetition elevated to intuition, to organic symmetry and center. The result is no longer an easel

painting; it is rather a ground painting (real horses have the ground as their only horizon).[11] But in truth, there are many ways of breaking away from the easel: Bacon's triptych form is one of these ways, which is very different from the two previous ones; in his work, what is true of the triptychs is also true for each independent painting, which is always in some sense composed like a triptych. In the triptych, as we have seen, the edges of the three scenes no longer isolate, although they continue to separate and divide: there is a union-separation, which is Bacon's technical solution and which, in fact, affects the totality of his procedures in their difference from those of abstraction and the unformed. Are these three ways of becoming "Gothic" again?

The importance lies, in fact, in the reason Bacon did not become involved in either one of the previous paths. The severity of his reactions does not pretend to be judgmental, but rather to state what does not suit Bacon; this explains why Bacon does not take either of these paths. On one hand, he is not attracted by a kind of painting that tends to substitute a spiritual, visual code for the involuntary diagram (even if this is an exemplary attitude of the artist). The code is necessarily cerebral and misses sensation, the essential reality of the fall, that is, the direct action on the nervous system. Kandinsky defined abstract painting by "tension," but, according to Bacon, tension is that which is most lacking in abstract painting: by internalizing it in the optical form, abstract painting neutralized it. And finally, by virtue of being abstract, the code risks being a simple symbolic coding of the figurative.[12] On the other hand, Bacon is no more attracted by abstract expressionism or by the power and the mystery of the line without contour. This is because, he says, the diagram has taken over the entire painting, and its proliferation creates a veritable "mess." All the violent means of action painting—stick, brush, broom, rag, and even pastry syringe—explode in a painting-catastrophe: this time, sensation is indeed attained, but it remains in an irredeemably confused state. Bacon continually discusses the absolute necessity of preventing the diagram from proliferating, the necessity of keeping it in certain areas of the painting and in certain moments of the act of painting. He thinks that, in the domain of the irrational stroke and the line without contour, Michaux goes further than Pollock, precisely because he maintains his mastery of the diagram.[13]

There is nothing more important for Bacon than saving contour. A line that demarcates nothing still has a contour. Blake at least knew this.[14] The diagram should not, therefore, engulf the entire painting; it should remain limited in space and time. It should remain operative and controlled. Violent means should not be unleashed, and the necessary catastrophe should not submerge everything. The diagram is a possibility of fact—it is not the

fact itself. Not all figurative data should disappear, and especially, a new figuration, that of figure, should emerge from the diagram and carry sensation to the clear and the precise. Emerge from the catastrophe. . . . Even if we finish with a stream of paint afterward, it is like a localized "crack of the whip," which makes us emerge rather than sink.[15] Could we say that the "*malerisch*" period at least extended the diagram to the entire painting? Is it not the entire surface of the painting that is lined with brushstrokes or with variations of a somber color-daub functioning as a curtain? But even so, the precision of sensation, the clarity of figure, and the rigor of contour continued to act upon the blob of color or beneath the strokes that did not erase them; it rather gave them a power of vibration and illocalization (the smiling or screaming mouth). Bacon's subsequent period returns to a random localization of strokes and cleaned areas. Thus, Bacon follows a third path, neither optical as in abstract painting, nor manual as in action painting.

Trans. Constantin Boundas and Jacqueline Code

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Music and Ritornello

1. A child in the dark, gripped with fear, comforts himself by singing under his breath. He walks and halts to his song. Lost, he takes shelter, or orients himself with his little song as best he can. The song is like a rough sketch of a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos. Perhaps the child skips as he sings, hastens or slows his pace. But the song itself is already a skip: it jumps from chaos to the beginnings of order in chaos and is in danger of breaking apart at any moment. There is always sonority in Ariadne's thread. Or the song of Orpheus.

2. Now we are at home. But home does not preexist: it was necessary to draw a circle around that uncertain and fragile center, to organize a limited space. Many, very diverse, components have a part in this, landmarks and marks of all kinds. This was already true of the previous case. But now the components are used for organizing a space, not for the momentary determination of a center. The forces of chaos are kept outside as much as possible, and the interior space protects the germinal forces of a task to fulfill or a deed to do. This involves an activity of selection, elimination and extraction, in order to prevent the interior forces of the earth from being submerged, to enable them to resist, or even to take something from chaos across the filter or sieve of the space that has been drawn. Sonorous or vocal components are very important: a wall of

sound, or at least a wall with some sonic bricks in it. A child hums to summon the strength for the schoolwork she has to hand in. A housewife sings to herself, or listens to the radio, as she marshals the antichaos forces of her work. Radios and television sets are like sound walls around every household and mark territories (the neighbor complains when it gets too loud). For sublime deeds like the foundation of a city or the fabrication of a golem, one draws a circle, or better yet walks in a circle as in a children's dance, combining rhythmic vowels and consonants that correspond to the interior forces of creation as to the differentiated parts of an organism. A mistake in speed, rhythm, or harmony would be catastrophic because it would bring back the forces of chaos, destroying both creator and creation.

3. Finally, one opens the circle a crack, opens it all the way, lets someone in, calls someone, or else goes out oneself, launches forth. One opens the circle not on the side where the old forces of chaos press against it but in another region, one created by the circle itself. As though the circle tended on its own to open onto a future, as a function of the working forces it shelters. This time, it is in order to join with the forces of the future, cosmic forces. One launches forth, hazards an improvisation. But to improvise is to join with the world, or meld with it. One ventures from home on the thread of a tune. Along sonorous, gestural, motor lines that mark the customary path of a child and graft themselves onto or begin to bud "lines of drift" with different loops, knots, speeds, movements, gestures, and sonorities.[1]

These are not three successive moments in an evolution. They are three aspects of a single thing, the refrain (*ritournelle*). They are found in tales (both horror stories and fairy tales), and in lieder as well. The refrain has all three aspects, it makes them simultaneous or mixes them: sometimes, sometimes, sometimes. Sometimes chaos is an immense black hole in which one endeavors to fix a fragile point as a center. Sometimes one organizes around that point a calm and stable "pace" (rather than a form): the black hole has become a home. Sometimes one grafts onto that pace a breakaway from the black hole. Paul Klee presented these three aspects, and their interlinkage, in a most profound way. He calls the black hole a "gray point" for pictorial reasons. The gray point starts out as nonlocalizable, nondimensional chaos, the force of chaos, a tangled bundle of aberrant lines. Then the point "jumps over itself" and radiates a dimensional space with horizontal layers, vertical cross sections, unwritten customary lines, a whole terrestrial interior force (this force also appears, at a more relaxed pace, in the atmosphere and in water). The gray point (black hole) has thus jumped from one state to an-

other, and no longer represents chaos but the abode or home. Finally, the point launches out of itself, impelled by wandering centrifugal forces that fan out to the sphere of the cosmos: one "tries convulsively to fly from the earth, but at the following level one actually rises above it . . . powered by centrifugal forces that triumph over gravity."[2]

The role of the refrain has often been emphasized: it is territorial, a territorial assemblage. Bird songs: the bird sings to mark its territory. The Greek modes and Hindu rhythms are themselves territorial, provincial, regional. The refrain may assume other functions, amorous, professional or social, liturgical or cosmic: it always carries earth with it; it has a land (sometimes a spiritual land) as its concomitant; it has an essential relation to a Natal, a Native. A musical "nome" is a little tune, a melodic formula that seeks recognition and remains the bedrock or ground of polyphony (*cantus firmus*). The *nomos* as customary, unwritten law is inseparable from a distribution of space, a distribution in space. By that token, it is *ethos,* but the ethos is also the Abode.[3] Sometimes one goes from chaos to the threshold of a territorial assemblage: directional components, infra-assemblage. Sometimes one organizes the assemblage: dimensional components, intra-assemblage. Sometimes one leaves the territorial assemblage for other assemblages, or for somewhere else entirely; inter-assemblage, components of passage or even escape. And all three at once. Forces of chaos, terrestrial forces, cosmic forces: all of these confront each other and converge in the territorial refrain.

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One Manifesto Less

I. The Theater and Its Critique

With regard to his play *Romeo and Juliet,* Carmelo Bene says: "It is a critical essay on Shakespeare." But the fact is that CB is not writing on Shakespeare; his critical essay is itself a piece of theater. How are we to understand this relationship between theater and its critique, between the original play and the one derived from it? CB's theater has a critical function—but of what?

It is not a question of "criticizing" Shakespeare, nor of a play within a play, nor of a parody, nor of a new version of a play, etc. CB proceeds in a more original manner. Suppose that he amputates one of the component parts of the original play. He subtracts something from the original. To be precise, he does not call his play on Hamlet one more *Hamlet* but, like Laforgue, "one less *Hamlet*." He does not proceed by addition, but by subtraction, by amputation. How he chooses the component for amputation is another question, as we shall see shortly. But, for example, he amputates Romeo, he neutralizes Romeo in the original play. So the whole play, because it now lacks a part chosen nonarbitrarily, will perhaps tip over, turn around on itself, land on another side. If you amputate Romeo, you will witness an astonishing development, that of Mercutio, who was no more

than a potentiality in Shakespeare's play. Mercutio dies quickly in Shakespeare, but in CB he does not want to die, cannot die, does not succeed in dying, since he will constitute the new play.

It is a matter then, in the first place, of the very constitution of a character on stage. Even the objects, the props, await their destiny, that is to say, the necessity that the *caprice* of the character is going to give them. The play consists first of all in the making up of the character, his preparation, his birth, his babblings, his changes, his developments. This critical theater is a constituting theater, the critique is a constitution. The man of the theater is no longer an author, actor, or director. He is an operator. By operation, one must understand the activity of subtraction, of amputation, but already masked by another activity which gives birth to and multiplies the unexpected, as in a prosthesis: amputation of Romeo *and* immense development of Mercutio, the one within the other. This is a theater of surgical precision. Consequently, if CB often has need of an original play, it is not in order to make a fashionable parody of it, nor to add literature to literature. On the contrary it is in order to subtract the literature, for example to subtract the text, a part of the text, and to see what happens. *Let the words stop making up a "text."* . . . This is a theater-experimentation that involves more love for Shakespeare than all the commentaries.

Take the case of *S.A.D.E.* Against the background of a frozen recitation of texts by De Sade, it is the sadistic image of the master which finds itself amputated, paralyzed, reduced to a masturbatory tic, at the same time that the masochistic slave searches for his identity, develops, metamorphizes, tests himself, constitutes himself on the stage according to the inadequacies and impotencies of the master. The slave is not at all the reverse image of the master, nor his replica nor his contradictory identity: he constitutes himself piece by piece, morsel by morsel, through the neutralization of the master; he gains his autonomy through the master's amputation.

Finally, consider *Richard the Third,* where CB goes perhaps furthest in his theatrical construction. What is amputated here, what is subtracted, is the whole royal and princely system. Only Richard III and the women are retained. But as a result that which existed only potentially in the tragedy appears under a new light. *Richard the Third* is perhaps the only Shakespeare tragedy in which the women do battle for themselves. And as for Richard III, it is not so much that he covets power as that he wants to reintroduce or reinvent a war-machine, even if it means destroying the apparent equilibrium or the peace of the State (Shakespeare calls this Richard's secret, the "secret goal"). In operating the subtraction of the characters of State power, CB will give free rein to the constitution of the man of war on the state, with his prostheses, his deformities, his outgrowths, his defects, his

variations. The man of war has always been considered in mythology as of another origin from that of the statesman or the king: deformed and twisted, he always comes from somewhere else. CB makes him come to pass on the stage: while the women at war enter and exit, worried about their whining infants, Richard III must make himself deformed to amuse the infants and keep the attention of the mothers. He makes prostheses for himself of objects he takes out of drawers at random. He constitutes himself a little like Mr. Hyde—of colors, of sounds, of things. He forms himself, or rather deforms himself, following a line of continuous variation. CB's play begins with a very nice "note on the feminine" (is there not already in Kleist's *Penthesilea* a similar relationship between a man of war, Achilles, and the feminine, the transvestite?).

CB's plays are short; no one knows better than he how to end. He detests every principle of constancy or eternity, of the permanence of the text: "The spectacle starts and finishes at the moment one makes it." And the play ends with the constitution of the character, it has no other aim but the process of this constitution and does not extend beyond it. It ends with birth, whereas customarily one ends with death. One should not conclude from this that these characters have an "ego." On the contrary, they have nothing of the sort. Richard III, the slave, Mercutio, only come to life in a continuous series of metamorphoses and variations. The character is nothing more than the totality of the scenic assemblages, colors, lights, gestures, words. It is odd that one often says of CB: he is a great actor—a compliment mixed with reproach, an accusation of narcissism. It is rather CB's pride to launch a process of which he is the controller, the mechanic, or the operator (he himself says: the protagonist) rather than the actor. To give birth to a monster or to a giant. . . .

This is neither a theater of the author, nor a critique of the author. But if this theater is inseparably creative and critical, what is it critical of? It is not CB criticizing Shakespeare.

At the very most one could say that, if an Englishman at the end of the sixteenth century constructs a certain image of Italy, an Italian of the twentieth century can return an image of the England where Shakespeare is present: the admirable, gigantic decor of *Romeo and Juliet* with its huge glasses and flasks, and Juliet who falls asleep in a cake, makes us see Shakespeare by way of Lewis Carroll, but Lewis Carroll by way of Italian comedy (Carroll already suggested a whole system of subtractions on Shakespeare in order to develop unexpected potentialities). It is no longer a question of criticizing countries or societies. One asks what the initial subtractions operated by CB concern. In the three preceding cases it is the elements of power, the elements that make up or represent a system of power, which are

subtracted, amputated, or neutralized: Romeo as representative of the power of families, the master as representative of sexual power, the kings and princes as representatives of the power of the State. Now the elements of power in the theater are those which assure at once the coherence of the subject dealt with and the coherence of the representation on stage. It is at the same time the power of that which is represented and the power of theater itself. In this sense the traditional actor has an ancient complicity with princes and kings—the theater, with power: thus Napoleon and Talma. Theater's own power is not separable from the representation of power in the theater, even if it is a critical representation. Now CB has another conception of critique. When he chooses to *amputate* the components of power, it is not only the theatrical material that he changes, it is also the form of theater, which ceases to be "representation" at the same time that the actor ceases to be an actor. He gives free rein to other theatrical material and another theatrical form, which would not have been possible without this subtraction. One will say that CB is not the first to make a theater of nonrepresentation. One will cite at random Artaud, Bob Wilson, Grotowski, the living theater. . . . But we do not believe in the usefulness of filiations. Alliances are more important than filiations. CB has very diverse degrees of alliance with those whom we have just cited. He belongs to a movement that is stirring the theater profoundly today. But he belongs to this movement only by virtue of what he himself is inventing and not the reverse.

And the originality of his approach, the ensemble of his procedures, seems to us to consist first of all in this: the subtraction of stable components of power, which releases a new potentiality of theater, a nonrepresentational force always in disequilibrium.

II. The Theater and Its Minorities

CB is very interested in the notions of major and minor. He gives them a lived content. What is a "minor" character? What is a "minor" author? CB begins by pointing out that it is stupid to be interested in the beginning or end of something, the points of origin and termination. What is interesting is never the way someone starts or finishes. The interesting thing is the middle, what happens on the way. It is not by chance that the greatest speed is at the halfway point. People often dream of commencing or recommencing at zero; and they are also afraid of where they are going to arrive, their landing point. They think in terms of future or of past, but the past and even the future are *history*. What counts, on the contrary, is the becoming: becoming-revolutionary, and not the future or the past of the revolution. "I shall not arrive anywhere, I will not arrive anywhere. There are no arrivals.

It does not interest me where someone ends up. A man may also end up mad. What does that mean?" It is in the middle where one finds the becoming, the movement, the velocity, the vortex. The middle is not the mean, but on the contrary an excess. It is by the middle that things push. That was Virginia Woolf's idea. Now the middle does not at all imply to be in one's time, to be of one's time, to be historical—on the contrary. It is that by which the most diverse times communicate. It is neither the historical nor the eternal, but the untimely. A minor author is just that: without future or past, she has only a becoming, a middle, by which she communicates with other times, other spaces. Goethe gave Kleist stern lessons, explaining that a great author, a major author must devote himself to being of his time. But Kleist was incurably minor. "Antihistoricism," says CB: do you know who those men are who must be seen in their century? Those whom one calls the greatest, Goethe for example (one cannot see him outside the Germany of his time, or if he leaves his time it is immediately to join the eternal). But the true great authors are the minor ones, the untimely ones. It is the minor author who provides the true masterpieces; the minor author does not interpret his time, the man does not have a determinate time, the time depends on the man: François Villon, Kleist, or Laforgue. Is there not therefore great interest in submitting authors considered major to treatment as minor authors, in order to rediscover their potential for becoming? Shakespeare, for example?

It is as if there are two opposing operations. On the one side one raises to the "major": from a thought one makes a doctrine, from a way of living one makes a culture, from an event one makes history. One claims in this way to acknowledge and admire, but in fact one normalizes. As with the peasants of Apuglia, according to CB: one can give them theater and cinema and even television. It is not a question of regretting the old times, but of being alarmed in the face of the operation to which one is submitting them, the graft, the transplant which one has made in their backs to normalize them. They have become major. So, operation for operation, surgery for surgery, one can conceive of the reverse: how to reduce or *minorize* (*minorer*—a term used by mathematicians), how to impose a minor or minimizing treatment in order to extricate becomings from history, lives from culture, thoughts from doctrine, grace or disgrace from dogma. When one sees what Shakespeare is subjected to in the traditional theater, his magnification-normalization, one clamors for another treatment that would rediscover in him this active minoritarian force. Theologians are major, but certain Italian saints are minor. "The saints who have made it by grace: Saint Joseph of Copertino, the imbeciles, the saintly fools, Saint Francis of Assisi dancing before the Pope. . . . I say there is already culture from the moment we are

in the process of examining an idea, not living that idea. If we are the idea, then we can dance the dance of Saint-Guy and we are in a state of grace. We begin to be wise precisely when we are dis-graced." We do not save ourselves, we do not become minor, save by the constitution of a disgrace or deformity. That is the operation of grace itself. As in the story of Lourdes: make my hand come back like the other. . . . But God always chooses the bad hand. How are we to understand this operation? Kleist stammering and grinding his teeth?

"Major" and "minor" are also said of languages. Can one distinguish in each epoch major common languages—international or national—and minor vernaculars? English, American—is that a major language today? Would Italian be a minor one? One distinguishes a high language and a low one in societies that express themselves in two languages or more. But is this not true even for unilingual societies? One could define some languages as major, even though they have little international standing: these would be languages with strongly homogeneous structure (standardization), and centered on invariants, constants, or universals of a phonological, syntactic, or semantic nature. CB sketches a linguistics, just for fun: thus French seems to be a major language, even though it has lost its international reach, because it retains a strong homogeneity and strong phonological and syntactic constants. This is not without consequences for the theater: "French theatres are museums of the everyday, a disconcerting and wearisome repetition, because in the name of a spoken and written language one goes in the evening to see and hear that which one has heard and seen during the day. Theatrically, between Marivaux and the stationmaster of Paris there is really no difference, except that at the Odeon one cannot catch the train." English bases itself on other invariants—for example, on constants that are rather semantic; it is always by dint of constants and homogeneity that a language is major: "England is a history of kings. . . . The Gielguds and the Oliviers are living copies of bygone Kembles and Keans. The monarchy of *once upon a time*—that is the English tradition." In short, however different they may be, the major languages are languages of power. To them one will oppose the minor languages: Italian, for example ("Our country is young, it does not yet have a language. . ."). And already one has no further choice; one must define the minor languages as *languages with continuous variability*—whichever dimension one is considering: phonological, syntactic, semantic, or even stylistic. A minor language is made up of only a minimum of structural constants and homogeneities. It is not, however, a porridge, a mixture of patois, since it finds its *rules* in the construction of a continuum. In effect, continuous variation applies to all the components, vocal and linguistic, in a kind of generalized chromaticism. This is theater itself, or "spectacle."

But, at the same time, it is hard to oppose languages that are major by nature to others that are minor. People protest, notably in France, against the imperialism of English or American. But this imperialism has precisely for its counterpart that English and American are worked on to the greatest extent from within by the minorities that use them. Observe how Anglo-Irish works on English in Synge, and imposes on it a line of flight or continuous variation: "the way. . .". No doubt this is not the same way by the minorities work on American, with black English and all the Americans of the ghetto. But in any case there is no imperial language that is not tunneled through, dragged along by these inherent and continuous lines of variation, by these minor uses. That being the case, major and minor do not so much qualify different languages as different uses of the same language. Kafka, a Czech Jew writing in German, makes a minor use of German and thereby produces a decisive linguistic masterpiece (more generally, the work of minorities on German in the Austrian Empire). At the most, one could say that a language is more or less endowed for these minor uses.

Linguists often have a debatable conception of their object of study. They say that each language is, assuredly, a heterogeneous mixture but that one can only study it scientifically if one extracts from it a homogeneous and constant subsystem: a dialect, a patois, a ghetto language would thus be submitted to the same condition as a standard language (Chomsky). From this point of view, the variations that affect a language will be considered either as extrinsic or extrasystemic or as bearing witness to a mixture between two systems of which each is homogeneous. But perhaps this condition of constancy and homogeneity already presupposes a certain use of the language upon consideration: a major use that treats the language as a condition of power, a marker of power. A small number of linguists (notably William Labov) have isolated in each language the existence of lines of variation, bearing on all the components, and constituting immanent rules of a new type. You will not arrive at a homogeneous system that is not still worked on by immanent, continuous, and regulated variation: this is what defines every language by its minor use; a broadened chromaticism, a black English for each language. The continuous variability is not to be explained by a bilingualism, nor by a mixture of dialects, but by the creative property most inherent in the language when it is in the grips of a minor use. And, in a certain way, this is the "theater" of the language.

III. The Theater and Its Language

It is not a question of an antitheater, of a theater within the theater, or which denies the theater, etc.: CB feels disgust for the pat phrases of the

avant-garde. It is a question of a more precise operation: you begin by subtracting, taking away everything that comprises an element of power, in language and in gestures, in representation and in the represented. You cannot even say that it is a negative operation inasmuch as it already engages and sets in motion positive processes. You will thus take away or amputate history, because history is the temporal marker of power. You will take away structure because it is the synchronic marker, the ensemble of relations among variants. You will subtract the constants, the stable or stabilized elements, because they belong to the major use. You will amputate the text, because the text is like the domination of language over speech and bears witness, too, to an invariance or homogeneity. You cut back on the dialogue because the dialogue transmits to speech the elements of power and makes them circulate: it is your turn to speak, in such-and-such codified conditions (the linguists are trying to determine the "universals of dialogue"), etc., etc. As Franco Quadri says, you deduct even the diction, even the action: the play-back is, first of all, a subtraction. But what remains? Everything remains, but under a new light, with new sounds, new gestures.

For example, you say "I swear it." But it is not at all the same statement according to whether you make it before a tribunal, in a love scene, or as a child. And this variation affects not only the external situation, not only the physical intonation but also from within the sense, the syntax, and the phonemes. You will thus make a statement pass by way of all the variables that can affect it in the shortest space of time. The statement will be no more than the sum of its own variations, which make it escape every apparatus of power capable of fixing it and which enable it to dodge every constancy. You will construct the continuum of *I swear it.* Let us suppose that Lady Anne says to Richard III: "I loathe you!" In no respect is this the same statement according to whether it is the cry of a woman at war, a child confronting a toad, a young girl who feels an already consenting and amorous pity. . . . Lady Anne must pass by way of all these variables, she must rise up as a soldier, regress to infancy, come to life again as a young girl, along a line of continuous variation and as fast as possible. CB never ceases tracing these lines along which are strung positions, regressions, rebirths, as he puts language and speech in continuous variation. Whence the very original use of lip-sync ("play-back") by CB, since lip-sync assures the amplitude of the variations and gives them rules. This is odd, as if there is no dialogue in CB's theater, for the voices, simultaneous or successive, superimposed or transposed, are engaged in this spatiotemporal continuity of variation. It is a kind of *Sprechgesang.* In song it is a matter of maintaining the pitch, but in *Sprechgesang* one keeps abandoning it by a rise or fall. Hence it is not the text that counts, since it is simply material for the variation. It is even necessary

to weigh down the text with nontextual—yet internal—indications, *which are not merely stage directions,* which function as operators, expressing each time the scale of the variables by which the statement passes, exactly as in a musical score. Now this is just how CB himself writes, with a writing that is neither literary nor theatrical but really operative, and whose effect on the reader is very strong, very strange. Look at those operators which, in *Richard III,* take up much more room than the text itself. CB's whole theater must be seen but also read, even though the text properly speaking is not the essential. This is not a contradiction. It is rather like sight-reading a score. This explains CB's reserved attitude towards Brecht: Brecht has carried out the greatest "critical operation," but he has effected this operation "on the written word and not on stage." The complete critical operation is that which consists in (1) deducting the stable elements, (2) putting everything in continuous variation, and also, consequently, (3) transposing everything into the *minor* (that is the role of the operators, corresponding to the idea of the "minimal" interval).

What is this use of language according to variation? One could express it in several ways: being bilingual, *but* in a single tongue. . . . Being a foreigner, *but* in one's own tongue. . . . Stammering, *but* as a stammerer of language itself and not simply of speech. . . . CB adds: talking to oneself, in one's own ear, *but* in the middle of the marketplace, in the public square. . . . We might take each one of these formulas in itself to define the work of CB, and see not which dependencies but which alliances, which engagements it makes with other attempts, past or present. Bilingualism puts us on the path, but only on the path. For the bilingual person leaps from one language to another; the one may have a minor use, the other a major. One can even make a heterogeneous mixture of several languages or of several dialects. But here it is in one and the same language that one must succeed in being bilingual, it is on my own language that I must impose the heterogeneity of variation, it is in it that I must carve out a minor use and cut away the elements of power or of majority. One can always start off from an external situation: for example Kafka, a Czech Jew writing in German; Beckett, an Irishman, writing simultaneously in English and in French; Pasolini using dialectal varieties of Italian. But it is within German itself that Kafka traces a line of flight or of continuous variation. It is French itself that Beckett makes stammer, as does Jean-Luc Godard in another way and Gherasim Luca in yet another way. And it is English that Bob Wilson causes to whisper, to murmur (for whispering does not imply a weak intensity, but, on the contrary, an intensity that has no definite pitch). Now the formula of stammering is as approximate as that of bilingualism. Stammering, in general, is a disorder of speech. But to make a language stammer is

another affair. It is to impose on the language, on all the inner elements of the language—phonological, syntactic, semantic—the work of continuous variation. I believe that Gherasim Luca is one of the greatest French poets, and of all time. He certainly does not owe this to his Romanian origin, but he makes use of this origin to make French stammer in itself, with itself, to carry the stammering into the language itself, not simply the speaking of it. Read or listen to the poem "Passionément," which has been recorded as well as published in the collection *Le Chant de la Carpe*. One has never achieved such an intensity in the language, such an intensive use of language. A public recitation of poems by Gherasim Luca is a marvelous and complete theatrical event. So, to be a foreigner in one's own language. . . . This is not to talk "like" an Irishman or a Romanian talking French. That is not the case with either Beckett or Luca. It is to impose on the language, insofar as one speaks it perfectly and soberly, that line of variation that will make of you a foreigner in *your own* tongue, or of the foreign tongue, yours, or of your tongue, an immanent bilingualism for your foreignness. One always comes back to Proust's formulation: "Beautiful books are written in a sort of foreign language." Or, conversely, Kafka's short story "The Great Swimmer" (who never knew how to swim): "I must remark that I am here in my own country and that, despite all my efforts, I do not understand a word of the language which you are speaking." So much for the alliances or the encounters of CB, involuntary or not, with those whom we have just cited. They have value only by the way CB constructs his own methods to make his own language stammer, whisper, and vary, and to make it intensive at the level of each of its elements.

All the linguistic and acoustic components, indissolubly language *and* speech, are thus put into a state of continuous variation. But this is not without effect on the other, nonlinguistic, components: actions, passions, gestures, attitudes, objects, etc. For one cannot deal with the elements of language and speech as so many internal variables without placing them in reciprocal relation with the external variables, in the same continuity, in the same flux of continuity. It is in the same movement that language will tend to escape the system of power that structures it and action the system of mastery or domination that organizes it. In a fine article, Corrado Augias has shown how CB combines a work of "aphasia" on language (diction whispered, stammering, or deformed; sounds scarcely perceptible or quite deafening) with a work of "impediment" on things and gestures (costumes that hinder movement instead of assisting it, props that are awkward to shift, gestures that are too stiff or "limp"). Thus, the apple in *Salome* continually swallowed and spat out again; and the costumes that keep falling off and having to be put on again; always the useful object that deserts in-

stead of serving, the table that interposes itself instead of supporting—one is always obliged to get clear of the objects rather than handle them; or once more in *S.A.D.E.*, the copulation perpetually postponed, and above all the slave who entangles himself, ties himself up in knots in the continuous series of his metamorphoses, for he must not *master* his role of *slave;* and at the beginning of *Richard III,* Richard who never stops losing his balance, wobbling, slipping off the chest of drawers on which he is leaning. . . .

IV. The Theater and Its Gestures

Is it necessary to point out, nonetheless, that this double principle, of aphasia and impediment, reveals relations of force by which each body makes itself an obstacle to the body of the other, as each will shackles that of others? It is something other than a play of oppositions that will lead us back to the system of power and domination. It is that by continual impediment gestures and movements are put in a state of continuous variation, the former in relation to the latter as well as each in itself, exactly as voices and linguistic elements are brought into this milieu of variation. Richard III's gesture keeps abandoning its proper level, its proper height, by a fall, a rise, a slide: the gesture in positive disequilibrium. The piece of clothing one takes off and puts back on, which falls off and is donned again, is like the variation of clothing. Or consider the variation of flowers that occupies such a place in CB's practice. In effect there are very few collisions and oppositions in CB's theater. We can conceive of procedures that would produce stammering by causing words to collide, phonemes to oppose each other, or even dialectal varieties to confront one another. But these are not the means that CB himself employs. On the contrary the beauty of his *style* is to achieve the stammering by instituting melodic lines which pull the language outside a system of dominating oppositions. And the same goes for the *grace* of gestures on stage. It is curious in this regard that angry women, and even critics, have reproached CB for his direction of the female body and have accused him of sexism or phallocracy.

The female-object of *S.A.D.E.*, the naked girl, passes through all the metamorphoses the sadistic master imposes on her, transforming her into a successive series of objects of use: but she just traverses these metamorphoses, she never adopts a degrading posture, she strings together her gestures following the line of a variation which allows her to escape the domination of the master and come to life outside his grasp, maintaining her dignity throughout the whole series. Hats off to the actress who played the part in Paris! It is never in relations of force and opposition that CB's theater is deployed, although this theater is "tough" and "cruel." Much more, the re-

lations of force and opposition belong to that which is shown only for the purpose of being subtracted, cut away, neutralized. Conflicts do not much interest CB. They are simply a medium for variation. CB's theater is deployed only in relations of variation that eliminate "masters."

In variation, what count are relations of speed or slowness, the modification of these relations insofar as they involve gestures and statements, following variable coefficients along a line of transformation. It is in this way that the writing and gestures of CB are musical: it is because every form is deformed by modifications of speed, with the result that one does not use the same gesture or the same word twice without obtaining different temporal characteristics. This is the musical formula of continuity, or of transformable form. The "operators" that function in CB's style and direction are precisely indicators of speed, which no more belong to the theater than they are external to it. CB has in fact found the way to articulate them fully in the "text" of his pieces, even though they do not belong to the text. The physicists of the Middle Ages spoke of *deformed* movements and qualities according to the distribution of velocities among the different points of a moving body or the distribution of intensities among the different points of a subject. The subordination of form to speed, to variation in speed, the subordination of the subject to intensity or affect, to the intensive variation of affects: these are, it seems to us, two essential goals to achieve in the arts. CB is a full participant in this movement that is bringing criticism to bear on the form as well as on the subject (in the double sense of "theme" and of "ego"). Affects and no subject, velocities and no form. But once again what count are CB's own means for realizing this goal: the continuity of variation. When he identifies the grace in the movement of disgrace (the "idiot saints" whom he loves), he wishes only to subordinate the designated forms to the deformity of movement or of quality themselves. There is a whole geometry in CB's theater, but a geometry in the manner of Nicolas Oresme, a geometry of speeds and intensities, of affects.

CB's films are not filmed theater. Perhaps this is so because the cinema does not employ the same velocities of variation as the theater, and above all because the two variations, that of language and that of gestures, do not stand in the same relation in cinema. In particular, is it possible that the cinema may directly constitute a sort of visual music, as if it is the eyes that grasp the sound first, while the theater, where even the actions are first of all heard, has a hard time disabusing itself of the primacy of the ear? (Already in his theatrical version of *Notre-Dame of the Turks* CB was seeking ways for the theater to get beyond this domination by words and to attain to a direct perception of the action: "The public had to follow the action through panes of glass, and heard nothing except when the actor deigned to open a little

window.") But at all events the important thing, in the theater as in the cinema, is that the two variations must not remain parallel. One way or another they must be *placed one within the other*. The continuous variation of gesture and things, the continuous variation of language and sounds can interrupt, intersect, cut each other off; they must nevertheless both continue, *forming one and the same continuum*, which will be—according to the case—filmic, theatrical, musical, etc. Someone should do a special study of CB's films. But remaining within the theater, we should like to find out how CB proceeds in *Richard III*, his most recent piece, in which he goes furthest.

The whole beginning of *Richard III* is based on two lines of variation, which intermix and take turns but have not yet merged. Richard's gestures never cease to slip, change level, fall only to rise again; the gestures of the servant, cross-dressed as Buckingham, accord with his own. But also the voice of the duchess never stops changing tone, passing by way of all the variations of the mother, at the same time that Richard's voice babbles and reduces itself to the "articulations of a cave-dweller." If the two variations still remain relatively separate, as two continuities that intersect, it is because Richard is not yet constituted on stage. In this beginning, there are still to be sought, in his head and in things, the elements of his impending constitution. He is not yet an object of fear, of love, and of pity. He has not yet made his "political choice," not yet raised up his war-machine. He has not yet attained the disgrace of "his" grace, the deformity of his form. But now, in the great scene with Lady Anne, Richard will constitute himself before our very eyes. Shakespeare's sublime scene, with respect to which he has sometimes been taxed for extravagance or implausibility, is not parodied by CB but multiplied according to the velocities or variable developments that will unite in a single continuity of constitution (not a unity of representation). (1) Richard, or rather the actor who plays Richard, begins to "comprehend." He begins to comprehend his own idea and the means of this idea. First he goes through the drawers of the commode, which contain plaster casts and prostheses, all the monstrosities of the human body. He takes them out, drops them, picks up another, tests them, hides them from Anne, then adorns himself with them in triumph. He achieves the *miracle* whereby the good hand becomes as contorted, as crooked as the other. He wins his political choice; he constitutes his deformities and his war-machine. (2) Lady Anne, from her side, enters into a strange complicity with Richard: she wounds and hates him while he is in his "form," but distraught before each deformation and already amorous and consenting. It is as if a new personality were constituting itself in her too, matching her own variation with that of Richard. She begins by helping him vaguely in his search for the prostheses. And, better and better, faster and faster, she starts to seek herself for the amorous deformation. She will wed a war-machine,

instead of remaining in the dependency and power of a State apparatus. She enters herself into a variation that weds that of Richard, never ceasing to undress and redress herself continually, to a rhythm of regression-progression that corresponds to the subtractions-constructions of Richard. (3) The vocal variations of the one and the other, phonemes and tonalities, form a line drawn tighter and tighter, which slips between the gestures and vice versa. The spectator must not only understand but hear and see the goal that the mutterings and stumblings of the beginning were already pursuing without knowing it: the Idea becomes visible, sensible, politics become erotic. At that moment, there will no longer be two continuities that intersect but one and the same continuum where words and gestures play the role of variables in transformation . . . (one would have to analyze the whole rest of the play and the admirable constitution of the ending—where one sees clearly that it was not a question for Richard of conquering a State apparatus but of constructing a war-machine inseparably political *and* erotic).

V. The Theater and Its Politics

Let us suppose that those who admire CB are more or less in accord on these functions of theater, as we have tried to define them: elimination of constants or invariants not only in the language and the gestures, but also in the theatrical representation and in that which is represented on stage; thus the elimination of everything which "makes" power, the power of what the theater represents (the king, the princes, the masters, the system), but also the power of the theater itself (the text, the dialogue, the actor, the director, the structure). Hence the passage of everything through continuous variation, as if on a creative line of flight, which constitutes a minor tongue within the language, a minor character on stage, a minor transformational group across the dominant forms and subjects. Suppose one is in accord on these points. It will be all the more necessary to get to the following simple, practical questions: (1) What is the external use of all this, since it is still theater, nothing but theater? (2) And in what respect, precisely, does CB place in question the power of theater or the theater as power? In what respect is he less narcissistic than an actor, less authoritarian than a director, less despotic than a text? Is he not all the more so—he that claims to be at once the text, the actor, and the director (I am a mass; "see how politics becomes mass, the mass of *my* atoms.")?

One has not accomplished anything until one has reached that which merges with someone's genius: his extreme modesty, the point where he is humble. All CB's declarations of pride are made to express something very

humble. And first of all that the theater, even the one he dreams of, is no big thing; that the theater obviously does not change the world and does not make the revolution. CB does not believe in the avant-garde. No more does he believe in a popular theater, a theater for everyone, a communication between the man of the theater and the people. For when one speaks of a popular theater, one tends always toward a certain *representation of conflicts*, conflicts of individual and of society, of life and of history, contradictions and oppositions of all sorts that traverse a society, but also individuals. Now that which is truly narcissistic—and which everyone finds acceptable—is this representation of conflicts, be it naturalistic or hyperrealistic or whatever. There is a popular theater that is like the narcissism of the worker. No doubt there is Brecht's attempt to ensure that the contradictions, the oppositions are something other than represented, but Brecht himself desires only that they be "comprehended" and that the spectator have the elements of a "possible" solution. This is not to exit from the domain of representation—it is only to pass from a dramatic pole of bourgeois representation to an epic pole of popular representation. Brecht does not push the "critique" far enough. For the representation of conflicts, CB claims to substitute the presence of variation as a more active, more aggressive element.

But why are conflicts generally subordinated to representation, why does the theater remain representational each time it takes as its object conflicts, contradictions, oppositions? It is because the conflicts are already normalized, codified, institutionalized. They are "products." They are already a representation—all the more fit to be represented on stage. When a conflict is not yet normalized, that is because it depends on something else more profound, because it is like the lightning flash that announces something else and that comes from something else, a sudden emergence of a creative variation, unexpected, subrepresentational. Institutions are the organs of representation of recognized conflicts, and the theater is an institution, the theater—even the avant-garde, even the popular—is "official." By what destiny have the Brechtians taken power over an important part of the theater? The critic Giuseppi Bertolucci described the situation of theater in Italy (and elsewhere) when CB was starting his endeavors: because social reality escapes it "the theater has become for everyone an ideological snare and an objective factor of immobility." And the same thing goes for the Italian cinema, with its pseudopolitical ambitions: as Marco Montesano remarks, "It is a cinema of institution, despite the conflictual appearances, for the conflict filmed ("mis en scene") is the conflict which the institution foresees and controls." It is a theater and a cinema that are narcissistic, historicist, and moralizing. The same for the rich as for the

poor: CB describes them as belonging to the same system of power and domination that divides them into "poor slaves" and "rich slaves," and where the artist has the function of an intellectual slave, on one side or the other. But just how is one to exit from this situation of conflictual, official, institutionalized representation? How is one to turn to good account the subterranean work of a free and present variation, which insinuates itself among the chains of slavery and bursts them apart?

Then there are the other directions: the living theater, where the conflicts are lived rather than represented, as in a psychodrama. The aesthetic theater, where the formalized conflicts become abstract, geometrical, ornamental. The mystical theater, which tends to abandon representation in order to become communal and ascetic life "beyond the spectacle." None of these directions suits CB; he still prefers representation pure and simple. . . . Like Hamlet, he is seeking a simpler, more humble formula.

The whole question turns around the *majoritarian fact.* For the theater for all, the popular theater, is a little like democracy; it appeals to a majoritarian fact. But this fact is very ambiguous. It assumes a state of power or domination and not the opposite. Obviously there may be more flies and mosquitoes than men, but man nevertheless constitutes the meterstick in relation to which men necessarily have the majority. "The majority" does not designate a larger quantity, but first and foremost that meterstick in relation to which the other quantities, whatever they may be, will be said to be smaller. For example, women and children, blacks and Indians, etc., will be minoritarian relative to the meterstick constituted by man—the white Christian ordinary-male-adult-inhabitant of today's American or European cities (Ulysses). But at this point everything is turned upside down. For if "the majority" refers to a model of power, historical or structural or both at once, one must also say that *everyone* is minoritarian, potentially minoritarian to the extent that they deviate from this model. Now is not continuous variation precisely that which keeps overflowing—by excess or by defect—the representational threshold of the majoritarian standard? Is not continuous variation the becoming-minoritarian of everyone, in opposition to the majoritarian fact of Someone? May the theater not therefore find for itself a function modest enough, and yet effective? This antirepresentational function would be to trace, to constitute a sort of diagram of minoritarian consciousness, as a potentiality of every person. To render a potentiality present, actual, is quite another thing from representing a conflict. One could no longer say that art has a power, that it still belongs to power, even when it criticizes power. For in drawing up the form of a minoritarian consciousness, it would be addressing itself to the powers of becoming, which are of another domain from that of power and of the representation-

standard. "Art is not a form of power, it is that when it ceases to be art and begins to become demagogy." Art submits to many powers, but it is not a form of power. It matters little that the actor-author-director exercises an ascendancy and behaves when need be in an authoritarian—very authoritarian—manner. This is the authority of a perpetual variation, in opposition to the power or despotism of the invariant. This is the authority, the autonomy of the stammerer, of him who has conquered the right to stammer, in opposition to the "well-spoken" major. Of course the risk is always great that the form of minority will restore a majority, refashion a standard (when art begins to become demagogy. . .). The variation itself must keep varying, that is, passing in effect along new and always unexpected paths.

What are these paths from the point of view of a politics of the theater? Who is this man of the minority? Even the word *man* is no longer appropriate, so much is it affected by the majoritarian sign. Why not *woman* or *transvestite?* But they too are already codified. One can see a politics being sketched out through CB's declarations or positions. The frontier, that is to say, the line of variation, does not pass between the masters and the slaves, nor between the rich and the poor. For between them a whole regime of relations and oppositions is woven that makes of the master a rich slave and of the slave a poor master, *within the same majoritarian system.* The frontier does not pass through history, nor even through the interior of an established structure, nor even through "the people." Everyone calls on the spirit of the people, in the name of the majoritarian language, but who is the people? "It is the people that is missing." In truth, the frontier passes between history and antihistoricism, that is to say, concretely, "those of whom History does not take account." It passes between the structure and the lines of flight that traverse it. It passes between the people and the *ethnic group.* The ethnic group is the minoritarian, the line of flight in the structure, the antihistorical element in history. CB lives his own minority in relation to the folk of Apuglia: his South or his Third World, in the sense in which everyone has a South and a Third World. Now when he speaks of the folk of Apuglia to which he belongs, he senses that the word *poor* is not at all suitable. How can one term people poor who would rather die of hunger than work? How can one term people slaves who do not enter into the game of master and slave? How can one speak of a "conflict" where there was something quite different, a blazing variation, an antihistorical variant—the mad riot of Campi Salentina, as CB describes it. But see how one has performed a strange graft on them, a strange operation: they have been planned, represented, normalized, historicized, integrated to the majoritarian fact, and yes, one has turned them into the poor, into slaves, into the people, into history—they have been rendered major.

A final danger, before we can believe that we have understood what CB is saying. He is not especially interested—not at all—in becoming the head of a regionalist troupe. On the contrary, he demands and clamors for State theaters, he fights for them, there is no cult of poverty in his work. One requires a lot of political bad faith to see a "contradiction" there or a recuperation. CB has never claimed to be creating a regionalist theater, and a minority begins already to be normalized when one closes it in on itself and when one circumscribes it with the dance of the good old times (thus one makes of it a subcomponent of the majority). CB never belongs more to Apuglia, to the South, than when he is making a universal theater with English, French, and American alliances. What he extracts from Apuglia is a line of variation, air, soil, sun, colors, lights, and sounds, which he himself will cause to vary in quite another way, on other lines—for example, *Notre-Dame of the Turks*, in which there is more of Apuglia than if he had represented it in poetry.

To conclude, *minority has two senses*, undoubtedly related, but quite distinct. *Minority* designates first a factual condition, that is, the situation of a group that, whatever its number, is excluded from the majority, or even included, but as a subordinate fraction in relation to a standard of measure that makes the law and fixes the majority. One may say in this sense that women, children, the South, the Third World, etc., are still minorities, however numerous they may be. But then let us take this first sense "at its word." Immediately there is a second sense: minority no longer designates a factual condition, but a becoming in which one is engaged. Becoming-minoritarian is a goal, but a goal that concerns everyone, since everyone enters into this goal and this becoming to the extent that each person constructs his/her variation around the despotic unity of measure, and escapes, one way or another, the system of power that made him/her a part of the majority. According to this second sense, it is evident that the minority is much more numerous than the majority. For example, according to the first sense women are a minority, but in the second sense there is a becoming-woman of all, a becoming-woman that is a potentiality for all, and women have to become-woman no less than men themselves. This is a universal becoming-minoritarian. Here *minority* designates the capacity for becoming, while *majority* designates the power or incapacity of a state, of a situation. It is here that theater or art can spring up with a specific political function, on condition that minority does not represent anything regionalist, but also nothing aristocratic, aesthetic, or mystical.

Theater will spring up as that which represents nothing, but which presents and constitutes a consciousness of minority, as becoming-universal, operating alliances here or there as the case may be, following lines of transformation that leap outside the theater and take another form or that recon-

vert themselves into theater in order to prepare a new leap. It is very much a question of awareness, although it has nothing to do with a psychoanalytic consciousness, nor with a Marxist or even a Brechtian political consciousness. Consciousness, awareness, is a great capacity, but it is not made for solutions or for interpretations. It is when consciousness has abandoned solutions and interpretations that it conquers its light, its gestures, its sounds, and its decisive transformation. Henry James writes: "She had finished by coming to know the extent to which she could no longer interpret anything; there were no more darknesses that would enable her to see clearly, there remained nothing but a cruel light." The more one achieves this form of minority consciousness, the less one feels alone. Light. One is a mass all to oneself, "the mass of my atoms." And beneath the ambition of formulas, there is the more modest appreciation of what could be a revolutionary theater, a simple, loving potentiality, a component for a new becoming of consciousness.

Trans. Alan Orenstein

Part Five

Politics

26

. . .

On the Line

Whether we are individuals or groups, we are made up of lines and these lines are very varied in nature. The first kind of line which forms us is segmentary—of rigid segmentarity (or rather there are already many lines of this sort): family—profession; job—holiday; family—and then school—and then the army—and then the factory—and then retirement. And each time, from one segment to the next, they speak to us, saying: "Now you're not a baby any more"; and at school, "You're not at home now"; and in the army, "You're not at school now." . . . In short, all kinds of clearly defined segments, in all kinds of directions, which cut us up in all sense, packets of segmentarized lines. At the same time, we have lines of segmentarity which are much more supple, as it were molecular. It's not that they are more intimate or personal—they run through societies and groups as much as individuals. They trace out little modifications, they make detours, they sketch out rises and falls: but they are no less precise for all this, they even direct irreversible processes. But rather than molar lines with segments, they are molecular fluxes with thresholds or quanta. *A threshold is crossed, which does not necessarily coincide with a segment of more visible lines.* Many things happen on this second kind of line—becomings, micro-becomings, which don't even have the same rhythm as our "history." This is why family histories, registrations, commemorations, are so unpleasant, whilst our true changes take

place elsewhere—another politics, another time, another individuation. A profession is a rigid segment, but also what happens beneath it, the connections, the attractions and repulsions, which do not coincide with the segments, the forms of madness which are secret but which nevertheless relate to the public authorities: for example, being a teacher, or a judge, a barrister, an accountant, a cleaning lady? At the same time, again, there is a third kind of line, which is even more strange: as if something carried us away, across our segments, but also across our thresholds, toward a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not preexistent. This line is simple, abstract, and yet is the most complex of all, the most tortuous: it is the line of gravity or velocity, the line of flight and of the greatest gradient ("the line that the center of gravity must describe is certainly very simple, and, so he believed, straight in the majority of cases. . . but, from another point of view, this line has something exceedingly mysterious, for, according to him, it is nothing other than the progression of the soul of the dancer. . ."[1]). This line appears to arise [*surgir*] afterwards, to become detached from the two others, if indeed it succeeds in detaching itself. For perhaps there are people who do not have this line, who have only the two others, or who have only one, who live on only one. Nevertheless, in another sense, this line has always been there, although it is the opposite of a destiny: it does not have to detach itself from the others, rather it is the first, the others are derived from it. In any case, the three lines are immanent, caught up in one another. We have as many tangled lines as a hand. We are complicated in a different way from a hand. What we call by different names—schizoanalysis, micropolitics, pragmatics, diagrammatism, rhizomatics, cartography—has no other object than the study of these lines, in groups or as individuals.

Fitzgerald explains, in a wonderful short story, that a life always goes at several rhythms, at several speeds.[2] Though Fitzgerald is a living drama—defining life as a demolition process—his text is somber, but no less exemplary for that, each sentence inspiring love. His genius is never so great as when he speaks of his loss of genius. Thus, he says that for him there were at first great segments—rich-poor, young-old, success–loss of success, health-sickness, love–love's drying up, creativity-sterility—which were related to social events (economic crisis, stock market crash, rise of the cinema which replaced the novel, formation of fascism, all sorts of things which could be said to be heterogeneous, but whose segments respond to and precipitate each other). Fitzgerald calls these "cuts" [*coupures*]; each segment marks or can mark a cut. This is a type of line, the segmented line, which concerns us all at a particular time, at a particular place. Whether it heads towards degradation or success does not alter much (on this model a successful life is not the best, the American Dream is as much in the street sweeper starting

out to become a multimillionaire as in the multimillionaire himself, the opposite; the same segments). And Fitzgerald says something else, at the same time: there are lines of crack [*fêlure*], which do not coincide with the lines of great segmentary cuts. This time we might say that a plate cracks. But it is rather when everything is going well, or everything goes better on the other line, that the crack happens on this new line—secret, imperceptible, marking a threshold of lowered resistance, or the rise of a threshold of exigency: you can no longer stand what you put up with before, even yesterday; the distribution of desires has changed in us, our relationships of speed and slowness have been modified, a new type of anxiety comes upon us, but also a new serenity. Fluxes have moved, it is when your health is at its best, your riches most assured, your talent most manifest, that the little cracking which will move the line obliquely starts to happen. Or the opposite: things go better for you when everything cracks on the other line, producing immense relief. Not being able to bear something any longer can be a progression, but it can also be an old man's fear, or the development of a paranoia. It can be a political or affective appraisal that is perfectly correct. We do not change, we do not age, in the same way—from one line to the other. Nevertheless, the supple line is not more personal, more intimate. Microcracks are also collective, no less than macrocuts are personal. And then, Fitzgerald speaks of yet another line, a third, which he calls *rupture*. It might be thought that nothing has changed, and nevertheless everything has changed. Certainly it is not the great segments, changes, or even journeys that produce this line; but neither is it the most secret mutations, the mobile and fluent thresholds, although these approximate more closely to it. It might be said rather than an "absolute" threshold has been reached. There are no longer secrets. You have become like everyone, but in fact you have turned the "everyone" into a *becoming*. You have become imperceptible, clandestine. You have undergone a curious stationary journey. Despite the different tones, it is a little like the way in which Kierkegaard describes the knight of the faith, ONLY MOVEMENTS CONCERN ME:[3] the knight no longer has segments of resignation, but neither does he have the suppleness of a poet or of a dancer, he does not make himself obvious, he resembles rather a bourgeois, a taxcollector, a tradesman, he dances with so much precision that they say that he is only walking or even staying still, he blends into the wall but the wall has become alive, he is painted gray on gray, or like the Pink Panther he has painted the world in his own color, he has acquired something invulnerable, and he knows that by loving, even by loving and for loving, one must be self-contained, abandon love and the ego. . . (it is curious that Lawrence has written similar passages). There is now only an abstract line, a pure movement which is difficult to discover, he never

begins, he takes things by the middle, he is always in the middle—in the middle of two other lines? "Only movements concern me."

A cartography is suggested today by Deligny when he follows the course of autistic children: the lines of custom, and also the supple lines where the child produces a loop, finds something, claps his hands, hums a ritornello, retraces his steps, and then the "lines of wandering" mixed up in the two others.[4] All these lines are tangled. Deligny produces a geoanalysis, an analysis of lines which takes his path far from psychoanalysis, and which relates not only to autistic children, but to all children, to all adults (watch someone walking down the street and see what little inventions he introduces into it, if he is not too caught up in his rigid segmentarity, what little inventions he puts there), and not only their walk, but their gestures, their affects, their language, their style. First of all, we should give a more precise status to the three lines. For the molar lines of rigid segmentarity, we can indicate a certain number of characteristics which explain their assemblage, or rather their functioning in the assemblages of which they form part (and there is no assemblage which does not include them). Here therefore are the approximate characteristics of the first kind of line.

1. Segments depend on binary machines which can be very varied if need be. Binary machines of social classes; of sexes, man-woman; of ages, child-adult; of races, black-white; of sectors, public-private; of subjectivations, ours–not ours. These binary machines are all the more complex for cutting across each other, or colliding against each other, confronting each other, and they cut us up in all sorts of directions. And they are not roughly dualistic, they are rather dichotomic: they can operate diachronically (if you are neither *a* nor *b*, then you are *c*: dualism has shifted, and no longer relates to simultaneous elements to choose between, but successive choices; if you are neither black nor white, you are a half-breed; if you are neither man nor woman, you are a transvestite: each time the machine with binary elements will produce binary choices between elements which are not present at the first cutting-up).

2. Segments also imply devices of power, which vary greatly among themselves, each fixing the code and the territory of the corresponding segment. These are the devices which have been analyzed so profoundly by Foucault, who refused to see in them the simple emanations of a preexisting State apparatus. Each device of power is a code-territory complex (do not approach my territory, it is I who give the orders here. . .). M. de Charlus collapses at Mme Verdurin's, because he has ventured beyond his own territory and his code no longer works. The segmentarity of adjacent offices in Kafka. It is by discovering this segmentarity and this heterogeneity of modern powers that Foucault was able to break

with the hollow abstractions of the State and of "the" law and renew all the assumptions of political analysis. It is not that the apparatus of the State has no meaning: it has itself a very special function, inasmuch as it overcodes all the segments, both those that it takes on itself at a given moment and those that it leaves outside itself. Or rather the apparatus of the State is a concrete assemblage which realizes the machine of overcoding of a society. This machine in its turn is thus not the State itself, it is the abstract machine which organizes the dominant utterances and the established order of a society, the dominant languages and knowledge, conformist actions and feelings, the segments which prevail over the others. The abstract machine of overcoding ensures the homogenization of different segments, their convertibility, their translatability, it regulates the passages from one side to the other, and the prevailing force under which this takes place. It does not depend on the State, but its effectiveness depends on the State as the assemblage which realizes it in a social field (for example, different monetary segments, different kinds of money have rules of convertibility, between themselves and with goods, which refer to a central bank as State apparatus). Greek geometry functioned as an abstract machine which organized the social space, in the conditions of the concrete assemblage of power of the city. We should ask today which are the abstract machines of overcoding, which are exercised as a result of the forms of the modern State. One can even conceive of "forms of knowledge" which make their offers of service to the State, proposing themselves for its realization, claiming to provide the best machines for the tasks or the aims of the State: today informatics? But also the human sciences? There are no sciences of the State but there are abstract machines which have relationships of interdependence with the State. This is why, on the line of rigid segmentarity, one must distinguish the *devices of power* which code the diverse segments, the *abstract machine* which overcodes them and regulates their relationships and the *apparatus of the State* which realizes this machine.

3. Finally, all rigid segmentarity, all the lines of rigid segmentarity, enclose a certain plane, which concerns both forms and their development, subjects and their formation. *A plane of organization* which always has at its disposal a supplementary dimension (overcoding). The education of the subject and the harmonization of the form have constantly haunted our culture, inspired the segmentations, the planifications, the binary machines which cut them and the abstract machines which cut them again. As Pierre Fleutiaux says, when an outline begins to tremble, when a segment wavers, we call the terrible Lunette to cut things up, the laser which puts forms in order and subjects in their place.[5]

The status of the other type of lines seems to be completely different. The segments here are not the same, proceeding by thresholds, constituting becomings, blocs of becoming, marking continuums of intensity, combinations of fluxes. The abstract machines here are not the same, they are mutating and not overcoding, marking their mutations at each threshold and each combination. The plane is not the same *plane of consistence or of immanence,* which tears from forms particles between which there are now only relationships of speed and slowness, and tears from subjects affects which now only carry out individuations by "haecceity." The binary machines no longer engage with this real, not because the dominant segment would change (a particular class, a particular sex . . .), nor because mixtures like bisexuality or class-mixing would be imposed: on the contrary, because the molecular lines make fluxes of deterritorialization shoot between the segments, fluxes which no longer belong to one or to the other, but which constitute an asymmetrical becoming of the two, molecular sexuality which is no longer that of a man or of a woman, molecular masses which no longer have the outline of a class, molecular races like little lines which no longer respond to the great molar oppositions. It is certainly no longer a matter of a synthesis of the two, of a synthesis of 1 and 2, but of a third which always comes from elsewhere and disturbs the binarity of the two, not so much inserting itself in their opposition as in their complementarity. It is not a matter of adding a new segment onto the preceding segments on the line (a third sex, a third class, a third age), but of tracing another line in the middle of the segmentary line, in the middle of the segments, which carries them off according to the variable speeds and slownesses in a movement of flight or of flux. To continue the use of geographical terms: imagine that between *the West and the East* a certain segmentarity is introduced, opposed in a binary machine, arranged in the State apparatuses, overcoded by an abstract machine as the sketch of a world order. It is then from *North to South* that the destabilization takes place, as Giscard d'Estaing said gloomily, and a stream erodes a path, even if it is a shallow stream, which brings everything into play and diverts the plane of organization. A Corsican here, elsewhere a Palestinian, a plane hijacker, a tribal upsurge, a feminist movement, a Green ecologist, a Russian dissident—there will always be someone to rise up to the South. Imagine the Greeks and the Trojans as two opposed segments, face to face: but look, the Amazons arrive, they begin by overthrowing the Trojans, so that the Greeks cry, "The Amazons are with us," but they turn against the Greeks, attacking them from behind with the violence of a torrent. This is how Kleist's *Penthesilea* begins. The great ruptures, the great oppositions, are always negotiable; but not the little crack, the imperceptible ruptures which come from the South. We say *South* without attach-

ing any importance to this. We talk of the South in order to mark a direction different from that of the line of segments. But everyone has his South—it doesn't matter where it is—that is, his line of slope or flight. Nations, classes, sexes have their South. Godard: what counts is not merely the two opposed camps on the great line where they confront each other, but also the frontier, through which everything passes and shoots on a broken molecular line of a different orientation. May 1968 was an explosion of such a molecular line, an irruption of the Amazons, a frontier which traced its unexpected line, drawing along the segments like torn-off blocs which have lost their bearings.

We may be criticized for not escaping from dualism, with two kinds of lines, which are cut up, planified, machined, differently. But what defines dualism is not the number of terms, any more than one escapes from dualism by adding other terms (× 2). You only escape dualisms effectively by shifting them like a load, and when you find between the terms, whether they are two or more, a narrow gorge like a border or a frontier which will turn the set into a multiplicity, independently of the number of parts. What we call an assemblage is, precisely, a multiplicity. Now, any assemblage necessarily includes lines of rigid and binary segmentarity, no less than molecular lines, or lines of border, of flight or slope. The devices of power do not seem to us to be exactly constitutive of assemblages, but to form part of them in one dimension on which the whole assemblage can topple over or turn back on itself. But, in fact, insofar as dualisms belong to this dimension, there is another dimension of the assemblage which does not form a dualism with this latter. There is no dualism between abstract overcoding machines and abstract machines of mutation: the latter find themselves segmentarized, organized, overcoded by the others, at the same time as they undermine them; both work within each other at the heart of the assemblage. In the same way there is no dualism between the two planes of transcendent organization and immanent consistence: indeed it is from the forms and subjects of the first plane that the second constantly tears the particles between which there are no longer relationships of speed and slowness, and it is also on the plane of immanence that the other arises, working in it to block movements, fix affects, organize forms and subjects. The speed indicators presuppose forms that they dissolve, no less than the organizations presuppose the material in fusion which they put in order. We do not therefore speak of a dualism between two kinds of "things," but of a multiplicity of dimensions, of lines and directions in the heart of an assemblage. To the question "How can desire desire its own repression, how can it desire its slavery?" we reply that the powers which crush desire, or which subjugate it, themselves already form part of assemblages of desire: it is sufficient

for desire to follow this particular line, for it to find itself caught, like a boat, under this particular wind. There is no desire *for* revolution, as there is no desire *for* power, desire *to* oppress or *to* be oppressed; but revolution, oppression, power, etc., are the actual component lines of a given assemblage. It is not that these lines are preexistent; they are traced out, they are formed, immanent to each other, mixed up in each other, at the same time as the assemblage of desire is formed, with its machines tangled up and its planes intersecting. We don't know in advance which one will function as line of gradient, or in what form it will be barred. This is true of a musical assemblage, for example: with its codes and territorialities, its constraints and its apparatuses of power, its dichotomized measures, its melodic and harmonic forms which are developed, its transcendent plane of organization, but also with its transformers of speed between sound molecules, its "nonpulsed time," its proliferations and dissolutions, its child-becomings, woman-becomings, animal-becomings, its immanent plane of consistence. The long-term rôle of the power of the Church, in musical assemblages, and what the musicians succeed in making pass into this, or into the middle. This is true of all assemblages.

What must be compared in each case are the movements of deterritorialization and the processes of reterritorialization which appear in an assemblage. But what do they mean, these words which Félix invents to make them into variable coefficients? We could go back to the commonplaces of the evolution of humanity: man, *deterritorialized animal*. When they say to us that the hominoid removed its front paws from the earth and that the hand is at first locomotor, then prehensile, these are thresholds or the quanta of deterritorialization, but each time with a complementary reterritorialization: the locomotor hand as the deterritorialized paw is reterritorialized on the branches which it uses to pass from tree to tree; the prehensile hand as deterritorialized locomotion is reterritorialized on the torn-off, borrowed elements called tools that it will brandish or propel. But the "stick" tool is itself a deterritorialized branch; and the great inventions of man imply a passage to the steppe as deterritorialized forest; at the same time man is reterritorialized on the steppe. The breast is said to be a mammary gland deterritorialized by vertical stature; and the mouth a deterritorialized animal mouth, by the turning-up of the mucous membranes to the exterior: but a correlative reterritorialization is carried out of the lips onto the breast and conversely, so that the bodies and the environments are traversed by very different speeds of deterritorialization, by differential speeds, whose complementarities form continuums of intensity, but also give rise to processes of reterritorialization. At the limit, it is the earth itself, the deterritorialized ("the desert grows . . ."), and it is the nomad, the man of earth, the man of