## 1ac—story

#### WHY I WANT TO FUCK RONALD REAGAN

#### SEXUAL FANTASIES IN CONNECTION WITH RONALD REAGAN. The genitalia of the Presidential contender exercised a continuing fascination. A series of imaginary genitalia were constructed using (a) the mouth parts of Jacqueline Kennedy, (b) a Cadillac, (c) the assembly kid prepuce of President Johnson...In 89% of cases, the constructed genitalia generated a high incidence of self-induced orgasm. Tests indicate the masturbatory nature of the Presidential contender’s posture. Dolls consisting of plastic models of Reagan’s alternate genitalia were found to have a disturbing effect on deprived children. REAGAN'S HAIRSTYLE. Studies were conducted on the marked fascination exercised by the Presidential contender’s hairstyle. 65% of male subjects made positive connections between the hairstyle and their own pubic hair. A series of optimum hairstyles were constructed. THE CONCEPTUAL ROLE OF REAGAN. Fragments of Reagan’s cinetized postures were used in the construction of model psychodramas in which the Reagan-figure played the role of husband, doctor, insurance salesman, marriage counselor, etc. The failure of these roles to express any meaning reveals the nonfunctional character of Reagan. Reagan’s success therefore indicates society’s periodic need to re-conceptualize its political leaders. Reagan thus appears as a series of posture concepts, basic equations which reformulate the roles of aggression and anality. Reagan’s personality. The profound anality of the Presidential contender may be expected to dominate the United States in the coming years. By contrast the late JFK remained the prototype of the oral subject, usually conceived in pre-pubertal terms. In further studies sadistic psychopaths were given the task of devising sex fantasies involving Reagan. Results confirm the probability of Presidential figures being perceived primarily in genital terms; the face of LB Johnson is clearly genital in significant appearance--the nasal prepuce, scrotal jaw, etc. Faces were seen as either circumcised (JFK, Khrushchev) or uncircumcised (LBJ, Adenauer). In assembly-kit tests Reagan’s face was uniformly perceived as a penile erection. Patients were encouraged to devise the optimum sex-death of Ronald Reagan.

*Excerpted from the short story “Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan” by J.G. Ballard.*

## 1ac—advantage

#### Ultimately our understand of *what Reagan is*, what a president is, what the government is all established by the production and regulation of what thoughts, what desires, and what pleasures are appropriate to *think* about America’s political leaders and its government. All of this contributes to the formation of community—but the problem is that this is always imperfect, exclusive, and closed.

#### Break open the possibilities of pleasure and the body of the president.

#### Our desires are not our own. They are our prisons, defining the terms and the scope of conceivable action. The 1ac ruptures the illusion of a normative economy of what it is appropriate

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It has, some argue, always been the impulse of Americans to see their political aspirations in terms of the sublime, be- yond the pragmatic politics of the Old World. The genius, if I may, of Ronald Reagan-who as governor so bitterly de- nounced the children of the '60s-was to call for the liberation of the child in corporate and consuming Americans when the '70s had us feeling old and cranky. But under the cover of a new American innocence, there emerged an unprecedented compulsion to serve the economic machinery in the name of private satisfactions. Jean Baudrillard, America's cool lover, saw it coming as early as 1970 when he identified the pathological obligation to enjoy in the "fun-system" of consumption (48). These narrowly constrained pleasures of consumption, so contemptuous of the pleasures of countercultural excesses of the body, had the unhappy effect of producing wild wealth for those few committed to the material fork of the American fantasy. J. G. Ballard looked at America, also in 1970, and in a scandalous piece, "Why I Want to Fuck Ronald Reagan," identified the governor's bursting anal joy as his most seductive characteristic, one that was to be realized on a national level in the 1980s. The fun was blinding. Only when consumers "lost confidence," like aging libertines sadly looking over yet one more virgin, did Americans begin generally to realize that the fun was not properly ours, that our desires were not our own. What I am considering here is the place of pleasure in the formation of communities, particularly of nations, and the con- sistent inability to understand the relation between them that has been a part of our own recent history and has again taken on disturbing international implications. The pursuit of happiness has a calculable side to it-wealth, security, property- but it has another side that seems, depending on the outcome, sublime or, as in nationalism, obscene. The confusion of these two dimensions appears, for example, at the center of most of Don DeLillo's work. He has consistently explored the problem of pleasure that attends Western, Enlightenment thought. It is difficult for most Westerners, particularly those with 10 years and more of university training behind them, to imagine that the idea of the rational individual has not triumphed in the world. The businessmen, CIA spooks, insurance agents, and other power brokers in The Names (1982) long for something beyond themselves but can no more imagine that some cult that kills people in accord with an alphabetic scheme represents the majority of the world than we believe David Koresh is the norm of American faith. In The Names, what goes beyond the individual has its most spectacular representation in the image of thousands of people circling the Kaaba in Mecca, a mass of people running for faith. DeLillo opens Mao 11 (1991) with a similar vision: thousands of couples in Yankee Stadium being married simultaneously by the Reverend Moon to partners they just met. The shadow of that deep pleasure, where some infantile joy inhabits the idea of a community, haunts every at- tempt by DeLillo's heroes to construct satisfying lives. No evi- dence of particular failures in Moonie marriages or alphabetic killings eliminates desires for some sublime transformation. Today, following the collapse of the East-West arrangement, an important issue on both domestic and international levels is to figure out what will constitute a national pleasure- how are we going to understand community. And as we have been asked by our national leaders to rediscover America-always a frightening proposition-it might serve us well to think again about the community and the sublime. The essays in Jean-Luc Nancy's The Inoperative Commu- nity (Communaute desoeuvree) and Jean-Francois Lyotard's The Inhuman propose that community as we normally think about it is impossible, was probably always impossible. The negation both use in their titles suggests the attempt they are making to find an alternative within an aspect of experience that has been denied or repressed. And yet it would be hard to call either of these strenuous accounts utopic, or even opti- mistic, and for that reason they present a useful response to the determined attempts to transcend cultural theory's impasses. The nature of these impasses is the subject of two of Steven Connor's recent books on contemporary theory and value, and as such the books serve as examples and analyses of the obsessions and repetitions that divide literary and cultural studies. Thinking through these problems in terms of pleasure, Connor locates the divides along the difference between satisfaction (the end of a Freudian death drive) and ecstasy (the jouissance of the sublime), between totalitarianism and anarchy. Connor articulates this opposition in Theory and Cultural Value: "The experience of pleasure in art and culture may be a useful place to start, not because art and culture offer access to any kind of pure or disinterested pleasure, but precisely because of the uncertain and impure nature of pleasure in these areas, poised between the interested and the disinterested, be- tween use-value and exchange-value, between homeostatic ego-gratification and the indefiniteness of sublime pleasure" (54). Connor circles variations of this opposition (providing a useful summary of many theorists along the way) in the name of a return to the ripe topic of ethics: so much theory, but what do you do? In his exploration of ethical positions, Connor does not let stand any plea for a paradise of resolutions, no Jiirgen Haber- mas or Fredric Jameson opening a door to utopia, more or less. But he does repeatedly suggest that we might live ethically in the center of a vortex. While remaining skeptical of the university as an institution, for example, one could still retain a "principled attachment" to it as a center that holds crisis open for examination (130); feminists might dialectically inhabit both a French field of difference and poetics (Luce Irigaray, Helene Cixous) and a more political field of universals directed to- ward developing a "dynamic interplay" of values (186-87). Theory, that is, should not determine values or evacuate them but chart their passage from one field to the other (257). This is not a simple pragmatism, as much as Connor admires this American school from John Dewey and William James to Richard Rorty. Rather, it is a determined suspension between idealism and daily life. What I find disturbing is that Connor in his pluralist tendency steadily abandons theory. Like many working in historicist and cultural studies, he displays an ulti- mate distrust of attempts to work a problem through to some usually unsatisfying end, of the impotence of philosophy. Nancy and Lyotard show no such limits. Nancy's book of essays, written in the mid '80s, emerges from the dilemma faced by the Left (that part of politics con- cerned "at least" with "what is at stake in community as op- posed to the right's concern with order and administration" xxxvi) during the collapse of communism. The topical es- says-on democracy, communism, freedom, religion, love- are couched in the difficult, deconstructive gestures of deferral typical of Martin Heidegger or Jacques Derrida and provide few specific historical examples, leaving the philosophy purer than many will like. But what Nancy claims about communism has far-reaching implications, for while communism as a polit- ical reality disappears, it ironically reemerges in new forms, emblematic of "the desire to discover or rediscover a place of community at once beyond social divisions and beyond subor- dination to technopolitical dominion" (1). The most threatening social forms this fantasy takes, Nancy argues, are those of communities that "operate," that are deliberately "worked" out: religion in its more enthusiastic forms, nationalism, and other political movements that tend toward the production of a unified communal spirit, all tending toward totalitarian impulses. What Nancy values instead is the "inoperative," "un- working," desoeuvree in community, "that which, before or beyond the work, withdraws from the work, and which, no longer having to do either with production or with completion, encounters interruption, fragmentation, suspension" (31). That is, the community Nancy imagines is one that emerges from what resists the communal, the gathering of all people in an es- sential spirit. The community, by contrast with the communal, would be what "exposes" you to the fact of your singular, mor- tal self in the presence of others. Nancy presses on the contradiction in democratic soci- eties that liberals, at least, have learned to live with, mostly by forgetting it exists: we dwell with, but separate from, others. This forgetting comes not despite the triumph of democracy in the post-cold war world, but as part of it, or of "the consensus of a single program that we call 'democracy'" (xxxviii). Con- sensus has replaced the difficult, conflictual process of communication, just as communion (the union of spirit) has re- placed community. Americans may assume, as The Life of Brian proclaims, that we are all individuals, but because we exist differentially, the only full individual is, literally, the dead individual(13), someone at last no longer touched by others. At the same time, the idea of a profound communion with other individuals grows out of a fantasy of a lost community, a "lost age in which community was woven of tight, harmo- nious, and infrangible bonds" (9). Such communities, Nancy argues, suppress all freedom, community, life, as contempo- rary examples almost anywhere in the world will demonstrate. Real community, by contrast, involves "sharing" (par- tage), the fact of coming together that distributes, spaces, and places people so that it is not one's individuality that emerges, but a sense of "finitude": "Sharing comes down to this: what community reveals to me, in presenting to me my birth and my death, is my existence outside myself.... A singular being ap- pears, as finitude itself: at the end (or at the beginning), with the contact of the skin (or the heart) of another singular being, at the confines of the same singularity that is, as such, always other, always shared, always exposed" (26-28). The skin, the face, the heart are for Nancy the simple physical facts that al- ways limit our ability to merge with others. No fantasy of com- munion will get past this difference. But these limits are also what open us to communication, to an awareness of our "expo- sure" before the world, and crucially (lest you think this is all bleak stuff) ecstasy, "what happens to the singular being" (7). Hard work, of course, to face exposure, but this is the way to thought, to the divine, to love, to "the impossible." It is not wholeness, but limits that Nancy seeks. Two passages on love: Love re-presents I to itself broken.... [H]e, this subject, was touched, broken into, in his subjectivity, and he is from then on, for the time of love, opened by this slice, broken or fractured, even if only slightly. .... From then on, I is constituted broken. (96) But it is the break itself that makes the heart.... The beat- ing of the heart-rhythm of the partition of being, syn- cope of the sharing of singularity-cuts across presence, life, consciousness. That is why thinking-which is noth- ing other than the weighing or testing of the limits, the ends, of presence, of life, of consciousness-thinking it- self is love. (99) Nancy is attempting here to link the social situation of "being in common," of community and thought, tojouissance. Joy "is to be cut across," which requires an opening to others in "aban- donment," in "destitution," without the protection of spiritual- ism and forgetting. This notion of community as that which separates and places us sounds like Michel Foucault's description of commu- nity under panoptic surveillance, though Foucault's followers, unlike Nancy, see this state of affairs as having oppressive implications. The Foucauldian subject is not congenitally singu- lar but is created as singular by and for power, created as a subject of knowledge. And since anything that might exist before or outside of power and discourse remains by definition unknowable, there seems to be no alternative to what power has created, no escape, no freedom. A number of recent theorists, most strikingly Judith Butler in Gender Trouble, have pro- posed strategies for evading power. Butler proves repeatedly that a sexual body does not exist prior to discourse, but the weight of this repetition suggests a fury at the thought that some piece of nature, as Freud puts it, might be behind our dis- content. Insistently, she points to the origin in discourse of cul- ture's malaise, disavowing organic imperatives and their rep- resentation in drives. "The epistemology of drive theory is junk," one opponent of that nature huffed at me and then turned away when I asked about drives. If our grief is only a conse- quence of discourse, just bad epistemology, then we might make it all right some day. Butler's famous solution is drag, the multiplication of gender positions that enables the individual to escape the construction of power, though I cannot get my mind off Paris is Burning and the image of Venus dreaming of the day when he could replace drag with a sex change opera- tion and thereby marry and settle down in the suburbs. He dies first, and meanwhile drag is becoming fashion. But Butler's strategy has become a common one, suggesting that the way out of the constraints of gender, the marketplace, and technolo- gy is to seize the position imposed by social power and exploit it, multiplying marketplaces and commodities, increasing the flow of information, accepting not a single gender but many until power cannot trace your movements. In all these moves I find a desperate optimism, a hope that happiness may yet be possible. I do not say that pleasure may be possible, because plea- sure itself is part of the problem. For Foucauldians like Butler, pleasure in the form of jouissance is a source of resistance to the other pleasures of consensus based, collective community. The displacements implied in ecstasy suggest not only an unbalancing of the self but also an evasion of power's individuating forces. But when thinking about such pleasure in Western society, we should probably keep in mind the perverse and de- structive jouissance that Baudrillard finds in our shopping malls and highways, the compelling repetitions in American history that W. S. Burroughs describes from the moment the first invaders hit Western shores in Cities of the Red Night (1981). Nancy also looks to jouissance as resistance, but he will have nothing to do with any jouissance that looks like fun. He insists, for instance, that the function of literature (as op- posed to myth, the lost story, the founding fiction) is to inter- rupt every myth, community, and thought of mastery. It is all agony, this suspension he describes, and consequently his cri- tique fails to address the real, if covert, pleasures that sustain modern institutions. Beneath the satisfactions of capital, gov- ernment, science, and even gender lie ancient enjoyments that remain mostly unconscious but vital.

#### Obviously perfect satisfaction is impossible. Being alive guarantees that shit happens that we don’t necessarily enjoy and we’ll never claim to solve that problem. Legislating what people ought to derive pleasure from is always already a reaction to the imperfections in any such system of value—the question of this debate is whether you’ll legislate our pleasure in enjoying the sexualization of the body of the president. What will you do with us, the discontents, the other worldly, those that dare to desire what civilization deems undesirable: commandeering the body of the commander-in-chief?

#### The fatal repetition of contemporary politics is that we can never consider our policies, their objects, or their subjects as joyous and instead circle ourselves endless, stuck in the same logic of stale, limited simulacra. Think the possibility of deriving joy from disorganized speech.

Foster continues.Dennis A. Foster, Daisy Dean Frensley Chair in English Literature at Southern Methodist University, PhD from UC Irvine, “Pleasure and Community in Cultural Criticism,” American Literary History, Vol. 6, No. 2 (Summer, 1994), pg. 372[unbroken]

What Lyotard adds to this discussion is a description of the dynamics of these unconscious enjoyments. His claims in The Postmodern Condition (1984) about the ubiquity of dis- cursive forces seem forgotten in The Inhuman, where he ex- plores a tension between two different ideas of what consti- tutes the human in humanity, or the inhuman limits of humanity. Lyotard situates the human between two "inhuman" temporal positions. One is the indeterminate movement of "progress," "development," or "complexification," a brute, evolutionary drive toward order that produces our cities, in- dustry, communications systems, institutions, no matter what the cost to any species, our own included. Our human desires, the passions that we identify as our humanity, work largely, though unconsciously, in service to this "inhuman" drive, al- lowing us to imagine that we are fulfilling purely personal needs as we promote a larger complexity. The other temporal position is the static persistence of the lost animal, the "famil- iar and unknown guest" (2) from our infant past that haunts our dreams, language, and art. This second inhuman informs our humanity and comes back to us in the forms Freud described as repetition, remembering and working through. Anamnesis, as a process of narrative remembering by which one comes to know that past, works counter to progress: "Writing and read- ing which advance backwards in the direction of the unknown thing 'within'" (2). Lyotard sees us as caught between these two forces but with the possibility of choosing to work in the mode of one or the other. He favors the work of anamnesis, although the direc- tion of the civilized world is otherwise. Complexification, like the unification within Nancy's "working" (that is, not inopera- tive) community, like the Foucauldian extension of power, tends toward the reduction of specific humans to the components of a larger task, to the "hardware" of civilization. Not surprisingly, Lyotard's investigations establish the deep analo- gy between thinking and what thinks-the body is within thinking as "writing is in language" (17). We think because we have bodies. Jane Gallop offered us all an image of the birth of her son and sparked a wave of personal criticism that denied the independence of the cogito from the bodily experience. The implication seems to be that critical thought has its source in the particular traumas of experience. But for all the sympa- thy I have for this gesture, I wonder how much we should con- sider those experiences to be personal: to what extent are indi- vidual failures of happiness productive of critical thought? Insofar as personal essays attempt to discover an origin for thought, or for unhappiness, they evade a more basic prob- lem. Judith Butler writes of the trouble gender is, but gender is actually an answer (flawed as it may be) to the real trouble. Psychoanalysis invites us to consider what is at stake in having a body: bodies are incomplete, born premature, divided by sex, mortal. These incomplete bodies are incapable of permanent satisfaction, and so we suffer. As Jacques Lacan, always the joker, puts it, there is no sexual relation, and I may as well add that there is no community. Something unavailable to thought-Lyotard, like Lacan, calls it the Real-forever blocks the way to satisfaction. All consolations, from gender to philosophy, for this flaw in the Real are fated to fail, and there- fore to be for Butler and others more trouble than they are worth. But that does not keep us from continuing to try to find happiness through them. The irony here is that flawed institutions-family, government, education, et cetera-continue to provide ancient, perverse enjoyments regardless of their ability to make us happy or miserable. The consequence of this enjoyment for the modern world is a fatal repetition. America's enlightened armies of liberation continue to stumble into colonialism; gender refuses to be freed from romance; nations divorced from communism seek out atavistic identities in the affronts suffered in previous millennia. For literary modernity, too, every now is burdened with the excess of an unspoken past and a future that provokes a "perpetual rewriting**"** (Lyotard 28) in which every event is sub- ject to a return. For literature and history, the question is how that return occurs. It can be as the obsessive return of an un- conscious desire, the crime endlessly repeated as though it were fresh each time. This is the deep horror that links, for ex- ample, The New Criterion's hatred of DeLillo's un-American novels to the national hatred of the ethnic other. Or the return can come as the desire, like Oedipus's, to control the past by identifying the crime, which always leads one to repeat the form of the crime (Lyotard 29): this is the pathos of liberal plu- ralism. In both cases there remains the thought that some original fault might be set straight or be so reformed that it ceases to antagonize us. Can there be a way out of this trap? Nancy's deconstruc- tive suspension has so much renunciation of desire that one might detect the odor of the Kantian perverse in his method. Lyotard, however, suggests something like an attendance, not to the lost body of pleasure, but to the "matter," the "body" that does speak: "The body is a confused speaker" (38), and because the body speaks unclearly, the orderly world ignores, and thereby loses "the enigmatic confusion of the past, the confusion of the badly built city, of childhood ... the disorder of the past which takes place before having been wanted and conceived" (38). The reasoning world has no interest in, and derives no benefit from, knowing such a past. The "inhuman" of complexification manifests itself unconsciously in the cal- culations of Enlightenment thought, capitalism, technology, and institutional life: consequently, Lyotard claims, what we experience as desire is "no doubt no other than this process itself, working upon the nervous centres of the human brain and experienced directly by the human body" (71). Any thinking that follows the path of desire (for a stable understanding) is duped. Fortunately, the other "inhuman," that of the confused body, is not, after all, silent. It exists, for one, in the language where words are the body of thought. Lyotard puts it this way: "Words 'say', sound, touch, always 'before' thought. And they always 'say' something other than what thought signifies, and what it wants to signify by putting them into form. Words want nothing.... They are always older than thought" (142). Words are like that old, animal child-body that one can never be rid of: "Always forgotten, it is unforgettable" (143). Writing, then, points toward one kind of thought, jouissance, and the resistance to the inhuman process of capital and complexification. Lyotard makes no claim that this resistance will ever liberate anyone, but here he does suggest an alternative to the "empowering" strategies of most contemporary critical ideologies. Slavoj Zizek, taking up a Lacanian idea, argues that the way to resist the repetitions of desire is to "enjoy your symptom." That is, if you recognize that it is not your desire but what constitutes your desire that belongs to you, if you can identify with your symptom, then you might find an enjoyment that eschews all promise of power, that recognizes control as a constitutional delusion. This proposal may seem rarefied, but Zizek's argument appears in the context of the real totalitarian consequences of certain fantasies of mastery, in Eastern Eu- rope during the cold war and in that same region under the new order of emerging nationalisms. Modern communities will, of course, continue to be plagued by too much mindless suffering, boredom, and violence. And always there are the temptations offered by those who would relieve us of the suspense of our lives through ecstasies of religion, consumption, nationalism, family values. But the political solutions suggested by Butler's stylization of Foucault, or Connor's pluralism, or the wishing for community that characterizes much political discussion lead nowhere. They participate in a pattern of thought that denies what cannot be clearly, positively articulated. Historical and cultural criti- cism has increasingly avoided theory and interpretation, aban- doning textuality. in a claim to be sticking to fact. Psychoana- lytic criticism, for example, in its turn toward self-psychology and object relations disavows the bodily real and its inarticu- late forces in the hope of finding an accidental, hence cor- rectable, cause of unhappiness. As if they can no longer stand the role of interpreting the world, critics of literature, culture, history, and mind have begun to act out an understandable desire to fix things. But they confuse, I believe, the unhappiness that comes from social and economic injustice, which may re- spond to action, and the unhappiness that arises in the meeting of the human with the inhuman in us. This is not a condition to fix but to understand and turn to useful thought and work. The- ory has not run its course: we have taken the first chance to run from it and the limitations it insists on. The inertial power of American institutions, the thrill felt by buyers and sellers wor- shiping on the floor of the stock exchange, is ultimately every bit as great as that which drives the masses DeLillo describes marrying by the ballpark-full and praying in swirling multi- tudes in Mecca. Drag is not going to provide a counterpleasure to substitute for the ecstasy these people experience. If we will be happy, it will not be in the community of consumption or in the spurious chaos of drag. Nancy and Ly- otard suggest that in an attention to language there may be some relief for the sad animal of humanity, and perhaps here there is the suggestion of another literary and critical practice that is not fated to repetition: We wake up and we are not happy. No question of remak- ing a real new house. But no question either of stifling the old childhood which murmurs at our waking. Thinking awakens in the middle of it, from the middle of very old words, loaded with a thousand domesticities. Our ser- vants, our masters. To think, which is to write, means to awaken in them a childhood which these old folk have not yet had. (Lyotard 197) These pleasures are, significantly, domestic, the foundation, not the end, of social change.

#### Free from all fascistic norms that regulate libidinal desire—our model is that of the schizophrenic—complaint against the system on its own terms only feeds into it

Deleuze and Guattari 72.*Anti-Oedipus*, 1972, pg. 340-342

From the viewpoint of unconscious libidinal investment, all the oscillations from one formula to the other are possible. How can this be? How can the schizophrenic escape, with its molecular dispersion, from an investment that is as strong and determined as the other? And why are there two types of social investment that correspond to the two poles? The answer is that everywhere there exist the molecular *and* the molar: their disjunction is a relation of included disjunction, which varies only according to the two directions of subordination, according as the molecular phenomena are subordinated to the large aggregates, or on the contrary subordinate them to themselves. At one of the poles the large aggregates, the large forms of gregariousness, do not prevent the flight that carries them along, and they oppose to it the paranoiac investment only as an “escape in advance of the escape.” But at the other pole, the schizophrenic escape itself does not merely consist in withdrawing from the social, in living on the fringe: **it causes the social to take flight through the multiplicity of holes that eat away at it and penetrate it, always coupled directly to it, everywhere setting the molecular charges that will explode what must explode, make fall what must fall, make escape what must escape, at each point ensuring the conversion of schizophrenia as a process into an effectively revolutionary force.** For what is the schizo, if not first of all the one who can no longer bear “all that”: money, the stock market, the death forces, Nijinsky said—values, morals, homelands, religions, and private certitudes? **There is a whole world of difference between the schizo and the revolutionary: the difference between the one who escapes, and the one who knows how to make what he is escaping escape, collapsing a filthy drainage pipe, causing a deluge to break loose, liberating a flow, resecting a schiz**. The schizo is not revolutionary, but **the schizophrenic process**—in terms of which the schizo is merely interruption, or the continuation into the void—**is the potential for revolution**. To those who say that escaping is not courageous, we answer: what is not escape *and social investment at the same time?* The choice is between one of two poles, the paranoiac counterescape that motivates all the conformist, reactionary, and fascisizing investments, and the schizophrenic escape convertible into a revolutionary investment. Maurice Blanchot speaks admirably of this revolutionary escape, this fall that must be thought and carried out as the most positive of events: “What is this escape? The word is poorly chosen to please. **Courage consists**, however, **in agreeing to flee rather than to live tranquilly and hypocritically in false refuges**. Values, morals, homelands, religions, and these private certitudes that our vanity and our complacency bestow generously on us, have as many deceptive sojourns as the world arranges for those who think they are standing straight and at ease, among stable things. They know nothing of this immense flight that transports them, ignorant of themselves, in the monotonous buzzing of their ever-quickening steps that lead them impersonally in a great immobile movement. **An escape in advance of the escape**. [Consider the example of one of these men] who, having had the revelation of the mysterious drift, is no longer able to stand living in the false pretences of residence. First he tries to take this movement as his own. **He would like to personally withdraw. He lives on the fringe**…[But] perhaps that is what the fall is, that it can no longer be a personality destiny, but the common lot.” In this regard, **the first thesis of schizoanalyis is this: every investment is social, and in any case bears upon a sociohistorical field.**

**The status quo is characterized by microfascist understandings of what desire can BECOME—becoming is the most important political choice because only it can explain molecular fascism, the fascism of the everyday that limits the forms we can take, the people we can fuck, and the desires that we have—this is what makes the desire to BECOME-DEAD, to destroy the self in a fascistic blaze of glory possible**

**Deleuze and Guattari 80.** *A Thousand Plateaus*, 1980, pg. 230-231

\*\*\*THIS EVIDENCE HAS BEEN GENDER MODIFIED

We cannot say that one of these three lines is bad and another good, by nature and necessarily. The study of the dangers of each line is the object of pragmatics or schizoanalysis, to the extent that it undertakes not to represent, interpret, or symbolize, but only to make maps and draw lines, marking their mixtures as well as their distinctions. According to Nietzsche's Zarathustra and Castaneda's Indian Don Juan, there are three or even four dangers: first, Fear, then Clarity, then Power, and finally the great Disgust, the longing to kill and to die, the Passion for abolition.28 We can guess what fear is. We are always afraid of losing. Our security, the great molar organization that sustains us, the arborescences we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us—we desire all that. "The values, morals, fatherlands, religions and private certitudes our vanity and self-complacency generously grant us are so many abodes the world furnishes for those who think on that account that they stand and rest amid stable things; they know nothing of the enormous rout they are heading f o r . . . in flight from flight."TM We flee from flight, rigidify our segments, give ourselves over to binary logic; the harder they have been to us on one segment, the harder we will be on another; we **reterritorialize on anything available**; the only segmentarity we know is molar, at the level of the large-scale aggregates we belong to, as well as at the level of the little groups we get into, as well as at the level of what goes on in our most intimate and private recesses. Everything is involved: modes of perception, kinds of actions, ways of moving, life-styles, semiotic regimes. A man comes home and says, "Is the grub ready?", and the wife answers, "What a scowl! Are you in a bad mood?": two rigid segments in confrontation. The more rigid the segmentarity, the more reassuring it is for us. That is what fear is, and how it makes us retreat into the first line. The second danger, Clarity, seems less obvious. Clarity, in effect, concerns the molecular. Once again, everything is involved, even perception, even the semiotic regime, but this time on the second line. Castaneda illustrates, for example, the existence of a molecular perception to which drugs give us access (but so many things can be drugs): we attain a visual and sonorous microperception revealing spaces and voids, like holes in the molar structure. That is precisely what clarity is: the distinctions that appear in what used to seem full, the holes in what used to be compact; and conversely, where just before we saw end points of clear-cut segments, now there are indistinct fringes, encroachments, overlappings, migrations, acts of segmentation that no longer coincide with the rigid segmentarity. Everything now appears supple, with holes in fullness, nebulas in forms, and flutter in lines. Everything has the clarity of the microscope. **We think we have understood everything, and draw conclusions. We are the new knights; we even have a mission**. A microphysics of the migrant has replaced the macrogeometry of the sedentary. But this suppleness and clarity do not only present dangers, they are themselves a danger. First, supple segmentarity runs the risk of reproducing in miniature the affections, the affectations, of the rigid: the family is replaced by a community, conjugality by a regime of exchange and migration; worse, micro-Oedipuses crop up, microfascisms lay down the law, the mother feels obliged to titillate her child, the father becomes a mommy. A dark light that falls from no star and emanates such sadness: this shifting segmentarity derives directly from the most rigid, for which it is indirect compensation. The more molar the aggregates become, the more molecular become their elements and the relations between their elements: molecular man for molar humanity. One deterritorializes, massifies, but only in order to knot and annul the mass movements and movements of deterritorialization, to invent all kinds of marginal reterritorializations even worse than the others. But above all, supple segmentarity brings dangers of its own that do not merely reproduce in small scale the dangers of molar segmentarity, which do not derive from them or compensate for them. As we have seen, **microfascisms** have a specificity of their own that can **crystallize into a macro fascism**, but may also float along the supple line on their own account and suffuse every little cell. A multitude of black holes may very well not become centralized, and acts instead as viruses adapting to the most varied situations, sinking voids in molecular perceptions and semiotics. Interactions without resonance. Instead of the great paranoid fear, we are trapped in a thousand little monomanias, **self-evident truths, and clarities** that gush from every black hole and no longer form a system, but are only rumble and buzz, blinding lights giving any and everybody the mission of self-appointed judge, dispenser of justice, policeman, neighborhood SS man. We have overcome fear, we have sailed from the shores of security, only to enter a system that is no less concentricized, no less organized: the system of petty insecurities that leads everyone to their own black hole in which to turn dangerous, possessing a clarity on their situation, role, and mission even more disturbing than the certitudes of the first line. Power (Pouvoir) is the third danger, because it is on both lines simultane ously. It stretches from the rigid segments with their overcoding and resonance to the fine segmentations with their diffusion and interactions, and back again. Every man of power jumps from one line to the other, alternating between a petty and a lofty style, the rogue's style and the grandiloquent style, drugstore demagoguery and the imperialism of the high-ranking government man. But this whole chain and web of power is immersed in a world of mutant flows that eludes them. It is precisely its impotence that makes power so dangerous. The [hu]man of power will always want to **stop the lines of flight**, and to this end to trap and stabilize the mutation machine in the overcoding machine. But he can do so only by creating a void, in other words, by first stabilizing the overcoding machine itself by containing it within the local assemblage charged with effectuating it, in short, by giving the assemblage the dimensions of the machine. This is what takes place in the **artificial conditions of totalitarianism** or the "closed vessel." But there is a fourth danger as well, and this is the one that interests us most, because it concerns the lines of flight themselves. We may well have presented these lines as a sort of mutation or creation drawn not only in the imagination but also in the very fabric of social reality; we may well have attributed to them the movement of the arrow and the speed of an absolute—but it would be oversimplifying to believe that the only risk they fear and confront is allowing themselves to be recaptured in the end, letting themselves be sealed in, tied up, reknotted, reterritorialized. They themselves emanate a strange despair, like an odor of death and immolation, a state of war from which one returns broken: they have their own dangers distinct from the ones previously discussed. This is exactly what led Fitzgerald to say: "I had a feeling that I was standing at twilight on a deserted range, with an empty rifle in my hands and the targets down. No problem set—simply a silence with only the sound of my own breathing. . . . My self-immolation was something sodden- dark."30 Why is the line of flight a war one risks coming back from defeated, destroyed, after having destroyed everything one could? This, precisely, is the fourth danger: the line of flight crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes, but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, turning to **destruction, abolition pure and simple**, the passion of abolition. Like Kleist's line of flight, and the strange war he wages; like suicide, double suicide, a way out that turns the line of flight **into a line of death**. We are not invoking any kind of death drive. There are no internal drives in desire, only assemblages. Desire is always assembled; it is what the assemblage determines it to be. The assemblage that draws lines of flight is on the same level as they are, and is **of the war machine type**. Mutations spring from this machine, which in no way has war as its object, but rather the emission of quanta of deterritorialization, the passage of mutant flows (in this sense, every creation is brought about by a war machine). There are many reasons to believe that the war machine is of a different origin, is a different assemblage, than the State apparatus. It is of nomadic origin and is directed against the State apparatus. One of the fundamental problems of the State is to appropriate this war machine that is foreign to it and make it a piece in its apparatus, in the form of a stable military institution; and the State has always encountered major difficulties in this. It is precisely when the war machine has reached the point that it has no other object but war, it is when it substitutes destruction for mutation, that it frees the most catastrophic charge. Mutation is in no way a transformation of war; on the contrary, war is like the fall or failure of mutation, the only object left for the war machine after it has lost its power to change. War, it must be said, is only the abominable residue of the war machine, either after it has allowed itself to be appropriated by the State apparatus, or even worse, has constructed itself a State apparatus capable only of destruction. When this happens, the war machine no longer draws mutant lines of flight, but a pure, cold line of abolition. (Later, we will propose a theory of the complex relation between the war machine and war.)31 This brings us back to the paradox of fascism, and the way in which fascism differs from totalitarianism. For totalitarianism is a State affair: it essentially concerns the relation between the State as a localized assemblage and the abstract machine of overcoding it effectuates. Even in the case of a military dictatorship, it is a State army, not a war machine, that takes power and elevates the State to the totalitarian stage. Totalitarianism is quintessentially conservative. Fascism, on the other hand, involves a war machine. When fascism builds itself a totalitarian State, it is not in the sense of a State army taking power, but of a war machine taking over the State. A bizarre remark by Virilio puts us on the trail: in fascism, the State is far less totalitarian than it is suicidal. There is in fascism a realized nihilism. Unlike the totalitarian State, which does its utmost to seal all possible lines of flight, fascism is constructed on an **intense line of flight**, which it **transforms into a line of pure destruction** and abolition. It is curious that from the very beginning the Nazis announced to Germany what they were bringing: at once wedding bells and death, including their own death, and the death of the Germans. They thought they would perish but that their undertaking would be resumed, all across Europe, all over the world, throughout the solar system. And the people cheered, not because they did not understand, but because they wanted that death through the death of others. Like a will to wager everything you have every hand, to stake your own death against the death of others, and measure everything by "deleometers." Klaus Mann's novel, Mephisto, gives samplings of entirely ordinary Nazi speeches and conversations: "Heroism was something that was being ruled out of our lives. . . . In reality, we are not marching forward, we are reeling, staggering. Our beloved Fiihrer is dragging us toward the shades of darkness and everlasting nothingness. How can we poets, we who have a special affinity for darkness and lower depths, not admire him? . . . **Fires blazing on the horizon; rivers of blood in all the streets**; and the frenzied dancing of the survivors, of those who are still spared, around the bodies of the dead!"32 Suicide is presented not as a punishment but as the **crowning glory of the death** of others. One can always say that it is just a matter of foggy talk and ideology, nothing but ideology. But that is not true. The insufficiency of economic and political definitions of fascism does not simply imply a need to tack on vague, so-called ideological determinations. We prefer to follow Faye's inquiry into the precise formation of Nazi statements, which are just as much in evidence in politics and economics as in the most absurd of conversations. They always contain the "stupid and repugnant" cry, Long live death!, even at the economic level, where the arms expansion replaces growth in consumption and where investment veers from the means of production toward the means of pure destruction. **Paul Virilio's analysis strikes us as entirely correct in defining fascism not by the notion of the totalitarian State but by the notion of the suicidal State**: so-called **total war** seems less a State undertaking than an undertaking of a war machine that appropriates the State and channels into it a flow of a**bsolute war whose only possible outcome is the suicide of the State itself**. "The triggering of a hitherto unknown material process, one that is limitless and aimless. . . . Once triggered, **its mechanism cannot stop** at peace, for the indirect strategy effectively places the dominant powers outside the usual categories of space and time. . . . It was in the horror of daily life and its environment that Hitler finally found his surest means of governing, the legitimation of his policies and military strategy; and it lasted right up to the end, for the ruins and horrors and crimes and chaos of total war, far from discharging the repulsive nature of its power, normally only increase its scope. Telegram 71 is the normal outcome: If the war is lost, may the nation perish. Here, Hitler decides to join forces with his enemies in order to complete the destruction of his own people, by obliterating the last remaining resources of its life-support system, civil reserves of every kind (potable water, fuel, provisions, etc.)."33 It was this **reversion of the line of flight into a line of destruction** that already animated the molecular focuses of fascism, and made them interact in a war machine instead of resonating in a State apparatus. A war machine that no longer had anything but war as its object and would rather annihilate its own servants than stop the destruction. **All the dangers of the other lines pale by comparison**.