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***Efficient Material-Abstraction:  
Towards a Critical Materialist Pragmatics***

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## SUMMARY

Marx's critique remains the most incisive analysis of capitalism to date, though the transformations which capitalism has undergone require that his conceptual apparatus be radically overhauled. I have attempted to do so through a topological<sup>1</sup> twisting of his conceptual assemblage, highlighting new elements and relations. In this way I am lead to questions of *time* already highlighted by Marx, in relation to an *immanent and constitutive ontology*. However, my primary concern remains with the contemporary strategies of capitalist *command*, and the new conditions and strategies of *resistance* it demands.

Concrete/Abstract: or, The German Ideology - i) The question of ideology, the failure of its problematic, and the initial step beyond: *fetishism as "dissimulation objective"* (Deleuze); ii) the function of *money* and the emergent 'truth in practice' of an ontology of *efficient material-abstraction*.

Total Critique is a Pragmatics - i) The transformation of *Critique* from partial to Total, and the emergence of a *differential materialist ontology*; ii) the critique of the *labour theory of value*, and the transformation of capitalism into a project of *heterogeneity management* (fundamental ontology).

Subsumption - i) An account of Braudel's notion of the *anti-market*, and a critique of the reduction of the *anti-market* to *capitalism*; ii) an account of *real subsumption* in terms of a *temporal ontology*.

Time and Resistance - i) A re-reading of 'historical determinism' in the light of Marx's letters to Vera Zasulich on the Russian commune; ii) the question of *becoming* as opposed to history through a diagramming of masses rather than the contraposing of classes; iii) temporality as motor of flight/control: the *syntheses of time* as a diagramming of *efficient capitalist material-abstraction*, and of the strategies of a *critical materialist pragmatics*.

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<sup>1</sup> "Topology studies the properties that remain unchanged when shapes are deformed by twisting, stretching or squeezing." (Chaos, J. Gleick, p46) I operate a *distortion*, a change of 'shape' of Marx's systematicity, in which discontinuities assemble new continuities.

## ABBREVIATIONS

|       |  |
|-------|--|
| AO    | <u>Anti-Oedipus</u> , G.Deleuze and F.Guattari                             |
| ATP   | <u>A Thousand Plateaus</u> , G.Deleuze and F.Guattari                      |
| B     | <u>Bergsonism</u> , G.Deleuze  |
| C1    | <u>Capital Vol.1</u> , K.Marx  |
| CC2   | <u>Capitalism and Civilization Vol.2</u> , F.Braudel                       |
| CPES  | <u>For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign</u> , J.Baudrillard |
| CT    | <u>La Costituzione del Tempo</u> , A.Negri                                 |
| DP    | <u>Discipline and Punish</u> , M.Foucault                                  |
| DR    | <u>Difference and Repetition</u> , G.Deleuze                               |
| F     | <u>Foucault</u> , G.Deleuze  |
| G     | <u>Grundrisse</u> , K.Marx   |
| GI    | <u>The German Ideology</u> , K.Marx and F.Engels                           |
| LS    | <u>The Logic of Sense</u> , G.Deleuze                                      |
| MbM   | <u>Marx Beyond Marx</u> , A.Negri  |
| MEW24 | <u>Marx/Engels Collected Works Vol.24</u> , K.Marx and F.Engels            |
| PoM   | <u>The Philosophy of Marx</u> , E.Balibar                                  |
| SED   | <u>Symbolic Exchange and Death</u> , J.Baudrillard                         |

# 1- CONCRETE/ABSTRACT: OR, THE GERMAN IDEOLOGY

As Balibar repeats throughout his The Philosophy of Marx (PoM), philosophy has never forgiven Marx for his notion of ideology (e.g. PoM p43). It is a notion that aims to place theory in an immanent relation to its material conditions, and understands theory as the effect of a *process/practice* of idealisation, -so that philosophy always exists in relation to non-philosophy. The German Ideology, like the Theses on Feurbach, was a call to exit theory, speculation, *ideology*, in favour of *revolutionary practice*. Yet rather than anti-philosophical, 'ideology' -and the oppositions it mobilises- is a meta-philosophical notion. By working the margins of philosophy and non-philosophy, Balibar argues, it never truly escapes its own re-appropriation by philosophy in its very problematising function. For 'ideology' is a notion generated out of the truly philosophical questions of the relation between 'theory' and 'practice', 'mental' and 'material', 'universal' and 'particular', 'appearance' and 'reality', 'thinking' and 'being', 'abstract' and 'concrete'. Like any re-appropriation, however, inclusion does not fail to be destabilising -for as we know, conquest frequently sees the conquered spread its cultural and economic practices throughout the ruling body (The German Ideology[GI], K.Marx and F.Engels, p94). Historically, 'ideology' has functioned as the aporetic fracture marking the encounter between 'host' and 'alien'. And when I say 'history', it is 'ideology' which blocks the easy assignment of titles: the 'history of thought', 'economic history', 'history of international relations', etc.

The notion of ideology has played the important function of element of passage in the formation of a truly immanent materialist 'philosophy'. Yet an element of negativity, an element of fissure has remained with this notion. By this I mean that the model of ideology operates still by the assignation of fixed roles and oppositions to the elements it employs, whilst never escaping an always -only- theoretical displacement and problematisation of the relation between those same elements. In other words, it never truly overcomes



the exclusive ontological dissociation of abstract and concrete elements. There is either a reductivism or an epiphenomenalism, either way, the time of the abstract is the time of material, concrete history, and/or it is also the (non-)time of the eternal. This clearly reverses idealism, but it is by no means clear that it escapes philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In the words of Balibar:

"Marx [is] ensconced not just at the heart of philosophy, but at the heart of its most speculative turn, in which it strives to *think its own limits*, whether to abolish them or to establish itself on the basis of a recognition of those limits." (PoM pl9)

This is no new discovery -in fact it is Marx himself who has a first intimation of this, and does so not as an effect produced from within a realm of theory in-itself, but from a *conjunctural* encounter which was to lead to the *disappearance* of the notion of ideology. Both the space of its appearing as of its disappearing needs to be engaged with -for it is in

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<sup>1</sup> For the *ontological* dissociation of concrete and abstract in the form of *practice* versus *idea* is re-established, with the corresponding effects of dissociation between temporal and non-temporal. To say that the time of the ideological is -ultimately- the time of the differing articulations between the division of labour into manual and intellectual, places the abstract in-itself outside time, assigning it only the time of the concrete. This is certainly a first stage in the overcoming of idealism, making the abstract rest upon the concrete rather than vice-versa. Nevertheless, a truly materialist problematisation of 'theory' rests upon the *immanent materiality of the time of the abstract*. Otherwise it is unclear how the mere reversal of a conceptual distinction -between concrete and abstract- effectively evades the opposition which would appear to still organise the dyad. As in Derridean deconstructive practice, reversal is an essential moment, but until a term can be mobilised which subverts the opposition itself, one remains caught within it. We will see, however, that the route out of this -still philosophical- impasse, is not through the play of signs, but rather through the question of practice, a question Marx prioritises from the beginning



this zone that the possibility of a truly *immanent critique* begins to emerge.

I will not go into a detailed account of this passage, I will indicate merely some of the principal functions of the notion of ideology and the problematic effects it produced within Marx's own thinking, which lead him to excise the concept from his critique.<sup>2</sup> *Firstly*, the importance of the emergence of the notion of ideology is clear from its linkage to the first systematic account of the *materialist conception of history* which occurs in The German Ideology.<sup>3</sup> This operates as the tool for the analysis of the formation of specific idealisations (ideologies) which mystify their origin in the specific concrete social conditions of production; the materialist conception of history operates by re-connecting specific ideologies with the material conditions of production specified in the varying articulations of the division of labour.<sup>4</sup> *Secondly*, in this way questions of idealisation and of power are sutured together:

"The ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relations, the dominant material relations grasped as ideas; hence of the relations which make the one class the ruling one, therefore, the ideas of its dominance." (GI p67).

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<sup>2</sup> The effect of the events of 1848-51 on Marx's notion of ideology is well documented by Balibar -amongst others. See for example his The Philosophy of Marx ch.1-3, and the three central chapters of Masses, Classes, Ideas.

<sup>3</sup> This book was written by Marx and Engels between 1845-6, but remained unpublished in their life-time. The manuscript then fell into the hands of the leaders of the German Social-Democratic Party after Engels' death, which probably accounts for the fortune the concept of ideology was to have in the history of Marxism. The whole text was not published until 1932. It would be counter-productive, however, to overly stress the fact of its being unpublished, for when it comes to Marx's writings much of his most crucial texts were to have this fate in his life-time (the Grundrisse and the later volumes of Capital also were unpublished at the time of his death).

<sup>4</sup> "Division of labour only becomes truly such from the moment when a division of material and mental labour appears." (GI p50)

Idealisations emerge as the universalisation of particular (class) interests, and their autonomisation in the state.<sup>5</sup> In this way we have the separation of civil society and the state (the critique of the Rights of Man, etc., follow from here), with political struggles being merely

"illusory [...] forms in which the real struggles of the different classes are fought out among one another" (GI p52).

One critical point to note here is the centrality of *relations* over identities or full-presences, i.e. identities exist as the effect of series of dynamic relations, relations which also determine 'interests' and hence classes themselves.<sup>6</sup> This marks the attainment of a critical threshold, beyond the 'theoretical humanism' of the earlier texts, which will remain central to the whole of Marx's later thinking.<sup>7</sup> Thirdly, and critically from the point of the theory of revolution, the proletariat exists both as the class antagonist to the bourgeoisie, and as a non-class or masses. In other words, the proletariat's world-historical role is guaranteed by its 'real' -not ideological- universality:

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<sup>5</sup> Already the division of labour into mental and material has given an autonomy to 'theory'. "From this moment onwards consciousness can really flatter itself that it something other than consciousness of existing practice, that it really represents something without representing something real; from now on consciousness is in a position to emancipate itself from the world and to proceed to the formation of 'pure' theory, theology, philosophy, morality, etc." (GI p50)

<sup>6</sup> In a marginal note, Marx writes: "For the *philosophers relationship = idea*. They only know the relation of 'Man' to himself and hence for them all real relations become ideas." (GI p100) As we will see, ideas cancel the differential, the relationship of difference, by contracting the difference in the unity of the idea.

<sup>7</sup> One need not buy into the whole of Althusser's reading of Marx's 'epistemological breaks' in order to grasp the thresholds attained in his various theoretical interventions. For no threshold is achieved once and for all, and elements inevitably bleed into one another across thresholds.

"because under the pressure of hitherto existing conditions its interest has not been yet able to develop as the *particular interest of a particular class*." (GI p69, my italics)

The proletariat exists as the *reality* of non-class relations, and hence as the *practical* dissolution of all ideology -which is always the expression of the interests of a particular class. The materialist conception of history operates as the analytical tool of demystification of the pairing ideology = idealism (GI p69-71); and the proletariat exists as site of 'real', de-mystified materiality or communism (GI p89-90), the "real movement which abolishes the present state of things" (GI p57).

That this conception of the role of the proletariat is problematic is immediately evident. For, as Balibar notes, the proletariat occupies the "site of truth" (Masses, Classes, Ideas, E.Balibar, p92-3), precisely by contracting all the antitheses to ideology = idealism, and does so immediately, in its very being. The proletariat contracts the true, the real, world-historicity, and revolution in its very definition: materiality = history = practice = production = revolution; thereby enabling Marx to propose the historical inevitability, or necessity of communism.<sup>8</sup> So in the attempt to escape from ideology towards the 'real', we have the re-inscription of the schema within the very space of philosophy, though defined in conjunction with the anti-ideology of the 'materialist conception of history': the proletariat is *unmediated* concrete reality, to be opposed to the *mediations* of abstract illusion.

The necessity of communism inscribed within the being of the proletariat but 'outside' political struggle was to be taken up and transformed, after Marx's death, into the *economic inevitability* of communism: economism. In effect the passivity of the proletariat was bought with theology (this has happened in remarkably similar ways in the East and the West).<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> See theses 1,2,3,8,9,10,11 -in particular- of the Theses on Feurbach on the intersection engendered between these concepts.

<sup>9</sup> The great opposition between economism and voluntarism has its roots within the great philosophical/ideological battle between idealism and materialism (e.g. economism = communism as telos, as opposed to voluntarism = utopianism; or,



Nevertheless, this vacillation between class and non-class relations -we will see- remains throughout Marx's thinking, though it undergoes fundamental transformations which withdraws it from the particular/universal or concrete/abstract schema in order to re-inscribe the relation into a control-flight matrix, whilst also complicating the schema of historical determination.

A little more needs to be said to clarify the notion of ideology and the evident aporias to which it gives rise. Balibar advances two possible interpretations of ideology: i/ the one Marx and Engels appear to assert in The German Ideology, that the proletariat exists 'outside' ideology due to its 'direct' and 'immediate' relation to the material conditions of production; or ii/ the proletariat has its own ideology which it contraposes to bourgeois ideology. In the first case clearly the whole dialectic of appearance and reality or abstract and concrete which we have been looking at comes to be activated, taking the form of a bourgeois ideological dominance maintained by means of deception or conspiracy, for ideology must always remain exterior to the proletariat as the expression of a 'ruling class'. As Marx becomes increasingly aware, however, especially so after the failure of the 1848 revolutions, it becomes difficult if not impossible to assert such an exteriority in the face of the

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voluntarism = revolution = communism, as opposed to economism = theology = passivity). Each side places itself within the 'site of truth' or materiality as opposed to that of ideology or abstraction, though no resolution is possible because the bar structuring the opposition signals both a suturing as well as a gap. It is remarkable how the debate between private-market-sector and public-state-sector has followed a very similar pattern, as D.Sassoon indicates in his article 'Fin-de-Siecle Socialism'. He speaks there of the current 'ideological' victory of vulgar Marxism, which he also calls 'bourgeois Marxism': "Vulgar, reductionist, deterministic Marxism has triumphed with a vengeance. Most explanations of contemporary transmutations have the economy as the starting-point and a world-wide market economy as its inevitable destination. [...] Bond dealers of the world shout in unison down their fibre-optic lines: 'Long live the economic base, down with the superstructure!'" (New Left Review, no.227, p89)

historical evidence: patriotism, religion, and intra-proletarian competition reveal the force of ideology within the proletariat itself.<sup>10</sup> In the second case, where the proletariat is understood to have an ideology it opposes to bourgeois ideology so that the two ideologies exist in their opposition to one another, the whole materialist construction which allows Marx to create the assemblage proletariat = production = practice = revolution = communism collapses.<sup>11</sup> It was, after all, part of the object of the notion of ideology to radically separate immanent proletarian social relations from mystificatory bourgeois ones, in order to form the proletariat as 'true' historical 'agents' of change. From this perspective any form of proletarian ideology is self-contradictory. However, already in 'The Manifesto of the Communist Party'<sup>12</sup> Marx had argued that the proletariat requires to grasp political power by "organis[ing] itself as a class" (Selected Works in 3 Vol.1, Marx & Engels, p127). This was evidently a move away from the immediate relation of the proletariat to practice = revolution, towards the idea of a proletarian politics. But how -on Marx's analysis- is one to think of a non-ideological politics, or a ruling class which does not function by universalising its particular interests?

The notion of ideology evidently becomes increasingly aporetic and unworkable, both from within the materialist conception of history, and from the position of a 'political' practice. It is no coincidence that Marx drops the notion after 1852. It is only with Engels' works in the 1870's that the term reappears -though it is by no means evident that the problems with the concept discussed above are overcome by him, and Marx himself never again adopts it.<sup>13</sup> In fact the fortune of this concept is almost entirely down to the late writings of Engels, and the influence of the German Social-Democratic Party. It is clear, however, that some of the problems which the notion of ideology was designed to answer, were not to disappear with the concept, crucially, the relation between

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<sup>10</sup> See the exemplary analyses of The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte written by Marx between 1851-2 on the basis of the revolutionary events in France of 1848-51.

<sup>11</sup> See Balibar's excellent discussion of the alternative in Masses, Classes, Ideas p100-2 and The Philosophy of Marx p54-5.

<sup>12</sup> Written in 1848, two years after The German Ideology.

<sup>13</sup> On Engels' attempt to reactivate the concept of ideology see Masses, Classes, Ideas, E.Balibar, p102-23.

state and civil society; for this is a segmentation of social space that the notion of ideology serves to produce as much as to analyse. For -though in classical Marxism it is in dispute whether the superstructure is itself ideological, or whether ideology is a product or aspect of the superstructure, nevertheless, ideology is always an effect of a materiality, a productivity which is its *cause*, yet which it excludes: this condition/conditioned relation means that the conditioned is understood simply as passive receptive 'substance' which by definition excludes re-action, and its power comes precisely from such a passivity (for though it proliferates the idea of dominance, domination occurs on a different plane).<sup>14</sup> So though the materialist conception of history aims to reveal the conditions of specific idealisations in historically determined/-ing material productive practices, it begins with an initial segmentation. There is no overcoming of the distinction between practice (concrete) and ideology (abstract) but a re-confirmation of its reality, of its logos, though with a different distribution of the hierarchy from that inherited from idealism. Marx's re-appropriation by philosophy at this stage seems certain:

"Il faut cependant signaler que dans le couple de contraires idéalisme/matérialisme, l'idéalisme - dans la mesure où il est la tendance dominant de toute la philosophie occidentale - est devenu la base sur laquelle s'est érigé et fondé le couple lui-même." (Sur la Philosophie, L.Althusser, p57)<sup>15</sup>

The section entitled 'The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret' in chapter one of Capital serves to reactivate some of the components of the notion of ideology, but in a way which

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<sup>14</sup> There is in fact good reason to think that Marx considered superstructure and ideology to be distinct, so that the abstract universalisation of particular class interests in an ideology, required the concrete machinery of (state) institutions to proliferate. For the abstract has no purchase on materiality here.

<sup>15</sup> Paradoxically for Marx, his reductivism or epiphenomenalism here has the effect of re-instating the ideal, the abstract, as immaterial, its being lying outside of itself. We will see that it is through giving an autonomy, a consistency to the abstract that a truly materialist critique is effectuated.



thoroughly overcomes the reality/appearance opposition, by viewing appearances as constitutive of the real:

"I call this<sup>16</sup> the fetishism which attaches itself to the products of labour as soon as they are produced as commodities, and is therefore inseparable from the production of commodities." (Capital Vol.1[C1], K.Marx, p165)

As with the analysis of ideology, 'appearances' are produced within the division of labour, but are not thereby counterposed to a site of truth which would dissolve the illusion. Rather, they exist in a reciprocal relation to the segmentations of the societal Assemblage which condition them. As Marx says, bourgeois economics does not falsely describe the capitalist Assemblage:<sup>17</sup>

"They are forms of thought which are socially valid, and therefore objective, for the relations of production belonging to this historically determined mode of social production, i.e. commodity production." (C1 p169)

To this extent, each social Assemblage has its own form of appearing. No longer do we have an ideology which deceives and dominates; rather, by considering processes of subjectification in reciprocal relation to the constitution of the 'objective' -displacing the distinction, Marx begins to diagram a truly immanent materialist-history with no outside providing one with a transcendent (ahistorical) site of truth.

The notion of fetishism itself was not a final solution, for there was no settling of the problem, it was to modify itself continually along with the exigencies of practice, and the transformations of capital.<sup>18</sup> This site of mutation to which

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<sup>16</sup> Where 'this' refers to the "definite social relation between men themselves which assumes here, for them [under capitalist relations of exchange], the fantastic form of a relation between things." (C1 p165)

<sup>17</sup> The notion of *assemblage* is taken from the work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari which I will clarify below. It is sufficient for now to understand it as an organised set of heterogeneous elements and relations with a consistency, i.e. that works.

<sup>18</sup> The lack of the projected book on wage-labour, what some have called the 'subjective element of capital' (which A.Negri and E.P.Thompson -amongst others- indicate as critical), would



'ideology' was a first -somewhat crude- solution, began to expand to take up the whole territory of capitalism, to the point that the 'abstract', the 'appearing', was no longer opposed to a real it distorted, but became an efficient positive element within its functioning -it became what Deleuze was to call -in another, but related, context- "une dissimulation objective".<sup>19</sup> The intimation of a break-down between the element of government and of the economy is critical in this respect, a break-down which is frequently apparent in the historical analyses Marx produces.<sup>20</sup> Marx began, especially in the Grundrisse and in Capital, to transform the question of practice by transforming our understanding of control, beginning with the displacement of 'subjective' and 'objective' elements of capital (the subjective becoming a critical component of political economy, i.e. of capital's appearing), by a proliferation of regulatory mechanisms which inform practices at all levels. It is with this space of contemporary capitalist control, and the transformations which it has undergone, with which I am concerned.

I shall now move on beyond an exegesis of the changing problematic of ideology, to the point at which we will see appear the question of the production of *flight* and of control; though it is with Marx's materialist analysis that the immanence of flight and control is first signalled. He does so by -in the first place- revealing the element of

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have gone some way towards a further transformation of the problem. The work of Italian Marxists from the 1960's onwards, especially Mario Tronti and Antonio Negri, have endeavoured to overcome this loss. See also 'The Silences of Capital', M.A. Lebowitz, in Historical Materialism, 1997 no.1.

<sup>19</sup> See Deleuze's lecture given on the 21<sup>st</sup> December 1971. These lectures are as yet unpublished, but can be found transcribed on the Deleuze web site ([www.imaginet.fr/deleuze](http://www.imaginet.fr/deleuze)).

<sup>20</sup> Further, as Foucault himself acknowledges, Marx also displaces government/power from its centralisation in the state: "There is a sort of schematism that needs to be avoided here -and which incidentally is not to be found in Marx- that consists of locating power in the State apparatus, making this into a major, privileged, capital and almost unique instrument of the power of one class over another." (Power/Knowledge, M. Foucault, p72)

government within capitalist production -to the point at which 'politics' and 'production' cease to be dialectically opposed, other than through the dissociations engendered by the activation of various assemblages or regulative mechanisms, and which react back upon the socius, social formation or Assemblage itself. In such a way the politicisation of the economic, and the economisation of the political becomes increasingly evident. But -secondly- and critically, beyond the governmentality theorist's proliferating regulative disciplinary techniques, Marx detects the (materially) abstract machinery of capital which enables the intersection of the multiplicity of assemblages (or regulative agencies) constituting the societal body, whilst itself being determined by the concrete machines, the assemblages of regulative control. I will begin with this second stage, in order to indicate the *immanent* cause which we will then see is effectuated in concrete regulative agencies/assemblages as their reservoir (capital reserve) of potential reconfiguration of social space -though a first indication of this transformation of social space, of the very problematisation of civil society and state, needs to be provided.<sup>21</sup>

The notion of *assemblage*, derived from Deleuze and Guattari's A Thousand Plateaus, provides a critical concept for a materialist analysis in that it enables one to view organisation/control/regulation as emerging from the more or less aleatory encounter of (differential) elements and relations, so that their function is not presaged in a variety of pre-formationist, teleological or conspiratorial schema. Further, and crucially for the question considered so far, it does not rest upon the prior segmentation of a space which would assign causal or structural forms of conditioning/conditioned in advance (such as base vs. superstructure), for it is the very emergence of *structure*, *system* or *agency* which is at stake. The plasticity of the notion of *assemblage* means that social space is not totalised in advance, but is seen as a continuously emerging effect of more or less aleatory encounters, and of the heterogeneous regulative techniques they call up. A concrete discussion of society as a set of assemblages will be provided in later

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<sup>21</sup> To problematise a distinction is not to deny it any reality, it is rather to challenge its status, primarily to question its status as organising ground of social formations.



chapters. In outline however, Deleuze and Guattari speak of a social formation itself, the socius, as an Assemblage composed of two types of segments (*assemblages of enunciation and machinic assemblages*) distributed in relations of reciprocal presupposition, but functional independence. Critically, their distinction subverts the hylomorphic schema which places form and substance in relations of exteriority, thereby reducing the autonomy of each. For Deleuze and Guattari form and substance are merely modal distinctions of an immanent materiality.<sup>22</sup> In 'November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics' (in A Thousand Plateaus[ATP]) they explore assemblages through a pragmatics of language (though the articulated Assemblage serves to map a multiplicity of semiotic regimes, mixtures of bodies, and the *incorporeal transformations* embedded in the interstices): all statements or utterances involve a *collective assemblage of enunciation* composed of both form and substance, and which operates a particular formalisation of a polysemiotic material, or aleatory a-signifying elements, and which "imprisons them in one particular syntax" (Molecular Revolution, F.Guattari, p169), forming a plane or stratum of expression in reciprocal presupposition with a particular formalisation of contents. This latter is effected by particular centres of power operating at the level of "words, sentences, semantic and pragmatic interpretations" (Molecular Revolution p169), and which effect hierarchical orderings determining specific forms of systematised/structured types of equivalencies and signifiances.<sup>23</sup> There are also *machinic assemblages* composed

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<sup>22</sup> "By mode I understand the affections of [matter], or that which is in another through which it is also conceived." (The Ethics, B.de Spinoza, pt.I/D.5). I have altered the terminology ('matter' for 'substance') so as to indicate its relation to Deleuze and Guattari's terminology at this stage. Their movement from a Spinozist to a Hjelmslevian terminology does not -however- involve any excision of Spinozist elements. It is in fact the substantial continuity or resonance between the two that enables such a synthesis.

<sup>23</sup> "Signification is always an encounter between the formalization of systems of values, interchangeability and rules of conduct, by a particular society and an expression machine which in itself has no meaning -which is, let us say, a-signifying- that automatically produces the behaviour, the

of both form and substance, operating a particular formalisation, regimentation and demarcation of bodily and affective series on a plane/stratum with its own content/expression distributions. In each case form and substance are immanent to matter itself,<sup>24</sup> and together they trace the relations between elements formalised on a new stratum of content or expression, or which supervene upon an already existing one (the form/substance distinction being -as we have said-merely modal):

"The attributes [content/expression] behave like real qualitatively different senses which relate to [matter] as if to a single and same designated; and [matter] in turn behaves like an ontologically unique sense in relation to the modes [substance/form] which express it, and inhabit it like individuating factors or intrinsic intense degrees." (Difference and Repetition[DR], G.Deleuze, p40 - my interventions)

In this way materiality is immanent to semiotic regimes not only to a bodily ones, as is the case with Marx's 'The Fetishism of the Commodity and its Secret', where 'appearance' is immediately real: semiotic regimes do not reflect an 'external' 'real' world, but are elements in its production and operation. The collective assemblage distributes certain "order-words", or implicit speech-acts, such that an internal or immanent relation is established between a statement and an act/event, an autonomisation effect, making the statement itself into "the redundancy of the act and the statement" (ATP p79). Specific enunciations or order-words, the variables of a collective assemblage of enunciation, are redundant in that they express the particular distribution of incorporeal transformations in a given society. These transformations, or attributions, are assigned to bodies but expressed in an enunciation; they produce a conjunction between the two planes (content/expression) of the Assemblage, and between collective and machinic assemblages. In this way they compose the articulations between assemblages and of the Assemblage. Foucault is the great thinker of incorporeal transformations,

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interpretations, the responses wanted by the system." (Molecular Revolution, F.Guattari, p169)

<sup>24</sup> It is always a case of formed substances, or substantial forms (ATP p44).



and he analyses many of these forms of transformation effectuated in an order-word or a set of order-words, for example with the constitution of the 'criminal', of the 'madman', etc. Other examples would be "I declare a general mobilisation!" transforming a situation from one of peace to one of war; "You're sacked!", from employment to unemployment; "You've failed your medical examination!", from health to sickness, etc.<sup>25</sup>

"The order-words or assemblages of enunciation in a given society (in short, the illocutionary) designate this instantaneous relation between statements and incorporeal transformations or noncorporeal attributes they express." (ATP p81)

These acts immanent to language but expressing incorporeal attributes of bodies are variables of particular assemblages of enunciation which enter into determinable relations, in such a manner that the

"assemblages combine in a regime of signs or a semiotic machine. It is obvious that society (the Assemblage) is plied by several semiotics, that its regimes are in fact mixed." (ATP p83-4)

The force of this re-distribution of elements and relations is not simply an application of extraneous principles to Marx's analysis -we will see, rather, that an effective cartography of contemporary capital (and the monetary function) is enabled by this reconfiguration of social space, one which continues

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<sup>25</sup> Clearly a distribution of roles in the production of a statement is essential, not just anyone can declare a general mobilisation. Language itself is distributed, and subjects are assigned a role within language. Language becomes a procedure of subjectification, such that "the subject of enunciation [the speaker] recoils into the subject of the statement, to the point that the subject of the statement resupplies subject of enunciation for another proceeding", see ATP p129, and p80 on the exemplary value of indirect discourse. See also The Psychic Life of Power, J.Butler, p6: "the subject is the effect of power in recoil". On Foucault's discussion of the subject as constituted within discourse, see 'Politics and the Study of Discourse' in The Foucault Effect, G.Burchell, C.Gordon and P.Miller ed., and The Archaeology of Knowledge.

the subversion of the schema of ideology already initiated by Marx. It is important to note that in this way no social formation is totalised in advance, that it is understood as a heterogeneous co-existence of various emergent assemblages and imperceptible aleatory elements. The concept of assemblage will be found to be critical for the understanding of the tactical element of capitalist strategy, i.e. of the concrete instantiation of the *abstract machine* of capital, or the capitalist regulation central to the effectuation of capitalist plasticity. I shall now turn to the abstract machine itself, leaving the concretisation of the notion of assemblage (and of the abstract machine) to a later chapter.

### The Efficacy of the Abstract

There is no explicit critique of ideology in Marx, for there could be none. Ideology was a solution to a problem which ceased to exist for Marx with the transformation of the question of control and resistance/revolution which occurred - or at least became evident- with the mutations of the capitalist Assemblage, and with the recognition that bourgeois political economy could not easily be fitted into the schema of ideological abstraction and illusion, but had an *objective efficacy* of its own. This transformation affected the very tools of analysis, the whole conception of critique Marx employed.

We will see that everything is overturned by the virulent materialism of Marx's thought: philosophy can no longer depend upon its categorial(-ical) distinctions; state operators and state operations are replaced as differential levels are horizontalised; the concrete becomes ever more abstract as its intensely material aspect escalates. Nothing survives production, and outside production there is nothing; this is a zone with no escape (or composed only of that which escapes), where walls are porous, and structures function by de-stratifying.

**Concrete/Abstract:** the single bar fails to definitively systematise and enclose within a one way street -traffic signals fail, walls are porous.



A consideration of the use of these two concepts in the 1857 'Introduction' to the Grundrisse places us immediately in a complex nest of displaced functions and meanings:

"It seems to be correct to begin with the real and concrete, with the real precondition, thus to begin, in economics, with, e.g. the population, which is the foundation of the subject of the entire social act of production. However, on closer examination this proves false. The population is an abstraction if I leave out, for example, the classes of which it is composed."

(Grundrisse[G], K.Marx, p100)

So, one cannot begin with the population, since to begin here would be to begin in abstraction, to work with abstracted concepts which relate to the concrete through the mediation of a process of abstraction. An abstracted concept is always abstracted from a particular historical concretion; but if it were to function as initial operator in an enquiry it would escape its historical specificity, thereby apparently universalising a set of concrete relations by abstracting them from their historical particularity. This has always been *bourgeois economics'* theoretical failure and political weapon.<sup>26</sup> But things are not so simple:

"Thus, if I were to begin with the population, this would be a chaotic conception [Vorstellung] of the whole, and I would then, by means of further determination, move analytically towards ever more simple concepts [begriff], from the imagined concrete towards ever thinner abstractions until I had arrived at the simplest determinations." (G p100)

Now what is the status of this passage following closely upon the previous one? Here, the population, which Marx has already told us stands as an abstraction, is conceived by bourgeois political economy as the concrete. From this "imagined concrete" (my italics) the bourgeois believes he is moving towards "ever thinner abstractions" from which the concrete can be re-constructed. But if Marx's displacement of the terms is correct, then it is not at all clear what the method would consist in; for one would be moving from a general

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<sup>26</sup> What is the status of such a distinction outside of a discourse of science vs. ideology, outside of an already stratified relation distributing abstraction and concretion?



abstraction to the concrete. But then it would be wrong to say as Marx does "[f]rom there the journey would have to be retraced until I had finally arrived at the population again", for the historical concretion would already be determined. More importantly, this method still leaves one with a set of universalisable natural relations, where the initial abstraction functions as template for all socio-historical concretions, thereby by-passing history in favour of nature.

As opposed to this method there is the "scientifically correct method" (G p101), which from "firmly established and abstracted" (G p100) elements proceeds to reconstruct the total concretion. What this involves is beginning with the concrete (the "concrete living whole, [...] population, nation, state, several states, etc." of the 17<sup>th</sup> century economists, G p100), proceeding to the "determinant, abstract, general relations" (social classes, exchange, division of labour, money, etc.), and moving back to the concrete; the method which bourgeois political economy believed it was following, but failing due to its mistaken notion of the status of its initial object of enquiry. We see here, that Marx appears to conceive of his own method as a more rigorous form of that which bourgeois economists believed themselves to be following -and at times he most certainly does. We will see, however, that this picture is fully displaced when Marx steps out of the game of mere reversals, where formal relations are retained but where the components exchange position -perhaps a necessary moment? But Marx's game is not reversal but *subversion*. In only a few pages Marx carries out a violent displacement of both bourgeois economic theory, and what he calls the "philosophical consciousness" (G p101). This attack, working on the fundamental tools of operation spoken of so far: concrete/abstract, has the effect of moving them to another level of analysis, and reconstructing their antagonistic relation. The hierarchical stratified relation (the abstract being conceived as merely a moment on the way to the concrete), is replaced by a smooth horizontal zone of interface; the stratified opposition with its ready-made doubled planes: representing and represented, is collapsed into a *diagram* which maps the differential relations between elements, forces and affects, distributed and distributing throughout the social field, from which the stratifications proceed. From the time of The German Ideology -if not earlier- we have seen the ontological and organisational centrality of

relations over presences. It is clear that to open social space to a pure determining relationality requires the dissolution of pre-determined distributions and orders. Rather than the abstract operating as signifier re-presenting, doubling, determining relations between particular abstracted contents in order to re-present a determinate concretion, so that an abstract plane of expression operates isomorphically to a concrete plane of contents, the strata or planes of the 'theoretical' assemblage themselves need to be constructed from within a determinate conjuncture. The concepts are given increased mobility, and given material efficacy. This is a move beyond bourgeois economic theory, and beyond 'scientific' correctness: both of which are seen simply as means of maintaining the established order, or the regulation of the stratified consistent planes of the multiple assemblages constituting the capitalist machine, where *forms of expression* are dissociated from the *forms of content*: finalised functions and formed matters, e.g. ready-made categories (money, wage, capital) and orders of dependence or operation (base vs. superstructure); and, on the plane of contents, hierarchical ordering of specific formed contents (technical-machine, worker) and their ready-made function (production, labour). On the model of the "philosophical consciousness", theory is seen to double, re-present contents, a means on the way to contents which continually flees it. However, the form of content and the form of expression have different genealogies, they are entirely heterogeneous strata and between the two there is no correspondence or conformity.<sup>27</sup> Marx's strength here is his displacement of this model, of this dream, by his detection of

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<sup>27</sup> There is only a dream of isomorphism. I say 'dream', because the plane of expression and the plane of content, what Deleuze in his excellent book on Foucault calls the 'articulable' and the 'visible', each have a genealogy of their own, there is a heterogeny of form in reciprocal presupposition, with no isomorphy (for a discussion of this 'non-relation' see Foucault[F], G.Deleuze, p61ff). Foucault's texts can to some extent be divided in accordance with whether they give an archaeology of the articulable or of the visible. In the former category comes The Archaeology of Knowledge, in the latter, Discipline and Punish -although there is always a spill over from one stratum into one another, where alliances are made and elements exchanged, this can be seen in the texts themselves.



the *immanent cause* or *phylum* beyond the duality of forms. This is most obvious in his discussion of labour and money.

"Indifference towards any specific kind of labour presupposes a very developed totality of real kinds of labour, of which no single one is any longer predominant. As a rule, the most general abstractions arise only in the midst of the richest possible concrete development, where one thing appears common to many, to all." (G p104)

The abstract is not a moment in the apprehension of the real, as in the realist "philosophical consciousness". Rather, it appears and functions as the concrete is exacerbated, i.e. as the material elements of production are ever intensified, as can be seen under capitalism. The abstract is a material force produced within, and across, the concrete:

"Not only the category, labour, but labour in reality has become the means of creating wealth in general, and has ceased to be organically linked with particular individuals in any specific form.[...] [T]he category 'labour', 'labour as such', labour pure and simple, becomes true in practice." (G p104-5)

Further, we can see that the abstract has ceased to be hierarchically subjected to the concrete, and enters a loop with the concrete, the central loop of capitalist development (the production of profit). The opposition concrete/abstract is transposed to another level: previously, the concrete was conceived of on the 'scientific' model (which as given previously appears to have very Hegelian resonances):

"The concrete is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations [abstractions], hence the unity of the diverse." (G p101)

We see, however, that such a definition can no longer operate, since the abstract appears as a material force precisely "in the midst of the richest possible concrete development", i.e. where there is an intense "concentration of many determinations". What will become apparent, is that the opposition now existing in the porous wall separating these two terms becomes *functional* rather than *hierarchical*. We have, further, a radical opposition being instituted between the bourgeois economic theorists, the 'scientific' method, and Marx's reconstruction of material processes. Both of the

former methods of analysis fail to properly grasp their object, since the material reality has escaped their conceptual tools: their concepts are inadequate and mystificatory of contemporary material reality. With Marx's reconstruction of this conceptual opposition in radically materialist terms, we have a total overhaul of theoretical method; one which leads to a functionalism, or rather, a *pragmatics*. We no longer have a conceptual re-presentation of external reality, for the subject is thoroughly integrated into material production, subverting the autonomy of speculation, in such a manner that processes at one level are transposed to the other: the abstract escapes the conceptual and becomes material force, as 'theory' becomes subject to precisely the processes at work in material production. Rather than a progressive movement from the concrete historical reality to the abstract, as a moment on the way to a more rigorous determination of the concrete -a movement which subjects the abstract to the concrete, in the same manner as the subjugation of consciousness to external reality. One must, on the other hand, proceed outside the *a priori* theoretical hierarchies to grasp the material ones (an historical *a priori* in Foucault's words?):

"It would therefore be unfeasible and wrong to let the economic categories follow one another in the same sequence as that in which they were historically decisive. Their sequence is determined, rather, by their relation to one another in modern bourgeois society, which is precisely the opposite of that which seems to be their natural order or which corresponds to historical development." (G p107)<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> There is a becoming which is not that of history, not of the order of effects distributed in concrete assemblages of formed matters and functions, of individuals and essences; but in the order of *immanence of cause* or of the *abstract machine* (as we shall see below). "The diagram or abstract machine is the map of relations between forces, a map of destiny, or intensity, which proceeds by primary non-localizeable relations and at every moment passes through every point [...] The actualization which stabilizes them is an integration: an operation which consists of tracing 'a line of general force', linking, aligning and homogenizing particular features, placing them in a series and making them converge." (F p36/75).



The question concerns how far critique is going to go. If the conceptual weapons of critique are salvaged from the virulent actions of the critical enterprise, i.e. a residual transcendence is provided for conceptual resources, then critique will become transcendent with respect to its object, imposing -overcoding- its own concepts on an extraneous reality. This is the failure of critique: rather than enter concrete material relation with productive forces, it remains outside them, unable to grasp their processes conceptually, or materially to enter their functioning. Critique can only become abstract material force, by revising its own tools/resources as it enters the relations of its 'object', thereby replacing itself with its object and its object with itself. This is the function of the *diagram*, not to represent or correspond to a form of content, but rather, to be a map:

"a cartography that is coextensive with the whole social field. It is an abstract machine. It is defined by its informal functions and matter and in terms of form makes no distinction between content and expression, a discursive formation and a non-discursive formation. [...] It never functions in order to represent a persisting world but produces a new kind of reality, a new model of truth." (F p34/35, see also ATP p141ff)

In such a manner critique no longer has an 'object' but it enters synergistic relations with material production, in order to operate as a weapon, as an active optics, in which detection is operational for movement. Marx enters into the depths of capitalist productive processes, continually trying to un-pick the formalised functions and formed matters, attempting to uncover the genealogical force, the immanent differential cause cancelled by the overcodings effected by bourgeois science, or stratified in the double-pincers of content and expression. We must grasp material relations as so many differential points of force, of affect, and seeing power as a power to be affected, and power to affect, force upon force, and distributed/-ing a whole field of forces, marking "inflections, resistances" (F p73), and the ensuing effects of dissociation and regularisation of series, of flows, marking the emergence of concrete machines or assemblages, and the processes by means of which these are maintained. This involves a conceptual apparatus which functions within those

capital processes, without pre-determining the emergent relations. However, critique does not merely enter to pinpoint deficiencies within a system; it operates in such a manner as to disclose operations of transcendence functioning as moments within a system (recall Kant's paralogisms), to remove them, and reveal the manner in which a system functions with the exclusion of these control processes. With Marx's subversive conceptual tools, critique becomes abstract material weapon. The question of critique will have to wait, however, until we have analysed the *plane of immanence* of capital, and seen its real functioning beyond the rigorous dissociation of series, and stratification of relations.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> In this way we will see how the *formalisation* and *alignment* of planes in reciprocal presupposition rests on a 'real [immanent] distinction' of series, but one which becomes exclusive, subject to independent formalisation. Formalisation, therefore, will be seen to follow upon 'real distinction' (i.e. as supervening upon it), and the latter will be found to be the differential condition of the strategic distribution of powers. 'Real distinction' is the condition of the extraction of elements upon which the different assemblages, the variety of semiotic regimes impose their structuration, systematisation. Of critical importance then will be to articulate the relation between immanent real distinction and supervening semiotic regime. It is here that a Spinozist and Deleuzian ontology whereby real distinction may co-exist with ontological monism/immanence (in contradistinction with the Cartesian problematic) becomes central to an understanding of the diagram composing, and lines of flight undermining, the systematicity of capitalist regimes of semiotic integration which attempt to rigorously autonomise and encode particular distributions of elements and correlations across planes. With the onset of parallel formalisations (the alignment of planes effected by the assemblages), power will be seen to operate a distribution of heterogeneous series in terms of planes of contents and expressions which in effect operate as a form of multiplication of ontological elements, i.e. the attempt to 'naturalise' particular differentiations through a cancelling of the immanence of relation (here we see how Marx's critique of idealism and bourgeois economics, and Spinoza's critique of ontology follow remarkably similar and parallel paths), and



## Material Abstraction

In the "Chapter On Money" (G p113-238) we have a description of the process towards the 'concrete' production of 'abstraction': where intensely material processes tend to realise themselves and circulate in ever more 'abstract' forms: the commodity exists on the one hand as a product whose existence and circulation capacity is determined -initially- by its use-value [U-V], but which circulates by means of the monetary form of its exchange-value [E-V]:

"Value [E-V] is at the same time the exponent of the relation in which the commodity is exchanged with other commodities, as well as the exponent of the relation in which it has already been exchanged with other commodities (materialized labour time) in production; it is their quantitatively determined exchangeability". (G p140-1)

E-V functions on a multiplicity of levels for Marx, fundamentally as the quantitative exponent of the material conditions of production underlying the productive process (determination by labour-time: quantitative labour-power extraction), and thereby, the relation which commodities in exchange have with one another.<sup>30</sup> It reaches back into the nerve-centres of capitalist processes, and up to the surface, the structured, axiomatised zone of circulation.<sup>31</sup> E-V is the

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normalise particular distributions and alignments of content and expression in the form of machinic assemblages of bodies and semiotic regimes.

<sup>30</sup> "Value is their social relation, their economic quality" (G p141). We will see below that things become more complex when we understand labour-power extraction as already being subject to capture by E-V, thereby displacing any fetishised idea of the labour theory of value.

<sup>31</sup> The notion of *axiomatics* will be discussed in detail below. It is sufficient for now to understand it as an open set of rules determining the alignment and correlation of heterogeneous series (e.g. a labour-time series correlated with a monetary-series).



exponent of the commodity as abstract determination in 'real' exchange, and the condition of its metamorphosis into material exponent of its virtual transformation into all other commodities outside of the actual process of exchange.

Money is the concrete cipher for material-abstraction, in which U-V is displaced (decoded)<sup>32</sup> and re-organised around E-V, as the Third (labour-time determination: the E-V of a commodity) operates the abstraction from a particular order of the Real to another:

"As a value, the commodity is an equivalent; as an equivalent, all its natural properties are extinguished; it no longer takes up a special, qualitative relationship towards the other commodities; but is rather the general measure as well as the general representative, the general medium of exchange of all other commodities". (G p141)

Firstly, how is one to understand these "natural properties" displaced by E-V? One must not risk the tendency of an ahistorical determination, which would find a transcendent outside to capitalism, thereby provoking a reading of the concrete production of abstraction as the production of illusion, a picture which would tend to intellectualise capital.<sup>33</sup> But Marx is very clear not to ahistoricise nature, setting it deep in the context of material production. In the 'Introduction' to the Grundrisse, Marx places the 'natural' in the position of an encoded product of particular historical epochs, defining, in turn, a historical period in relation to the productive forces by which such a period is encompassed.<sup>34</sup> Nature then, is not an Outside to capitalism, but resides within

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<sup>32</sup> I.e. the signs' composing habits and conventions of consumption are displaced by a subsumption to an alien logic.

<sup>33</sup> The impossibility (and undesirability) of discovering a transcendent Outside to capital does not negate the possibility of subversion. Rather, the transcendent nature of an Outside may lead one to seek deeper within "at every stratifying endpoint of [capital], by way of every condition, through all the branchings [also translated as *bifurcations*]" (Artaud, Collected Works Vol.I p31, my interventions). For as we will see, interiority supervenes upon immanent exteriority of relations.

<sup>34</sup> See, for example, G p97.

it as its product, as the habits and conventions which come to be encoded as its projected presupposition. After all, what is there more natural than capital, yet what more progressive? The natural can therefore be most clearly understood as a differentiator of function: the commodity doubles into natural properties, general U-V relations on the one hand; and on the other hand, into E-V relations. In fact, precisely because commodities differ from one another (in the order of E-V) only quantitatively, this results in the fact that commodities (in the order of U-V) must differ qualitatively from their own value and are encoded as such. *What is at work is the progressive production of differential orders, strata of organisation; the pluralisation of processes intersecting and segmenting each other across the same surface, by the same abstract-machine.* That a book is exchangeable for a certain quantity of bread is entirely due to the abstraction made, the decoding, of any of the particular (encoded) qualities of the commodities by a third thing by which they are measured. This inevitably involves each commodity differing qualitatively from its measure.

This 'doubling' is what needs to be understood, and Marx fails to explicitly clarify its nature. To use an Althusserian distinction, it is as though Marx lacks the word for the concept he is attempting to explain. Marx speaks of this existence as E-V as a "doubling in the idea" but goes on to say:

"This doubling in the idea proceeds (and must proceed) to the point where the commodity appears double in real exchange:<sup>35</sup> as a natural product on the one side, as exchange value on the other. I.e. the commodity's exchange value obtains a *material* existence separate from the commodity".<sup>36</sup> (G pl45 -my italics)

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<sup>35</sup> I think that the notion of appearance indicated, implies a Kantian reading, in which what is possible in the realm of appearance (the immanent conception of the Real) is determined by the underlying conditions of its production. This seems to be implied by Marx's discussion of the fetishism of bourgeois economics, understood as "forms of thought which are socially valid, and therefore objective, for the relations of production belonging to this historically determined mode of social production" (C1 pl69).

<sup>36</sup> One thing this passage may point to is that it is precisely this "material" "doubling" which allows for the determination of "natural properties" within capitalist relations in the first



This notion of the "material existence" of the commodity, separate from its 'natural' existence has the effect of displacing the notion of "doubling in the idea" as understood in terms of the "philosophical consciousness" (G p101) spoken of above, and pointing towards the notion of the material-abstract, or abstract matter.<sup>37</sup> Further, it tends to re-enforce the notion of a pluralisation of levels and functions produced from within capitalist operations, proceeding by a differentiation of an immanent materiality:

"It is precisely because the immanent cause, in both its matter and its functions, disregards form that it is realised on the basis of a central differentiation which, on the other hand, will form visible matter, and on the other will formalize articulable functions. [...] The concrete assemblages are therefore opened up by a crack that determines how the abstract machine performs." (F p38)

The immanent cause, the abstract-machine of capital lies in the interstices, imperceptible but at work -the great reservoir from which concrete differentiations of function unfold.

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place.

<sup>37</sup> Clearly it is not sufficient to produce a new functional concept simply by the intersecting of certain words and concepts whose interrelation is unusual. What is required is that such a concept be seen to be materially functioning within the processes described. A concept is a weapon, a little knife (Collected Works Vol.1, A.Artaud, p18), which insinuates itself within the system, following its operations, detecting and morphing -metamorphing; and it is here, within this zone, that conceptual space becomes ever more porous, ever more material. What I am attempting is not the subsumption of a set of variables under a concept, but rather, to articulate various functions, operators, which determine the mutations of a concept. Here, in part, lies what one may call the Deleuzo-Guattarianism of my engagement with Marx: "It's not a matter of bringing all sorts of things together under one concept but rather of relating each concept to variables that explain its mutations." ('On A Thousand Plateaus' in Negotiations, G.Deleuze, p31).

Money becomes the general commodity as exchange relations develop. It is, on the one hand the "general measure", a symbol standing in for value determined as a particular quantitative determination of the labour-time realised in a commodity; on the other hand, it is the general commodity, the "material representative" of all commodities, the general medium of exchange.<sup>38</sup> As the capitalist mode of production spreads and intensifies its subsumption of exterior zones (whether they be further within or without) to its own ever more materially-abstract functionality, the product as U-V becomes increasingly cancelled as End of production. Hence U-V, as absolute consumption (terminal point of a productive cycle), becomes integrated to a further process to which it is subsumed -a decoding which strikes at the series themselves (series of goods, of labours, of peoples, of circulation, consumption, production), producing an abstract quantitativity which subverts the conventional, historically produced codes: the production of decoded flows. For money to be the general commodity, E-V functions have to dominate over U-V operators. What this means is the thorough reduction of U-V to a functional moment of E-V relations:

"When money enters into exchange, I am forced to exchange my product for exchange in general, or for the general capacity for exchange, hence my product becomes dependent on the state of general commerce and is torn out of its local, natural and individual boundaries. For exactly those reasons it can cease to be a product". (G p150)

It involves the displacement of prior regimes of organisation in which production was a sub-function of other systems, such as politico-religious control,<sup>39</sup> war, etc. Within capitalism, production dominates and subsumes these other functions to itself, thereby producing a radical overhaul of those relations.

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<sup>38</sup> In later chapters I will engage in a critique of the traditional labour theory of value itself. This does not mean, however, that Marx's articulations of it always fail to produce effective concepts for an understanding of contemporary capital which escapes bourgeois naturalisations.

<sup>39</sup> Which of course subsumes within it a variety of mechanisms: class differentiation, racial hierarchies, religious hierarchies, production control as in the guild system, land proprietorship, etc.

Production has no other end in sight than itself, it is a self reflexive system, and it invests and dis-invests precisely those systems which invest in it.<sup>40</sup>

E-V is not simply a by-product of production, but it is the produced condition of capitalist production itself. Money is not an efficient representative of capitalist circulation, but a materially abstract operator within production, having a material effect on the system itself.<sup>41</sup> It is a principle of metamorphosis. The U-V of the product/commodity is transformed, into a concrete instantiation of the virtuality of E-V as *all commodities*: realised price as the actualisation of a

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<sup>40</sup> This is not to deny the possibility of bad investments - capitalist control is a project, not an essence. The complexity of a system such as that of capitalism also involves disturbances to the calculating and visual mind such that it is forced to also make hallucinatory qualities functional (this is especially obvious in the financial markets).

<sup>41</sup> This will become even more obvious when money is considered in the form of capital.



determinate quantity of labour-time in the form of money.<sup>42</sup> Money circulates commodities which have already been transformed into E-V through determination by labour-time.<sup>43</sup> The model is

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<sup>42</sup> "What money circulates is exchange value (products of labour); therefore circulation is the process in which commodities are transformed into prices" (The Economics of Marx's Grundrisse, G.Lallier, p26), for the circulation of commodities (C-M-M-C') is the original precondition for the circulation of money (monetary turnover: M-C-C-M'), i.e. the transformation of E-V into prices (E-V in the form of money). Price, nevertheless differs from E-V, in that E-V is always the average of the socially necessary labour time objectified in a commodity, whilst price is always the actual amount of labour time objectified, and hence price always falls short or rises above real value: "The value (the real exchange value) of all commodities (labour included) is determined by their cost of production, in other words by the labour time it cost to produce them. Their price is this exchange value of theirs expressed in money" (G p137). The duplicity of the money form means that although money is always equivalent to that which it measures, in actual transactions (i.e. as medium of circulation rather than as general measure) it can prove to be incommensurable with value, thereby producing glitches and breaks within circulation (see n.43 below).

<sup>43</sup> "Exchange value forms the substance of money, and exchange value is wealth" (G p221). Money and E-V, therefore differ: money -once produced- is correlated with a specific amount of labour-time, which expresses a particular level of the productivity of labour at the time of production (say, an average level of productivity over five years): "[t]his amount of labour time defines the 'value', the real exchange value, of the particular amount of gold [for example] contained in this coin [...] [T]his money, defined in terms of the labour time necessary to produce the metal contained in it, serves as the 'general equivalent' and is convertible for commodities produced under conditions of the same level of labour-time productivity" (The Economics of Marx's Grundrisse, G.Lallier, p41). For full convertibility to be realised in a transaction/exchange, the productivity of labour would need to be stabilised ("held constant" -Lallier- Ibid.); but the law of rising productivity pushes the relationship away from commensurability between "real value" and "market value", disturbing the correlation, the

clearly not linear in that determination by labour-time already involves wage-labour (hence money) as a means of placing circulation within production itself, thereby making circulation (exchange) into both end and presupposition of the system (and further, displacing the priority of commodity turnover by placing monetary turnover within the heart of the system). Only where the object of labour is not a particular object, but a general one, can the abstract function as motor of the system. Only where the wage is the general object of labour, is labour de-particularised/decoded.<sup>44</sup> In so far as money is the "general representative" of wealth, it remains at the level of the abstract, in that its generality (virtuality) must be denied (actualisation of the virtual) so as to function as "material representative" of wealth.<sup>45</sup> Yet the negation of the generality, or rather the actualisation of a particular abstract quantity, must be one in which it retains its virtual (general) quality in its material instantiation, without collapsing the two into a diagrammatic function which would de-stratify material abstraction to the point at which flow conjunction can no longer

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apparent relation of equivalence.

<sup>44</sup> See G p224. Historical digression- Labour comes under the dictates of exchange by means -initially- of a process of 'primitive accumulation', where gold (and other precious metals) is hoarded through invasion and conquest (a process which has the effect also of forming a virtual market yet to be actualised). The wealth of a nation comes to be identified with its gold reserves (economics is never far from a fetishism), a commodity which at this stage is still exchanged through simple barter. When labour comes to be submitted to this general commodity, we have the subsumption of labour to generality: a process which initiates the progressive de-particularisation (a decoding and axiomatisation, or movement towards the "truth in practice" of material-abstraction) of labour itself. A fuller history of capital will be given in a later chapter. It is evident that this is merely a model. The role played by mercantilism in the rise of British capitalism, for example, is disputable.

<sup>45</sup> The language of this passage with its emphasis on representation, is Marx's, and requires renewal by a language adequate to material-abstraction, to a diagrammatics which escapes the stratifications of content and expression.



be axiomatised.<sup>46</sup> In other words, characteristic of the functionality of money (and ultimately E-V also) is that it *is* material-abstraction: it consists of a series of operations integrating material efficacy with intense de-particularisation (decoding), which we will see under capitalism comes to axiomatise the diagram through a dissociation of series and a co-ordination of regulated planes:

"Its very entry into circulation must be the moment of its staying at home, and its staying at home must be an entry into circulation. That is to say that as realised exchange value it must be simultaneously posited as the process in which exchange value is realized." (see G p234-5).

Wealth, in the form of money as 'representative', or as we prefer, in its form as *axiomatised function of material-abstraction*, appears and operates, both as ground and end of the process of circulation -the exacerbation of non-linearity: in so far as it is the end of the process, it must become its presupposition, since as material operator ('representative') it can only function as such through not being mere symbol, it can only be realised through re-insertion: M-C-C-M'.<sup>47</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> It is in this dual role which money must take on that crisis in circulation can occur due to the potential for money as "general representative" to separate and conflict with its "real value" (see n.42 and n.43 above). Crisis, however, and the possibility for internal dis-assembling of axiomatised material-abstraction, is not at present the issue. The functional mobility internal to material-abstraction will only be of interest when material-abstraction is itself operational. However, we can see how in Marx we may finally have the supersession of conditioning by genesis/production, but without falling into the dogmatism of other post-Kantians, as the possibility of crisis leaves open the between within each conceptual production. The attainment of the "'critical' point, the horizon or focal point at which difference qua difference serves to reunite" (Difference and Repetition[DR], G.Deleuze, p170).

<sup>47</sup> "The process of circulation must equally appear as the process of the production of exchange values" (G p235 -the force of 'appear' in this sentence is -again- to be taken in the Kantian sense of, as determined by the immanent conditions of

E-V in its monetary form has the effect of exacerbating the movement towards efficient abstraction directly through its own functioning, i.e. due to output retaining its character as E-V only through re-introduction (re-investment) into the process, but also through the subsumption of labour.<sup>48</sup> In fact these two processes should not be exclusive, since they follow the same paths at times, then separate whilst intersecting and feeding back into one another:

"The two forms [money/E-V and labour] do not have the same formation, genesis or genealogy [...] Between the two alliances are formed and broken, and there is occasional overlapping on particular strata and thresholds." (F p62-3)

The account given above aims implicitly to show (although I have concentrated on E-V and money rather than abstract labour-power) how these processes intersect in such a manner as to make capital an orphan, i.e. how capital functions as though it were

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the system). "In circulation, as it appears as money circulation, the simultaneity of both poles [general and material 'representation' of wealth] of exchange value is always presupposed" (G p235). As Deleuze says, the "unique limit that separates each one is the common limit that links one to the other" (F p65), it is this crack that determines how the abstract machine of material-abstraction is effectuated in the concrete machines or assemblages. *The limit and link is the point of 'real [immanent] distinction' where an axiomatic intervenes to maintain immanence of relation along with dissociation and convertibility of the produced heterogeneous series.* Capitalism then, strikes at the abstract-machine itself, but it does so -as we shall see- by (re)producing it through the co-ordination of a set of concrete machines in accordance with a generalised axiomatic of conversion of the decoded series/flows produced by the machines. Hence the term 'Integrated World Capitalism' (IWC) adopted by Guattari, Alliez, and Negri.

<sup>48</sup> The system produces affects within the system in such a manner as to integrate heterogeneous components. For example, the desire for profit is what Baudrillard calls a "function induced (in the individual) by the internal logic of the system" (For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign p82).



its own product.<sup>49</sup> This occurs precisely through the development of material-abstraction, whereby the concrete is subsumed to process which de-stratify and decode/de-particularise it: dis-assembling and re-assembling concretion (decoding the series or flows) around its own intensely material immanentising axiomatic. There is an ever tighter subsumption of what appears to the conditions of its appearance, of the produced to the conditions of production; in such a manner that feed-back becomes ever more efficient as motor of operations, in that what is produced can become operator of production -its own condition; and such that what is able to appear becomes ever more dependent upon its conditions; and yet -the risk for capitalist control processes- is that whatever is produced becomes ever more efficacious in the transformation of its own conditions of existence.

Material-abstraction is then in no sense an abstraction from materiality, it is rather the synergistic relation developing within matter, towards a functioning which operates on a level whereby displacement of a certain set of relations is produced by a different organisation and distribution of material relations, one tending increasingly to de-stratify contents (qualities and states of things) and decode functions (distribution of aims), but which under capitalism substitutes them with an immanent axiomatic which enables a co-ordination, regularisation, and manipulability of the produced decoded flows. *The reproduction of material-abstraction proceeds through the re-distribution of elements and relations across dissociated planes, and -in its capitalist form- a managed axiomatisation of their conjunction through an articulated conversion between the*

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<sup>49</sup> The fact that capital functions in this manner is not to deny the historical (and contingent) nature of capital, but is merely to describe the process by means of which capital functions and reproduces itself (as a corrective to this, see the inadequate Historical digression above, and Subsumption below). Capital functions precisely through the development of itself as abstract matter; organising itself on a plane which displaces 'historicality' (or, the time within which temporality is produced and coded, see Time and Resistance below) in favour of an immanent temporality of capitalist processes themselves, derived from the abstract-machine which is its immanent potential and counter-actualising threat.



regulated series or planes. There is, therefore, also a distribution of codes and affects, of stratified elements and functions -distribution of automizations- by the concrete machines which function as "immanent models of realization for an axiomatic of decoded flows" (ATP p455); they do so -paradoxically- in order that any such distribution is effected so as to produce regularised and homogenised decoded flows subject to an axiomatised conjunction. Fordism, for example, as a strategy of control over production operated by a strict and rigorously enforced set of codes: the 'rationalisation' of the production process distributing tasks and functions, and 'standardisation' of products, in such a manner able to produce a strictly regularised and homogeneous (decoded) labour-flow and commodity-flow through a massive encoding of the various planes of the production process itself. As we will see, decoding under capital operates in the service of an axiomatisation whereby the quality of the decoded flows produced derives solely from their regulated (axiomatised) conjunction.<sup>50</sup> Marx gives an excellent historical account of this process in Capital Vol.1 (see chapter 10 in Capital Vol.1 on 'The Working Day'):

"The changed material mode of production, and the correspondingly changed social relations of the producers, first gave rise to outrages without measure, and then called forth, in opposition to this, *social control, which legally limits, regulates and makes uniform the working day and its pauses*" (C1 p411-12, my italics).<sup>51</sup>

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<sup>50</sup> In Fordism, a conjunction produced within the factory, where at each stage of the productive process flows of labour and goods gain their qualitative determination entirely from their regulated conjunction fixed by the particular phase of the process.

<sup>51</sup> See also the whole of part four on 'The Production of Relative Surplus-Value'. The relation between the axiomatic and its models of realisation is taken up again in *Total Critique is a Pragmatics*. One should note further, that despite the 'attack' on the state by Anglo-American capitalism, this has not blocked both a real increase in state expenditure and a proliferation of regulatory bodies -both intra- and trans-national. Regulatory coding appears to increase in the strategy of decoding and axiomatising of flows.

Marx's language frequently falls short of his conceptual resources, thereby provoking at one and the same time a feeling of familiarity, and alienation. I have been seeking a language more adequate to the task of hunting down the processes Marx uncovers, one which will pin-point immanent relations between the heterogeneous series and emergent processes of capitalism, and perhaps will only develop as one grasps for weapons whilst tracking Marx: tracking capital tracking Marx.

### Suspended Singularisation

Marx's own statements concerning material-abstraction waver - as we have seen- between a not completely effective displacement of the representationalist or "philosophical consciousness" model, finding no positive term for the concept lying between the "doubling in the idea" and "material existence" (G p145); except, that is, in certain important instances as in that of labour-power, and a more adequate formulation which occurs through a consideration of the intersection of circulation and production processes: in speaking of circulation Marx claims that

"my product is a product in so far as it is for others; hence *suspended singularity*, generality" (G p196 -my italics).

It is the intriguing notion of "suspended singularity" which requires consideration; a notion so unfortunately placed as though on a level with that of "generality" which leads it to be overlooked in favour of the known term.<sup>52</sup> There is, however, a distinct difference between the two terms. Whilst "generality" implies lack of determination, and is usually directed at properties or attributed qualities -an aspect of the stratified 'abstraction'; "suspended singularity" can only be understood of a non-stable function. It implies a process, the arresting of a process which has begun and traced a certain number of distinctive points which nevertheless lack completed determination or saturation; perhaps *suspended singularisation* would be clearer. To understand it as the 'suspension' of the already formed properties of a commodity (the surface meaning)

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<sup>52</sup> But after all, these are only 'outlines' (grundrisse).



fails both to explain how and why such a suspension would occur, and critically fails to reveal what suspended singularity would disclose in the suspension. Such a reading would force us back into understanding the suspension as a merely intellectual determination -i.e. as an effect of a process of (mental) abstraction, rather than a *real practice*. What is to be thought -on the other hand- is a process impacting directly upon circulation and its production: suspended singularity/isation is produced and operates within production (and on its surface). For suspended singularity/isation to function at the level of circulation implies its production at another level.<sup>53</sup> Although Marx often speaks of this process in terms of a sequence of individual acts of "alienation" of products, such an operation is best understood by the production of an assemblage by means of which suspended singularisation is effected. Suspension of singularisation is not an event acting as limitation on an established process (e.g. the production of the singular product), but is rather the regulated conjunction/integration of diverse planes of production operating in a manner as to arrest, re-route, start-up, intersect a set of processes (series) under way, re-organising them onto the level of circulation: a set of points (a series) not yet captured in a fully stable (coded) form, but functioning as virtual matrix, fragmentary process, acting as space for further connections to intersect and re-form. Labour-power and temporality, these heterogeneous series and the series which intersect, interrupt, and produce them, operate within the suspension they produce, and re-organise within it: labour-power seizure, velocity of production, modes of machinic interfacing, social dismemberment... all intersect in the production of this space, the decoded and axiomatised space which acts as surface and machine of suspension: the production of circulation. For what we have with suspended singularity is the transformation of production into (capitalist) circulation. There is no difference in the components, only a re-organisation of the intersecting series. What we have with the suspension of singularisation is the production of a space which lies *between*, a zone of happening *between* the planes of production and consumption -the materialisation of the exteriority of relations. To allow singularisation to be completed is to have the production of a U-V economy, where the actualisation of a

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<sup>53</sup> For circulation does not "carry within itself the principle of self-renewal" (see G p254-5).



singular product is its consumption by the immediate producer who provides its actuality:

"Consumption, the satisfaction of needs, in short use-value, is therefore its final goal." (C1 p250)

This is an economy of finality, of end-points, of coded aims and functions where all the actual is pre-determined and constrained to rigorous law inscribed in the flesh, the organs, and the land. To allow processes not to end, to suspend resolution is to remain between, in the intersection, in such a manner as to allow process-interface, enabling them always to re-route, re-organise and follow transverse lines and connections: "production is not an end in itself for me but a means" (G p196) -a means without Ends; there are only means without ends:

"It is in the nature of circulation that every point appears simultaneously as the starting-point and as a conclusion, more precisely, that it appears to be the one in so far as it appears to be the other." (G p203)

The circulation of commodities within capitalism is the condition of the circulation of money, but the circulation of money repeats on another plane the organisation of production: that of the division of labour, labour-power abstraction, etc., as does in another form commodity circulation. Commodity circulation 'displays' labour-power as matter of production, as monetary circulation 'displays' means of extraction<sup>54</sup> -the organisation of power of the socio-economic axiomatic.<sup>55</sup> Both

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<sup>54</sup> "Barter in its crudest form presupposes labour as substance and labour time as measure of commodities; this then emerges as soon as it becomes regularized, continuous, as soon as it contains within itself the reciprocal requirements for its renewal." (G p205)

<sup>55</sup> The notion of 'displaying' is insufficiently determined. It is important not to see here a 'natural' correspondence, or a representational doubling or conformity; between the two there is a difference in nature: a form of expression and of content. In *Total Critique is a Pragmatics* we will see how power operates through a correlation between series, i.e. as affect and effect of the production of an Assemblage articulated through the double pincer of a collective assemblage of enunciation, a machinic assemblage, and incorporeal transformations between the two which stratify and segment the social field, enabling an

display/disguise and perpetuate. The integration of production and commodity circulation: commodity production and the axiomatics of the dismembered socius (i.e. the decoding of series and their axiomatisation in terms of an economic function), is the actualisation of suspended singularity whereby the use-value of commodities is subsumed under their exchangeability, displacing the singular (coded) quality of each as product by alignment with the plane of abstract labour and money, i.e. productive and circulating moments, nodes of intersection and re-combination: for labour-power lies always between, as zone of interface, with money directing the conjunctions. Initially E-V was correlated with homogenised labour-time, and extended itself in circulation, then instantiating itself in the form of money. If labour were to govern the system, the series would close with consumption, or with a monetary hoarding which would lose all connection with its conditions of renewal, i.e. production: such a system is one in which exchange is a means of distribution in accordance with extra-economic exigencies, or a means of regulating waste. Self-renewal operates through E-V positing its own presupposition no longer as simple equivalent, but as 'objectified' E-V.<sup>56</sup> This system reversal functions by producing E-V as independent operative substance:

*"Money (as returned to itself from circulation), as capital, has lost its rigidity, and from a tangible thing has become a process. But at the same time, labour has changed its relation to its objectivity; it, too, has returned to itself. But the nature of this return is this, that the labour objectified in the exchange value posits living labour as a means of reproducing it, whereas, originally, exchange value appeared merely as the product of labour. Exchange value emerging from circulation, a presupposition of circulation, preserving*

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effective regulation of the decoded flows, and an axiomatisation of their conjunction.

<sup>56</sup> I.e. labour is instantiated into a utility for capital. We have an early example of this change of status in the relation of E-V to labour, i.e. of this system reversal, in G p257. This concerns the effect on English production of the influx of cheap commodities from the Netherlands in the sixteenth century.



and multiplying itself in it by means of labour." (G p263-4)

We have no two-world Kantianism of phenomena and noumena, since each plane doubles back upon the other. Circulation is as much a moment of production as production is of circulation. The space of circulation (suspended singularity) could no more be opened if labour itself were not decoded, than could labour be decoded without the space of non-singular commodities, or of the abstract efficiency of money as it intersects and co-ordinates each level. Marx summarises how the series are articulated from the perspective of money:

"Money provides the possibility of an absolute division of labour, because of the independence of labour from its specific product, from the immediate use-value of its product for it." (G p200)

This does not imply that no distinction can be made at the level of the real amongst the network of series, of course. Crisis is precisely the failure to intersect in the manner determined by the capitalist axiomatic, the failure of processes to interact in such a manner as to suspend the relatively independent operations of each series and re-route in a manner appropriate to the smooth running of the capitalist machine. There is a careful 'freeing-up' of elements and relations, the decoding of established habits and conventions effected by capital, but capitalism always imposes rigorous dissociation, co-ordination, and regulation procedures so that the conjunction of the heterogeneous plastic flows is organised by massive axiomatisation which gives each flow its qualitative character. Failure to axiomatise could lead to the emergence of runaway processes as decoded flows feed into one another engendering unseen conjunctions exceeding established (axiomatised) capture and regulation procedures. The articulation of crisis then must rest upon the prior analysis of axiomatised material-abstraction and its various facets (e.g. suspended singularity).



Dark Precursor<sup>57</sup>

The E-V of a commodity exists only in so far as it loses its U-V qualities through intersecting (communicating) with an other:

"If 1 bushel of wheat is worth 3 bushels of rye, then only the bushel of wheat is expressed as value [E-V], not the bushel rye." (G p206)

U-Vs lose their functional character through being subjected to a separate series which intersects and re-organises its qualities. A heterogeneous, foreign X intersects with U-V a, displacing the qualitative character of a and making it follow another attractor. This is not a simple displacement effected by an overriding signifier, for the alien X, say b, itself is dislodged by a foreign, heterogeneous X, say a, which strips b of its functional operations broadly categorised as U-V. The operator of displacement is always itself absent; an empty square travelling a grid, always escaping visibility. It is never fixed, taking on particular features whilst at each stage escaping them. Intersection by the empty square displaces all intersecting terms as each is made to pass into the other whilst thereby dissecting, dividing, and re-organising its features. Only in this way are the heterogeneous series be co-ordinated.

However, this sequence of displacements and becomings can be viewed in another manner which perhaps opens more possibilities of understanding these relations in process. Rather than understanding this as a doubling in the specific qualities of commodities, a doubling commencing from U-V into E-V, with each commodity functioning as dislocator of the other, whilst itself being displaced in the process; it is perhaps precisely the process which must be viewed. Not only do we have the series *commodities*, but we have the series U-V and E-V. The first term involves the subsumption of the other two terms, whilst the latter two function through mutual exclusion -they operate in distinct ways. There is within the system of commodities at least two series in communication. E-V is always on the way to subsumption of U-V, communication here functions through

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<sup>57</sup> This term is borrowed from G.Deleuze's Difference and Repetition (see especially p119-24), and distorted towards my own ends.

dominance, capture, through the assimilation of one series to the functioning of the other.<sup>58</sup> One level of material production is made to traverse another, and be organised under, within, its operations. One series 'signifying', the other 'signified'. The former is always in excess of the other in that it comes all at once, and functions by globalizing: each 'signifier' determined by differentiation from each other term, whilst the 'signified' is always organised by fragmentation and loss. In the first series (globalization) what is produced is an empty square; in the second series (part-objects) there is an occupant without a place. This extra and this less than

"are two sides of the same thing -two uneven sides- by means of which the series communicate without losing their difference." (The Logic of Sense[LS], G.Deleuze, p50. <sup>59</sup>

It is important to note that no claim of alienation or loss of wholeness is being made concerning the second series; these terms (fragmentation, part-object) attempt to grasp the manner of its functioning, its openness onto an Outside, and its expulsion of interiority -i.e. the exteriority of relations. The commodity divides into U-V' and E-V': heterogeneities communicating as articulations of the commodity system. E-V functions through (attempted) globalization-totalisation of U-V, i.e. subjecting it to its own organisation, by subsuming it under determination by labour-time;<sup>60</sup> whilst U-V is always in

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<sup>58</sup> There are numerous heterogeneous series forming systems which function in such ways in Marx's writings other than U-V/E-V: money/commodities, capital/labour, objectified labour/labour-power... - and they all intersect across the same space, the same abstract-machine.

<sup>59</sup> Much of this section relies on Deleuze's 'The Eighth series of Structure' in The Logic of Sense. The terms signifier/signified are seen here to subvert their function within semiological analysis through their mapping of a semiotic which exceeds the linguistic.

<sup>60</sup> "[U]se value as such does not stand in a connection with exchange value, but becomes a specific exchange value only because the common element of use values -labour time- is applied to it as an external yardstick" (G p269); what we are speaking of is transformation which operates by substituting one



the process of escape, as products are perpetually produced, circulated, consumed. The empty square has its path already traced across the space of production, it is the syntax of capitalist order: *axiomatics*. Velocity and efficiency of production are the capitalist functions, but their escalation involves the ever more difficult subsumption of the produced to the E-V axiomatic -one is always in danger of producing an excess for which capital has no means of assimilation.

The body of capital forms the surface across which these heterogeneous series communicate: capital acts as differentiator of E-V/U-V, i.e. it produces and marks their difference, and in this space of difference is produced the excess and the lack by means of which communication across the series is made possible. Communication occurs across the space of production (of difference), by means of that space thereby produced. Capital is the dark precursor:

"Thunderbolts explode between different intensities, but they are preceded by an invisible, imperceptible dark precursor, which determines their path in advance but in reverse, as though intagliated." (DR p119)

Dominance, capture, occurs "in reverse", it has already happened, subsumption has happened and production functions within the space already marked by what is to appear on it, and how it is to appear: "objects of experience, are themselves possible only in conformity with the law" (Critique of Pure Reason, I.Kant, B234). Potentiality is subjugated to pre-determined lines of actualisation: capital is the differentiator of function. Friction or conflict is produced in the produced difference, and it is by means of this energy, in excess of the parts, that the series communicate. As Negri notes, without antagonism, without friction "not only is there no movement, but the categories do not even exist" (Marx Beyond Marx[MbM], p9). The commodity is the energetic surplus produced in the conflict of the two series capital/labour.<sup>61</sup> The assemblage (formed by the heterogeneous series of the money-form and labour-process) is operated and constituted by the abstract-machine of capital;

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set of functions for another, operating a movement from one level of material/productive organisation to another.

<sup>61</sup> For it must not be forgotten that the empty place and the occupant without a place are always themselves produced.



it acts as the transcendental factory wherein the phenomenal is produced:

"every phenomenon flashes in a signal-sign system. In so far as a system is constituted or bounded by at least two heterogeneous series, two disparate orders capable of entering into communication, we call it a signal." (DR p222)

The signal/commodity travels the circuits of the series as their produced by-product, and as the empty square which allows the series to communicate -but it also always marks an excess and the possibility of flight. Capital mobilises the potential for flight at the same time as it aims to constrain it to its own functioning, a functioning in reverse which determines the lines to be followed by potential before potential has agreed to follow -Capital plays a dangerous game.

### Fracture

"As soon as money is posited as an exchange value which not only becomes independent of circulation, but which also maintains itself through it, then it is no longer money, for this as such does not go beyond its negative aspect, but is capital." (G p259)

Capital must be understood in its full positivity; any limitation introduced into its initial notion provides one with a partial, schematised set of concepts of the economist order, i.e. the idealisation of a set of material processes.<sup>62</sup> It is both independent of circulation whilst sustaining itself on it -

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<sup>62</sup> "If, when things are viewed from this twofold standpoint [from the point of view of abstraction and that of concretion], we find that there is agreement with the principle of pure reason [axiomatised material-abstraction as the principle of capitalist functioning], but that when we regard them from only a single point of view [the capitalist logos operating either fully outside or fully within exchange] reason [capital] is involved in unavoidable self-conflict, the experiment decides in favour of the correctness of this distinction." (Critique of Pure Reason, I.Kant, BXIX n.a. -interjections aim to point out the connections with the critique of capital functioning.)

vampiric. Unlike money or commodities capital does not dissolve itself in circulation; neither does it lie outside like a jackal: one does not differentiate between the host and the guest. Capital is at each stage both moments, commodity and money: *"it is itself the alternation of both these roles"* (G p261).<sup>63</sup> Identity is overrun by a form which exists in its own internal differentiation; it differentiates itself in its functioning, producing the heterogeneities of commodity/money, and it does so precisely due to its fractured 'nature'. Precisely because capital is internally split it acts as transcendental zone of phenomenality; constructing, within the heterogeneity of its own intensive structure, events which develop series of a continuous yet distinct kind with regard to their transcendental ground:

"It is not indifferent to the substance, but to the particular form; appears in this respect as a constant metamorphosis of this substance; in so far as it is then posited as a particular content of exchange value, this particularity is a totality of particularity; hence indifferent not to particularity as such, but to the single or individuated particularity." (G p262)

Capital concerns itself with 'substance', in that it operates directly upon individuality in such a manner as to disperse its identity, actualising its ideal singularity: the abstract-machine. What is subjected to metamorphosis is substance in its identity (or "individuated particularity"), dislodging its unity which comes to be understood in terms of the effect of relations lying always exterior to their terms, i.e. never to be totalised. Both the particular and the individual are displaced: the particular is deterritorialised by being instantiated in diverse substances; whilst the individual retains only the one sided or fetishised functions which disguise the movement of its production.

Capital is fractured. This can only be disguised by means of a differentiation between the categories of capital and of labour which ignores their fundamental continuity in the abstract-machine. The distinction needs to be sustained in order to provide answers for the fetishised questions of the economists, but needs to be by-passed in order to map the problematic functioning of capitalist strategy.

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<sup>63</sup> See also G p266.



"In the relation of capital and labour, exchange value and use value are brought into relation." (G p267)

Marx retains the opposition in order to describe the fracture within the capital structure, which thereby opens the phenomenal space of commodity relations, i.e. the concretion of the capitalist abstract-machine in the assemblages which effectuate its strategy. Capital-labour is fundamentally an intensive continuum (material-abstraction), a differential system which produces and enables the organisation of zones of conjugation. The opposition capital/labour occurs when intensity is re-organised in terms of exclusion and subjugation, a necessity for capital's own functioning. As Marx develops his analysis of the system, it begins to open onto a conflictual schema. Just as E-V is displaced at the critical point of consumption, so capital stands in a critical relation to labour.

With the development of E-V, U-V is ever increasingly subsumed to the logic of the former; U-V becomes a moment employed/organised by the superior functioning of E-V. In the same way -by means of the same tools- capital subsumes labour to its own order: whilst capital[s] and labour form a differential relation, a reciprocally determined relation, capitalist tactics produce a hierarchical ordering of the relation, forcing the immanent relation to re-organise across a stratified space: capital dominance involves the development of the 'signifying' system (E-V) over the 'signified' (U-V), i.e. over individual relations of consumption -thereby subjugating labour and U-V: labour-power is processed by capital; it effects this through recoding the labour-process in accordance with the systemic



features of exchange (time and space).<sup>64</sup> U-V does not stand in opposition to E-V as in a relation of dependency; rather U-V is transformed into a specific form of E-V -more easily then assimilatable to capital- due to the code transformation E-V effects.<sup>65</sup>

We do not have harmonious co-existence, but friction: in the case of money's relation to capital, it becomes clear that money, being the general representative of wealth, is only capable of quantitative motion. On the one hand, it is the U-V par excellence in that it is transformable into any U-V, and stands in a positive relation to all of them (it effectively forms a continuum with them). On the other hand, it stands in relation to all commodities in so far as it sustains itself as E-V. As Marx puts it, its quantity stands in opposition to its quality as general representative of wealth, since any actualisation of itself is limited, whilst it nevertheless forms a continuum of metamorphosis in relation to all of them:

"it preserves itself as a self-validated exchange value distinct from a use value only by *constantly multiplying itself*" (G p270).

Material-abstraction is an immanent relation, it is intensive, but is made to function in accordance with an internal fracture by which flows can be regulated: decoding of flows, dissociation

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<sup>64</sup> The subsumption of immanent series, of differential flows (e.g. technico-social; psycho-physical; material-abstract, etc.) to production time; and to logistics of distribution across space. What we are speaking of is precisely the distribution of a homogenised time and space: "A distribution of this type proceeds by fixed and proportional determinations which may be assimilated to 'properties' or limited territories within representation" (DR p36). This also helps explain the economist's attraction to this form of analysis (ordered by identity and exclusive categorisation), rather than the movement which takes one to the diagrammatic conditions of such a process of extending the differential into the exclusive concrete machines -materialist strategy.

<sup>65</sup> "[U]se value [labour-power] as such becomes what it is to become [capital] through exchange value, and [...] exchange value mediates itself [with capital] through use value [labour-power]" (G p269).

of series, and axiomatised conjunction. Capital solicits the opposition of U-V/E-V, and thereby produces friction which precisely constitutes the differential structure of capital as exclusive/conflictual. Friction is essential to capital for the simple reason that, being the by-product of a set of processes which capital subjects to itself, capital is in the constant process of displacing the tendencies of the processes which it requires to sustain and augment itself:

"The use value which confronts capital as posited exchange value is *labour*. Capital exchanges itself, or exists in this role, only in connection with *not-capital*, the negation of capital, without which it is not capital; the real *not-capital* is *labour*." (G p274)

The commodity is the sign-form of the cancelled intensity of capital differentials.<sup>66</sup> It is the by-product of friction, and the means by which friction is domesticated; it is the sign, the signal by means of which communication is retained and can be reproduced. Friction becomes (re-)productive (of dissociation), it proliferates, and itself becomes the measure, the tensor of a set of tendencies and displacements. What is continually at stake is control. Material-abstraction as capital produces and sustains itself on the conflict, the fracture which constitutes its order, and effectively controls its systemic tendencies through domestication-commodification.

### Integrated World Capitalism and Control

The relation between capitals involves an apparently indifferent reciprocal independence. This disguises the necessity of their dependence and integration. Marx's discussion of the capitalist's differing relation to his own work force, as opposed to that of his competitors discloses the antagonism by which capital functions, a dualism consumed at critical points of the capitalist realisation process, e.g. under conditions of

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<sup>66</sup> The qualitative explication of implicated intensity. See 'Asymmetrical Synthesis of the Sensible' in Difference and repetition, e.g.: "Difference is explicated, but in systems in which it tends to be cancelled; this means only that difference is essentially implicated, that its being is implication" (DR p228).



overproduction. The barrier of capitalist production, according to Marx, is the relation of necessary to surplus labour in terms of the relation of consumption to realisation. When an imbalance is introduced, the reduced velocity of capital realisation provides an articulated space whereby capital is able to re-orientate: crisis is not terminal, but the phenomenal form symptomatic of tendencies governing system alterations (operating at different degrees of radicality). Death is not dialectically opposed to life, but is the zero-point on an intensive continuum.

Under conditions of crisis, after the reduction of necessary labour through increase productivity caused by labour resistance has raised disproportionately the relation of constant capital to variable, causing the rate of profit to decline,<sup>67</sup> "excess" (G p451) (surplus') labour 'freed' from direct integration with production, is let loose and is the condition of the eventual extension of an integrative productive loop; as is the freeing of capital from direct industrial commitment caused by the inability of capital to realise itself. Capital functions as a dissipative system, which at a certain threshold -a point of non-equilibrium- breaks with its present investment program, extending beyond its territory.<sup>68</sup>

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<sup>67</sup> An increase in the productivity of labour can, therefore, result in a relative devaluation of capital as less valorising labour is "sucked in[to]" the process (see Negri's important discussion of the relation between necessary vs. surplus labour, and increase in the organic composition of capital, MbM p100-3).

<sup>68</sup> Hence capital's needs to perpetually reproduce pockets of primitive accumulation upon which it supervenes in time of resistance. As Braudel argues, the market functions as prey to a parasitical capital, such that capital extends its scope only to the extent that the market has already spread its web across potentially profitable regions. The market often grows outside of capitalist subsumption processes, and is only of any interest to capital when it has reached a certain degree of profitability. Capital steps in and replaces the open rhizomic system of exchanges with top-down, increasingly regulated exchanges -e.g. the formation of monopolies. At this point regulation/de-regulation are in reciprocal presupposition, depending on the health of the system, one or the other dominates.



Capital is an open system. It may appear that I have made this claim and its opposite. It is perhaps time for clarification. How does Capital function? what are its desires? how does it realise its attachments, its repulsions? In this section I shall consider this question with direct reference to the Grundrisse, but it shall open onto broader questions subsequently. Why does the question of desire arise here, at the stage of crisis? It is because desire is a question of communication, of connection and of exclusion. Critical thresholds are those where the whole system re-orientates, where it must function as an intensive sensorium, functioning as an articulated unity with heightened sensibility, or where the locked-in heterogeneities re-emerge and dissolve the emergent (assembled) unity: crisis is the point of desire.

Capital is axiomatised material-abstraction, functioning by a fundamental rupture with the conditions of its own production. It migrates away from its initial conditions constantly re-organising its boundary conditions, policing its parameters. We are told that capital measures its quantitative realisation "by itself: as being its own measure" (G p448). It is both an "abstraction", as well as particular existing capitals involved in their own particular productive sequences (G p449). However, this "double positing [...] becomes damn real in this case" (G p449-50). Capital makes itself an orphan. It acts as differentiator of the functional multiplicities thereby breaking with its initial conditions, and controlling its parameters: "its [labour's] material unity appears subordinate to the objective unity of the machinery" (G p470).<sup>69</sup> Capitalism breaks with its conditions of production (this is what we can term the autonomisation of capital), through the 'freeing' of labour from the 'objective conditions' of its operation.<sup>70</sup> This is what

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<sup>69</sup> I think that the rather obfuscating remarks concerning "material" and "objective" "unity" can be dealt with in the manner of A.Negri, in his Marx Beyond Marx, where he understands this opposition in terms of an underlying antagonism which constitute the dynamic dichotomies of the theory of crisis (e.g. MbM p14). As Negri says, "Reality is political" (MbM p42, see also my Total Critique is a Pragmatics below).

<sup>70</sup> This remark requires qualification: as Marx frequently points out, capital operates a 'freeing' of labour from exclusive connectivity produced under feudal, tribal, etc. conditions, only to re-organise it across its own space of axiomatised pure

Deleuze and Guattari have termed the paralogism of capital: the 'formal conditions' of labour act as material differentials by instantiating themselves only in the conjunctions axiomatised by capital.

Marx's tendency to speak of this 'separation' from the 'objective conditions' as being effected against labour's "natural unity", or "inorganic body" ought to be viewed with Marx's critique of nature in mind, and is explicitly placed in such a context.<sup>71</sup> Marx has already told us that all 'natural' presuppositions are simply the basis of the subsequent productive regime, or the effect of the preceding one. Marx has given us a functional metaphysic of natural determination; or perhaps, a geology of historical determination. One can only understand this notion of a "natural unity" as the formation of an articulated unity (axiomatised material-abstraction) by means of which, and across which, diverse productive assemblages compose themselves: Integrated World Capitalism (IWC). As IWC, this articulated unity operates in such a manner as to determine the possible correlations of series across its surface.<sup>72</sup> Control and correlation is critical. As Marx says:

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functionality. Capital passes through a process of deterritorialisation and decoding of series whereby previous exclusive (coded) formations are displaced and re-organised in accordance with a world-wide axiomatic of production of decoded flows; this nevertheless operates through a massive re-activation of regulation (coding) of series at the levels of the assemblages which produce the decoded flows (as Foucault's analyses reveal).

<sup>71</sup> E.g. "In the relations of slavery and serfdom this separation does not take place [the distinctive separation which operates under capitalism]; rather, one part of society is treated by the other as itself merely an *inorganic and natural* condition of its own reproduction" (G p489). It is important to note that although Marx considers other historico-productive regimes as retaining -rather like a memory trace- certain 'natural' presuppositions which clearly are historical (in this case slavery and serfdom), the separation which capital effects differs from previous regimes by itself functioning in a manner which appears to produce its own conditions.

<sup>72</sup> In Marx's own words: "The separation of the objective conditions from the classes which have become transformed into



*"The social relation, production relation [that of labour to capital], appears in fact as even more important result of the process than its material result [profit]."*  
(G p458 -my interjections and italics)

This is both central to Marx's analysis, and frequently overlooked in favour of a naïve economism.

I have said above that Marx gives us a functional metaphysic, or a geological history of determination, by which I mean that he considers separation, stratification, the formation of boundaries as historical productions which require explanation; they are determinations which break with the immanence which appears split, severed by the construction of superimposed regimes of assemblages. In the disruptive language of the Grundrisse:

"It is not the unity of living and active humanity with the natural, inorganic conditions of their metabolic exchange with nature, and hence their appropriation of nature, which requires explanation or is the result of a historic process, but rather the separation between these inorganic conditions of human existence and this active existence, a separation which is completely posited only in the relation of wage labour and capital. In the relations of slavery and serfdom this separation does not take place; rather, one part of society is treated by the

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free workers necessarily also appears at the same time as the achievement of independence by these same conditions at the opposite pole" (G p503). The numerous ways in which the series come to be articulated I have -in part- covered in the earlier parts of this chapter: e.g. connection can only occur when labour is reduced to labour-time determination; commodities circulate in accordance with determination by money which appropriates the product in accordance with exchange relations; productive investments (connection) are enabled only in accordance with quantity and speed of capital returns; production is determined (multiplicities synthesise) in accordance with pre-determined lines of actualisation regulated by the concrete assemblages (and correlated by the capitalist axiomatic), etc.



other as itself merely an *inorganic and natural* condition of its own reproduction." (G p489)<sup>73</sup>

Taken as a whole this passage destroys any possible opposition of a nature/history divide in Marx, placing the whole structural determination of production within a question of the genesis of concrete assemblages and their semiotic regimes. This piece of text annihilates its component parts by a perpetual displacement of its conceptual elements and relations. Marx does not only speak of 'open systems', his texts function in such a manner as to produce crevices in any possible closure of system. Like all dissipative structures, those which Marx produces and maps are "essentially a reflection of the global situation of non-equilibrium producing them" (Order out of Chaos, I.Prigogine and I.Stengers, p144).<sup>74</sup> Any closure effects are simply the result

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<sup>73</sup> We have in this passage an indication of the difference between the capitalist regime of axiomatics, and pre-capitalist coding regimes. In the former we have a decoding, a dissociation, "thereby appropriating for itself all surplus production and arrogating to itself both the whole and the parts of the process, which now seem to emanate from it as a quasi cause" (Anti-Oedipus, Deleuze and Guattari, p10). Whilst in the latter we have a hierarchical subordination of qualities and relations.

<sup>74</sup> This passage, however -and there are numerous others, especially in the lengthy section 'Forms which precede capitalist production' (G p471-514)- with its stress upon "humanity" and "individuality", raise once again the question of Marx's dependence upon an a-historical determination of one of the components of production (at least at the scale of the social), i.e. the human individual. A closer a look at these passages, however, reveal Marx's recognition of the inadequacy of such a reading. Take for example: "But human beings become individuals only through the passage of history [...] Exchange itself is a chief means of this individuation." (G p496) The individual is broken down, or rather recomposed through re-organisation around a notion of the gradual stratification proceeding through diverse historico-productive formations: the individual as a multi-layered statistical accumulation (See, for example, A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia, B.Massumi, p48-9, and also Order Out of Chaos, I.Prigogine and I.Stengers, "Biological systems have a past" p 153.) Taking this a little further, the "labouring individual" is one who: "has an

of efficient axiomatisation procedures directed at the exteriority of relations composing the immanent ontology of material-abstraction.

### Conclusion

One will fail to maintain a fully critical grasp of capital and its elements, unless its sub-processes are understood as radically historical. Historical materialism as materialist critique cannot stop (as Kant does in his own critical enterprise) with a small set of inviolable entities, principles, ends to which one must hope to return, to re-activate:

"It is as ridiculous to yearn for a return to that original fullness as it is to believe that with this complete emptiness history has come to a standstill." (G p162)

It is only through a detailed analysis of the system and its history that one can delineate and explore the points of force, of weakness, of rupture, and the processes of recuperation of capitalism. One must begin from the point of the constitutive

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*objective mode of existence* in his ownership of the land, an existence presupposed to his activity, and not merely as a result of it, a presupposition of his activity just like the skin, his sense organs, etc." (G p485) This relation of 'proprietorship' rests on "occupation of the land and soil, peacefully or violently, by the tribe, the commune", etc. (G p485). The integration of organic-inorganic, into a stratified, functional productive process operates by means of a coded territoriality, a set of organising conventions. Proprietorship, in other words, is here understood in terms of immediate non-linear connective sequences with the conditions of production. We have the integration of series of multiplicities across a set of stratified planes, with the individual emerging as product of diverse contracted series, spaces, and temporalities. The individual, the subject is a stratified X formed through the gradual accumulation, contraction, of multiple process guided by different, constantly bifurcating regimes of production, at each stage maintained in a different connective relation to the conditions of its production: an effect of various procedures of subjectification.



existence of heterogeneity, and of the stratification of antagonism. The logic is then not that of the surgeon, or the pathologist carrying out a post-mortem; but rather the logic of the engineer seeking to divert the water flow, the artist re-constructing or distorting orders of representation; a reverse genealogist who follows the lines of alliance to construct new filliations, new associations at a future stage; a constructionist driven by the logic of the paranoiac, the perverse logic of the sado-masochist or junky waiting, for the moment when affectivity can be maximised; of the martial-artist staying back waiting for the moment when the assessment of the lines of force, of the dynamics of movement, the centres of balance, etc. reveal the possible re-directions of flow, reconfigurations of attachment, and points of alliance *within* enemy lines. Any attempted stabilisation, universalisation of elements, extraction of constants, has the effect of essentialising both the elements of rupture, as those of control in such a manner as to disguise the forces to which the elements are subject and thereby preventing any effective strategic intervention in a particular conjuncture. All identity, revolutionary or otherwise, is in Balibar's words "always a partial effect and never a specific property of nature" (Masses, Classes, Ideas p147), i.e. the effectuation of the diagram, the abstract-machine in the concrete assemblages which stratify it.

## Appendix :

### U-V Reduction and the Cold

In order to clarify some further points in my reading of Marx, I will turn to part of Baudrillard's critique in order to orientate and concretise the analysis.

"For use value -indeed, utility itself- is a fetishised social relation, just like the abstract equivalence of commodities.[...] In effect, our hypothesis is that needs (i.e. the system of needs) are *the equivalent of abstract social labour*: on them is erected the system of use value, just as abstract social labour is the basis for the system of exchange value." (J.Baudrillard, For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign [CPES] p131)

There is in Baudrillard what one may call a reduction of U-V to E-V. Or to be more precise, U-V legitimates the system of capital production in accordance with "an identical abstract logic of equivalence, an identical code" (CPES p131). What Baudrillard fails to take seriously, however, is U-V as essentially critical, the critical point of non-equilibrium. U-V is (on the one hand) subjected to capital through objectification, commodification; and in this sense E-V requires U-V: E-V is that which is immediately integrated into capital processing, whilst U-V is that which is diverted through the worker-consumer-raw materials, acting as machinic interface with capital itself:<sup>75</sup> the commodity is essentially double, disciplining diverse objects in its various functions. However, U-V has another face.

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<sup>75</sup> "It must now be posited that use value as such becomes what it becomes through exchange value, and that exchange value mediates itself [with capital] through use value" (G p269). With Baudrillard one often feels as though the former claim is a discovery he himself has made and which is ignored or explicitly denied by Marx (see for example 'Beyond Use Value' in For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign where Baudrillard says that it is here "that we have to be more logical than Marx himself -and more radical, in the true sense of the word" CPES p131).



Baudrillard is correct to point out that utility is abstracted and objectified through instantiation in commodities: "as a useful value, the object attains an abstract universality, an 'objectivity'" (CPES p132), and thereby is invested in in accordance with the control system of capitalist functioning. In turn,

"Work [...] becomes a simulation of its former self, and is, in the process, diametrically emptied of all real content. It is a form which now has to reproduce itself for its own sake." (Baudrillard's Bestiary: Baudrillard and Culture, M.Gane, p80)

Utility cannot therefore be considered a universal of economic theory, as Marx (in places) does. Baudrillard, however, seems blind to the complexity of Marx's thought which allows for a movement between E-V and U-V which breaks with any simple notion of independence which these all too material processes may have with respect to one another. We can see at the heart of Marx's concern with the realisation process of capital the articulated integration of these intra-dependent functions: essential to this process is (a) the centrality of 'utility' (however we then decide to interpret this notion) to realisation, and (b) 'utility' loss under conditions of over-production, i.e. under conditions of non-exchangeability. This, however, leaves the question as to whether U-V can be entirely reduced to capitalist processing open. E.g. labour can be seen as the differential, fractured, commodity par excellence, involving both U-V and E-V; its primary importance (for Marx), however, lies not in its commodified utility, which is definitely for capital, and hence infused with capitalism's axiomatic (Baudrillard's 'code'), and to this extent Baudrillard is correct; but rather in that side which is potentially post-capitalist, and it is so precisely in those functions which capital needs to develop most. It is insufficient to claim that:

"far from the individual expressing his needs in the economic system, it is the economic system that induces the individual function and the parallel functionality of objects and needs." (CPES p133)

For one thereby ignores the thickness, consistency, materiality constituting the induced 'individual'. E-V/U-V, apart from the work that they do at the level of economic explanation (in which form they are static abstract categories, or relative

constants), fundamentally contract diverse series and functions which either submit to or escape capital axiomatisation. Capital supervenes upon, and instigates a set of functions and processes essential to its escalation, but which in capital's constant search for innovation, risk being potential aliens to the system.

Baudrillard's idealisation of the sign and its various logics, fails to allow for the material nature of each series, and the metamorphosis of the functions which each sign system develops, he forgets that the sign is itself *material*; thereby his genealogies tend to be static and structural, leaving little - *Nothing*- to bleed between regimes. He is therefore unable to conceptualise *becoming* within sign systems. E.g. *abstract-labour* is a U-V which is invested in by capitalism, but it also forms a series (integrating U-V, exchange relations, capitalist axioms, etc.) which when exceeding demand ceases to be subjected to the objective abstraction, commodification of utility, or integrated logics of exchange, thereby escaping capitalist axioms by its very imperceptibility, superfluity. Baudrillard appears frequently as an (structural-)idealist (a category which he uses to condemn Marx) unable to move between theoreticist, economist categories (: concrete/abstract, U-V/E-V, etc.) and the material processes that these categories systematise dialectically only at the level of representation. To some extent Baudrillard's critique of U-V helps cancel some pre-Marxian concepts within Marx's texts (which is an important contribution to materialist thinking); on the other hand he fails to develop the Marx of revolutionary non-axiomatised materially-abstract efficacy. U-V is sometimes humanised in Marx, and in his critique (operating through the notion of objectified utilities: "[w]e repeat that 'needs' are a *social labour*, a productive discipline" CPES p133 n.2), Baudrillard is undoubtedly correct. However, when Marx goes on to use this same concept (U-V) in the relation of labour power to capital (capitalism's U-V par excellence), he firstly displaces the concept of utility (it becomes fundamentally machinic), and thereby (secondly) immanentalses subversion/revolution: the potential of decoded flows. Marx's concepts are too plastic, too material for Baudrillard to remain comfortable in. Mutation governs Marx as it governs capital's viscera.

For Baudrillard it is as though everything appearing within the space of capital is already axiomatised, it is born/produced axiomatised. Not only this, but once axiomatised, the axioms



remain and cannot be exchanged. Yes utilities are coded and invested in; labour is subjected to coding and organised by exchange. But this is not law but process/project. Series come to be coded, or survive only as axiomatised.<sup>76</sup> Baudrillard is unable to conceive of control being effected rather than simply being, precisely because he wishes to displace the productive model by the model of homeostasis: DNA, the Genome project, etc.:

"It is always the 0/1, the binary scansion that is affirmed as the meta-stable or homeostatic form of contemporary systems. It is the core of the processes of simulation that dominate us." (Symbolic Exchange and Death[SED], J.Baudrillard, p69)

Control occurs in reverse, it is already there; but it happens to mutating series, series that function by mutation. To what extent can mutation be adapted and axiomatised? -this is the question for capitalism. Baudrillard is unable to ask the question since code is static for him, it lacks materiality. The labour-process is regulated, and correlated with exchange relations; but it is only invested in by capital in so far as it can be decoded as produced condition within the production process. Yes, order governs within the process, but only to the extent of containment and channelling. Capital invests in its enemy through processes of subjugation and release -not an easy equilibrium (though this model of capitalism as a hydraulics should not of course be taken too seriously).

Baudrillard ignores that what requires explanation is control. Capital functions through control because there are flows which

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<sup>76</sup> Baudrillard in Symbolic Exchange and Death appears to note this: "It [capital] makes this rupturing energy which should shatter the relations of production into a term homogeneous with the relations of production, in a simulation of opposition under the sign of dead labour" (p35). He seems here to allow for a process of axiomatisation to occur, rather than labour-power simply being coded. In such a way that labour-power then comes to simulate aggression -if coding occurs successfully- rather than effectively acting so. Typically, Baudrillard goes on to claim, however, that such "rupturing energy" is itself only simulated as the double of capital's 'game' of production: "Don't be so stupid: at the height of the seriousness of production, capital is doubtless only a simulation" (p36).

escape it -escape operates, control follows. Control is effective, but it works only to the extent that it ever improves its methods of surveillance. The loop: control/escape/control, is the central loop of capitalist processing, and it controls in order to release, to allow sufficient flow to escape and be reintegrated in a higher control loop. This loop is the loop of the production process: *capital-labour-power-capital*'. Capitalism is for Baudrillard a closed system.<sup>77</sup> His own antagonism to capitalism stems from the exterior space, beyond the sign and the code, of symbolic exchange:

"His theory is characterised by a powerful search for the principle of transcendence, a principle of alterity, just as it is for the sense of the points of dramatic closure within the system." (Jean Baudrillard: Critical and Fatal Theory, M.Gane, p95)

As will become evident, it is this will to transcendence, this idealist acceptance of the stability of limits, of closure, which blocks any possible effective practice of resistance.<sup>78</sup> Baudrillard ignores that closed systems tend

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<sup>77</sup> It is "[a]nalogous to the effect of an internal distance from the dream, allowing us to say that we are dreaming, hyperrealism is only the play of censorship and the perpetuation of the dream, becoming an integral part of a coded reality that it perpetuates and leaves unaltered" (SED p74).

<sup>78</sup> This leads to much ambivalence and indeterminacy in the relations between symbolic and sign regimes. So, although it may be correct to say that "the mode of appearance of the sovereignty of the individual to the classical economists is an effect of this prestructured field which paradoxically turns the individual subject into one of the 'most beautiful of these functional and servile objects' (CPES p136), and then, *a fortiori*: 'this utilitarian imperative even structures the relation of the individual to himself' (Ibid.)" (Jean Baudrillard: Critical and Fatal Theory, M.Gane, p89), to also say "[w]e repeat that 'needs' are a *social labour*, a productive discipline. Neither the actual subject nor his desire is addressed in this scheme" (CPES p133 n.2 -my italics) seems to place the 'subject' in the realm of the symbolic in opposition to the 'individual' of the sign systems. This is not necessarily wrong, but this dichotomy is both suspicious and problematic.



towards entropy due to unavoidable energy dissipation in their functioning. To maintain the stability of a system, capital must invest in non-assimilated energies (i.e. 'external' flows). Labour/population-flow, raw materials, matter-energy, must -for capitalism's own sake- remain 'outside' capital, even if admittance into the system involves massive -logistical- regulation.<sup>79</sup> This, as Marx points out, is not only true in terms of production, but is central to circulation itself. Circulation, if not opened onto a process which is the condition of its renewal suffers the equilibrium point of all closed systems:

*"Circulation [...] does not carry within itself the principle of self-renewal. The moments of the latter are presupposed to it,<sup>80</sup> not posited by it. Commodities constantly have to be thrown into it anew from the outside, like fuel into a fire. Otherwise it flickers out in indifference."* (G p255)

The use value of Baudrillard is tactical. He is caught within a transcendental aesthetic which allows him to see only through schematisation. Political economy clouds his vision by naturalising itself (a danger which Marx warned us of well over a hundred years ago). Baudrillard reads the history of capital<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> This is also a space for displacements of Freudo-Marxist readings of capital; as the resonances between Freud's discussion of the organism (e.g. in 'Beyond the Pleasure Principle') and Marx's critique of capital are played out in a zone which allows for the integration of libidinal and political economies in such a manner as to eat both organism and capital (see, for example, Lyotard's Libidinal Economy). However, not only must a hydraulics of capitalism be side-stepped, but also this energetics. As should have been evident in the body of this first chapter, and will further be apparent in later chapters, these models play no part in my account; their role is strictly strategic, as evidenced here in my engagement with Baudrillard.

<sup>80</sup> Although this "presupposition" is not of a linear order, since production itself depends on circulation as the realiser of capital, and hence itself as "presupposition" of production. The whole system is organised by non-linearities (see, for example, G p403 and p407).

<sup>81</sup> Baudrillard is of course dismissive of the concept of

through shifts in semiotic systems which inevitably fail to account for (material) processes of transformation. Nevertheless, when a functional system is in operation,<sup>82</sup> the new semiotic exchanges which it introduces, as systematised in political economy, for example (-or by Baudrillard's analyses), display the transformation in the functioning of the system. By which I mean represent it by the formation of a new aesthetic. Baudrillard's systematisations must, like political economy in general, be submitted to a critique which reveals the underlying functioning of the surface 'term' exchanges. Baudrillard's importance lies precisely in an apparent slavish submission to capital which makes him into its most effective spokesman (although there is always the sense that his apparent fascination hides a poisonous influence from Outside, a *primitivism*).

If one takes, for example, his discussion of money,<sup>83</sup> Baudrillard differentiates between the hot money of the 'classical' period, and contemporary cool money. The break occurs with monetary floatation, the end of the Gold Standard in '71. Hot money denotes referentiality, money as material representative: "its singularity and the opacity of its signified in the real" (SED p22). Cool money on the other hand characterises money in the form of non-actualised floating sign; it designates

"an intense but non-affective relativity of terms, a play sustained purely by the rules of the game, the commutation of terms and the exhaustion of these commutations" (SED p22).

Baudrillard maintains that we are now at the stage of cool money. This effectively means that money has become a pure floating signifier relating to no signified -there is no longer anything to exchange but signs themselves:

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history, though following Marx, I believe suspicion to be sufficient.

<sup>82</sup> And such systems appear, to any representations of it, closed; since the process of genesis hides behind the 'completed' system as difference is cancelled in the determination of systematicity (see *Total Critique is a Pragmatics*).

<sup>83</sup> SED p20-3.



"Once a certain phase of disconnection has been reached, money is no longer a medium or a means to circulate commodities, it is *circulation itself*, that is to say, it is the realised form of the system in its twisting abstraction." (SED p22)

The distinction made by Baudrillard he seems to think is radically exclusive: money is either hot or cool. This seems odd for a number of reasons. Primarily because Marx conceives of both these functions of money under "medium of exchange" (Cool) and "material representative" (Hot), and sees them as the articulations of a single articulated process. Further, Baudrillard's own terms would lead one rather to the thought of a continuum: reciprocal determination by each function of the monetary form.<sup>84</sup> Baudrillard's reason for believing that the two processes must be seen as exclusive, seems to rest on his understanding Marx to conceive exchange to function always under the conditions of equivalence:

"[t]he commodity law of value is a law of equivalencies, and this law operates throughout every sphere" (SED p8).

This leads Baudrillard to conclude that with the end of the Gold Standard, the law of equivalence can no longer hold, as there is no standard of reference effective in producing equivalencies across value and price series. This is the moment of the decisive split between the referential and structural forms of money. However, I would argue that this simplification (amounting almost to a falsification) of Marx's position, is designed primarily to direct one towards Baudrillard's own sci-fi vision.<sup>85</sup> Briefly, Marx's position is that only in the first two volumes of Capital does he proceed under the assumption that commodities openly exchange at their labour values, i.e. that the law of value directly determines prices. However, when relaxing the boundary conditions of the abstraction he was

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<sup>84</sup> This is in fact consistent with the reading of Marx I have given so far, and with Lyotard's critique of transcendence in the same terms in Libidinal Economy.

<sup>85</sup> It could be argued that sci-fi is capital's primary 'ideological' art form, tending ever more to integrate within it tendencies of existing political economy into ideal (even if at times, distopian) visions.

working with, to the extent of considering industries employing divergent organic compositions of capital,<sup>86</sup> he found that this would have disturbing effects on the rates of profit. This would provoke mass migrations of capital from one branch of industry to another, producing various de-stabilising effects (such as over and under production, etc.). Marx goes so far as to say that:

"[t]here is no doubt [...] that aside from unessential, incidental and mutually compensating distinctions, differences in the average profits in the various branches of industry do not exist in reality, and could not exist without abolishing the entire system of capitalist production." (Capital Vol.III, K.Marx, p153)

So with the wage effectively constant, the length of the working day also,<sup>87</sup> and the rate of profit equalised by capital migration producing a re-organisation of percentage returns of profit, only commodity prices can shift in order to produce this balance in the equation between differing organic compositions of capital, diverse capital investments and proportional profit returns. However, with prices shifting to balance the system, and labour values unaltered, prices will have to move away from labour values, thereby upsetting the labour theory of value (and hence the equivalence of exchange).<sup>88</sup> However, the price at which commodities exchange on the market is merely a surface phenomenon of capital exchange relations, disguising the deeper reality of the market's parasitical dependence. The equalisation in the rates of profit produced by capitalist re-distribution of profits functions merely as a stabilising force for capitalist investments, insuring that capital migration does not push the system into instability. The rate of returns to each capital investment is determined in accordance with the magnitude of

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<sup>86</sup> I.e. the relation between c(onstant)/v(ariable) capital in the total capital employed in production.

<sup>87</sup> An equalisation produced throughout industry, so as to prevent too much unwanted mobility amongst the workers, which might de-stabilise capital investments.

<sup>88</sup> Marx had already argued in the Grundrisse that price and value only "coincidentally" balance-out, p137-8 (I will discuss this further in Total Critique is a Pragmatics).



each capital investment. The divergence which is produced in the movement of prices away from labour values, functions thereby to 'mystify' the relations of exploitation of the capitalist system.

It may be correct to claim that this does not falsify Baudrillard's claim that Marx's theory still depends on equalisation fundamentally, since although profits appropriated in any single industry may exceed or fall below the surplus value extracted from the work force in that industry, in the society as a whole, the total profits earned must exactly equal the total surplus value extracted from the workers. Nevertheless, it would seem that Marx does attempt to integrate non-equivalence between individual and large-scale monetary transactions with "referentiality", without having to do away with material relatedness between the diverse functions of the monetary relation, he does this through what may perhaps be called a politicisation of economics.<sup>89</sup> It is necessary to repeat the quote given previously from the Grundrisse:

*"The social relation, production relation [that of labour to capital], appears in fact as even more important result of the process than its material result [profit]."*

(G p458 -my interjections and italics)

In this way we are able to maintain both the dominance of exchange relations (cool money) over referential (hot money), without falling into the 'naturalness' of equivalence, or the hyper-realism (which in fact itself tends towards a naturalisation) of total separation between the diverse

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<sup>89</sup> This is in fact part of what I have attempted to do above in the sections concerning material-abstraction, and below in *Total Critique is a Pragmatics*. What is crucial here is to recognise Marx's openness to, awareness of, the question of non-equilibrium. Baudrillard fails to recognise this side of Marx, thereby allowing him to dismiss his analysis out of hand. Further, it is surely the case that to condemn Marx's economics with not having grasped an economic transformation occurring almost one hundred years after his death would seem a little churlish. In my chapter on *Total Critique is a Pragmatics* I have attempted to account for the changes which floating exchange rates have produced, a possibility whose clue for a resolution lies precisely in Marx's discussion of the *theory of profit*.

functions of the monetary-sign. Not only does this analysis break with the idealist science fiction of hyper-realism, but it allows for a critical analysis of the ways in which divergences in the relations between price and the material instantiations it actualises function, so as to display the various forms of control and 'mystification' capital operates through its diverse monetary articulations.<sup>90</sup> Further, such an analysis leaves open the possibility of variations in the relations of the diverse functions of the monetary form which can lead to instability (or otherwise, potential capitalist re-configuration of conjunctions through addition/subtraction of axioms) within the system itself. If one denies any articulation within the monetary form, non-exchangeability (for example) is an impossibility which tends to lead to a universalisation of the capitalist form. More importantly, the abstraction which Baudrillard operates would enable capital to function in text-book manner, whilst at the same time unable to account for many of the slow-downs, speed-ups of the economy attributed to the internal frictions of the monetary functions. The articulated form of the monetary function described by Marx is essential for the analysis of many of the systemic features of capital, and their diverse functional interrelations enables one to diversify capital processes across a dynamic spatio-temporal grid,<sup>91</sup> rather than

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<sup>90</sup> For example see Late Capitalism, E. Mandel, p71-4. Clearly the concept of 'mystification' with its representationalist bias is not one to which I would subscribe. Nevertheless, it indicates the effects of overdetermination of the assemblages correlated in IWC, producing equivalencies across the various series.

<sup>91</sup> This would enable one to understand the diversity of monetary relations within capitalist economies, between capitalist and pre- or part- capitalist economies, etc. Baudrillard's analysis of money appears unable adequately to account for monetary relations between zones with diverse rates of profit, different inflationary pressures, etc., or at least it is not at all clear how such an account could be given. The importance of this inadequacy in Baudrillard's theory can be shown through a consideration of 'unequal exchange': "The actual movement of capital obviously starts from non-capitalist relations and proceeds within the framework of a constant, exploitative, metabolic exchange with this non-capitalist milieu. [...] The accumulation of capital itself produces development and under



in accordance with static categorisations which fail to account for their own genesis.

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*development as mutually determining moments of the uneven and combined movement of capital. The lack of homogeneity in the capitalist economy is a necessary outcome of the unfolding of the laws of motion of capitalism itself."* (Late Capitalism, E.Mandel, p44 and p85)

## 2- TOTAL CRITIQUE IS A PRAGMATICS

The subversion of the concepts *concrete/abstract* produced in the problematisation of the notion of ideology by means of the cartography of the abstract-machine of capital, provokes the re-configuration of critique itself as *intervention*. Critique can no longer be placed on one side, on the side of abstraction from a given (material) concretion which stands outside and opposed to it and gives the abstract its unity and truth. At each stage elements appear to be determined by the relations which compose them and distribute a potential range of variation; critique cannot stand outside this process without itself operating an *overcoding* of the elements emerging on another plane -thereby reproducing the double-pincer of *concrete/abstract*. The question of what critique must become is central to any mapping of control-capital and flight.

Related to this is the question concerning the apparent functionalism of Marx's Capital, to the point at which some have been led to call it a textbook for capitalists. Others, such as Balibar, have noted that though there is a history of capitalism, it has no historicity -a failure Balibar detects precisely in Capital (Masses, Classes, Ideas p160). These two points are inter-related: *the non-historicity of capital is precisely the effect of its functionalism*. What Capital describes is capitalism as a functional system distributing *legitimate* and *illegitimate* procedures as an effect of a historically emergent complex totality. He is able to do this by the excision of a historicity by which the closure of the totality would be opened to a materiality which would transform it. Or rather, Marx appears to be engaged in an unresolved conflict between an analysis of the operations of capital, a recognition of its procedures and operations; and an understanding of their emergence and their passing-away as essentially *historical*. In this way he fails to give the concepts a materiality, an historical *efficacy* which would displace their functional operation from within the emergent stable totality.<sup>1</sup> This failure can be traced to Marx's neglect

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<sup>1</sup> So, although Marx is correct on one level in claiming that it "would therefore be unfeasible and wrong to let the economic categories follow one another in the same sequence as



of the notion of *critique*. Though 'critique' forms the title of many a text, it is never thought in relation to that which it critiques in the form of its materiality: it always remains external to its object as it does in the hylomorphic Kantian form (as we shall see). In part this is due to Marx's resistance to idealism, which led him to always subject the theoretical-abstract to a concretion which would determine it, but in so doing he failed to provide the abstract at the level of theory with a materiality/historicity of its own. Marx -in effect- re-establishes the idealism of theory by assigning it to the abstract, whilst neutralising its efficacy by reducing it to a mere re-presentation of a materiality which escapes it. Whilst in his cartography of capitalism Marx is able to uncover the abstract-machine at its core, theory never itself becomes a practical intervention, an efficient abstract-material practice decoding stratified formed substances and functions, but always draws back doubling abstract-materiality with the abstraction of theory, of critique.

The question of critique is not therefore a question separate from the question of the cartography of capitalism -producing an independent space for a dispute between science and ideology; *it is rather the question of capitalism itself.*

Before we go on to speak of the concrete machines of capitalism, the manner in which the abstract-machine comes to be specified, we will turn to the question of critique. Critique

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that in which they were historically decisive. [and that] Their sequence is determined, rather, by their relation to one another in modern bourgeois society" (G p107), for in this way the distribution of finalised forms and functions can emerge, and their effectivity mapped. Nevertheless, the historicity of these categories should not only be recognised, but also be mapped. *Rather, the very manner in which historicity becomes displaced, and replaced by the time of capital, needs to be traced in the very mapping of the emergence of the legitimate and illegitimate functions; only in this way can the stratifications be un-picked in such a manner as to re-open the enclosure to an alien time.* Marx recognises this, but is not always able to fully integrate, immanentise the strategies. The Grundrisse is much more effective than Capital at doing this, as Capital too often schematises the strategies into an opposition.

must operate a diagramming of the abstract machine, as well as a practice by means of which the structuration, stratification, or geology of any specified *X* is diagrammed. The *X* stands for anything which is produced as a formed substance. The strata composing any *X* are stripped away, revealing their various modes of composition, the processes by means of which each stratum entered into relation with all others, and the means by which the composite formation of multiplicities interact with one another or form a communicating unity through which they enter into relations with their aleatory outside. There is a molecular shifting of elements in an apparently random manner, yet the elements 'communicate' with one another through fragmentary processes by degrees forming whole systems, enfolding differential multiplicities by an order of redundancies: distribution of automatisations, incorporeal transformations. Those fragmentary processes, functioning by local connection, by which multiplicities are brought into communicative relations, engender a multi-layered individual which functions in a unified manner, distributing *legitimate* and *illegitimate* functions according to a set of operations which allow of determination in such a manner that predictions concerning its behaviour can be made; the exteriority of the relations comes to be folded into an interior. Critique should function immanently, so that all determination of stratification, and of the threshold points where 'molecular' differential relations are explicated in unified extended systems of redundancies ('molarity'), can be fully disclosed by following the singularity of the grain of history.

### From Partial to Total Critique

Any discussion of critique should begin, of course, with Kant. I hope in this way to indicate both the transformation which critique undergoes in order to become fully immanent, and the transformation within the very *problematic* of critique thereby effected.

Kant's failure to produce a fully immanent critique,<sup>2</sup> means that his critique functions *transcendentally*, in other words, through the determination of a sacred realm (wherein hides

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<sup>2</sup> Though his game was clearly another: legitimisation, justification.



Truth, the Good, the Beautiful, God ...) which exceeds, and is the condition of possibility of the realm of difference, of the determinable, the produced.<sup>3</sup> The sacred realm acts as a despotic ruler, functioning by means of a profane emissary, an inferior double emerging from a passive synthesis, to control, subject. Such a realm functions by means of processes alien to the produced, thereby allowing a set of elements to remain outside the zone of critique, forming an unbridgeable wall around an uncrossable territory. Transcendent critique has the effect of tracing territories (fundamentally two), each with its own laws; but it thereby restrains the potentially virulent effects of critique.<sup>4</sup>

From its beginning philosophy has tried to account for, and ground multiplicity, difference, what Kant calls the manifold; thinking thereby to uncover an original order or logos which underwrites and distributes plurality and would enable one to

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<sup>3</sup> One must differentiate between the transcendent and the *transcendental*, where the latter concerns the critique of the conditions of possibility of the immanent, whilst the former concerns the subjugation of the immanent. Nevertheless, such a distinction operates in Kant merely to re-codify transcendence by the production of a transcendent subject forming the anterior condition of possibility for the immanent, as we will see below. (For a discussion of the transformation of transcendence produced by Kant see What is Philosophy?, Deleuze and Guattari, p 46, or the short paper 'L'immanence: une vie...' by G. Deleuze in Philosophie n.47).

<sup>4</sup> As Michael Hardt says: "The Kantian critique remains partial and incomplete because it guards the suprasensible as a privileged terrain, protecting it from the destructive forces of critique. [...] The transcendental reserve shields the essential order from any radical destruction or restructuring" (An Apprenticeship in Philosophy: Gilles Deleuze, M. Hardt, p 116). It is precisely for this reason that (early) Lyotard attacks Critique so viciously (see, for example, Libidinal Economy p5-6.) Marx's critique of bourgeois economics is designed to indicate the universalisation and naturalisation which it effects with regard to the capitalist abstract-machine (the excision of history by the time of capital). Kant's universalisations -his "transcendental reserve"- has much the same effect.

totalise, determine, know it. Kant carries this endeavour to the point at which not only is order inscribed within the different, the sensible, as that which needs to be uncovered or recovered, but where the same principles of order are distributed within the world of experience, and of the experienced:

"the order and regularity in the appearances, which we entitle nature, we ourselves introduce. We could never find them in appearances, had not we ourselves, or the nature of our mind, originally set them there." (The Critique of Pure Reason, I.Kant, A125).

This is the essence of Kant's 'Copernican revolution'. Transcendent(al) critique sets up two territories, that of transcendental conditioning, and of the empirical conditioned. Kant, however, doesn't rigorously separate the transcendental from the empirical.<sup>5</sup> This is necessarily so when the transcendental is defined as the *form of possibility* of the conditioned. For in seeking the condition of possibility of the conditioned X as *object of knowledge*, one is merely uncovering the *formal conditions* under which X can be given, known, recognised -not the material ones. For Kant the conditioned is comprised of two series immanent to one another: empirical consciousness and the real object of knowledge, each founded on the same formal conditions. The double series of the conditioned is, in Deleuze's words,

"founded on an originary instance which retains the pure form of objectivity (object=x) and the pure form of consciousness, and which constitutes the former on the basis of the latter." (LS p105)

The conditions of the empirical object and of the conditions of knowledge are founded on the *original synthetic unity* of the subject, of the 'I think'.<sup>6</sup> For Kant the immanence of the

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<sup>5</sup> See DR p135.

<sup>6</sup> On the 'synthetic' and yet 'original' nature of transcendental apperception, see §16,17 of the Transcendental Deduction (B). However, in summary: "In so far as the manifold representations of intuition are given to us, they are subject to the former of these two principles; in so far as they must allow of being *combined* in one consciousness, they are subject to the latter. For without such combination nothing can be thought or known, since the given representations would not have in common the act



conditioned to itself is only possible because of the immanence of the conditioned to the transcendental unity of apperception which determines it from the outside, so that the thinking 'I' passively receives determination (see DR p85-7). *This is because Kant endows the transcendental field with the form of the I, of unity. Order is placed at the heart of critique, in the shape of a transcendental consciousness which distributes identity in the series of the conditioned consciousness and its object, and does so as the formal condition under which anything can be given* (see LS p105-6). As Deleuze says, Kant

"seems to have confused the positivity of critique with a humble recognition of the rights of the criticised [...] the only object of Kant's critique is justification, it begins by believing in what it criticises."<sup>7</sup> (Nietzsche and Philosophy, G.Deleuze, p89, 90)

The conditioned X itself is then merely a sensible given exemplifying the formal conditions of possibility, which are - however- in turn limited by the empirical given. In this manner a true differentiation in kind between the two realms, the transcendental and the empirical, fails to emerge. The conditioning remains external to the conditioned precisely because they are not the *real conditions* of its emergence, but only its *formal conditions*: the immanence of the conditioned to itself is only a function of its subsumption by an exterior transcendent subject. Therefore, differentiation of the conditioned is always mediated, produced from the external transcendent instant, whilst the empirical merely serves to illustrate the transcendental conditions.<sup>8</sup> The fundamental point

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of the apperception 'I think', and so could not be apprehended together in one self-consciousness." (Critique of Pure Reason, I.Kant, B136-37, see also A124-26)

<sup>7</sup> This is what Marx calls vulgar economist's "worship [of] appearances only" (C1 p679); a bowing down before the given.

<sup>8</sup> I will consider critique primarily through the displacement of its Kantian form at the hands of Deleuze. However, I should indicate some of the points at which Marx intervenes. Firstly, and critically, it is with the question of time. For Kant time is a formal condition of inner intuition, i.e. for something to be given to consciousness, to the subject, it must be given in time. For Marx, on the other hand, the subject itself must occur within time, and is defined by the time of history; in this way

of Deleuze's critique of Kant's understanding of the transcendental field, and the tracing of it from the empirical, is that this fails to allow for a transcendental employment of the faculties which would truly enable a *difference in kind* to emerge between the empirical and the transcendental operation of the faculties. As Kant develops the distinction, it becomes apparent that the empirical is conditioned by the transcendental conditions of possible experience, but that in turn the transcendental finds its legitimate usage in this empirical function which acts as its limit. In other words, there is an order of subjection, distribution, and discipline between the faculties, a harmonious accord, which organises legitimate and illegitimate functions a priori. *The underlying model of Kant's thought is one which is concerned with the strait-jacketing of difference.* The Image of Thought (see Difference and Repetition chapter 3) governing this operation is the dogmatic one of the *commonality of senses* (identity of the subject and its faculties), and *recognition* (directedness towards the unity of the object), which leads in Kant towards the determination of the formal identity of conditions of subject and object of knowledge, under the synthetic unity of apperception. It is somewhat complicated in the first place by the interiority of illusion to thought,<sup>9</sup> but this was to be rectified through a juridical transformation within thought, determining a

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the epistemological question is subverted by the question of historical change and determination. Secondly, the subject does not exist other than in historically determined social relations, so that the question of (social) relations, the question of *practice*, effects a displacement of epistemology to a secondary, tertiary ... position (one should look, for example at the first thesis of the Theses on Feurbach whilst replacing Materialism and Idealism as spoken of there, by conditioned and conditioning). In this way Marx places the 'transcendental' within history, giving it a materiality and an immanent variability. A difference in kind emerges between conditioning and conditioned, but one which must always be uncovered in concrete analyses and mappings of elements and relations across the always open plane of history.

<sup>9</sup> By which "I mean actual principles which incite us to tear down all those boundary-fences and to seize possession of an entirely new domain which recognises no limits of demarcation." (Critique of Pure Reason, I.Kant, A296)



legitimate articulation of the faculties under a plurality of common senses:

"While it is true that in general all the faculties collaborate in recognition, the formulae of that collaboration differ according to the nature of that which is to be recognised: object of knowledge, moral value, aesthetic effect... [...] knowledge, morality, reflection and faith are supposed to correspond to natural interests of reason, and are never themselves called in question; only the use of the faculties is declared legitimate or not in relation to one or other of these faculties." (DR p137)

In such a way there is a reciprocal determination between object and faculty/function.<sup>10</sup> It is not until the third Critique's discussion of the sublime that Deleuze is able to discern a *disjunctive* usage of the faculties which breaks with the model of *common sense unity and recognition*: a passage to the limit forces itself upon the operation of the faculties through a fundamental encounter of the imagination and a demand of reason, pointing to a discordant accord which is the condition of any harmonious accord (or common sense) which may supervene upon it. Here the faculties find themselves confronting their own differential limit, and are

"pushed to [their] involuntary and 'transcendental'<sup>11</sup> exercise, an exercise in which *something is communicated violently from one faculty to another, but does not form a common sense* [harmonious accord]." ('Deleuze's Theory of Sensation: Overcoming the Kantian Duality', D.W.Smith, in Deleuze: A Critical Reader, P.Patton ed., p34).

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<sup>10</sup> In fact W.S. Pluhar in his translation of Kant's Critique of Judgement translates *Vermögen* with 'power' as opposed to 'faculty'. Pluhar writes, "I am trying to avoid reifying the Kantian powers (which are mere abilities), in other words, avoid turning them into psychological entities such as compartments, sources, or agencies 'in' the mind" (Critique of Judgement, I.Kant, p3 n.3).

<sup>11</sup> In fact Deleuze speaks of this as the 'transcendent' exercise of the faculties, precisely in order to indicate that it is not traced from the empirical (DR p143). See also Deleuze's discussion in his Kant's Critical philosophy p50-2.

The sensible, the manifold, difference, resonates in the encountered sensible sign, and instigates a thinking through the passage to the limit to which it pushes the faculties. Recognition and common sense come to be dissolved in this encounter with the outside, the alien which disjuncts and fragments the accord of the faculties, and has a reciprocal effect on their respective 'objects'. Whereas faculty and object were given together as conditioning/conditioned, the discord produced in the encounter uncovers the differential and fragmented element of the *sensible sign*,<sup>12</sup> differentiating the object as it fragments and multiplies faculties. The faculties must mutate towards an evaluative, enfolding-unfolding operation in such a way converging with the differential being of the sensible which had previously always been captured/cancelled in the form of *object by/for a faculty*. The sensible multiplicity differentiates itself, implicating and explicating itself intensively: there is no simple self-identity of the object given by the accord of the faculties in a transcendental subject; the accord is broken, the subject dissolved, and the manifold exists only in its immanent differential\iating relations. For the differential relation implicated in the sign is composed of elements of no determined value,<sup>13</sup> but which determine each other reciprocally in their relation forming differential series (hence their relation to intensive magnitude), and which thereby determine *singularities* which marks *intensive thresholds of coexistence* of difference. The differential is never an object of the senses from the *empirical* (common sense/recognition) point of view -it is cancelled in the form of the *object-for-a-faculty*; though it is that which can only be sensed in the transcendent exercise of the faculties, though never forming a common sense. For only the sensible sign, that which enfolds the differential implicate order, is sensed, but is so as the qualitative covering or veiling of the differential intensity which is only given by calling up a

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<sup>12</sup> The sensible becomes a sign signifying nothing other than the difference it enfolds.

<sup>13</sup> The manifold in Kant was 'determined' only by the categories in the unity of the transcendental subject, without such determination -Kant thought- there could be only sensible flux. Thus we find Platonism at the heart of Kantian Critique.



faculty to enfold it. The sign does not stand for an identity it re-presents, it is simulacral:

"in other words, the simulacrum is the sign in so far as the sign interiorises the conditions of its own repetition. The simulacrum seizes upon a constituent disparity in the thing from which it strips the rank of model." (DR p67)

The phenomenon as sign, the being of the sensible, is the implicated difference, the interiorised (in the sign -the sign as fold) disparity, inequality, intensive asymmetry which is its genetic and real condition. The sensible exists in continuity with its genetic (differential) conditions which exist as the ground from which it emerges, and to which it may return through a counter-actualisation. Deleuze's aim is not to establish a "doctrine of the faculties" (DR p144), but "only to determine the nature of its requirements" (Ibid.). To be more precise, Deleuze's aim is that of extracting a new thinking through the evacuation from the transcendental of all unity, opening it to exteriority itself as the object of an encounter not pre-determined by a 'natural law' distribution and exercise of the faculties; to follow Foucault's injunction to think differently, to think difference-in-itself, to think the plane of immanence of thought as the un-thought of thought, the experience of the differential limit which can never be the object, but only the operation, the absolute movement of thought, a superior empiricism: "It is in this sense that thinking and being are said to be one and the same." (What is Philosophy?, Deleuze and Guattari, p38).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Deleuze's engagement with Kant is subtle and complex, it could take up a thesis on its own. My aim, however, is not to engage with the details of this account, or to develop a 'doctrine of the faculties', although I hope to have been able to indicate some of the points at which Deleuze intervenes in the Kantian problematic. Though Deleuze says of the doctrine of the faculties that it is "an entirely necessary component of the system of philosophy" (DR p143), it is so precisely in terms of its dis-articulation, disjunction; for it is necessary principally as a fracturing of interiority, and of its ejection onto an exterior space of difference, which blocks any pre-determination of a field of distributed differential elements entering into aleatory relations of exteriority. In this manner critique, *Total Critique*, becomes a symptomology of signs, an

In the terms set up by Deleuze, critique should move from the partial functions allowed it under its Kantian conception, to what he calls *Total Critique*. This involves the formation of a thought without image: a surface across which critique may travel, suturing any tears, detailing any foldings, any creases which may inhibit travel, and which institute 'originary' domains with their own functions, limits, borders, with their own "spheres of influence which have been already shared out" (Nietzsche and Philosophy, G.Deleuze, p89), and which guide questions of legitimate and illegitimate functions. No realm should escape the virulent forces of critique; nothing is protected from its effects, from its affects. This is precisely what we discover in Lyotard's Libidinal Economy: a smooth surface across which energies, forces, pulsions travel; forming connections, associations, statistical aggregates, or nomadic wanderings, but occasionally falling under the sway of some too powerful external force, such that a multi-layered individual is formed, through an aleatory in-folding of difference, and submitted to a set of emergent functions allowing it then to function in a manner different from how it was produced.<sup>15</sup> What is at stake for Deleuze is the formation of an immanent critique, a critical empiricism (Empiricism and Subjectivity, G.Deleuze, p87), a transcendental empiricism (DR p56-7).

But besides immanence, something else is at stake: *positivity*. The partiality of the Kantian critique also inhibits it from

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engineering of difference, a constructivism, a rhizomatics, a pragmatics... in which faculties are constructed from the differential, as its emergent effect and apparatus of capture. The faculties are points of specification, where coexistent differential elements begin to operate as a whole within a determinate threshold. As I move away from discussion of Kant, the notion of faculty will come to be substituted for that of concrete-machines, assemblages, etc. This will become apparent below.

<sup>15</sup> It becomes a *technical machine*, as described in Anti-Oedipus [AO], G.Deleuze and F.Guattari, p268-9. This is one of the great contributions of Marx's analysis of capitalism, in which he detects the emergence of a functional unity which operates in a manner different from how it was produced, from how it emerged historically.



becoming wholly positive and autonomous. Negation enters the Kantian form of critique at the point of the determination of a sacred realm which escapes the effects of critique; an absence which always haunts the critical enterprise, as desire submits to the absent phallus in the psycho-analytic treatment of desire. We have seen above the paradoxical fact that such a transcendent realm is traced from the empirical. *Total Critique*, by means of which an entirely smooth surface is formed and travelled, becomes entirely positive when impersonal and pre-individual elements in relations of exteriority are able to enter into inclusive relations on a plane of immanence: where difference qua difference serves to unite (see DR p170).<sup>16</sup> This problematic emerges more clearly in the analysis which such a

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<sup>16</sup> On the exteriority of relations and difference serving to reunite see Empiricism and Subjectivity and Difference and Repetition. What Deleuze is seeking to engender is a plane of immanence, i.e. a plane which is not immanent to anything else (as opposed to Kant where the immanent is immanent to a transcendental subject which introduces order at the beginning), and is, therefore, entirely positive. "We seek to determine an impersonal and pre-individual transcendental field, which does not resemble the corresponding empirical fields, and which nevertheless is not confused with an undifferentiated depth." (LS p102) Such a plane has a number of characteristics: it presupposes firstly a conception of difference in-itself (ordinal or intensive difference, in which each difference is composed of further differences on a continuum), i.e. that is not subjected to any form of mediation, such as subsumption under a concept, where difference is distributed, determined by the concept, and therefore remains outside itself; and that relations remain exterior to their terms -such that differences can only be experienced in an encounter, not distributed a priori from a space which holds itself in reserve, operating through the articulation of a commonality of senses in the service of recognition. However, in order for systematicity, order, to emerge on this plane, difference qua difference must serve to unite, and it does so by actively differentiating itself through a process of making-itself-different (see DR p28-9). It is the internal disparity, asymmetry which pushes difference to differentiate itself. In such a manner Deleuze arrives at the point of genesis (on this more below).

conception of Total Critique allows of the notion of the possible in the writings of Bergson (emphasised especially in the writings of Deleuze). "The possible has no reality (although it may have an actuality); conversely, the virtual is not actual, but as such possesses a reality" (Bergsonism[B], G.Deleuze, p96). Deleuze then, in relation to the virtual, quotes Proust: "Real without being actual, ideal without being abstract". Bergson-Deleuze affirm the virtual to be the only category adequate for an understanding of the absolutely immanent.<sup>17</sup> For unlike the possible, virtuality does not function through limitation (i.e. negation doesn't enter the picture). When the possible is realised, this involves a limitation being placed on the realisation of other possibilities -since the realm of the possible exceeds that of the real. On the other hand, when the virtual is actualised,<sup>18</sup> it proceeds by means of (positive) difference by following (engendering) lines of divergence and convergence, creating such series whereby it actualises itself. The possible is the real which pre-exists itself; it is a pre-critical gesture whereby the real 'is' in some sense, but it has not yet been realised. The real exists in the image of the possible which is to be realised.<sup>19</sup> The difference between the possible and the real is little more than a difference in degree. The virtual, on the other hand, is not realised, but actualises itself, and does so creatively, through a selection of paths towards actualisation - only in this way can the new appear. The virtual maps the genetic conditions of the inordinate, or -if you like- the impossible: 'Be realists, demand the impossible!'. Unlike the possible, the virtual does not resemble the actual, but makes itself actual.

"The virtual possesses the reality of a task to be performed or a problem to be solved: it is the problem which orientates, conditions and engenders solutions [actualisations], but these do not resemble the conditions of the problem" (DR p212).

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<sup>17</sup> "L'immanence absolue est en elle-même: elle n'est pas dans quelque chose, à quelque chose, elle ne dépend pas d'un objet et n'appartient pas à un sujet." ('L'Immanence: Une Vie...', G.Deleuze, in Philosophie, no.47, p4)

<sup>18</sup> The virtual is not realised it is actualised.

<sup>19</sup> See B p98.



In this way the externality of the conditions to the conditioned in Kant come to be internalised as we move from conditions of possibility to genetic conditions of actualisation, thereby escaping any possibility of tracing the (transcendental but immanent) virtual conditions from the actual. This is precisely because of the fundamental difference in kind between the virtual and the actual, whilst both nevertheless remain real. The impossible<sup>20</sup> molecular surface at the level of the virtual recedes as the virtual follows its lines of divergence and convergence, differentiating itself from the impossible mass of multiplicities, to form a line, a singularity of positive differentiation, its actualisation in an in-folding of differential multiplicities.<sup>21</sup> This following of a line of positive difference, explicating and implicating, should not be seen as a simple tracing of a pre-existent path, for "what coexisted in the virtual ceases to coexist in the actual" (B

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<sup>20</sup> On the notion of 'impossibility', more below.

<sup>21</sup> The concept of different/ciation is central to Deleuze's Difference and Repetition, and it represents the two orders of difference, marking a difference in kind between them. In brief, difference does not divide or accrue elements without changing in nature. Differentiation describes an order of co-existence of difference at the level of the virtual, a realm of pre-individual singularities, composing a section of chaos; differentiation, on the other hand, determines the order of actualisation, operating through an intensive divergence of differential series, engendering impossible relations between series, so that what once co-existed at the level of the differentiated no longer does so in the process of actualisation, which determines a selection of paths: "What is differentiated must, first of all, differ from itself, and only the virtual is what differs from itself. [...] Different/ciation expresses simultaneously the compossibility of 'elements' inside the virtual and the divergence of the series in which the virtual is actualised" ('Deleuze-Bergson: an Ontology of the Virtual', C.V.Boundas, Deleuze: A Critical Reader, P.Patton ed., p91). Actuality itself, on the other hand, is the effect, product or 'remainder' -see DR p222- of these two processes; for it is always already past, or not yet present (this will be discussed further in the final chapter).

pl01). Hardt describes the difference between the possible and the real as one between order and organisation:

"The realization of the possible clearly gives rise to a multiplicity of order, a static multiplicity, because all of real being is pre-given or predetermined in the 'pseudo-actuality' of the possible. The actualization of the virtual, on the other hand, presents a dynamic multiplicity in which the process of differentiation creates the original arrangement or coherence of actual being: This is the multiplicity of organization." (An Apprenticeship in Philosophy: Gilles Deleuze, pl8)

In this way critique ceases to be concerned with legitimisation, and becomes entirely positive. It no longer concerns itself with *formal conditions of possibility*, and turns to questions of *real genesis*, of the actualisation of immanent virtual elements.<sup>22</sup> It escapes the State apparatus, the realm

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<sup>22</sup> Firstly, what is of critical importance here is the subversion of the exteriority of 'method'. In other words, where in the Kantian critique the critical method is external to its object -setting up this very duality in the form of the transcendental method, what is crucial is the attempt to think the *ontologically constitutive potential of critique*. This should by no means be seen in the context of the idealist ontological reconstruction of Kantian formalism; rather, the centrality of Spinoza emerges again here, especially in Negri's reading: "in Spinoza the relationship between the phenomenological continuity and discontinuity of being is tied to the axiomatic effectiveness of the principles and never ventures onto the terrain of the transcendental manipulation of dialectical moments. [...] The multiplicity is a dynamism, and vacillation (even in the form of doubt) dispenses with all that remains of the exterior, gnoseological, and methodological connotations in order to become a substantial element, a constitutive key to the world. If this is a method, it is the method of being" (The Savage Anomaly, A.Negri, pl49, pl49-50, and on "axiomatic effectiveness" see pl45). We have here then a realisation of Marx's second thesis, where the question of truth is no longer understood as a "question of theory", but rather as a "practical question" (the second of the Theses on Feurbach), for it is not a question of 'adequate ideas', but rather it is a question of *ontological-practice*, a



of transcendental unity, bourgeois political economy towards the concerns of a fully material conception of production. In this manner, the mutation of the transcendental field towards the construction of an immanent ontology of material-abstraction, transforms the whole conception of critique from its Kantian formulation.

### Matter and Strata

The notion of materialism also becomes transformed as Marx wished.<sup>23</sup> It operates at a number of different levels, and encompasses a variety of diverse functions. *Matter is production at the virtual level: that which forms the material of production, prior to the differentiation into substance and*

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potential already detected in the disjunctive usage of the faculties. It is what Negri in The Savage Anomaly calls the "real synthesis" of "spontaneity and subjectivity" (p147): "Conatus [striving] is the force of being, the actual essence of the thing, of indefinite duration, and, at the same time, it is conscious of all this." (p146). We can see also a parallel path mapped by Negri's double-foundation reading of Spinoza, where from 'utopian' univocal being we move to its antagonistic dislocation, and practical re-constitution by the multitude, and the move from univocal immanent being in Difference and Repetition to the pragmatic assembling of machinisms and their respective planes of immanence or Bodies-without-Organs (BwO's) in A Thousand Plateaus. The whole of 'Second Foundation' in The Savage Anomaly is of crucial importance, particularly in relation to the methodological elements of the critique of political economy discussed in the 3<sup>rd</sup> lesson of Negri's Marx Beyond Marx; it becomes apparent there that the 'methodological principles' of the latter are further developed in terms of a 'constitutive ontology' in the former: "The method itself has become the construction of being." (The Savage Anomaly p171).

<sup>23</sup> "The chief defect of all hitherto existing materialism - that of Feurbach included- is that the thing, reality, sensuousness, is conceived only in the form of the object, or of contemplation" (Theses on Feurbach, in Selected Works in Three Volumes Vol.1, Marx and Engels, first thesis p13).

form.<sup>24</sup> This is captured by the notion of impossibility (in its non-logical formulation), the defining feature of the virtual. The word *impossible* is a neologism coined by Leibniz to signify the coexistence of divergent series of events in a number of distinct possible worlds. Depending on the interpretation, this is either a function of logical contradiction, or on Deleuze's reading, logical contradiction is a function of the divergent eventmental series which determine a-logical incompatibilities (see LS p171), i.e. to be understood, therefore, not at the level of logic, but in terms of the co-existence of (molecular) multiplicities in an undifferentiated form (e.g. the smooth surface of primary process libido). As will become clear, matter is entirely immanent, but it can function as transcendent. This is not to deny the radical immanence of matter, it merely reveals how transcendence is an effect (product) of the immanence of matter. Deleuze understands the originary impossibility of matter in terms of a distribution of difference which serves to re-unite *qua* difference (see DR p170): *the immanence of divergent and convergent series across an inclusive plane of exteriority evacuated of all unity*. As opposed to Leibniz's determination of a single world by the convergence of series, and their divergence as determining difference of worlds, in other words by working with an exclusive -negative- understanding of disjunction, or divergence;<sup>25</sup> Deleuze speaks of *divergent* (impossible/disjunctive) and *convergent* (compossible/conjunctive) series of differential elements, relations, rates and velocities, as *parts of one and the same world* -as both being affirmed as such:

"We are rather faced with a positive distance of different elements: no longer to identify two contraries with the

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<sup>24</sup> As will become clear, form and substance are merely modal distinctions of an immanent materiality (material-abstraction).

<sup>25</sup> Deleuze claims that Leibniz is justified in this exclusive use of divergent and convergent series only to the extent that he is speaking of differential events already actualised (differentiated) in distinct possible worlds and individuals, thereby re-activating the logic of common-sense and recognition spoken of earlier. "It is no longer justified, however, if we consider the pure events and the ideal play" (LS p172), the level of difference-in-itself.



same, but to affirm their distance as that which relates one to the other insofar as they are 'different' [...] Incompossibility is now a means of communication." (LS p172-3, 174)

Convergence, conjunction, travels the *disjuncted* series affirming their distance, and makes the series resonate through their distance, such that the "ideational centre of convergence is by nature perpetually decentered, it serves only to affirm divergence" (LS p174-5).<sup>26</sup> Matter operates an *inclusive affirmative disjunctive synthesis* which make the heterogeneous series ramify along their differential paths, whilst the *conjunctive* co-ordinates in a global way the divergent series, and a *connective* synthesis already contracts the heterogeneous divergent series in serial form, from which disjunction asserts each differential element engendered in the connective synthesis. Deleuze operates with a conception of matter which is defined in terms of an engendering and differenciation which actualises virtual differential series of singularities, i.e. pre-individual differential elements structured through a series of non-linear syntheses in a problematic ideal/virtual field, distributed across a plane escaping any pre-programmed determination. Matter is a genetic, vital, open system composed at the virtual level entirely of pre-individual singularities which escape identity, determined entirely in terms of auto-unifying differences determined through connective, disjunctive and conjunctive syntheses (for identity must be seen to emerge, it cannot be originary without the transcendental field coming to be determined in terms of an external Transcendence), and which comes to be actualised in physical, mental, cultural... extended systems only through an engineering by further processes differenciating the intensive differential implex of affirmative difference of pre-individual singularities. Deleuze's empiricism, and materialism stems precisely from this attempt to always think the singularity, difference-in-itself, not absorbed by the concept so that it remains outside itself, but as always haunted by the exterior, to make the distance one of an encounter with the outside: always to think the between. The 'ideal' relations compose difference-in-itself from which

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<sup>26</sup> We have already spoken of the commodity-sign in the previous chapter in these terms, though we will see the money-form play a similar role below.

exclusion, incompatibility is alien, operating through series of exterior relations or syntheses, determining differing rates of catalysis, of tension, of reaction by which the a-symmetrical differences come to be actualised in extended systems which come to lock-in intensive difference, cancelling the differential in the partial closure of the system by which an interiority is formed, and space is engendered and distributed.<sup>27</sup> Matter appears determined by both an *ideal* element and an intensive *individuating* one.

Before going on to discuss in more detail virtual-actual circuits (in the Time and Resistance), and the progressive determination of difference in distinct material systems, I should return to the problematisation of the *hylomorphic* model in determining materiality. These two questions are clearly interdependent, in that the evacuation of identity from the (virtual) transcendental field as a condition for the emergence of individuation and determination of the pre-individual singularities, itself emerges from the problematisation of the hylomorphic schema. This schema rests on the assumption that one has either to accept, a) undifferentiated ground, undifferentiated abyss, hence chaos, and no possibility of determining anything: pure becoming, the platonic world of simulacra; or b) supremely individuated Being, personalised form, and the inherent logos.<sup>28</sup> I.e. it is only possible to think about:

*"those determinable singularities [...] which are already imprisoned inside a supreme Self or a superior I [...or more simply] we are faced with the alternative between*

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<sup>27</sup> One should see the discussion on the unity of composition of the strata as a concrete discussion of differentiation in A Thousand Plateaus (esp. p49-52), where space is engendered and distributed through a cutting-up, a dividing of exterior and interior milieus in the form of the substratum, the Ecumenon -or central layer or ring, the epistrata and parastrata (on this, more below).

<sup>28</sup> Deleuze sees this fork as structuring nearly all metaphysical and transcendental philosophy here-to, we have already seen this at work in Kant above. It was also implied in the discussion in Concrete/Abstract: or, The German Ideology which lead to the introduction of the notion of A/assemblage.



undifferentiated groundlessness and imprisoned singularities." (LS p106)

Deleuze and Guattari following -they claim- the linguist Hjelmslev, displace the hylomorphic distinction by disclosing the materialisation of form apparent in the procedure of differentiation. They distinguish between: *matter*, *content*, *expression*, *form* and *substance*, the elements coming together to engender the *formed matter*, the differentiated actualisation, named the *system of the Strata*. These elements are articulated through *real distinction*, *reciprocal presupposition*, and *general relativism* (ATP p45). *Matter* is the term for the impossible plane of molecular multiplicities, or *Body without Organs* (BwO):

"in other words, the unformed, unorganised, nonstratified, or destratified body and all its flows: subatomic and submolecular particles, pure intensities, prevital and prephysical singularities." (ATP p43)

**Content** names formed matters, and is to be considered under two aspects: *substance*, the matters deducted, *form*, the order of deduction; the result being the distillation of a statistical aggregate. **Expression** is the term for functional structures, in turn to be considered in terms of the organisation of specific *forms*, and *substance*, and the compounds thereby formed. Between the two stratal articulations of content and expression there is a *real distinction* (not, however, a numerical distinction -see DR p40), but one which is relative, i.e. they are articulations of a function of stratification or thickening on the BwO defined "oppositively and relatively" (ATP p45); whilst between form and substance we have a merely modal distinction, or the "affections of a substance" (The Ethics, B.de Spinoza, pt.I/D.5). The picture here, is one which points back to Spinoza's "God, or Nature", and his univocal ontology. To again quote this passage from Deleuze:

"The attributes [content/expression] behave like real qualitatively different senses which relate to [matter/BwO] as if to a single and same designated; and [matter/BwO] in turn behaves like an ontologically unique sense in relation to the modes [substance/form] which express it, and inhabit it like individuating factors or intrinsic intense degrees."<sup>29</sup> (DR p40 -my interventions)

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<sup>29</sup> The relation to Spinoza is made even more explicit in '10,000

However, the picture is further complicated because although "matter is the same on all strata" (ATP p45), all matter employed by the stratal double pincers of content and expression is itself already stratified, i.e. is already actualised in distinct formed substances, whilst matter as BwO always escapes, eludes the judgements of God, or system of the strata. For Deleuze and Guattari there are different treatments of matter, different interventions, immanent or transcendent. These are not two types of matter, but two ways of engagement with or by matter. Stratification, however, fails to uncover the operation of materiality at the level of the differential itself, by centring discussion on the manner by which the differential is explicated, differentiated from the virtual plane of pre-individual singularities, by the double pincer of content and expression, into matter as formed substance. This treatment is still too 'transcendent', with difference -apparently- appearing as a function of an operation of stratification, i.e. still determined from 'outside' through the extraction of a number of (relative) constants. It is necessary to constantly plug these constants back into a differential realm which puts them in continuous variation -the machinic phylum of material-abstraction -another treatment of matter. Expression and content become variable intensive traits/affects and singularities or haecceities:

"the machinic phylum is materiality, natural or artificial, and both simultaneously; it is matter in movement, in flux, in variation, matter as conveyor of singularities and traits of expression." (ATP p409)

Both practices concern the space of differentiation, the progressive actualisation of intensive pre-individual difference, but whilst the strata primarily concern the determination of a relatively invariant segmentation of space(-time) in the service of individuation, the machinic phylum

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B.C.: The Geology of Morals': "The strata are judgements of God; stratification is the entire system of the judgement of God. [...] To express is always to sing the glory of God. Every stratum is a judgement of God; not only do plants and animals, orchids and wasps, sing or express themselves, but so do rocks and even rivers, every stratified thing on earth." (ATP p40, p43-4)



concerns the engendering of space(-time) itself through the nomadic distribution of elements populating a space:

"Such a distribution is demonic rather than divine, since it is a peculiarity of demons to operate in the intervals between the god's fields of action, as it is to leap over the barriers or the enclosures thereby confounding the boundaries between properties."<sup>30</sup> (DR p37)

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<sup>30</sup> With stratification, on the other hand, one is concerned with that which belongs, that which is distributed within a particular space: what is proper to the stratum? Hence the central question for stratoanalysis, what accounts for the unity and diversity of a stratum? (ATP p45). Here the operations of matter tend to be discovered in the processes of de- and re-territorialisation, which concerns the formation of formed substances and interior/exterior milieus; and de- and re-coding, which is concerned with the selection or actualisation of forms/habits and milieus: the former produces a piling up of epistrata in relation to the central belt, membrane, abstract-machine or animal of the stratum which defines its unity of composition (:"exterior molecular materials, interior substantial elements, and the limit or membrane conveying the formal relations" ATP p50), and which the epistrata fragment, with their proliferating differentiation of formed matters (ATP p50-1); or the way the central belt fragments into "sides and 'besides'" (ATP p52) in the parastrata which envelop the codes which come to actualise organic forms/habits and structurate an associated milieu for the organism as a function of the relative advantage for its interior milieus (see ATP p51-2). We also have in this formation of differential milieus the actualisation of heterogeneous and relative space-times as interior and exterior come to be relative to the stratal unity of composition (or abstract-machine) in which populations come to distribute themselves in different ways, at different rates. Hence, though I have termed the stratal treatment of matter still too 'transcendent', there is still a recognition of the immanence at the heart of this transcendence. For there is no operational unity here, as the stratal unity exists and operates only in its differential fragmentation into epistrata and parastrata by the operations of de- and re-territorialisation and de- and re-coding.

These two treatments, two modes of intervention are not divided along the lines of the true and the false, the real and the illusory, both forms enfold one another; each practice develops a different relation to matter according to whether one (the impersonal 'one') locks-in intensive mutation in an extended system determining an either/or, or whether one follows, implicating locked-in potentialities through addition (and..and..and..); each practice engenders different states of intensities, different forms of mapping, a stratoanalysis, a rhizomatics, each of which envelops, folds and unfolds the other. In fact, as Deleuze and Guattari go on to say, there are here two modes of existence for the abstract-machine: as *Ecumenon*, which is intrastratal, existing within the dimension of the assemblage (a particular distribution of elements and relations in a working -consistent- machine); and *Planomenon*, which is transversal to the strata, and is composed of unformed matters and non-formal functions operating at the limit of the assemblages whose immanent relations it maps and places in intensive variation (re-)composing the immanent ontology of material-abstraction (see ATP p55-7, 510-14). These two 'modes of existence' are defined by a difference in nature which allows one to find one enfolded within the other, the one inhabits the other. The *planomenon* operates as an absolute deterritorialisation cutting across all the strata, only becoming relative when stratification already has begun; so that the *ecumenon* deterritorialises only through reterritorialising upon an intrastratum, or by appropriating another stratum, etc. If the *ecumenon* and *planomenon* were exterior to one another, entirely alien, it would "preclude any understanding of why the strata themselves are animated by movements of relative deterritorialisation and decoding" (ATP p56). Their difference is one of nature, but they exist in a mutual machining, engineering of one another:

"The plane of consistency is always immanent to the strata; the two states of the abstract machine always coexist as two different states of intensities." (ATP p57)

The plane of consistency, the BwO, has no regions other than the "tribes populating and moving around on it" (What is Philosophy?, Deleuze and Guattari, p36-7), i.e. the intensive



multiplicities distributing themselves across it; but it is the plane which assures their coexistence.<sup>31</sup>

It is precisely the openness of the BwO, the materiality of the plane of immanence, which assures the possibility of a critical materialism which can trace the emergence of concrete assemblages operating a specification of the abstract-machines which populate the BwO (matter) as a first differentiation of immanent materiality. In the first chapter we have already seen the characteristics of the abstract-machine of capital, as an operation of 'immanentisation'. We must now see the manner in which the capitalist abstract-machine maintains a consistency through a regulation of the differential flows in a manner that blocks any non-axiomatised conjunction.

### Monetary-Forms, Concrete Assemblages, and Capitalist Strategy

Gilles Deleuze:

"On ne peut penser l'Etat qu'en rapport avec son au-delà, le marché mondial unique, et avec ses en-deçà, les minorités, les devenirs, les 'gens'. C'est l'argent qui règne au-delà, c'est lui qui communique, et ce qui nous manque actuellement, c'est ne pas un critique du marxisme, c'est une théorie moderne de l'argent qui serait aussi bonne que celle de Marx et le prolongerait". (Magazine Littéraire, No.257 septembre 1988, 'Signes et Événements', p24)

Antonio Negri:

"[It is] money which demonstrates, in its appearance as money, as 'abstract sensuality', the route which capitalist command over society travels in order to

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<sup>31</sup> See DR p36 on the univocity of being in relation to its differential modalities. Though the two modes of existence of matter, or of the abstract-machine are immanent to one another, one should not confuse the two. For any such confusion would only serve to stratify matter in advance, leaving no mobility to matter other than as already captured, with a fixed distribution of formed matters. It would be -in effect- to make immanence immanent to something else, thereby re-instating transcendence.

overdetermine continually the oscillation of exploitation. Money will permit us to understand how surplus value is consolidated in social command; how to command crisis is the normal situation of capital." (MbM p40)

I cannot claim to have provided such a 'modern theory of money', what I have attempted is simply to open up Marx in such a way that threads can be drawn from his work to produce such an expansion of the theory of money, one demanded by the new forms of capitalist "semiotic pilotage" ('Capitalistic Systems, Structures and Processes', F.Guattari and E.Alliez, in The Guattari Reader, G.Genosko ed., p235). The central feature of this opening is the attack on the metaphysics of value, in such a manner that value is seen to exist only in the variety of its forms -the most pervasive of these being money. By hacking out the principle of synthesis and rationalisation (value), money is seen in the immediacy of its command structures,<sup>32</sup> in its role as correlator coming from the outside, rather than as a quantifier of an abstract substance embodied in commodities, and subject to a rational distribution in the service of equilibrium.<sup>33</sup> This effects a rupture of the closure, 'interiority' of Capitalism (and of Marxism defined as 'the science of Capital'), thereby revealing the anti-systemic

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<sup>32</sup> The shift from talk of control to that of command, other than making my terminology consistent with that adopted by Antonio Negri whose work will be increasingly important to the rest of this thesis, aims to more explicitly indicate the connections with Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of the 'order-word' as marker of incorporeal transformations in A Thousand Plateaus already invoked in Concrete/Abstract: or, The German Ideology.

<sup>33</sup> See Labor of Dionysus: a Critique of the State-Form, M.Hardt and A.Negri, p8. This excision of the concept of 'value' should not be seen in opposition to the analysis provided in Concrete/Abstract: or, The German Ideology, for we are operating on different planes of organization. Whilst in Concrete/Abstract: or, The German Ideology I spoke of the diagram of capital, where the concept of value operates as 'produced immanent cause', here I am speaking of capital's correlated assemblages, where the immanent diagram exists only in its differentiated concrete machines, i.e. in its effects.



heterogeneity of the system, the internal haemorrhaging of totality, what Deleuze and Guattari will call power defined through its lines-of-flight, rather than through its totalisation procedures. A side-effect of this work, is that of enabling a proliferation of tools of analysis of the strategies, and lines of flight traversing the social assemblages. No longer a simple question of Marxist or not, so that Foucault -for example- is assigned a place outside and in opposition to Marxism (both by 'Marxists' and 'Foucauldians'), rather an alongside Marx, in exchange with, multiplying strategies of analysis, and the extraction of correlated elements and relations -tracing lines of communication, paths of interference and intervention.

### Monetary-Forms

The concept of value is essentially one of the forms of "socially valid" -hence "objective"- thought of bourgeois economics. Undoubtedly Marx was at times beguiled by its seductive logic, though it seems that he thought it could be disrupted from within. The concept of value nevertheless operates within a rationalisation of economics -where value is seen not only as the common substance present in all productive activities and common to all commodities, hence as the materialisation of abstract labour, but is also the abstract principle of a rational distribution of labours within the different sectors of production: value is determined by social necessity, i.e. labour has to operate under normal conditions of the time (such as with the average level of development of productive technology), be of an average effectiveness, and produce no more than average wastage (C1 p303). In this way Marx's analysis of value served to advance the theory of capitalist equilibrium beyond the apparent anarchy of production. The parallel with the history of philosophy's attempt to rationalise nature is re-produced with the attempt to naturalise capital: the abstract here plays the role of rational foundation at the heart of concrete reality -it exists as theological principle. Further, value operates a moralisation of economics within a bourgeois logic of legality, where value is seen as expropriated from the 'rightful' 'owners': revolt, the taking of power, is a regaining of one's property according to a natural justice. This whole schema operates within the

bourgeois schema of alienation -the ego and one's own. The future comes then to be defined either in terms of a continued 'illegality', a contradiction between social production and individual ownership; or a justice to come where concrete and abstract harmonise within the rightful order, the natural order of communism.<sup>34</sup> Further, justice comes to be defined in terms of 'the plan': for example, either a return to ancient forms of social organisation, essentially despotic, where property is 'in common', but allocated or held in so far as one is a 'good citizen'; or government by experts (dictatorship of the proletariat, understood in terms of a vanguard party), which tends to operate in terms of 'social' capital; or some combination of the two. For only in some form of regulation and co-ordination of needs and abilities, of production and distribution, can *rightful* ownership be determined. It is essential that this schema which views escape, flight, revolution in terms of right, be subverted. Otherwise, the future is captured within the element of the past, as a development of its own fixed logos. Marx himself was aware of the danger. In the rest of this chapter I will be concerned in mapping precisely such a move beyond the metaphysics of value which is to be found within Marx's Capital, but which can also be subverted by the *historicisation* of its categories. Unfortunately Marx -at least in the presentation of his theory in Capital- rigidly separates the historical from the *functionalist* aspects. This is in part explained by the project which Marx had set himself, i.e. to show the exploitative nature

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<sup>34</sup> Capitalism's claim of the 'end of ideology' also operates within this logic of reality and appearance. The 'end of ideology' re-produces the schema of ideology it thinks it subverts. It is not so much that Marx's critique rests on such a moralisation, but nevertheless Marx's shifts between moral condemnation and 'scientific' critique have the character of both a revolutionary theory alien to bourgeois morality, whilst at other times the dominant moral code is called in to reinforce the critique. So, one should note -for example- that capitalism does not operate individual acts of theft, but that a surplus-product is withdrawn from the productive engagement of an entire class. Therefore, production being immediately social, moral condemnation cannot rest on theft of an individual's property. Despite this, Marx's tone of moral outrage frequently invokes a sense of workers being *wronged* by the property system.



of capitalism, and to present capital as a historical and not a 'natural' system. Critically, what Marx did not explicitly do, was integrate the two analyses.<sup>35</sup>

Value comes not at the beginning but at the end -it is always a resultant space of overdetermined command. Commodity circulation begins on the margins, a practice perhaps of alliance rather than exchange, though as the ties grow stronger exchange proliferates and feeds back into the relations within each social grouping.<sup>36</sup> From this time on, certain goods become produced for exchange, their commodity status gains a certain autonomy and passes through certain phases as a differential plane is formed from their encounter, and which deterritorialises them in gaining a certain consistency as exchange proliferates:<sup>37</sup> 1) a commodity A = c commodity C, where an exchange is singular, contingent and produced through a random groping between aleatory factors. A positive difference arises as a result of this practice of exchange, of this encounter, the form of value, in that it is precisely the difference between commodity A and commodity C which enables the exchange, but it only occurs through the confrontation of the two in a social relation. In the exchange, the commodity sought

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<sup>35</sup> Only with a look at the Grundrisse with its explicit problematisation of the concrete/abstract schema does the necessity of this intersection become explicit.

<sup>36</sup> See, the discussion in C1 p182: "The exchange of commodities begins where communities have their boundaries, at their points of contact with other communities, or with members of the latter. However, as soon as products have become commodities in the external relations of a community, they also, by reaction, become commodities in the internal life of the community." To begin with, exchange plays an extra-economic function of alliance. When, however, the effects of this form of exchange hit a certain critical threshold, they feed-back into the interior linking exchange to production (and its relations), drawing alliance into an economic function. In other words, a threshold is hit which modifies qualitatively the practices themselves -from alliance to filiation.

<sup>37</sup> Deterritorialisation consists in the extraction/flight of an element from a differential field/domain in which it was determined/organised; it then comes to be reterritorialised in another field/domain.

for in exchange is produced as an equivalent, the equivalent form to which one's own commodity is relative. The exchange relation divests, thereby, A and C of their qualities and manifests itself as a quantitative difference within a qualitative equivalence. So, although the exchange is still motivated by a desire for C over A (and vice-versa); the process of exchange must place the goods into a relation of quantitative differentiation whereby an exchange can be determined 'objectively', in a manner which satisfies both parties. Marx describes this process as the displacement of *use-value* by *commodity-value* (E-V). The passive synthesis of difference produced by the exchange/encounter between commodity A and commodity C gains, however, little consistency, and is consumed in the exchange, thereby being unable to feed-back into production itself.<sup>38</sup> Although from the perspective of a social practice it is the search for the 'equal' in an exchange which dominates the *differential*, it is only on the condition of the emergence of a consistent differential field, with its a-signifying elements marking the singular nature of each differential relation, that equality may arise, serving to reterritorialise difference on its deterritorialised plane. This difference is of a different order from that of bodies and their relations, it arises in their interstices, at the limit of each, but only in relation to bodies, for it exists in relation to a set of *incorporeal transformations* which exist as the produced 'presupposition' of the linkage of the a-signifying elements of the differential plane to a set of more or less deterritorialised practices.<sup>39</sup> So, in the practice of a simple exchange there is, at first, a placing into relation of two heterogeneous goods which removes their qualitative aspects,

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<sup>38</sup> This is what Marx calls the simple or isolated form of the appearance of value. "The expression of the value of commodity A in terms of any other commodity B merely distinguishes the value of A from its use-value, and therefore merely places A in an exchange-relation with any particular single different kind of commodity, instead of representing A's qualitative equality with all other commodities and its quantitative proportionality to them." (C1 p154) The various forms emerge as different thresholds of relative deterritorialisation are reached.

<sup>39</sup> These are the elements for an 'incorporeal materialism', or fully immanent critique.



thereby determining each merely in its quantitative difference from the other; each one is thereby placed in a position of equivalence with the other -such that the two elements are subject only to a quantitative difference and/or equivalence with one another. Once an exchange has taken place, apart from a redistribution of commodities that has occurred, further transformations, metamorphoses are being undergone: an incorporeal transformation transforming the object received into property, setting it into a whole complex of other practices of consumption: legal, religious, assigned obligations, responsibilities, demands of production, etc. Further, in selling your calf, you have sanctioned the incorporeal transformation of calf into meat. You have not killed the calf, but by your exchange the calf is condemned. The elements in an exchange are the goods, the interminglings and mixtures they enter into; the practices to which they are subject (e.g. money/tax-payments, livestock/slaughter, land/cultivation, labour/work): the institutional frameworks which take hold of or condition the various practices and bodies -both at the level of collective assemblages of enunciation and machinic assemblages of bodies; i.e. the set of incorporeal transformations these bodies/goods are subject to, variables of the given societal Assemblage, which are coded into a particular semiotic regime as a set of practices, and attributed to the bodies, though the semiotic exists not so as to:

"represent them [bodies and their mixtures, their becomings] but to anticipate them or move them back, slow them down or speed them up, separate or combine them, delimit them in a different way. The warp of instantaneous [incorporeal] transformations is always inserted into the woof of the continuous modifications."

(ATP p86)<sup>40</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> We see here the formation of a particular assemblage with its distribution of an a-signifying (monetary) semiotic as a 'collective plane of enunciation'; a 'machinic assemblage' distributing bodies and affects, e.g. persons, goods, livestock, desires, etc. And a set of practices of exchange which actualise a set of 'incorporeal transformations', correlating elements of the two planes. The 'incorporeal transformations' exist as a potential of the historical formation, which come to be actualised in supervening practices which instantiate them (see Time and Resistance) .

2) a commodity A = c commodity C or b commodity B or e commodity E or d commodity D or... Here we are at a stage where commodity exchange has become increasingly dominant; where a series of exchanges, actual and virtual produce as an effect the proliferation of the differential plane, the plane of the form of value, of the passive synthesis of difference between commodities in relations of exchange. As increasing numbers of goods cease to be related through qualitative difference, difference in-itself progressively gains consistency on a plane of its own. It ceases to be the effect of a coincidental, contingent encounter, where relative and equivalent forms are the effect of a single exchange, for each commodity stands in a social relation with the "whole world of commodities" (C1 p155), so that in any one exchange, difference points beyond the particular towards a whole series.<sup>41</sup> The previous practices involving negotiation, a tentative groping, have become increasingly standardised and fixed, if not institutionalised, forming the warp of the Assemblage; the differential plane of a-signifying elements become increasingly formalised into intersubstitutable elements, hierarchically ordered, systematised in accordance with a whole set of equivalencies, etc. A whole syntax is generated and expands throughout the Assemblage. Nevertheless, difference (the plane of the value-form) maintains only a relative autonomy. i/ It is always incomplete and dependent, as difference -always the effect of a passive synthesis of the series of exchanges- is vulnerable to modification as the chain

"is liable at any moment to be lengthened by a newly created commodity, which will provide material for a fresh expression of value." (C1 p156)

ii/ Each difference is partial and fragmented, revealing no univocity of ground. Difference remains (re-)territorialised by the machinic assemblage of bodies. 3) z commodity Z =

a commodity A  
c commodity C  
e commodity E  
g commodity G

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<sup>41</sup> This is what Marx calls the total or expanded form of value.



All differentiation is expressed in terms of a single commodity-equivalent "excluded from the ranks of all other commodities" (C1 p162) to which all commodities relate in different magnitudes, and relate to each other proportionally. The value-form (differential plane) has gained maximal consistency by being assigned a content of its own; it has always been a result of commodity exchange, it now has a commodity of its own to differentiate: Money.<sup>43</sup>

### Capital: Homing-Head/Means of Semiotic Pilotage

I have tried to avoid as much as possible to speak directly of value. To some extent this is simply to show how the "simple commodity form is [...] the germ of the money-form." (C1 p163) As much as possible therefore, describing the relation of commodities to money without passing by way of the -apparently-less concrete notion of value. On the other hand, and more importantly, it is in order to describe the progressive autonomisation of a plane of difference generated as a passive synthesis from the plane of commodity exchange, which will then allow for a delineation of how value is produced by means of a *correlation* between the *formalisation* of a plane of difference (moneterisation), and the *formalisation* of a plane of circulation and of production, by which I mean a regulation coming from outside, submitting a set of 'relative contents' to

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<sup>42</sup> As above the small case lettering denotes quantity with the upper case signalling quality. This segmentation of the commodity indicates not so much distinct aspects or qualities intrinsic to commodities, as -and this will become clearer below- distinct planes or points of intervention in its operation.

<sup>43</sup> This is what Marx calls the money form, although it involves passing via the general form -which is an aspect of it (see C1 p162). We are nevertheless still at a point of relative deterritorialisation, and though at a 'maximal consistency', this is merely meant to indicate a particularly intense level of deterritorialisation, such that any further threshold would involve a particularly critical transformation in kind of the whole Assemblage.

a form of expression which determines them. The interaction between these relatively independent planes gives it an appearance of differences within a unity, in that "a specification on any one level automatically calls forth a homologous specification on another." (G.Dumézil quoted in ATP p352) With monetarisation, the plane of difference gains a consistency, a thickness, a content proper to itself -producing a double pincer of expression and content (as we shall see). In fact, the plane of difference of monetarisation only exists in the various degrees of consistency which the level of commodity circulation through the *intensity* of its circulation produces, or to the extent which a specific content is withdrawn and appropriated by the field of monetary difference reterritorialising on its deterritorialised plane, so that a consistent monetary plane or stratum is able to form. *For value is -as we shall see- what results from the processes of homogenisation and capture of labour-power by means of the correlation/conversion produced by the circulation of commodities in its alignment with the monetary plane;*<sup>44</sup> in Marx's language, value derives from the degree of exploitation of labour. The reason for this form of derivation, or synthetic approach to the structurations of the socio-economic body of capitalism, is so as to avoid the pitfalls of the reductionist Marxism in its classical guise; in which Marx is understood as reducing all phenomena to the productive relations between persons determined "in the last instant" by the development of the forces of production.<sup>45</sup> To re-read Capital in such a manner

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<sup>44</sup> Though this will be qualified below by indicating that strictly speaking it is the *value-form* which reterritorialises labour, for value -understood as the labour-time necessary to produce commodity X- exists only in its variety of forms (price, wage, profit, etc.).

<sup>45</sup> In effect, the economy here operates somewhat as an essence, such that change can only be predicated on the transformations of the economic base. Even classes -and their struggles- are seen purely as functions of these economic laws, therefore functionally subsumed to the telos inscribed in their development. Such a reductivism is not even asserted by Engel's (whose interpretations of Marx -especially after his death- tend to give a somewhat reductivist understanding), as the ambivalence of Engel's letter to J.Bloch, September 21[-22], 1890, reveals; as does, for that matter, the ambivalence of



as to truly integrate the historical analyses, the becomings, fractures, segmentations, enables one to re-introduce the question of transition, questions of the radically new into a re-conception of capitalism. Whilst much of Capital reads as an analysis of a completed, totalised economic system, the consideration of its fractures, the autonomy of processes and their produced correlations, enables one to deal with system and anti-system. The process of homogenisation of a differentiated, heterogeneous space, rather than an already appropriated social whole.

Nevertheless, the usefulness of this approach which attempts to grasp the relative autonomy of a series of planes may appear to prevent, block any possible derivation of value from a quantitative determination of labour-power, or rather, ceases to have any connection with labour-power as source of value, thereby failing to truly distinguish between price and value; which in turn would have the effect of preventing crisis from occurring as an effect of inconvertibility, thereby totalising the system, strengthening the status-quo.<sup>46</sup> This criticism, however, presupposes the already homogenous nature of the system, so that crisis, as an element immanent to capitalism, would only be understood as effectively developing from laws inherent to its functioning, i.e. crisis would be a moment in the development of the laws of capital -a fully-costed sub-function. The radically new is not new at all, but merely a development within the same element. My approach, on the other hand, an approach I consider also to be present in Marx, though not always and everywhere, proceeds from the presupposition of the originary nature of heterogeneity, views the differentiation of planes and elements as a process, with emergent effects produced by operations proper to each, and only then attempts to think their intersection, correlation, segmentation. Laws do not pre-exist and determine the space, thereby guiding the elements which appear, which are produced; rather, laws arise from the passive syntheses, the unanticipated effects, which either deterritorialise the elements of the assemblages, or

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Althusser's discussion of the letter in his 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' in For Marx (see esp. p112-14 and appendix).

<sup>46</sup> This is an element of the critique which Marx directs against the 'time chitters', both in the Grundrisse and in The Poverty of Philosophy. See also E.Balibar's The Philosophy of Marx p61.

territorialise the whole by folding over the plane on which they were produced, and establishing specific correspondences, procedures of distribution, of a centralising or hierarchical form, and specific organisational practices. Correlations between the planes are engendered, produced by relations lying outside the elements they relate, though allowing something to circulate between them, conjugating the segments of each plane. On this understanding of the socio-economic articulations, the homogeneity of the capitalist ideal,<sup>47</sup> is a project guided by a number of processes on and between the various planes whose effects must constantly be reproduced. Crisis is the possibility of non-conversion, incommensurability, the scrambling of the codes. In this rather lengthy quote of an article by Guattari and Alliez this re-articulation of capital is summarised:

"Capitalism would therefore represent a paroxystic form of integration of different types of machinisms: technical machines, economic machines, but also conceptual machines, religious machines, aesthetic machines, perceptual machines, desiring machines. Its work of semiotisation -the method of *Capital*- would form at the same time both a sort of collective computer of society and production, and a 'homing head' of innovations adapted to its internal drives. In these conditions, its raw material, its basic diet, would not be, directly, human labor or machine labor but the whole gamut of the *means of semiotic pilotage* relative to the instrumentation, to the insertion in society, to the reproduction, to the circulation of many component parts concerned by the process of machinic integration. What capitalises capital is semiotic power. [...] What specifies it historically is that it only tries to control the different components which come together to maintain its processual character. [...] it is first of all and continuously a *mode of evaluation and technical means of control* of the power arrangements and their corresponding formulations." ('Capitalistic Systems, Structures and

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<sup>47</sup> E.g. reduction of labour-power to simple abstract socially necessary labour; segmentation of persons into two -and only two- classes (bourgeois, proletarian); distribution of elements in accordance with money relations: production operating only for profit: alliances -domestic and foreign- produced only for economic advantage; etc.



Processes', by F.Guattari and E.Alliez, in The Guattari Reader, G.Genosko ed., p235)

I will approach the question of originary heterogeneity through a discussion of the mechanism by which a correlation between the produced regulated planes, of labour-power/production and monetary differentiation, is produced. This may appear a strange procedure, to discuss a relation prior to the elements of the relation. However, not only is this the manner in which Marx proceeds in Capital, where though both elements are present from the beginning, labour-power is defined in terms of its value-forms (at least initially), hence as domesticated, whilst money is revealed in its process of composition/domestication, such that there is an asymmetry here; but also because the element which correlates the terms operates a change in the terms related. Any other procedure would tend to too rigidly segment the space as an origin, and disguise the immanence of the relations to one another, i.e. elements will be seen to exist in their relationality, not independently but across a plane of exteriority which does not predetermine the relations or the elements. Finally, the terms labour and labour-power are also only apparently given at the beginning, they emerge in a different form through the historical analyses (e.g. on the working day), which reveal them as processual and emergent, and do so precisely in relation to the parallel formalisations of elements of circulation. The process of correlation will be discussed below, and is implied in some of what has already been said, although it will be discussed in terms of its emergence from the diagram of material-abstraction in other chapters, rather than being considered in-itself. However, the correlation comes to be formed between the differential plane of money emerging as an effect of commodity circulation, and the formalisation of a plane of production in terms of quantities of labour-time. As discussed above, the differential plane emerges from the machinic relations between bodies and passes through various degrees of deterritorialisation, initially highly dependant on the level of deterritorialisation of the machinic assemblage, only gradually gaining a consistency of its own.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> For one thing, historically difference was always reterritorialised upon particular commodities used for exchange, which had the dual role of element in an exchange, as well as use-value external to its purely economic function. E.g. the use of tobacco as money in Virginia, a function it maintained for

It is only when the differential plane was given a content of its own, enabling it to reterritorialise the element of exchange (e.g. gold) upon its own deterritorialised plane, that it gained sufficient consistency to form a (relatively) autonomous monetary plane able to intersect the plane of production on its own terms (or potentially so). In fact, the distinction between the plane of exchange, of production, and of money can emerge only through such autonomisation effects. Nevertheless, such autonomy is only relative. What we have, rather, is the emergence of a new Assemblage, with its different distributions of content and expression, of bodies and a-signifying elements, and a different correlation established between its segments and flows, its local power centres and coded elements. The correlation however, is a project, a process which requires the circulation of an X which perpetually (re)produces the correlation by means of the formation of an 'equivalent'. The 'equivalent' must operate as a bridge, an instance of communication between the planes. On the one hand, it must take a certain amount of labour-time to be produced (hence able to circulate on the plane of production as a commodity);<sup>49</sup> on the other hand, it must be homogeneous and divisible without changing in nature (thereby able to circulate in quantitative form on the differential plane). In other words, the monetary assemblage comes to be formed through the formation of a machinic assemblage of bodies, in which a specific content is withdrawn from the plane of production, and a collective assemblage of enunciation, by which a specific differential plane of expression with its a-signifying elements comes to be formalised in reciprocal relation with the plane of content. The emergence of a new assemblage: the monetary body-monetary a-signifying regime:

"Precisely because content, like expression, has a form of its own, one can never assign the form of expression the function of simply representing, describing, or averring a corresponding content: there is neither

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two centuries, far longer than the gold standard (see Money: Whence it came, Where it went, J.K.Galbraith, p48-50).

<sup>49</sup> I have simplified somewhat, as the planes are at least three: differential monetary plane, plane of circulation (of commodities and money as medium of exchange), and plane of production.



correspondence nor conformity. The two formalisations are not of the same nature; they are independent, heterogeneous." (ATP p86)

Various commodities play the role of correlator at different times, depending on the relative deterritorialisation of the differential plane, and the relative degree of homogenisation of elements on the plane of production. In Marx's day it was gold. It tends, however, to lose as much as possible any qualitative determinations which would enable it to flee its assigned role as correlator (as in the case of tobacco). It becomes an occupant without a place on the plane of production, where commodities are doubled by their monetary expression, their price -so that everything appears double (worker/wages, commodities/prices, etc.); and an empty space on the differential plane, always circulating elsewhere.<sup>50</sup> There is a distribution of excess and lack between the series (occupant without a place, and mobile empty space) which is the condition of re-alignments between the series in "perpetual relative displacement" (LS p39). Without money operating as this paradoxical element, the originary heterogeneity would block any potential negotiation of the emergent systematicity (unless another element took its place, operating in another manner, actualising another form of systematicity). Money is then subject to strategic interventions by power centres (state-forms: State, central banks, World bank-IMF complex, etc.) by means of which varying antagonistic conditions are negotiated and the series re-aligned. Lack and excess are then distributed in accordance with the alterations in the conditions of the system in order to maintain specific correlations.<sup>51</sup> Though unable to reduce heterogeneity, capital operates a form of pseudo-homogenisation, through the extraction of (relative) constants and the autonomisation of specific correlations.<sup>52</sup> It

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<sup>50</sup> See the 'Sixth Series of Serialization' in The Logic of Sense.

<sup>51</sup> For example: variations in 'structural' unemployment at different degrees; inflationary variations; differences in intensity of production; varieties of taxation -direct/indirect, corporation tax; interest rate changes, etc. These all operate by series of axioms by which correlations are maintained.

<sup>52</sup> E.g. gold as a relative constant of the monetary form; this

is therefore, because (monetary) difference is an effect of commodity circulation/exchange, a result of a passive synthesis, but not of it (it operates in the gaps, the interstices), that it is able to gain an autonomy and a consistency of its own; that it is able to be intersected and fixed by the circulation of a commodity X, which both gives difference a content of its own, whilst this content is able to operate as a circulating 'equivalent' on all planes, producing correlations, communications.

Commodities appear under capitalism in two forms:

i/ as a definite quantity of labour-time -its Value;

ii/ as a variable quantity of a monetary value which it may appropriate in exchange -its Value-form or price.<sup>53</sup>

The value-form can be seen as an 'effect' of value and its overdetermination, but value can be said to exist only in its effects, its modes of existence, its variety of forms -it is immanent to them, though the 'effects' pass through degrees of deterritorialisation, gaining a consistency, a certain autonomy,

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in turn enables an 'autonomisation' of correlations between the monetary and the productive plane ('autonomisation' does not, however, signify a minimisation of regulation and direct intervention; it does involve, however, the axiomatisation of specific engendered correspondences). As will become clear, gold was never a 'true essence' or necessary correlate of money - money never operated as though directly intersubstitutable and dependent upon gold; rather gold functioned as a disciplinary element in the regulation of the monetary body. That is not to say that the non-correlation between the two did not cause collapses and crises; money's escape from the discipline of gold indicated the frailty of the current disciplinary techniques. As in the case of the labour-theory of value, the gold standard itself played a critical ('mystificatory') function in bourgeois economics. Acknowledgement must go to Nick Land for leading me to question my initial acceptance of the gold standard as real correlate of the monetary form.

<sup>53</sup> "Each commodity 'counts' simultaneously as a fraction of the total stream of income deriving from the total product and as a fraction of the total doing involved in producing the total product." ('The Visible and the Measurable', B.Roberts, Postmodern Materialism and the Future of Marxist Theory, A.Callari and D.Ruccio ed., p198)



or being reterritorialised across whichever plane it is taken up by.<sup>54</sup> Elements and planes communicate in accordance with the different degrees of deterritorialisation of the elements and planes. So for example the commodity-form communicates with the money-form in terms of velocity of circulation, or degree of deterritorialisation of property relations. Value (labour-time determination), is the site of overdetermination; the heterogeneity of the site (both with regard to elements and relations) mean that crisis, rupture, incommensurability is originary: "It is this disequilibrium that makes revolutions possible." (LS p49) -the question then is one of the production of homogeneity, of correlation and conversion, so that indeed power can be said to be defined as that which escapes it.

It is the double nature of commodities which enables them to intersect the plane of difference whilst keeping to their own plane that allows Marx to say:

"Money as a measure of value is the necessary form of appearance of the measure of value which is immanent in commodities, namely labour-time." (C1 p188)

and that the

"price or money-form of commodities is, like their form of value generally, quite distinct from their palpable and real bodily form; it is therefore a purely ideal or notional form."<sup>55</sup> (C1 p189)

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<sup>54</sup> For example, the wage, profit, interest, rent, etc. I have in mind something similar to A.Negri's discussion of causality in relation to Spinoza and Althusser: "Causality is submitted to the aleatory nature of the surface; in Spinoza, causality is realized completely on the surface -all of its internal necessity removed, every finality ignored- for the simple reason that only the effect qualifies the cause." ('Notes on the Evolution of the Thought of the Later Althusser', A.Negri, in Postmodern Materialism and the Future of Marxist Theory, A.Callari and D.Ruccio ed., p61) This has already been discussed in part in terms of the double existence of capital, in terms of the two forms of its diagram, whether existing as pure 'matter-function', i.e. abstract functionality, unformed matter, or as instantiated in a concrete assemblage with a form of content and one of expression which determine the diagram (this will be discussed further in the following chapters).

<sup>55</sup> As should have become clear, it is through this problematisation of the concrete/abstract 'dialectic' that Marx is

In fact, both commodities and money are elements of a machinic assemblage of bodies -though both are also subject to intervention from a collective assemblage, or semiotic monetary regime. This latter operates by inserting elements into the interstices of the machinic body, parcelling-off relations, interminglings, mixtures, in order thereby to "anticipate them or move them back, slow them down or speed them up, separate or combine them, delimit them in a different way" (ATP p86). In other words, the semiotic monetary regime operates by segmenting the flows of bodies, and correlating the various segments and flows: a flow of labour for a monetary segment (the wage); an expanding monetary body recoded in terms of price variation (inflation), investment, and/or interest rate increases; a flow of finance money segmented into reserves, corporate budgets, etc.

The correlation does not, therefore, block the relative autonomy proper to each realm. So that for example,

"although price, being the exponent of the magnitude of a commodity's value, is the exponent of its exchange-ratio with money, it does not follow that the exponent of this exchange-ratio is necessarily the exponent of the commodity's value." (C1 p196)

In other words, the value relation operates between a commodity and the labour-time (socially) necessary to produce it, and between the commodity and its monetary expression in quite autonomous ways. It is this internal split within value, its multiple composition, which can produce the imbalances within it:

"The possibility, therefore, of a quantitative incongruity between price and magnitude of value, i.e. the possibility that price may diverge from the magnitude of value, is inherent in the price-form itself. This is not a defect, but, on the contrary, it makes this form [price-form] the adequate one for a mode of production whose laws can only assert themselves as blindly operating averages between constant irregularities."<sup>56</sup> (C1 p196)

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able to map contemporary capital.

<sup>56</sup> I repeat the words of Deleuze and Guattari: "the functional independence of the two forms is only the form of their



This correlation is, therefore, not carried out once only, resulting in a totalisation of system. The exteriority of the relations to their elements means that vigilance is required to maintain and enforce the correlation. This can only be carried through by the disciplining and formalisation processes distributed across each plane. So, though it is important not to cloud the distinction between, for example, price and value, any attempted logical deduction or derivation, of the form: socially necessary labour-time  $\rightarrow$  value of commodity  $\rightarrow$  expressed in a commodity acting as universal equivalent: money  $\rightarrow$  in turn determined by labour-time necessary for its production, fails to grasp the autonomy of the segments and the differing distributions of contents and expression, which are produced independently both logically and historically, and which would otherwise result in a simple reductivism of an essentialising/homogenising nature.<sup>57</sup> It is precisely because the planes are autonomously produced, that there is "an essential lack of correspondence" (LS p39), that correlations can be produced and be subject to asymmetries, imbalances. The differential plane folds back over commodity circulation, deducing an element, and producing it as a content of its own; this element is then allowed to circulate as a substitute, a simulacrum or double of the commodities circulating on the plane of production; this element circulates on all planes simultaneously, though taking on different forms on each plane in accordance with the varieties of segmentarity they encounter, in accordance with the various forms of content/of expression they are taken up by.

The process of correlation is extremely complex as elements intervene from outside the apparent calm and simplicity of the surface of exchanges, where all appears as domesticated and clear: all heterogeneity is overlain with a homogenous - *axiomatised*- surface: wages, circulating monetary-quantities,

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reciprocal presupposition, and continual passage of one to the other." (ATP p87) It is this flexibility of originary heterogeneity which enables re-alignments axiomatised in accordance to changing conditions.

<sup>57</sup> E.g. the economic as essence, labour as its humanist correlate. As Althusser points out in Reading Capital.

all phenomena faithfully mirrored in their price -no perplexity, no disguise, a representative monetary democracy. Filling in some of the things I have only passed over briskly: money exists in two forms: i/ as measure of value ('money of account'), determined in a complex negotiation with the quantity of labour necessary to produce the commodity in which it is materialised (e.g. gold), and differentiated on its own plane through quantitative specification of a representative -money of account; ii/ as means of circulation, it is quantitatively overdetermined by the price and quantity of the commodities in circulation, and the velocity of its exchanges.<sup>58</sup> As price is in turn determined in a complex negotiation between the monetary expression of the socially necessary labour-time required for the commodity's production ('social necessity' indicating the intervention of demand and supply factors as well as level of 'development' of productive forces, and crucially, the degree of regulation within the labour process itself), it presupposes money as measure of value. It is -as we have said above- money as equivalent, or measure of value which enables the correlation across the planes of money-in-itself, circulation, and production, though it is the circulation of money which enables communication and conversion. Different agencies emerge on the different planes as the abstract-machine of capital is specified, concretised in a proliferation of assemblages in order to maintain the correlations, regulate the elements of each plane/sector/zone of specification, and enable the continuing conversion.<sup>59</sup> There are therefore, a number of

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<sup>58</sup> There is a third determination of money, what may perhaps be called finance money; it is the object of speculative investments, this is a flow which is segmented by an increasingly mobile and flexible axiomatic, by increasingly contracting monetary onto temporal flows -in effect, time itself becomes the tool and object of speculation. In fact, this third form may be seen as a mutation of the first form (money of account), or this first form at a particular degree of deterritorialisation and autonomisation (see below).

<sup>59</sup> Central banks are one of these agencies proper to the monetary sphere, which aim to maintain the convertibility of money as measure of value, with money as means of circulation, through strategies such as interest rate shifts to slow or speed up the expansion of the money supply by reducing/increasing borrowing, hence production, prices, wages, and thereby



variables, each operating on a plane with its own consistency, its own stratification procedures: its own formalisations of specific contents (bodies) and expression (a-signifying elements), but which are made to intersect at certain critical points by an element effectuating an incorporeal transformation amongst the elements of the correlated plane(s). A number of factors come to overdetermine the relations and elements: price stability is overdetermined by level of productivity, level of development of organised labour, growth of the economy, velocity of the circulating medium, etc.; quantity of means of circulation is overdetermined -amongst other things- in a complex negotiation between "the sum of the prices of the commodities divided by the number of times coins of the same denomination turn over" (C1 p216), as well as credit demands for investment, etc. And both of these sites of overdetermination depend upon the -relative- stability of the monetary value, which in turn depends upon organisation and segmentation of the plane of production, the circulation of commodities, etc. These orders of dependency are not causal; rather, they depend on effective regulation of planes, and a correlation produced through the effectuation of the incorporeal transformations which enables the intersection, conjugation of series. Any rigid form of causal dependency would problematise any notion of strategic modification between the assembled planes. It is precisely the heterogeneity of elements and relations which enables the plasticity of the capitalist axiomatic.

**An aside:** some further qualification, or rather, clarification, is required here concerning the direction of 'determination': from production to circulation, or circulation to production.<sup>60</sup>

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producing various inflationary/deflationary effects. Central banks began as means of maintaining the value of the currency by preventing debasement, by counterfeiters and then speculators - with varying degrees of success. Though central banks in the 18th and 19th centuries in France and England have often been more the cause of speculation, and the ensuing collapse, than its regulators.

<sup>60</sup> Marx's contention appears to be that it is production which 'determines' effects on the plane of circulation. Though as will become clear, Marx is less dogmatic than the economists that both preceded and followed him. As will become apparent, autonomy and homologous specification leaves a significantly

As Braudel and Galbraith indicate, in the sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries the huge increases in gold from the newly discovered territories of the America's, produced massive price inflation. Is this not an example of increased prices following upon the growth of the money supply? It is sufficient to clearly distinguish between the two forms of money Marx speaks of: money as measure of value, and money as means of circulation, in order to reveal the complexity and overdetermination of correlations, interventions, across planes. For Marx's position is quite consistent with the fact that -and in fact implies precisely that- an increase in money as the measure of value produces an increase in prices (inflation). For if there is an increase in gold (which in Marx's day was the measure of value), so that its production time falls, there is a decrease in its value. As prices are the representatives of a commodity's value expressed in gold, a fall in the value of gold (due to the reduction in production time, e.g. a discovery of easily mined gold deposits) -other things being equal, crucially that the production time necessary for the production of other commodities remains the same as prior to gold's fall in value- will be represented in an increase price, i.e. an increase in the gold represented by the price of the commodity. So, if at time  $t$  commodity  $X$  takes 10 hours to produce, and is equal to the production time of 10g of gold represented in the price of £50; then at time  $t'$  10g of gold which now only take 1 hour to produce, commodity  $X$  which still takes 10 hours to produce will now be equal to 100g of gold, represented in the price of £500. The amount of money as a means of circulation -i.e. enabling the price to be realised in an exchange- will, therefore, have to increase in line with price increases (or circulation will have to speed up, the number of commodities diminish, etc. -in line with Marx's analysis). Price increases in turn vary in accordance with the reduction in production time (and hence reduction in the cost) of gold. We have, therefore, inflationary pressures as a result of changes in production, and of trade, and of communication, and... and... and... and... I have already discussed, however, the need to evade the metaphysics of the traditional 'labour theory of value' which tends -amongst other things- to create a future society within the 'interiority' of capital, a form of economic pre-formationism. This is the case also for the role of the Gold Standard, where its *function* as real essence/substance of the

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more open understanding of correlations across planes.



monetary function has diverted attention from its role as disciplinary element in the regulation of money. Whilst it is most certainly true that at various times in history the money-form has orbited around gold, the monetary semiotic and gold have never coincided, rather gold is called on so as to engender specific tactics for *convertibility* and *conversion* across monetary registers and economic sectors. It is due precisely to the plasticity and consistency of the monetary semiotic that it is able to adopt and be adopted by differing techniques which enables it to transform the forms of its intervention. When the money-form was tied to gold, transformations in gold production and circulation would produce effects upon the money-form, for the two forms would be specified reciprocally. However, each phenomenon is (over)determined by factors proper to planes exterior to their own, each plane requiring stratification procedures of its own to naturalise elements, so that any correlation must come from outside, though affecting a reciprocal specification on the inside -enabling the emergent unity to arise by pragmatically negotiating a path through the variables in order to produce a noise-free communication. As we can see from the example of the discovery of the America's, a number of aleatory factors intersect producing a number of effects on the variety of planes, each one coping with the new events in accordance with the assemblages it is able to mobilise: expansion of trade, following upon the repression and organisation of production of the colonial people, and/or export of ones own population; the rise of prices at home meant exacerbation of popular unrest until wages were allowed -or forced- to rise with prices, though away from home (Spain) wages struggled to do so; price increases and the lag in wages produced high profits for commerce and early industry, proving a strong incentive to invest, and hence to the growth of early capitalism; the influx of gold was able to finance increasing military expansion and reverse, or reconfigure political allegiances; piracy and smuggling increased, as did counterfeiting, thereby provoking the Dutch Republic to form the first central bank; etc. Paradoxically, the emergence of correlation, the paths they establish, and the agencies/assemblages which aim to stabilise the structured heterogeneity, rather than producing balance, enable the exacerbation of unanticipated feed-back across the planes, with the correlates just as frequently allowing destabilising elements to travel across planes and assemblages.

As is clear, the two forms of money have drastically altered over the last one hundred years, passing through increasingly critical thresholds of deterritorialisation. It was still obvious, for example, in Marx's day, that the correlation between money as value, and commodities, had to pass via production-time, i.e. preventing the monetary stratum from fully deterritorialising production by reterritorialising it upon gold production: the accumulation of gold reserves. In this manner, the monetary stratum was only as deterritorialised as its gold reserves, as the eventual conclusion of John Law's banking endeavours revealed. Increasingly, as commodity circulation expanded to form what Alliez and Guattari have called Integrated World Capitalism (IWC), so did commodity-value or the money-form, increasingly gaining consistency, as gold reserves were found to be increasingly restrictive on the expansion of production, the freedom of financial institutions, and the requirements of national and global governmental institutions.<sup>61</sup>

Nixon: on the 17th August 1971 the president of the U.S. decided to allow the dollar to float free from gold, actualising the autonomy of the monetary plane -in actual fact simply an acknowledgement of a de facto state of affairs which enabled the distributed agencies (state-forms/power centres) to mutate in order to make themselves adequate to this event, producing a modification in the axiomatisation of correlations- in such a way that, in the words of Antonio Negri, "Every relative parameter of certainty of values thereby became dissolved" (Pipe-Line: Lettere da Rebibbia, A.Negri, p130 -all translations from this book are my own). Or, in other words, monetary value ceased to be aligned with the conditions of (re)production. This deterritorialisation of the monetary-value, by untying money from production, increasingly dissociated the planes, and thereby provoked the emergence of new forms, new agencies, new axioms by which correlations were produced and maintained, and the need for a transformation of political demands. This involved both a maximisation of regulation on each separate plane, whilst a relative de-regulation of their correlation. This did more than mark a new distribution of expression and content on the economic planes:

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<sup>61</sup> Production-time itself became increasingly deterritorialised, as velocity of circulation became in-itself increasingly productive, money was able to reterritorialise on the digital world system of the international money markets.



"In such a way the residual pathetic illusions of socialism were swept away -as were the possibilities of trade-unionism: in other words, the project of hooking up and reconnecting salaries, and the conditions of reproduction, to criteria co-determined by progress, development, value- this truth of theirs, the bosses, slammed it into your face, rudely but realistically."  
 (Pipe-Line, p130)<sup>62</sup>

Inconvertibility is, therefore, always present -at the origin, and as perpetually reproduced. It is the zero point of non-correlation, of non-communication: the exteriority of relations. The velocity of circulation enables the emergence of the complex unity around which simple commodity exchange must circulate: the 'identity' of sale and purchase: C-M-C -the transformation of a commodity into money and money into a commodity; the *commodity/money* 'identity' through the autonomisation of specific 'motor-sensory' procedures. As circulation slows down, inconvertibility emerges, the elements fall back to their own planes, reterritorialising on consumption and finance. From the heart of the assemblage, from within the stratified elements and relations, sale and purchase are opposite, but "mutually complementary" (C1 p200). They lack "internal independence", though

"if the assertion of their external independence proceeds to a certain critical point, their unity violently makes itself felt by producing -a crisis." (C1 p209 see also G p198.)

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<sup>62</sup> "[T]he restorative and restructuring operation was not aimed towards the determination of a new equilibrium, it did not see itself as the articulation of the movement of the law of value, but rather it rested entirely on the punctual validation of political command." (Pipe-Line, p132) Once the 'causal' order of 'dependency' of each plane (production, circulation, monetary, etc.) is increasingly seen as a produced axiomatised correlate of regulation on each (i.e. an autonomisation effect); the political nature of the economic will become increasingly evident. The historical sections in Capital themselves make this evident, and thereby leave little room for the whole edifice of ideology.

The unity is an effect of correlation; however, it folds back over forming a new plane or stratum by deterritorialising the correlates and reterritorialising them across the monetary plane,<sup>63</sup> producing one as a plane of content the other as one of expression: "These two processes [sale and purchase] lack internal independence because they complement each other." (C1 p209) A sale is at any one time also a purchase, and vice-versa; for a commodity is transformed into money at the same time as money is transformed into a commodity: instantaneous incorporeal transformation.<sup>64</sup> The formation of a new assemblage always proceeds by taking the most deterritorialised element and folding it back over, producing a new plane of expression for one of content - as Marx has described (and I have commented on above), in the movement from the simple and isolated form of value to the money-form. From within the articulated double-pincer (expression/content), the whole movement, the circulation of elements, looks as though,

"both the money and the commodity function only as different modes of existence of value itself, the money as its general mode of existence, the commodity as its particular or, so to speak, disguised mode. It is constantly changing from one into the other, without becoming lost in this movement; it thus becomes transformed into an automatic subject." (C1 p255)

The heterogeneity of elements is substituted by the homogeneity of filiation -the process is read through its emergent element and totalised: anti-production. The product (money) folds back over and endlessly repeats its genesis: ROM, distributing elements and relations in accordance with a formalisation proper to its own plane. This does not prevent the elements from continuing in a different form on their own plane, in accordance

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<sup>63</sup> This is not the subsumption of one correlate to the other, for the correlates are i/ commodities, and ii/ means of circulation. The two are reterritorialised across money as measure and differentiator of command (see below).

<sup>64</sup> As Deleuze and Guattari say quoting Hjelmslev, "They are defined only by their mutual solidarity, and neither of them can be identified otherwise. They are defined only oppositively and relatively, as mutually opposed functions of one and the same function." (ATP p45)



with immanent processes of mutation, or subject to different formalisations (different distributions of content and expression).<sup>65</sup>

An observation leading onto a methodological point concerning Capital needs to be made at this stage. Though Marx views the problems of the circulation of money as symptoms of processes occurring on the plane of production, this does not mean that Marx views determination to operate in a single direction, blocking non-linear phenomena:

"It should be mentioned in passing that it by no means follows, from the fact that the popular ascription of stagnation in the process of production and circulation to an insufficiency of the circulating medium is a delusion, that an actual shortage of the circulating medium resulting from, say, bungling government interference with the 'regulation of currency' may not for its part give rise to stagnation." (C1 p218 note)

One reason for the frequent mis-readings of Marx on this and other questions, ones which frequently result in the ascription of linear and equilibrium models of understanding capitalism to Marx, is the methodology he adopts; what he calls the difference between method of inquiry and method of presentation.<sup>66</sup> Capital operates by means of a series of ever expanding 'snap-shots', each one operating with a number of different actors and elements, interrelations, and a number of emergent effects and becomings are produced from the Assemblage. The limited nature of each mis-en-scene produces an antagonism, a crisis (as a symptom of the heterogeneity of the elements and the attempted homogenisation), and thereby pushes one to expand the limits of the action. We see how at each stage the introduction or emergence of new elements mutates the nature of the Assemblage. In the first part of Capital, the elements deducted from the chaos are: commodities, the agents of exchange, value, and value-form, and a number of related concepts. Some of these were already present from the beginning, others emerged en-route. We find these elements engaged in a set of stratified relations in

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<sup>65</sup> See n.29 in Concrete/Abstract: or, The German Ideology.

<sup>66</sup> See the 'Postface to the Second Edition' of Capital Vol.1, p102.

a working Assemblage, with heterogeneity at its heart, and crisis as its possibility. A set of rules of thumb, pragmatic procedures, axiomatised "trick[s]" (C1 p216) emerge as means by which the consistency of the stratified Assemblage can be maintained. However, these rules of thumb already indicate the rupture of the delimited field or snap-shot by pointing towards agencies/assemblages of anti-production<sup>67</sup> proper to each assembled stratum, each effectuating the capitalist axiomatic in accordance with its own forms of realisation, by which the variables are negotiated, the correlations established and maintained, and segmentations proceed. In short, Capital operates by a progressive accretion of elements, which thereby transforms the Assemblage by the emergence of new elements and relations. It is this processes of accretion that I have attempted to describe so far -one which reveals the emergence of equalisation, of homogeneity, as the product of heterogeneity, and perpetually re-worked by its differential elements within. In the words of Michael Ryan:

"Capitalist ideology presents capitalism as a homogenous entity; Marx's text is deconstructive of that ideology in that it demonstrates the fissured structural and historical origin of the system. Any stasis that it attains is merely the provisional stabilisation of a differential antagonistic force. That differential is defined less by a systematic interrelation of distinct entities than by *limits* of force and resistance." (Marxism and Deconstruction, M.Ryan, p88)

### Time and Correlation

"If we look at the whole process from the point of view of its result, the product, it is plain that both the instruments and the object of labour are means of production and that the labour itself is productive labour." (C1 p287)

Labour is, in effect, productive in relation to the product which marks the completion, the limit or threshold of the

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<sup>67</sup> Agencies of anti-production are not for that matter alien to production, rather they are elements of redundancy proper to each assembled plane, and which operate by maintaining specific correlations and incorporeal transformations.



productive process or, rather, cycle. Beyond this point the product is appropriated on another plane (de- and re-territorialised) which withdraws it from immanent relations to production, whilst nevertheless producing feed-back effects upon it in the form of monetary returns. Productive labour is determined in terms of the limit, which marks the recoding of the product in terms of price;<sup>68</sup> though it is already appropriated as productive labour through capital investment at the beginning of the cycle: price is unrealised capital -it is in this sense that the end of the productive cycle is already its re-commencement:

"Products are therefore not only the results of labour, but also its essential conditions." (C1 p287)

This is the status of production in conditions of real subsumption.

Time is the primary form of appropriation, of intersection - the 'common substance'. Price acts as a matrix across which relations and elements are distributed in temporal segments proper to each plane in accordance with the disciplinary requirements of the assemblages there operating. In fact, the determinations of socially necessary labour (the *social average time* around which production -and productive labour- fluctuates) are all subject to translation/transformation into specific temporal segments and thresholds marking conditions of profitability:<sup>69</sup> 'technical machines' and labour-power must operate at a particular degree of intensity, i.e. a definite number of articles must be produced within certain temporal limits (relative/absolute surplus-value production); there must be no more than an average waste-time in the form of waste of means of production (e.g. raw materials, instruments of labour). It must be remembered that raw materials are for Marx elements which have "already undergone some alteration by means of

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<sup>68</sup> This recoding does not, thereby, transform the material properties of the product, but rather substitutes itself for it (the familiar logic of the supplement?), whilst allowing it a continued existence on other planes. In fact the recoding is rather a realisation of the axiomatic in accordance with its own *model* of realisation (determined by the contents and expression which stratify it).

<sup>69</sup> On socially necessary labour see, for example, C1 p303.

labour" (C1 p285), and hence are correlated with a certain quantity of labour-time, as is the case with the instruments of labour. It must also be remembered, that Marx's stress on *quality* of labour and raw materials when determining social necessity, itself undergoes recoding in terms of temporal segments: e.g. skilled labour is concentrated time of training, and different quality of goods is understood as involving more or less production time to reach an 'average', which is again determined temporally -e.g. the role of worst, or best soil as standard operates a temporalisation itself, i.e. labour-time required for cultivation, etc. It is important to note here, that though the time of correlation appears as homogenous and univocal, that this is rather the effect of the axioms of correlation. In fact, the variety of practices have a temporality of their own which is the time of their constitution and operation, and which allow only of a functional reduction of that temporality. It is this heterogeneity which capital must manage through its axiomatic. In the words of Antonio Negri:

"[capitalism] is therefore negation of real time which is felt to be antagonistic, or -rather- its reduction within a *formally dialectical* schema: the cycle and cyclical progression, the market and the plan - that is, time is configured, in the cyclical movement, in the form and the manner of the criterion of order of economic space, as reversibility of all points, circulation, money." (La Costituzione del Tempo. Prolegomeni[CT], A.Negri, p153 - all translations from this book are my own)

What capitalism produces is an ideal time ("*tempo ideale*" CT p153), the abstract time of *modernity*, by the displacement of the multiple heterogeneous presents of practice, by a formal presentness of universal convertibility.

**Conducts of Time-** Time is the element here. Following closely Hume's analysis, Deleuze maintains firstly that our originary relation to time is not to the notion of succession, but rather, to the succession of independent 'perceptions' in the *connective synthesis* of the imagination.<sup>70</sup> Such that the succession,

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<sup>70</sup> See for example A Treatise of Human Nature, D.Hume, p35: "Wherever we have no successive perceptions, we have no notion of time, even tho' there be a real succession in the objects. From these phænomena, as well as many others, we may conclude,



repetition of instances or cases in a connective synthesis changes nothing in the object, but only in the mind: for the synthesis of successive perceptions is not carried out by the mind but *in the mind*: a *passive connective synthesis*. In other words something new is produced in the mind by this contraction or passive connective synthesis, a difference is allowed to emerge from the repetition in the contemplating mind which determines an affective space from the encountered difference, a difference which comes to be coded in the mind.<sup>71</sup>

"It [the imagination] contracts cases, elements, agitations or homogeneous instants and grounds these in an internal qualitative impression endowed with a certain weight [difference as the e/affect of an encounter]." (DR p70 -my interventions)

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that time cannot make its appearance in the mind, either alone, or attended with a steady unchangeable object, but is always discover'd by some *perceivable* succession of changeable objects." 'Perception' is Hume's generic term for the phenomenological contents of the mind.

<sup>71</sup> The fundamental modification which Deleuze initiates, is the substitution of "sensitive plate" (DR p70), passive synthesis, recording surface, etc. for 'mind' (and its various faculties), in order to displace the centrality of conscious perception by what he calls the "primary sensibility" of "organic syntheses", so that any encounter produces a sign, an affect (DR p73). This is also in order to rigorously determine a difference in kind between the connections, encounters between difference within virtual coexistence, on the plane of immanence, and the produced synthesis, produced as an effect/product. In 'The Geology of Morals', Deleuze and Guattari go further, by allowing for a geological sensibility/affectivity (see ATP Plateau 3, and 'Nonorganic Life', M.DeLanda, in Incorporations, J.Crary and S.Kwinter ed., p128-67). This passive synthesis allows for a difference to emerge between the repetition of cases, indicating the heterogeneity of each contracted element. The connective synthesis is necessarily passive, for the encounter between elements is across a plane of exteriority which does not predetermine the connections. This should be clear from the discussion of matter and difference-in-itself above. It is clear however, that what we have here is *time as constitution*, as immanent condition of practice (this will become clearer below).

This contraction of the series of independent perceptions, constitutes the time of the affective lived/-ing present of the subject.<sup>72</sup> The foundational productive passive synthesis organises a milieu as its expressed product, a lived vibratory block of space-time, qualified as a *habit* defined by a "periodic repetition" (ATP p313) of contracted cases and elements, interleaving material and perceptual characteristics, in which one is affected and acts -emergent practice as '*conduit du temps*' (or '*conducts of time*', see Capital Times: Tales from the Conquest of Time, É.Alliez, and Deleuze's introduction). Between the process of composition that is the passive connective synthesis (the synthesis of production), and its functioning (the produced-/ing habits and affects) there is no difference, for there is but one synthesis at work: "primary production: the production of production" (AO p7). Although a difference subsists between the contracted, synthesised differences, and their '*free state*'. Only the contracted habit of the present is actual; the past and future emerge from retentions and anticipations pertaining to the lived present. The present is constituted by the contraction of material and perceptive elements precipitating a milieu which one inhabits, which in turn describes, spawns pasts and futures as repetitions, dimensions of this contracted habit of the present. The picture is even more complex, as Deleuze allows for the multiplication of contemporaneous presents as a function of the multiple coexisting passive connective syntheses, contemplations, or contracted habits/practices:

"the contraction implied in any contemplation always qualifies an order of repetition according to the elements or cases involved [see DR p70-2 on the contraction of elements and cases in relation to Hume and Bergson]. It necessarily forms a present which may be

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<sup>72</sup> Subject here, should be understood simply as emergent point-of-view or perspective on the '*world*', defined precisely through the practice '*of*' difference-contraction (to be understood "in the two sense of the genitive belonging both inside and outside the concept" Capital Times: Tales from the Conquest of Time, É.Alliez, pXV). Although, one must bear in mind that there are no personalistic overtones here, and no identity, totalisation of encounters which can truly be termed '*world*'. We have distributed heterogeneity across a plane of exteriority.



exhausted and which passes, a present of a certain duration which varies according to the species, the individuals, the organisms and parts of organisms under consideration. Two successive presents may be contemporaneous with a third present, more extended by virtue of the number of instants it contracts. The duration of an organism's present, or of its various presents, will vary according to the natural contractile range of its contemplative souls [or passive syntheses]."  
 (DR p76-7 -my interventions)

The task is then to think of variable accords or various compositions between milieus in terms of lateral temporal relations which are not successive but pluri-dimensional.<sup>73</sup> Though for capital it is always a case of negating the heterogeneity of the consistent practices (*conduites du temps*), substituting for it the non-time of its analytic spatialisation (e.g. time-of-circulation). So the connective synthesis also contracts together other syntheses as machine parts, forming further connective syntheses and milieus as products, "continually producing production, of grafting producing onto the product" (AO p7). This is a question of practice, in that the contractions constituting the present(s) distribute the elements and relations for potential spaces of action, and for further productive syntheses. There is a practice of contraction, where the sense of the genitive ('of') marks a non-linearity: contraction is the condition of practice, whilst practice is itself a contraction. The of marks a point of constitutive ontological ambiguity.

Capital seeks to operate, in effect, as a reserve of time, an accumulation, capture of time which proceeds by an efficient *parcelisation* of time. Temporal segments are formalised differently on each plane;<sup>74</sup> capital operates by producing -

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<sup>73</sup> Along with an understanding of the subject 'of' practice as in a continual becoming between, across (spatio-)temporal dimensions of the present (since the subject and its milieu is determined by the range of contracted habits of the variety of passive syntheses).

<sup>74</sup> E.g. time of circulation overdetermined by time of production, size and velocity of the money supply, interest rates on borrowing -short or long term, etc.; time of production

axiomatised- correspondences between the conducts of time on each plane, its task aided by a thorough regularisation or disciplining of practices.<sup>75</sup> Nevertheless, the formalisations and segmentations proper to each plane operate under exigencies emerging on those planes, e.g. social stabilisation, profitable production, monetary stability... Time only exists in the variety of its forms, of its practices, but is able to operate as the element in which correlation appears, is produced, in the form of temporal parcelisations, time is commodified and marks a criterion of reversibility in circulation; for appropriation takes a set of elements proper to each plane, correlates/axiomatises them, enabling a displaced representative (money) to circulate the various planes performing de- and re-territorialisations, de- and re-codings. Money dominates the processes of appropriation by the uniqueness of its role. It emerges on the one hand as an effect of the circulation of heterogeneous products and labours, and therefore circulates on this plane; whilst on the other hand it gains a consistency on a

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overdetermined by the efficiency of technical segmentation of labour, intensity of surveillance of the labour-process, degree of organisation of labour, velocity of circulation, size of industrial reserve army, etc. Some further factors are the efficiency of transport and communication processes, urbanisation (ease of access to labour through concentration), degree of stability of interstate system enabling noise free exchanges, forms of subjectification procedures producing efficiency targets mapped in education tests, etc. We will see in the next chapter how Negri views these heterogeneous times as inherent in capital as *real subsumption*, such that the univocal homogeneity of *time-as-measure* is effectively subverted here by *time-of-command* as *ontological-constitution* of *command*.

<sup>75</sup> In the first place, heterogeneous practices have -as we have seen- a heterogeneous temporal consistency. The capitalist axiomatic -on the other hand- always 'realises itself' in a particular domain with its own model of realisation (i.e. determined by the assemblages which stratify it). Thus the axioms will differ in accordance with the assemblages composing a social formation. Nevertheless as Deleuze and Guattari indicate, "the difference and independence of the axioms in no way compromise the consistency of an overall axiomatic" (ATP p465).



plane of its own, with its own segments and a logic of its own. In other words, it is immediately multi-planer, and autonomous. As I have discussed above, value exists only in the variety of its forms, and these forms can be further determined in terms of temporal parcelisations determined on each plane, but effected by the monetary-form which is immediately multi-planer. Appropriation operates by correspondences produced across planes, producing differing effects according to the plane they intersect. So, for example, in the chapter 'Constant Capital and Variable Capital' we see the manner in which different elements are formalised or appropriated in accordance to formalisations proper to each plane: on the plane of production technical machines operate as a form of expression proper to content segmenting labour in a variety of ways, by subjugating it to its own breaks, stoppages, to its variable speeds, etc. a stratum of expression proper to a flow of labour-power/time it parcels out, divides up and distributes; on the other hand, on the monetary plane, it [the technical machines] operates as a homogenised set of contents taken-up by the form of monetary expression, contributing to the expansion of the monetary body by a parcelisation into a set of discrete temporal moments:

"in one and the same process of production, [it] counts in its totality as an element in the labour process, but only piece by piece as an element in the creation of value."<sup>76</sup> (C1 p312)

Or again, the rate of surplus value not only measures the ratio of capital inputs into labour to capital withdrawn (surplus-value) from the investment  $[s/v]$ , but rather -and again we see the temporal determinateness of formalised and appropriated elements- the subsumption/command/correlation of labour to

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<sup>76</sup> Marx speaks of "one and the same process of production", only in the sense that he looks at the overall effect of capitalist production as the production of surplus-value, whilst I am attempting to show how capitalism as a 'totality' is heterogeneously assembled, producing different effects on the various planes, whilst surplus-value in its variety of forms (and it does not exist independently of these forms!) emerges as the effect of the axiomatised correlations across assemblages. However, capitalism as *real subsumption* displaces this duality to the point at which heterogeneity and unity coexist in the element of immanent capitalist command.

capital; as Marx points out, "surplus-value is in the same ratio to variable capital as surplus labour is to necessary labour." (C1 p326) Both ratios "express the same thing in different ways", or rather, as appropriated on different planes -monetary, productive... That is to say, different processes produce effects which differ according to the planes upon which they occur, by which they are taken-up, in part dependent upon the nature of the correspondences produced between the distinct formalisations, in part, in spite of the correspondences.

Value and surplus-value, constant and variable capital, necessary and surplus labour, etc. are markers of segmentation of the various flows -of labour, of money, of goods... - and elements of cross referencing (e.g. value correlated with necessary labour, surplus-value with surplus labour), whereby the interface across the various planes, by diverse procedures of appropriation is effected; or rather, these different categories are effects/signs of the overdetermined formalisation of elements and relations -generalised reversibility- on the various planes upon which processes of correlation supervene. These 'signs' are 'representations' (as in Marx's chapter title: 'The Representation of the Value of the Product by Corresponding Proportional Parts of the Product') which may be termed 'ideological', in the sense of being effects produced through the process of cancellation of the heterogeneity of their production/genesis in the correlation to which they submit in cross-referencing. Yet they are elements of concrete material production: these signs gain sufficient consistency that they are able to fold over, describing routes to the expansion of production, paths to re-routing profits, markers to increase surveillance, signals for balancing-out the inter-planer exchanges, etc. The correlations produced -for example- through the monetary plane emerging through the circulation of commodities, gaining a consistency of its own through the deduction of an element (e.g. gold) as its content, enabling it, thereby, to map and intervene in processes occurring on another planes (through correlating segments), reveals the process of interiorization of heterogeneity; the production of the analytic of capital, capital as tautology, and the reduction of temporal heterogeneity by the ideal time of capital's automatised reversibility. The need for a schematism between signs-systems and material flows is removed, as the exteriority of heterogeneous elements remains, but the correlations of the planes is produced as a process of carving out an interior -



homogeneity is a result which emerges through the establishment of the interior. Once the correlations are produced (and they are not done so once and for all, but through a careful negotiation between heterogeneous formalisation procedures on each plane, through an axiomatic of functional 'rules of thumb', "tricks"), 'representation' effects supervene in the correspondences between the aligned planes, so that recognition effects are able to further regulate and survey the elements on the various planes.

### From the Critique of Money to the Critique of *Power*. Negri

We are, therefore, directly within the realm of production, within the machinic distribution of bodies at the stage of real subsumption -i.e. where the differentiation between productive and unproductive labour breaks down -where the whole of society becomes a factory integrated in a cybernetic loop producing effects across the whole socio-productive body: IWC. But why view value immediately in its monetary form? How is it that value as money leads directly into production? Does not this attempt to understand value in terms of its variety of forms betray a naiveté that Marx would never have fallen into? But let us turn this questioning around. Negri:

"If a theory of value is given, can it be given outside of an immediate reduction to the theory of money, of the capitalist organisation of exchange, of exploitation? [...] Money has the advantage of presenting me immediately the lurid face of the social relation of exchange; it shows me value right away as exchange, commanded and organised for exploitation. I do not need to plunge into Hegelianism in order to discover the double face of the commodity, of value: money has only one face, that of the boss." (MbM p23)

By cutting out the derivational form: commodity/value/surplus-value, cutting out the mediating role of value except in the forms in which it is given -i.e. always under the command forms of surplus-value, the possibility of synthesis is removed and we are left with heterogeneity, antagonism, and the proliferation of assemblages by means of which the heterogeneous is organised, submitted to procedures of command, surveillance, re-alignment... Value comes to be extended into an immediately social relation:

the social averaging of labour, which operates a specific set of correspondences and correlations with the plane of production, of circulation, instigating procedures of domestication and regulation internal to the productive process itself through the set of incorporeal transformations distributed throughout the Assemblage, and capturing elements and relations of production in a series of affects on the monetary plane -the monetary body having its own semiotisation/domestication procedures and agencies.

"The theory of value, as it has existed so far, is simply an allusion to money as a concrete representation of the social mediation of antagonism. Value will be defined through average labour, through *socially necessary labour* in the sense in which money is defined in this framework.

'What determines value is not the amount of labour time incorporated in products, but rather the amount of labour time necessary at a given moment' (G p135). But, if one looks more closely, the definition of necessary labour is a definition which is already social."<sup>77</sup> (MbM p29)

To say 'determines' is too strong, as the monetary form of value has both a content and expression of its own, such that effects on the plane of production produce certain affects on the monetary plane of a different nature (and vice-versa).<sup>78</sup> Nevertheless, the form of value is correlated with the productive process in terms of the degree of command-control over the labour process. Negri goes on to quote Marx again:

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<sup>77</sup> For, value is 'determined' by the degree (of efficiency) of the exploitation/subsumption/control of labour, i.e. the efficiency of command and regulation structures within the productive process (e.g. degree of absolute and relative surplus-value extraction/control collapse in real subsumption where no exteriority to capital exists, as heterogeneity becomes immanent but subject to disciplinary command).

<sup>78</sup> The model which should be kept to, of which I have spoken already, is that of "a specification on any one level calls forth a homologous specification on another." (ATP p352) What such a process calls for is a carefully regulated alignment of planes enabling correspondences across the segments of an Assemblage, in which elements are captured and distributed in different *formed substances*, but in reciprocal presupposition.



"The market value is always different, is always below or above this average value of a commodity. Market value equates itself with real value<sup>79</sup> by means of its constant oscillations, never by means of an equation with real value as if the latter were a third party, but rather by means of constant non-equation (Hegel would say, not by way of abstract identity, but by constant negation of the negation, i.e. of itself as negation of real value)." (G p137)

'Real value' is defined as a constant emerging from the continuous variation of market value, or price, i.e. it extracts a constant relation by fixing on a particular level of variation -drawing out a constant relation between a set of variables in continuous variation. 'Market value' operates by a continuous oscillation between the degree of command of the labour process, i.e. the degree of averaging, or homogenisation of social labour, and the overdetermination of prices.<sup>80</sup> Hence, though there is a relative autonomy of planes, of production, of money, homologues are produced between planes by a complex negotiation of different formalisations and appropriations proper to each plane. It is not then that 'value' is too abstract as a concept, rather it is not abstract enough. In operating by the establishment of constants, it is unable to grasp the continuous

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<sup>79</sup> Where 'real value' is defined as the average socially necessary labour time, i.e. degree of disciplinisation of (social) labour, over a set period of time (Marx gives the example of 25 years, we would probably say 3-5 years).

<sup>80</sup> "It is money which constitutes, immediately, this relation, interpreting the oscillation between the social averaging of social labour and the overdetermination of prices. Money represents this oscillation in itself; there is -outside this oscillation- no other reality: money is a constitutive oscillation, which mediates and demonstrates the complete value produced by social labour." (MbM p40) Prices -as discussed above- are overdetermined by the rate of exploitation or control of the production process, both generally, and in particular sectors, e.g. gold production; by the quantity and velocity of the circulating medium, the quantity of commodities in circulation; currency speculation; interest rate shifts; security of investment; political equilibrium; etc.

variation of variables and their relations, from which the constants are extracted.<sup>81</sup> What the expansion of value into its variety of forms does, is lead us from exchange to money to regulation of the process of production, not as a derivation, but rather as the constitution of an immanent space of politico-economic (and ontological) control. We will see in the following chapter that money has thereby ceased to operate as measure, to become *ontologically constitutive*, i.e. it becomes analytic unit of command under conditions of real subsumption.

### Conclusion

Much more could be said about the monetary plane, especially about the distribution and proliferation of collective assemblages of enunciation in the form of central and world banks, IMF, WTO, speculative bodies (e.g. stock markets), etc., and the impact of computerisation/digitalisation of financial institutions on the increased consistency and deterritorialisation of the monetary body. I hope, however, that the space has been opened for precisely such an analysis -one which would not ignore the monetary plane's intervention in the machinic command of bodies.

Most importantly, what this return to Marx -if for ease of presentation, this is what we want to call it- reveals, is not so much the continuing veracity of a systematic body of knowledge, the truth of a continuing actuality which it reveals, but rather, the uncovering of a real *problematic field* which continues to 'condition' a mutating actuality. As I have already argued, the virtual conditions of a conditioned actuality do not resemble the conditioned, they are of a different nature, continuing to operate, continually re-virtualising, de-stratifying and re-stratifying a changing reality which they differentiate. Yet Marx shows how with capitalism, the actual is ever more tightly subsumed to its virtual conditions. Marx discovers a 'true problematic' which continues to condition the contemporary systematicity of capital, which throughout its mutations, its becomings, returns -ever more closely- to its virtual differential core in order to renew and reconfigure

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<sup>81</sup> "Anything but a metaphysics of value! Marx leaves that to his predecessors, and too often as well to those who follow him."  
(MbM p29)



itself in a perpetual negotiation, a continuing re-distribution and constitution of the heterogeneous series which compose it. It is to the 'historicisation' of this *diagram* that I shall now turn in my next chapter. It is -however- this diagrammatic core, which distributes the heterogeneous elements in series of non-finalised functions and unformed matters as a "generalizeable model of functioning" (Discipline and Punish[DP], M.Foucault, p205) upon which concrete -historical- assemblages supervene, and are subsumed, to which I must now turn.

### 3- SUBSUMPTION

"I am tempted to agree with Deleuze and Guattari that 'after a fashion, capitalism has been a spectre haunting every form of society'" (Capitalism and Civilization Vol.II[CC2], F.Braudel, p581).

The relationship between capitalism and history has always been a problematic one, as this extraordinary statement from a historian makes -once again- apparent. From Marx's first statements concerning capitalism's relationship to its history as a form of ideological dissimulation of origin (the *universalisation* of particular *determinate* material relations), whereby the material history of capitalism deleted itself in its own re-presentation of itself, it is plain that history has always been a problem for capitalism. But it is with the post-ideological analyses of the Grundrisse and Capital, that it becomes apparent that capitalism historically constitutes itself as its own genetic condition. In the first place history was cancelled in the a-historicism of ideology (for the history of ideology is external to it -i.e. it is the history of its material conditions); then, as the analyses were refined, it became apparent that there was no question of representation here, rather, there was a historical excision of history produced by the very operation of capitalism. In the conditions of *real subsumption* there is no longer any exteriority to capital, hence time is only the temporal analytic of capital, i.e. the irreversible production of reversible time. It is this that is at the heart of the badly resolved conflict between diachronic and synchronic analyses in Marx's Capital. But there is still more to this question, because capitalism's excision of history is a project, i.e. a *projected* presupposition, so that that projection itself has a history. It is perhaps misleading to speak of a *projection*, for what we have is rather a *practice* of dismemberment, of extraction of matters and functions from their traditional, *habitual*, en-codings, in such a way that the elements are qualitatively determined entirely in their conjunction, rather than from an external inscription apparatus. Deleuze and Guattari argue that capitalism's particularity is that it strikes at the flows themselves rather than the codes,



for it intervenes by regulating their conjunction (the practice of axiomatisation), not through a de- and re-coding. The massive and generalised conjunction of flows of labour, of raw materials, of technology, of money, etc. in the factory; or the conjunction of digital flows, electronic media, and human terminals in the stock exchanges round the world; rather than the strict and concerted application of -relatively- fixed codes to individuated persons in the apprenticeship and guild systems.

Capitalism is truly a foundational science in that it operates by the evisceration of all historically determined practices and the excavation of the immanent plane of material-abstraction. It is the history of this non-history which needs to be discussed. I shall do this initially through Braudel's analysis of anti-markets, as the emergent space of total(-itarian) appropriation or monopoly.

### A Short History of Markets and Anti-Markets

A route is produced: contraction. It is the condition of its being followed, of its being inscribed across a space, a memory trace. Any such tracing is the potential activation of a control network. For memory describes capital funds -it is the capitalisable depot of reinvestment. The intensity of its production is lost as its re-crossing programs a path for viral diffusion. What we are speaking of is capital-capture.

A market exists as a distribution zone, a nodal point on a network where goods are concentrated: centripetal-centrifugal is the logic. At least the logic on the ground, although we shall find that it's more a question of accounting as levels intersect, systems interface. Markets have a tendency to form 'spontaneously', as goods seek out consumption points, and such points attract goods.<sup>1</sup> They form as populations/packs descend on

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<sup>1</sup> I place 'spontaneously' between inverted commas because it should also be pointed out that the city-state was aggravating the whole movement towards the formation of markets by imposition of tax on the populace. Money only began to circulate widely when people were forced into dealing with money -tax was levied in cash, hence obliging the great movements towards the city in order to sell goods for money for the sole purpose (at least initially) of paying taxes: "it is taxation that

spaces wherein are concentrated consumers, and thoroughly deregulated sales practices coagulate the flows through the city-body, which in turn requires the hacking out of a space for distribution: the market-place. City-body, communication channels are entirely interdependent: the city defines the system in so far as the channels tend towards the city-body. One can say that the city controlled the flow of goods, in that it is the geographical position of the city which determined where the goods were to flow to, thereby defining the network. But, as with all spontaneously organising systems, control resides nowhere for long:

"Taken over by the towns, the market grew apace with them. More and more markets appeared, overflowing from the small town squares which could no longer contain them. And since they represented modernity on the march, their growth allowed no obstacle to bar their way: they could with impunity impose on their surroundings their congestion, their rubbish and their obstinate gatherings of people." (CC2 p31)

The city-body opened to the spread of the networks, only for it to then overflow its outer boundaries. Of course, all population concentrations had -at all times- to be open on their outer limits to nutrition supplies which frequently came from other zones. But with the post-fifteenth century population growth,<sup>2</sup> sedentary organisations expanded and required an ever increased supply of goods. The logistics of such a situation was -apparently- solved, not -solely- by a calculated effort on the part of the city, the state, but primarily by the spread of trade networks which homed in on large settlements forming markets. Inevitably, the ease with which goods could be found in the cities meant that the populace increased, thereby causing the trade networks to escalate as more goods were required. Inevitably such positive feedback resulted in turbulence, disorganising the coded order of the towns, producing highly organised networking processes at many levels. The spatial confinement to the market-places (which operated as one of the first modern attempts at coding the social space with respect to

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monetarises the economy" ATP p443 -see also CC2 p56).

<sup>2</sup> From this time -if not a little earlier- the world population gave up cyclical movement in order to follow the arrow of time.



trade) was soon found to fail radically in the attempt to re-systematise the effect of networks in accordance with the requirements of city space. The market itself grew, as the trading network became increasingly efficient and profitable. As the market-places were pushed to the outskirts of the city,<sup>3</sup> the population growth of the city in turn forced the walls of the urban centres to move out, thereby re-introducing the market into it.

"When an open space became available of course, a market took it over. Every winter in Moscow, when the Moskva river froze, shops, booths and stalls were set up on the ice."<sup>4</sup> (CC2 p32)

The rigorously coded spaces of the town, the assigned functions of city space (as well as 'natural' space) was constantly disorganised, and re-organised by the markets. This decoded (and temporarily recoded) space was open ground for thieves, beggars, con-men, etc. Not only social space was reorganised, but also the space for the excluded was re-opened. Everything re-entered with the expansion of the market. The control centres of the city were disrupted by this perpetual out-flowing and re-flux of its control parameters.

The city intensified its coding, but it realised that it was not inclusion/exclusion that could operate here. The market was there to stay, and the city could not do without it. Control became more plastic as market traders were taxed on their arrival at the market, and so their profits diminished. This, in England in 'the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, had the effect, however, of simply pushing "'substantial' travelling merchants" (CC2 p47) into 'private trading', which involved going directly to small peasant producers and buying directly from them, by-passing market tariffs. These private traders would act as middlemen and wholesalers for larger producers

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<sup>3</sup> This was an attempted imposition by the governors of the city (see CC2 p31).

<sup>4</sup> This, also in the seventeenth century, occurred in London as well.

requiring raw materials.<sup>5</sup> In this way the tentacles of the monetary economy increasingly expanded into the rural communities.

As the city grew, a supply chain, a zone around the city-body had to be protected in order to be certain of supplies. Producers and distributors within the area would be allowed free rein within the zone, whilst "professional merchants were allowed to trade freely only outside this area" (CC2 p38). The question of communication networks became important, as an infrastructure of supervised roads, supervised water routes, Inns transformed into tax and toll collectors, etc. was produced:<sup>6</sup> in effect, the overseeing and control of the protected area for any irregularities. The supply area had to be proportionate to the city, therefore extending its trade routes throughout particular areas, and frequently across countries. As the affected areas became ever more integrated into the city-body's consumption needs, so they became more specialised, more commercially minded. The costs of transport, the tax levied, etc., had the effect of pushing much of the small scale traders into the hands of large capital-rich investors, alone able to cope with the financial demands and risks of long-distance transportation of goods. Professional traders, middlemen, emerged as go-betweens -always attempting to escape the supervision of the markets, and their high tolls and duties. The city-state was caught between the opening up and decoding of local communities, and the attempted recoding in its own terms. This had the effect of disrupting many of the deeply coded traditional production practices of the communities -opening up the communities to trading operations which clouded the traditionally overt nature of markets.

Domination of trading networks was always to escape the total control required by previous state operations, as the new state-capital interface produced its own controllers. The emergence of the networks, and their escalation, were to have the effect of creating emergent points around which circulation was to be part-organised, and through which any collapse was to be bypassed. Under trade conditions, organisation was always partial,

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<sup>5</sup> Here we have the emergence of something which fundamentally breaks with the logic of the market: the first signs of capital dominance -already, in its very inception, an anti-market.

<sup>6</sup> On this last, see CC2 p353-4.

and collapse always relative. These two features are massively interconnected, in that the maintenance of part-organisation rests on non-collapse, so that the collapse of one centre has the effect of disorganising it and shifting onto another operational centre:

"In any event, centering, decentering, and recentering seem on the whole to be linked to prolonged crises in the general economy." (Afterthoughts on Material Civilization and Culture, F.Braudel, p86)<sup>7</sup>

The complex movement (flux and re-flux) of trade has the inevitable effect of pluralising nodal points on the network. Trade functions through decoding traditional forms of control over work practices, products, social organisations, and recoding them (forming anew) in accordance with the sequences which the networks insinuate, impose: monetary sequences which molecularise control by being instantiated in the re-organisation of relations of production occurring through simple proliferation<sup>8</sup> -whilst nevertheless re-situating it at the points of large capital concentration. It is precisely change in the associated milieu, the transformation of productive relations in accordance with the imperatives of the trading requirements of the city-body, that have the effect of transforming the coding mechanisms of the surrounding communities encompassed by the protected areas. As trade flows

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<sup>7</sup> Admittedly Braudel is here referring to the dominance (and collapse) of particular city states (Venice, Genoa, Amsterdam, London, New York) as economic capitals, but it seems that this could be used (ignoring the need for crises being global or general) also as a description of the economic agents on the highest rung of economic activity -large merchant houses, banks, and all variety of financial institutions, and of course city-states. With reference to the global shifts, it is interesting to note that on the same page Braudel questions the inevitability of New York's demise, which may point to a major transformation in the systemic structure of global capitalism.

<sup>8</sup> "Traditional habits and customs were being smashed. Who would have thought that the belly of London or the belly of Paris would cause a revolution? Yet they did so 'simply by growing'" (CC2 p42). Braudel is again referring to events in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.



from the periphery to the centre, and back again, intermediary nodes arise en route, involving a dispersal of wealth, and thereby a propagation of the money economy. The en-route-nodes absorb some of the wealth passing through, and sometimes themselves become trade centres, thereby forming new centres for new peripheries.<sup>9</sup> Decoding and deterritorialising, money functions as the agent of mutation. Its ends are nothing but the propagation of its own control sequences -trade is its means. *Whilst trade appears as the most efficient means of coding areas in accordance with the requirements of the city-body, the unseen agent proceeds by substituting all codes.* Money is directly (re-)productive in its very propagation: its transmission/distribution acts as an opener of markets, and dislocator of their processes by the production of *anti-market* procedures which operate by substituting quantitative criteria (specifically: accumulation and concentration) for the prior heterogeneous exchange practices which horizontalised trade, openly operating in terms of demand/supply criteria. The transparency of markets,

"with its many horizontal communications between the different markets [...] where a degree of automatic co-ordination usually links supply, demand and prices [is substituted with the] zone of the anti-market, where the great predators roam and the law of the jungle operates. This -today as in the past, before and after the industrial revolution- is the real home of capitalism" (CC2 p230).<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> See for example, the case of the Turkish Empire in the sixteenth century (CC2 pl99).

<sup>10</sup> Unlike Braudel's frequent collapse of capitalism and anti-market, I prefer to follow the suggestion provided here, of viewing capitalism as an inhabitant of anti-markets. It operates by concentration and monopolisation, but needs specifying as an assemblage. In the words of Braudel: "The difficulty is first, that the market complex [including the anti-market] can only be understood when it is replaced within the context of an economic life and no less a social life that changes over the years; and secondly that the complex itself is itself constantly evolving and changing; it never has the same meaning or significance from one minute to the next." (CC2 p224) I shall discuss this suggestion a little more below.

Public Agent, Invade Damage Occupy<sup>11</sup>

What dominates this whole operation is the growth of trade itself, and the extension of the monetary economy (as we see the state played a large hand in both these tentacular movements).<sup>12</sup> These two processes are absolutely inter-linked. Money travels the routes as the most fluid commodity on the network; but unlike all the others, it is not a consumable, it functions by mutating. Paraphrasing Burroughs in Nova Express: money is not a three-dimensional organism: it's not an organism and it's not three-dimensional. It proliferates through X-dimensional bodies, producing a dependence by re-enforcing certain tendencies: exchange, movement, calculation, substitution. It travels through, it runs beneath, within bodies: it is a control agent. It slackens other controlling tendencies by making itself energetic agent.<sup>13</sup> Money may decode, may deterritorialise, but it is fundamentally a control agent: it travels by axiomatising. It can only intersect a system, travel its routes, once it has taken hold. For it to take hold it must be imposed from without, either through force (taxation), or through insinuating itself by masking itself (just another commodity) -or both. Money is

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<sup>11</sup> Sub-title composed of phrases taken from The Soft Machine by W.Burroughs (see p6 and p18).

<sup>12</sup> The history of the capitalist world-system in the longue durée, with its cycles, and bifurcations (see F.Braudel, I.Wallerstein, W.McNeill, and G.Arrighi amongst others), have always indicated the variable alliances formed between the state and capital. One should perhaps begin to wonder if the radical opposition which it is assumed exists today between the two is anything other than a power-knowledge effect operating a radical binary dissociation. See for example Linda Weiss's excellent essay 'Globalization and the Myth of the Powerless State' (in New Left Review n.225). That is not to say that there is no difference in kind between the two, but rather, I am indicating the possibility of an articulated co-functionality.

<sup>13</sup> "Virus defined as the three-dimensional co-ordinate point of a controller-Transparent sheets with virus perforations like punch cards passed through the host on the soft machine feeling for a point of intersection" (Nova Express, W.Burroughs, p72).

like junk, it seduces, then reproduces itself by reproducing the tendencies which allow it functional mobility.

Take sixteenth century Russia as an example, where mass infusions of silver apparently to straighten out the trade balance due to Russia supplying the West with large quantities of wheat, rye, wood, fish (and other commodities), whilst itself importing very little, appeared to many to be a loss of wealth streaming out of Western Europe (primarily Holland and England). In fact, Russia would have been both unwilling and unable to supply the West's demands otherwise. As Braudel puts it:

"I would prefer to think of Europe as bombarding, with her gold (and above all silver) currencies the countries whose gates would otherwise have been firmly closed to her, or would have been opened only with difficulty. And does not any victorious monetary economy tend to replace other currencies with its own -doubtless by a kind of inevitability, without any deliberate manoeuvre on its part?" (CC2 p200)<sup>14</sup>

What we have here, is the production, the emergence of trading zones, through the propagation, diffusion of money. These zones are one of the first forms of surplus-value. Surplus-value is always a point of re-investment, re-organisation, command, the double displacement of centre and periphery. It is in this sense that money produces part-organisation, and systems by means of which collapse is by-passed. Collapse here is relative to a centre, but all trade operates by a constant production of nodes of re-organisation:

"an active network once frustrated always has a tendency to compensate for its losses. Driven out of one region, it may press its capital and the advantages it offers upon another." (CC2 pl64)

And its capital is formed at each stage in its very processing of territory and boundary, i.e. in its very function as producer of trading zones. The movement is: centre-periphery-centre, emerging intermediary nodes, the opening of heterogeneous exchange zones, and the (relatively) smooth (but grid like)

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<sup>14</sup> See also Capitalism and Civilization Vol.1 p463. Our century is rather one in which deliberate state intervention is prevalent -we need look no further than Bretton Woods and the Marshall Plan.



space created by money's injection into these initially alien spaces. On its routes, its travels, money constantly re-orientates on one of the zones that form as relative collapse of a centre pushes it off its initial path,

"forcing the animal to abandon it and strike up an association with new portions of exteriority, this time leaning on its interior milieus". (ATP p55)

The interior milieus here being monetary and commodity reserves, but more fundamentally the infra-structural trade routes, and trading connections which can be reactivated at any time. Trade networks, monetary dependency, activate any code systems they can: racial, familial, religious... in accordance with the axiomatic of the monetary logic, i.e. of the demanded conjunction of the decoded flows. Anything which can operate as a re-orientation point, re-systematiser of trade connectivity. As Braudel says: "A minority [...] was a solid and ready-made network" (CC2 p167).<sup>15</sup>

The opposition market/city-body has by now become ever more complex. With large-scale trade, and the mass infusion of money into the world economy, we have stepped out of this simple conflict. Or rather, as soon as the market has been integrated into the city-body, it has become one of the central features of the state-body: it has now become coded, regulated, subject to tax, excise duties, etc. -at this stage, we have the growth of the upper strata of the economy. The market now is a money-making venture on a large scale. We're no longer talking of peasants going to market to sell a few goods so as to have cash to pay state taxes -we are at the stage of a monetary economy growing up on the shoulders, the backs of commodity markets: the emergence of the *anti-market*. Large-scale traders don't work through the market with all the tax restrictions, tolls, etc. they go to the sources, crossing territories, continents. I have already spoken of the transmission of money as an opener of

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<sup>15</sup> Braudel is referring here specifically to the Genoese nobles (the *fuoriusciti*) of the fourteenth century which emigrated en-masse as a protest against the new popular government, and the Spanish and Portuguese Jews (the *marranos*) who emigrated to Amsterdam after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. This, however, is clearly generaliseable beyond these specific cases.

trade routes, but also bills of exchange and a whole system of credit was in full working order by the fifteenth century.

At this stage, it is not in commodity production that wealth lies, but in the control of production, and in trade. One doesn't need to reduce one's costs by cutting down one's labour force when one can have virtually free labour, and where the simple transportation of goods can quadruple profits. Above the agricultural producers we have the rise of money lenders, banks, and all manner of financial institutions, along with state power exemplified most clearly in colonialism. Trade is where wealth lies.

The *anti-market*<sup>16</sup> proceeded by the decoding of the feudal regime by means of the injection of monetary flows into the rural regions. As money was invested in agricultural production, whole sectors of the economy were integrated. But capital also functioned by masking itself, exemplifying Nietzsche-Deleuze's lesson:

"a new force can only appear and appropriate an object by first of all putting on the mask of the forces which are already in possession of the object." (Nietzsche and Philosophy, G.Deleuze, p5)

In the 'second serfdom' of sixteenth century Eastern Europe, the re-instatement of a feudal regime operated on the basis of anti-market trading activity. The re-introduction of compulsory labour for up to six days a week, was due, on the 'outside', to the West's enormous need for food and raw materials, and on the 'inside', the struggle between state, city, and nobility with the latter emerging as victors due largely to the poor state of

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<sup>16</sup> Some have argued for an identification of the *anti-market* with *capitalism*. I will differentiate between the two however. I shall distinguish between the *anti-market* and *capitalism* on the basis of differences in social-formation, i.e. on the basis of a difference of Assemblage. That capitalism is an anti-market, i.e. operating through the concentration of capital, does not mean that only capitalism is an anti-market, or that the term anti-market is able to account for all the features of capitalism. For whilst capital is an essentially economic category, existing as an element in a variety of assemblages (all of which may well be anti-markets), capitalism is not (on this more later).

the economy. However, we can see who dominated this two-pronged introduction of feudalism. In fact, the self-sufficient nature of the feudal regime was totally re-organised by the a-cephalic nature of the landowners. As Braudel puts it, these 'feudal' systems were "open to the rest of the world at the top end" (CC2 p270). Capital inflow acted as the energetic source on which the second serfdom ran -the feudal landlord was simply "part of the system" (CC2 p271) of the European, if not the world, economy.

Anti-markets perpetually processed traditional markets and productive regimes, without necessarily re-organising their relations of production. At this stage it wasn't -as I have said- in commodity production that wealth lay, but rather in the production and extension of trade networks, their control, and their monopolisation:

"[anti-market-control] was able to penetrate systems structurally very foreign to it, either by head-on assault<sup>17</sup>, or by dominating production from a distance merely by controlling it at the bottleneck of distribution." (CC2 p265)

Wealth made in the colonies never remained there for long -money had to control, but not operate any immediate transformation of economic activity there. Money was a control agent, functioning at the top level of economic activity, without revolutionising things on the ground. It penetrated the system in order to then function as a communication link with Europe, re-injecting Europe with alien wealth. Money essentially functions in accordance with the phenomenon of increasing returns -it operates by establishing a positive feedback loop with its point of origin, and with the route it follows. Most colonially made wealth in the eighteenth century returned to Europe through "freight charges, insurance, commissions, interest on debts, and transfers of money to absentee landlords" (CC2 p279), not to mention the wealth made by selling to the colonies at extortionate rates European goods whose price increased inordinately in transportation. Wealth returned to the highest

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<sup>17</sup> State military activities -exemplified in colonialism, for instance- were always tied in with the possibility of large scale capital investment in trade. Gold from South America saved many a European economy, introducing vital energetic resources crucial for the emergence of capitalism (as already discussed in Total Critique is a Pragmatics) .



strata of the economy, sometimes being the very producer of these strata:

"In London, as in Bordeaux, the proceeds of colonial trade were transformed into trading houses, banks and state bonds." (CC2 p279)

Money is the most efficient control mechanism functioning at this time, at the time when space and time themselves operate as wealth producers. As Marx points out, the faster money circulates, the more wealth is contracted into each cycle. Money converts intensity:

"[v]elocity [...] substitutes for quantity; by its means, a single coin is multiplied." (G p194)

Money operates by dividing space-time, it contracts them into its cycle, so that circulation itself becomes productive of wealth. The extensive trade networks are contracted into the circulating circulator: money; and moreover, the contracted money system extends itself back into trade networks. Money is in perpetual flux and re-flux, contracting a number of elements and series into itself, and proceeds to differentiate captured elements into actual trading systems. Trade systems are investments operated by money as the most contracted point of capital -trade systems as the most extended point of capital. Capitalisation functions by substituting its own monetary-series for the coded arrangements of its client, of its host body.<sup>18</sup> The struggle between anti-markets and the guilds was won when the guilds were forced to put themselves in the hands of anti-markets as distributor of their goods, and as forwarding cash in times of economic slump. The trade networks expanded to the point at which only massive capital concentration could efficiently occupy its routes. The market economy was gradually

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<sup>18</sup> "'The perfect product, gentlemen, has precise molecular affinity for its client of predilection. Someone urges the manufacture and sale of products that wear out. This is not the way of competitive elimination. Our product never leaves the customer. We sell the servicing and all Trak products have precise need of Trak servicing [...] This is not just another habit-forming drug takes over all functions from the addict including his completely unnecessary under the uh circumstances skeleton. reducing him ultimately to the helpless condition of a larva. He may then be said to owe his very life such as it is to Trak servicing'." (The Soft Machine, W.Burroughs, p27)

processed by the anti-market machinery: barriers were not to be torn down -for capital was not the great instigator of progress- for these pockets of 'underdevelopment' -as both left and right (the great messiahs of progress) like to call them- are points at which the conditions of wealth contraction (monetarisation) occur. The barriers merely become porous, enabling anti-markets to produce conversion criteria between capital in the form of money and in the form of goods.

### Anti-Markets and Capitalist Axiomatics

What is the relation between anti-market and capitalism then? Is it rather that the anti-market is capitalism at the level of *formal subsumption*, i.e. where capital captures goods and labour but does not necessarily operate a transformation of its operations?<sup>19</sup> Is it therefore 'early' capitalism? If so, does that mean that there is a capitalist path? This question is too large to be resolved here, and would take me too far off my main concern -certainly the last question is one which I would want to answer in the negative, for fear of falling into a classical determinism. Nevertheless, a productive way of looking at the question is to think of capitalism as a *specification* of the anti-market, so that whilst the notion of anti-market captures the process of development of command in the *longue durée*, capitalism determines a *specific Assemblage of command*. That a separation is maintained between the two seems to me essential, otherwise a 'neo-Smithian' commercialisation model of the history of capitalism is swallowed whole,<sup>20</sup> losing thereby the historical determinateness and contingency of capitalist social-formations. In fact, it seems crucial to me to view the emergence of the anti-market as the '*development*' of decoding,

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<sup>19</sup> "At first capital subordinates labour on the basis of the technical conditions within which labour has been carried on up to that point in history. It does not therefore directly change the mode of production." (C1 p425, see also p1019-23)

<sup>20</sup> By which is meant the "tendency to treat the specific dynamic of capitalism -and its need for increasing labour-productivity- as an inevitable outcome of commercial expansion" ('The Non-History of Capitalism' E.Meiskins Wood, in Historical Materialism Vol.1 1997).

and in this way, undoubtedly there is a strong element of what Marx calls formal subsumption here:

"this formal change is one which increases the continuity and intensity of labour; it is more favourable to the development of versatility among the workers, and hence to increasing diversity in modes of working and ways of earning a living. Lastly, it dissolves the relationship between the owners of the conditions of labour and the workers into a relationship of sale and purchase, a purely financial relationship. In consequence the process of exploitation is stripped of every patriarchal, political or even religious cloak." (C1 p1026-27)

The difference between Marx's and Braudel's model -however- rests in part on the different stress placed upon the production process. The anti-market operates in terms of monopoly over the market in terms of trade and capital concentration, it is essentially commercial and financial, only indirectly intersecting with producers; formal subsumption, on the other hand, concerns capital's mode of capture of the production process (and thereby of workers, raw materials, etc.). The two models are able to intersect -perhaps- through the recognition that a market monopoly produced at the level of the anti-market sets the stage for *production-for-monopoly*: once a monopoly exists, this can be fed more efficiently through direct control of production. I think, however, that the crucial difference between the two models is that Marx aims to understand capitalism not primarily as a 'mode of production' or form by which capital was invested (commerce, finance, industry), but more importantly as a specific social formation.

Braudel is right to point out that one cannot simply view the anti-market as an early stage of capitalism, merely setting the stage for *true* capitalism; but I do not believe that therefore what we have is capitalism. For fundamentally what is ignored by the Braudellian collapse or reduction is the difference-in-kind of capitalism's operations of capture and command. As discussed in my previous two chapters (and below), capitalism is essentially totalitarian, nothing escapes.



## Axiomatisation, or, Code Mutation

The question of the 'mode of production', clearly becomes secondary here, where the anti-market is understood outside of any specific control over production. As we shall see, however, industry becomes central and pivotal as the point of conjunction and co-ordination of flows of labour, raw materials, money, a critical node of realisation of historical capitalism; though capital itself emerges at a different level, in a more plastic form (as we have seen above). Yet only in its industrial form, the earliest 'mode of production' adequate to the totalitarian desires of capitalism (i.e. substitution of its procedures for all others), which is central to Marx's critique, do we see capital at its most efficient, micro-physical, and pervasive. It is the point where Foucault meets Marx, where 'relative surplus value' becomes a disciplinary diagram traversing the whole social body. If there is a 'capitalist mode of production' it can be defined only by a diagrammatic series which marks transitions as tactical discontinuities under an over-all strategy of total or *real subsumption* (see C1 p1023-25).

Anti-Oedipus is a central text here. Marx's texts are - however- not so much subverted or displaced by Anti-Oedipus, as re-conceived. With Anti-Oedipus (and A Thousand Plateaus), Capital, and especially the Grundrisse are transformed and strategically modified. New 'visibilities', new 'utterances' become possible within Marx's texts, inducing different interventions; a whole new pragmatics and cartography of flight (as we have already seen in part).

So far decoding has been primarily in the service of a recoding or overcoding -in the interest of (re-)territorialisation;<sup>21</sup> under capitalism, on the other hand,

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<sup>21</sup> Codes always code flows, where flow is to be understood as flow of production, or passive connective synthesis (repeated differences which come to gain a consistency of their own -in the form of habits- a 'connective synthesis' forming through repetition: there is no difference between function and formation). The active connective syntheses, however, are produced in a manner different from how they function, as they grasp series from outside as so many formed substances, which come to be co-ordinated through *conjugation* with codes which

decoding has always aimed at the flows themselves, not the codes. Of course decoding always strikes at codes, but under capitalism the decoding of flows involves the prioritisation of deterritorialisation, in such a manner that any independent coding mechanism by means of which code capture, and synthesis across a new territory can proceed, is removed. In other words, capitalism functions by the deterritorialisation of the actual, but in such a manner as to prevent the deterritorialised flows from synthesising on the fully virtual plane of becoming, of immanence, of efficient material-abstraction. This is the pivotal point upon which Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of capitalism operates. This delicate procedure whereby de-actualisation must fall between the actual and the virtual is the continual risk of capitalism, and explains pre-capitalism's continual attempt to exorcise the potential emergence of decoded flows generalised under conditions of capitalist production.

Deterritorialisation of flows is not an invention of capitalism, "decoded desire and desires for decoding have always existed" (AO p224, see also ATP p448-52). As Marx himself observed, feudalism already employed various decoded flows: private property, money, commodity production, a relatively

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operate as exclusive points of disjunction. We have already discussed these active syntheses when discussing the formation of assemblages: code becomes *collective assemblage of enunciation*, or formalised semiotic, and flow becomes *machinic assemblage* of bodies and affects (though codes always code bodies, they have a content of their own, and flows are produced as formed substances). In the words of Deleuze and Guattari: "'Connection' indicates the way in which decoded and deterritorialised flows boost one another, accelerate their shared escape, and augment or stoke their quanta; the 'conjugation' of these same flows, on the other hand, indicates their relative stoppage, like a point of accumulation that plugs or seals the lines of flight, performs a general reterritorialisation, and brings the flows under the dominance of a single flow capable of overcoding them. But it is precisely the most deterritorialised flow, under the first aspect, that always brings about the accumulation or conjunction of the processes, determines the overcoding, and serves as basis for reterritorialisation under the second aspect" (ATP p220-21). A fuller discussion of the relations between codes and flows will follow in the next chapter.

expanded labour market, etc. But such decoded flows were always subjected to a recoding whereby such flows were plugged back into the qualitative differences encoded by the socius (social formations); or otherwise, there was not a sufficient conjunction of such flows to extend decoding as a generalised social practice. Feudalism operated by a rigorous separation and coding of flows, preventing the conjunction which would engender a new Assemblage. Capitalism, on the other hand, is realised with the *generalised conjunction of decoded flows*:

"The commercial and monetary inscription remains overcoded [in feudalism] and even repressed by the previous characteristics and modes of inscription of a socius considered in its specific mode of production, which knows nothing and does not recognise abstract labour. As Marx says, the latter is indeed the simplest and most ancient relation of productive activity, but it does not appear as such and only becomes a true practical relation in the modern capitalist machine [see G p105]. That is why, before, the monetary and commercial inscription does not have a body of its own at its disposal, and why it is inserted into the interstices of the pre-existing social body." (AO p227)

For labour to become decoded a number of other flows need first to be themselves decoded, e.g. the decoding of the soil through privatisation, the decoding of the means of production through appropriation, and the decoding of the worker in favour of the work itself (see AO p225 and ATP p440-4, see also Marx's discussion of primitive accumulation in Capital Vol.1). Then, the decoded flow of labour, labour divested of any qualitative difference (i.e. the production of abstract labour as purely quantitative determination), must encounter the flow of capital-money as the decoded flow of wealth/power. Flows become (materially-)abstract, and must enter into a conjunction whereby productive interaction can proceed. The conjunction occurs in the space of industrial production. There is a process of abstraction whereby, for instance, in the process of commodity exchange labours are equated, becoming homogenous units of an (materially-)abstract substance: labour-power. This appears at first as a qualitative change, which then becomes a transmutation from quality to quantity when a "general equivalent" appears in the form of money.<sup>22</sup> At this stage we

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<sup>22</sup> See AO p226 -this fundamentally repeats the analysis at the



have an integration of decoded flows in such a manner as to produce a new surface of production, a new zone of integration, across which decoded flows travel, which fundamentally splits with the pre-capitalist productive order. Whereas the pre-capitalist order subjected economic processes to extra-economic (molar) processes, so that the capture and regulation of flows was in the service of the reproduction of molarity; under capitalism, production becomes fully immanent in that quantitativity becomes the beginning and end of the process of production -the becoming filiative of capital: <sup>23</sup>

"The spectacle is essentially tautological, for the simple reason that its means and its ends are identical.[...] For the spectacle, as the perfect image of the ruling economic order, ends are nothing and development is all - although the only thing into which the spectacle plans to develop is itself." (The society of the Spectacle, Guy Debord, §13-14)

Deleuze and Guattari argue in Anti-Oedipus that capital's movement of decoding, subjugates territorial modes to its own enterprise of deterritorialisation. Even molar organisations are made to submit to the immanent economic investments expressed by the capitalist axiomatic of generalised conjunction of decoded flows: the despotic order of the military is put in the service of the decoding and axiomatising of the periphery;<sup>24</sup>

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beginning of Marx's Capital Vol.I. However, when I speak of *first* decoding/abstraction, then monetarisation, this should not be understood chronologically -it is a question of political-ontology, the *ontological constitution of command at the level of material-abstraction*.

<sup>23</sup> Though this is a little schematic, as the discussion of anti-markets above should have made clear. We can say, however, that with capitalism, we have an -apparently- irreversible 'freeing-up' of productivity for its own sake. That is not -as we have and shall see- a claim for the 'de-regulated' nature of 'true' capitalism, but rather a recognition of capitalism's re-placement of all forms of control by *massive -molecular- capitalist command*.

<sup>24</sup> E.g. through imperialist expansion into the third world; and -more recently and more subtly- through the U.N. and Nato 'peace-keeping forces'.

psychoanalysis is made to doctor (colonise) the privatised individual, i.e. that side of the worker which cannot be directly subjected to the productive process of the capitalist axiomatic;<sup>25</sup> education functions in order to produce the malleable individual, which more easily submits to transmutation into abstract labourer.<sup>26</sup> The capitalist axiomatic functions precisely through its extreme plasticity, in such a manner as to

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<sup>25</sup> Although new and more efficient ways have been created through the ever more subtle divisions of the day, work-time, commuter-time, "leisure time", and the consequent development of dead-time: T.V., week-ends, vacation (holiday from life, itself defined as work, and the ensuing rise of service sector industries, thereby making 'non-work' time productive); segmentation of life itself as school, work, retirement; etc. It is clear that absolute surplus-value has indeed reached its temporal limit, the 24 hour day. All we have are differing degrees of relative surplus-value. Marx's distinction between productive and unproductive labour also becomes increasingly unworkable (although already in 1863-6 Marx was aware that "An ever increasing number of types of labour are included in the immediate concept of *productive labour*" C1 p1040). Recently there have been reports that over 100,000 work days a year are lost in the U.K. because of depression; are not shrinks immediately engaged in the process of production (on the discussion of productive and unproductive labour, see C1 p1038ff)?

<sup>26</sup> Has not the pupil already submitted to quantification by examination? Has not enclosure already occurred in the family, as it becomes the point of reference of desire, and the transcendental realm from which the transcendent critique ('understanding') of the individual proceeds? The foreclosure of the social. But as with all systems of closure, the family is not as rigid a structure as it would seem: "The father, the mother and the self are at grips with, and directly coupled to, the elements of the political and historical situation -the soldier, the cop, the occupier, the collaborator, the radical, the resister, the boss, the boss's wife- who constantly break' all triangulations, and who prevent the entire situation from falling back on the familial complex and becoming internalised to it" (A0 p97). Enclosure is always haunted by a generalised pragmatics which ruptures its domesticity.

adopt/capture elements seemingly inimical to it, and subject them to its tautologous expansion. Just as under molar order there was a process of abstraction and concretion, so there is in the procedures of capitalism. There is, however, a major difference: whilst under molarity abstraction was always over-coded by the molar territory; under capitalism the materially-abstract (deterritorialised) flows are themselves made to act as surface of organisation (I say surface rather than territory advisedly). Rather than the abstracted code being overcoded by a higher order code (by which production comes to be synthesised across a territory), here it is abstraction itself which reorganises the concrete as material-abstraction. Rather than abstraction being a process which then reterritorialises upon the figure of the despot, it remains at the level of intense deterritorialisation, and conjoins and orders flows at the level of the deterritorialised, so as to encompass all possible syntheses of flows; it is a (dynamic) plastic schemata decoding and axiomatising as it goes, so as to subject flows to a differential relation whereby production is subjected to a concretised abstraction.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>27</sup> Deleuze and Guattari speak of this as a 'differential relation' which expresses the transformation of 'surplus value of code' into 'surplus value of flux'. This differential relation expresses the processes of organisation under capitalism. The relation between abstraction and concretion acts as the process of production and extension of the capitalist axiomatic. For, under rigorously coded regimes, intensive quanta-serial multiplicities- are coded as qualitative differences organised in extensity as a function of a domain. Under capitalism the decoding of the flows results in a de-activation of the actualisations of the connective syntheses or flows (which come to be coded and distributed on the BwO, which records the flows and enable their synthesis as a territory), without allowing them to return to the fully immanent coexistence of difference-in-itself (non-axiomatised material-abstraction). It does this through an axiomatisation which deals directly with the diagram, with the "purely functional elements and relations whose nature is not specified" by a particular domain, but which are "immediately realised in highly varied domains simultaneously" (ATP p454). This delicate balance between decoding and axiomatisation is produced through the conjunction of the flows.



Capitalism functions through the perpetual expansion of its mode of production, i.e. by a constant expansion of its axiomatic.<sup>28</sup> It does this through the adoption of deterritorialised flows, whilst axiomatising as it goes so as to prevent the counter-actualisation which would proceed by means of fully inclusive syntheses, not subjecting production to filiative lineages in the service of reproduction (see, for example, AO p227). The process of capitalist expansion is: axiomatise then decode.<sup>29</sup> The two mechanisms are in essential and necessary interrelation, as can be seen by its relation to Marx's discussion of the tendency of the rate of profit to fall: capitalist expansion would result in a falling rate of profit - and hence crisis, if capitalism did not constantly decode on its periphery -displacing its absolute limit, by recreating the internal limit which is capital itself, and re-axiomatising.<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> "Both in each individual country and internationally, capital presses outwards from the centre -in other words, its historic birthplaces- towards the periphery. It constantly tries to extend itself to new domains, to convert new sectors of simple reproduction of commodities into spheres of capitalist production of commodities, and to replace sectors which have hitherto only produced use values by the production of commodities" (Late Capitalism, E.Mandel, p47).

<sup>29</sup> Although this order of priority should not be taken too strictly: as Deleuze and Guattari put it, "[i]t axiomatises with one hand what it decoded with the other" (AO p246). All that this order is intended to express is that capitalism will not decode unless it is able to axiomatise the flows it decodes. See also Dark Precursor in Concrete/Abstract or, The German Ideology.

<sup>30</sup> As the argument goes in Marx's Capital Vol.III Pt.3. This is precisely what is meant by the differential relation composing the genetic conditions of axiomatisation. Decode the series, so that they have no pre-determined qualities, and produce an axiomatised conjunction which constitutes them as pure quantities of materially-abstract labour and capital whose determinations are specified in their conjunction (see AO p249). Since capitalism has undergone many changes since Marx's day, the description of the falling tendency has altered; in Deleuze and Guattari's words, it has become one with "no conclusion" (AO p230). This is because money itself has altered its form: from being linked to production directly in the form of the gold

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standard, to a state of massive deterritorialisation since being organised 'immanently' in terms of floating exchange rates. Money exists now in the form of *payment money* (alliance capital) and *investment/finance money* (filiative capital), these two flows are co-ordinated according to processes of convertibility across these two forms which Deleuze and Guattari call axiomatics. Surplus-value continues to be produced from the *filiative capital* which operates insofar as there is a return on investment. Yet an investment is always made through an alliance with or appropriation of labour (as concrete coded labour, i.e. which functions through a surplus-value of code), which occurs through the monetary exchange (*payment money*). In this way labour becomes abstract-labour, i.e. labour as capital; so that 'surplus value of code' is transformed into 'surplus value of flow', axiomatised as money, as return on invested capital (this is what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the "cosmic swindle" disguising the difference in nature). *Investment money* or *filiative capital* is constantly, therefore, engaged in opening up territorial forms of production in order find and appropriate surplus value of code to convert (axiomatise). Hence primitive accumulation is a function internal to, and constantly reproduced by, capitalism. Capital's internal limit is precisely that of the conversion to be effected between *payment* and *finance money*, which is at each stage reconstituted in its expansion. In A Thousand Plateaus the discussion of the conversion is repeated in relation to apparatuses of captures (see especially ATP p440-8). Here money and goods come to be convertible only under the conditions determined by an initial monopolisation by an operation of capture of the series, which is then able to place them in comparison. We have a monetary series A existing as an undivided flow produced by the banks (*filiative capital*), and another A' existing as a comparative set aligned with the goods produced (*payment money*). The difference between the two is where capture strikes. Nominal wages are always higher than real wages, thereby "the immediate producers are able to convert only a portion of the distributed set [A]. [...] We shall call capture this excess or difference constitutive of profit, surplus labour, or the surplus product." (ATP p446) Labour, wages, goods have already submitted to an appropriation by capital (see ATP p440-4), such that "the mechanism of capture contributes from the outset to the constitution of the aggregates upon which capture is

Decoding is fundamental for this expansion process, but it must not get the upper hand -the axiomatisation of the differential relation must retain control:

"Monetary flows are perfectly schizophrenic realities, but they exist and function only within the immanent axiomatic that exorcises and repels this reality. The language of a banker, a general, an industrialist, a middle or high-level manager, or a government minister is a perfectly schizophrenic language, but that functions only statistically with the flattening of the axiomatic of connections that puts it in the service of the capitalist order." (AO p246)

Axiomatisation contrasts with the molar processes of overcoding in that the latter submits economic to extra-economic factors. Molar overcoding functions by means of an excess (a 'surplus-value of code') in relation to the productive process it aims to code, and 'falling back'<sup>31</sup> upon the productive process, arrogating its powers to itself. Axiomatisation, on the other hand, does not overcode, and is directly economic.<sup>32</sup> It

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*effectuated.*" (Ibid. -see also AO p228-31; is this not a description of *real subsumption*?). A heterogeneity of the money form can be understood once its apparent function of *measure* is displaced by its function of *command*; it is then determined according to the disciplinary operation required of it.

<sup>31</sup> Translated from "il se rabat sur" AO p10.

<sup>32</sup> Although this does not exclude -paradoxically- a reliance on a variety of assemblages and molar processes in order to regulate flows, and organise alliances/conjunctions between decoded flows. As we have seen, capitalism operates with a number of coded assemblages in delicate alignments and correlations between their various planes, which operate by producing, regularising and formalising decoded flows. It operates, however, a continuous transformation of surplus-value of code, by means of which territorial assemblages are spliced together, into surplus-value of flow, whereby the flows themselves come to synthesise elements and relations in an immanent axiomatic. The state does not cease -thereby- to be a central element in the realisation and regulation of capital: we have a becoming-economic of the political, and a becoming-political of the economic. As Linda Weiss argues in an excellent



effects a mutation into quantity -through the exacerbation of decoding- thereby producing a (potentially) infinite surface whereby qualitative flows (coded flows) are displaced and replaced by an immanent quantitative relation between decoded flows. Decoding is not sufficient on its own, Deleuze and Guattari maintain, as it risks returning the flows to the immanent intensive becomings which escape capture: the decoding effected by code abstraction must encounter the decoded flow of quantitative determination: money.<sup>33</sup> The concretion, produced through the conjunction of these flows, results in a deterritorialised assemblage which operates through transmutation into quantity. The process of concretion, which operates in reciprocal presupposition to the process of

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article, "'globalization' must be seen as a politically rather than technologically induced phenomena" ('Globalization and the Myth of the Powerless State', in New Left Review, n.225, p23); in the sense, firstly, that "the opening up of capital markets has occurred as a direct result of governments"; and more specifically, in that "a number of states are seeking directly to facilitate rather than constrain the internationalisation of corporate trade activity, investment, and production." (Ibid.) This is done so as to take advantage of foreign capital investments and technological partnerships with multinationals for local industries, thereby evolving strong domestic state-business alliances. Also, there is a proliferation of regional agreements and coalitions between nation-states, e.g. EU, NAFTA, APEC, etc. in order to increase control over the external environment (Ibid. p24-5). The models of realisation, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, are isomorphic with the axiomatic they effectuate, whilst allowing for the greatest of formal differences; in the words of Linda Weiss, "whilst current tendencies in the world economy subject more and more national economies to similar challenges and opportunities, these are likely to solidify the institutional differences that separate the weaker from the stronger performers." (Ibid. p26)

<sup>33</sup> It is insufficient for labour to be decoded through determination in accordance with labour time; it must also integrate with a quantitative substance by means of which a surface of material integration can be provided for it -i.e. money (see Material Abstraction in Concrete/Abstract: or, The German Ideology).

abstraction, functions in such a manner as to allow flows to integrate across -and in accordance with- degrees of deterritorialisation of the flows: what were previously qualitatively distinct flows<sup>34</sup> are now able to integrate across a single quantitatively determined surface which they compose (the immanent constitutive plane of material-abstraction). Flow quality now arises due to the differential relation axiomatised in the conjunction. Within this differential relation flows gain qualitative differentiation in their axiomatised conjunction.<sup>35</sup> Unlike coding which proceeds through the conjunction and capture of surplus value of code, axiomatisation proceeds from the conjunction, expressed in the differential relation, of a surplus value of flux. This whole process is summarily described in Anti-Oedipus as follows:

"The quality of the flows results solely from their conjunction as decoded flows; outside this conjunction they would remain purely virtual; this conjunction is also the disjunction of the abstract quantity through which it becomes something concrete."<sup>36</sup> (AO p249)

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<sup>34</sup> Which under molar processing would become not merely distinct, but oppositional, i.e. would synthesise according to exclusive differences explicated in qualitative form (though Massumi does indicate a middle-course between capitalist axiomatisation and despotic over-coding, i.e. liberal recoding, A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia, B.Massumi, p133 and n.64).

<sup>35</sup> The commodity form is a primary example of the mutation from qualitative determination to quantitative, with the further reversal by means of which quality is made to depend upon the quantitative. The commodity form is determined by production's subsumption to exchange -i.e. the exacerbation of quantitativity. The quality of any commodity is determined by the extension of its possible exchanges. Value is seen to determine the quality of a product. Filiation follows from quantity to quality (for an excellent discussion of the relation of abstract labour and money, and their gradual determination in a differential relation, see AO p226-28).

<sup>36</sup> It is precisely in the conjunction of the decoded flows that we have the determination of the differential relation which allows for sufficient differenciatio from the virtual to put into effect a productive process which functions between, and at

In other words, qualitative differences are now engendered by a filiative lineage running down from the differential relations of axiomatised capital expansion (real subsumption): flows of abstract labour, money, property, class, subjectification...

## Real Subsumption

Marx's discussion of *formal subsumption* too often appears as a description of the *mediation* of (constitutive) productive forces by 'capitalist relations', i.e. a synthesis of the manner in which productive forces are subject to command through specific social relations -but does this not imply a 'neutrality' or utopia of productive forces which then comes to be 'corrupted', Rousseau again; or worse, the re-production of the hylomorphic schema. With *real subsumption* any pretence at mediation is removed by the transparency of *command as totalisation*, "there is no exteriority to call upon, in no case" (CT p63):

"once adopted into the production process of capital, the means of labour passes through different metamorphoses, whose culmination is the *machine*, or rather, an *automatic system of machinery* (system of machinery: the automatic one is merely its most complete, most adequate form, and alone transforms machinery into a system), set in motion by an automaton, a moving power that moves itself; this automaton consisting of numerous mechanical and intellectual organs, so that the workers themselves are cast merely as its conscious linkages." (G p692)

But 'mediation' was never an element proper to capitalism, there was never a rational synthesis in the service of equilibrium, e.g. the mystification of free-markets. What we have rather is training, disciplining, command, whereby decoding always served axiomatisation. Discipline not mediation. This becomes apparent when the metaphysics of mediation (of value) is displaced by the immanent ontology of efficient material-abstraction. *Formal* and *real subsumption* then describe different degrees of decoding and pervasiveness of axiomatisation. *Capitalism is totalitarian in that its serves to uncover, to (re-)compose, the immanent*

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the limit of, the processes of virtualisation and actualisation.



ontology of efficient material-abstraction through massive decoding of stratified flows, but it always axiomatises in advance.

As soon as time under capital is subsumed entirely to questions of reproduction, what happens to time as measure: when all time becomes (re-)production time "who measures whom?" (Revolution Retrieved, A.Negri, p220). Time is abstracted from the materiality of its constitutive non-linearity, it is made formal and reversible: monetarisation.<sup>37</sup> Time-as-measure is a time established on the basis of an element determined from outside, i.e. "by a social process that goes on behind the back of the producers" (C1 p135). Antonio Negri in his reading of this passage notes that this can be understood only in the sense that the temporal unit of measure, simple socially necessary labour time, is determined from the realm of U-V, i.e. exterior to appropriated E-V itself. Moreover, Negri is correct in noting that such a U-V foundation of this unit of measure is also -paradoxically- determined immediately (CT p26) by the general level of social productiveness (technical conditions of production, skill of workers, interchangeability/versatility of workers, etc.).<sup>38</sup> The immediacy of this determination of abstract temporal unit of measure by productive forces, provokes various theoretical difficulties which Marx never truly overcomes at this level of analysis. I will briefly note Negri's account of these points:

- *Qualified labour* -one cannot reduce qualitatively differing labours to simple labour, for the differing types and qualities of labour have varying effects on the level of productivity: this is a U-V effect, a qualitative substantial differential force which Negri calls "irreversible" (CT p27).
- *Productive labour* -on the one hand productive labour, in so far as it is a 'producer of surplus-value', is reduced to simple unit of measure; on the other, in so far as it is differentiated from unproductive labour, it is so on the

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<sup>37</sup> "'Time gets unhinged' because it has overturned its subordination to the regulated movements it was measuring. It has become a pure order of time" (Capital Times. Tales from the Conquest of Time, É.Alliez, pXVIII-XIX).

<sup>38</sup> By the 'social process' going on 'behind the back' of the producers. "The immediacy of the determination, faced with the function of mediation which the very same measure of unity determines, is a veritable enigma." (CT p26)

basis of formal participation of productive labour in the whole capitalist productive machine, and therefore defined in terms of a constitutive practical relationship (U-V).

- *Productive power of labour* -here also a reduction to pure temporal measure is blocked, as qualitative criteria (U-V), such as the differing effects of co-operation, play a crucial role in the definition of labour productivity.
- *Productive value of intellectual and scientific labour* -again the qualitative difference blocks any simple quantitative reduction.

"In each case the insurmountable theoretical difficulty consists in the impossibility of loading and homologating a reversible, equivalent temporal unit, with substantive qualitative multipliers. Marx resorts to use-value -in any case qualified- that is to an external [element], in order to explain that which is most internal: productive force. This is a veritable enigma" (CT p27)

These difficulties, this paradox, is only overcome when one reaches the level of *real subsumption*. For here there is no longer an exteriority to capital -we have the real appropriation of the real by E-V in its monetary form. *Time-as-measure* becomes identical with *time-as-substance*, for capital presents itself, and operates no longer as end-of-production, but as its very presupposition. The exteriority of U-V is 'always already' E-V. Time measures nothing but itself as axiomatised abstract-material substance: tautology. For capital no longer operates through the capture of alien elements, but operates through the capture of already socialised labour, from the nomenclature of time/money-as-measure, to disciplinarisation: "let us say, therefore, the absolute productive command of capital over social labour in real subsumption" (CT p89). In this way, heterogeneity is not reduced, but internalised and commanded. So, differentials of production are no longer determined by qualitative differences in the organic composition of capital, but rather, these differentials are indicated by:

"lines of command which traverse society: productive differentials are the expression of *disciplinary dissymmetries* (hierarchies)." (CT p100)

As should have become apparent, capitalism's strategy of decoding of flows, involves the excising of any alien

immanently differentiating qualitative elements from the immanent constitutive ontology, and axiomatising all flows in a conjunction which (intra-)regulates the elements, replacing the irreversible constitutive time of efficient material-abstraction, with the tautologous temporal practices of the capitalist analytic.<sup>39</sup>

A number of questions arise here, provoked in part by this re-reading. On the one hand the question of the relation between *formal* and *real* subsumption in relation to capitalism. Is only *real subsumption* fully *capitalistic*? Questions of definition always emerge when an apparently structural form is applied to an historical narrative. These questions of periodisation ought however to recede behind the observation that capitalism is a project of (temporal) capture, of appropriation (composition). Here in fact is to be found the clue to the second question also, i.e. what is the relation between *formal* and *real* subsumption themselves? For capitalism is defined both by a projected end which is also a condition: totalised axiomatisation of efficient material-abstraction; and a strategy: the decoding and axiomatising of flows. In other words, both the material constitution of efficient material-abstraction, and its axiomatisation. *Formal and real subsumption are then strategies of appropriation depending on the status of flows.*

Finally, Negri often discusses the history of capitalism as a movement from mediation to command. This he does primarily in terms of a productionist logic of market-value mediating between money/wealth and production up to the '60's or '70's, and the then financial command function of money when the mediation/measure of labour and commodity by value is broken through the movement away from the gold standard (and/or of broadly Keynesian institutions such as welfare planning of demand/supply criteria which guaranteed E-V as law of re-production) towards floating exchange rates, where money no longer is tied to conditions of re-production and becomes a floating element of command/capture: "capital becomes immediately and solely 'command over labour'" (I Libri del Rogo, A.Negri, p45 -my translation). But -as discussed in *Total Critique* is a *Pragmatics* (see especially *Capital: Homing-Head/Mean of Semiotic Pilotage*)- one should rather view mediation as a function of

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<sup>39</sup> Discussed in part in *Time and Correlation* in *Total Critique* is a *Pragmatics*.



command: "Human anatomy contains a key to the anatomy of the ape" (G p105). There is no inscribed rational telos of mediating synthesis, rather, the function of value should be seen either as re-territorialisation of command-automatisation on production, or directly on the monetary-form. In the first case the exteriority of relations of efficient material-abstraction is axiomatised into the exclusive hierarchical dissociation of planes of production and circulation, with communication being produced through the circulation of a paradoxical element: monetary-value, as a function of command; in the second case, the exteriority of relations is substituted for an *inclusive* axiomatic which totalises all elements and establishes the automated-reversibility of command: in effect the 'mediator' (or paradoxical element) substitutes for both elements of an exchange. In both cases a function of command organises the automations of conversion. Money then, is the dominant semiotic of contemporary reality, and should therefore be seen as the critical co-ordinator or correlator, whose immanent functionality effectuates the tautologisation effects of contemporary capital in its project of control.

### Conclusion

This reading opens the potential for a detailed exploration of these axiomatic conjunctions, the assemblages which sustain them, regulate the flows, and operate 'incorporeal acts' of conversion by which capitalist command operates, as well as of the lines of flight which de-stratify and scramble codes and axioms. What Foucault did for the disciplinary society, Negri<sup>40</sup> and Deleuze and Guattari, do for the command society.

Already we have begun to see how Deleuze and Guattari's ontology informs their understanding of capitalism; and how their reading of capital is able to delineate an ontological pragmatism, what Negri calls 'constituent power'. Increasingly we have also seen how this onto-politics may inform a reading of Marx which carries his analyses of historical capital deeper into the potentials which capital co-opts. We will see in the following chapter how Marx himself is able to concretise the understanding of capital by producing a double mapping of

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<sup>40</sup> See especially his work done with M.Lazzarato, and the writings of P.Virno.

control and of flight in his analysis of classes and masses, the critical point where Marx meets Deleuze and Guattari, and Negri's constitutive ontology. I will now turn increasingly towards a Deleuzo-Guattarian reading of Marx, or a Marxian -not Marxist (see below n.41)- reading of Deleuze and Guattari. I would prefer to speak, in fact, of the construction of a working assemblage with coexistent consistent parts, a parallel system, named by the complex idea deleuze-guattari-marx. This has a double function: it evades a simple overcoding of one conceptual-assemblage by another which would totalise or enfold it in a global manner, from which would then follow applications in practice; whilst at the same time it reveals the centrality of a pragmatics as governing the very assembling of the working machine: no completion is here possible, for the machine must remain a consistent fragment, never folding back onto a molar territory without being opened once again by lines of flight which produce its cartographic deterritorialisation, a mapping "entirely orientated toward an experimentation in contact with the real." (ATP p12) In this way the concept of pragmatics subsumes the binary of theory and practice.

To conclude I would like to indicate what has clearly not been at stake here, and that is a debate with the Marxist tradition itself. What I mean by this is the rejection of any thinking which rests upon a binary reading of Marx's understanding of socio-economic development and organisation. Economism or militancy/voluntarism (and the varieties subsumed or which subsume this couple, such as base versus superstructure, and the multiplicity of concepts spawned in this way, e.g. technics, culture, etc.), and the hierarchical ordering to which they submit the terms of the binary, can, somewhat schematically, be said to summarise what I understand by Marxism.<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> The binaries frequently operate a form of repetition of Hegelianism in the Marxist tradition and outside it (see Althusser's essay 'Contradiction and Overdetermination' in his For Marx). Contradiction is a category which tends to dominate Marxist theorisation (not only for those who explicitly refer back to Hegel), and in this manner betrays the essentialism (coupled with the exclusion of the 'inessential'), and hence linearity, of its understanding. To this I oppose both the (admittedly undetermined) notion of over-determination, but in the form spoken of by Deleuze, i.e. of making the inessential essential (coupled with this ontology of multiplicities, over-

"In each case Machiavelli, Spinoza, and Marx represent in the history of Western thought the irreducible alternative of every conception of the bourgeois mediation of development, of every subordination of productive forces to capitalistic relations of production." (The Savage Anomaly, A.Negri, p141)

It is with this immanent productivity with which I shall now be concerned. It is what we have already spoken of as immanent efficient material-abstraction; the constitutive ontological force which, in Marx's words, "achieves practical truth" (G p105) with capitalist decoding, but which is continuously disrupted by the command-axiomatics of the capitalist abstract-machine.

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determination enables one to escape the notion of contradiction which still reappears in Althusser, see DR p310 n15). That is not to say that I reject the binary, rather I question its status as causal ground or ratio of history, politics, etc. So for example, it is not necessary to deny that "all history has been the history of class struggles, of struggles between exploited and exploiting, between dominated and dominating classes at various stages of social development" (Selected Works in Three Volumes, K.Marx & F.Engels, Vol.1 p101); but this only if class itself is understood as the effect/product of relations between force and force determining dissociations, differentiations of the 'masses': "always a partial effect and never a specific property of nature" (Masses, Classes, Ideas, E.Balibar, p147): the binary is an emergent effect of the immanence of power (*potestas/potere*) to the social field, so that power produces the real through a differentiation, a doubling, and a dissociation of elements and relations (The History of Sexuality Vol.1, M.Foucault, p94, and also F p37ff). Clearly my 'account' of Marxism is a simplification in the extreme; it should however serve at least to indicate that which I seek to avoid. We could say, following an often repeated formula (a repetition always of the different), that I wish to think Marx beyond Marxism; although to the extent that this would mean a coupling of them, a disentangling of them, an assignation of origins and developments, this is misleading.



## 4- TIME AND RESISTANCE

The critique of capitalist strategy and the operations of command, have opened a path to a radical re-thinking both of politics and history. What has been 'freed-up' by capitalism is the *political question of time*.<sup>1</sup> It is to this that I shall now turn. Though history itself is for me a secondary concern, the analyses of historical capital produced by such thinkers as Braudel, Arrighi and Wallerstein, provide a striking example of how to evade the progressivist and linear historical model provided by much Marxist thinking, whilst further evidencing their resonance with traits in Marx's own later writings. Despite their differences with Marx's own thinking on capitalism itself, it is perhaps here, with the question of the *history* and the *time* of capitalism, that one should begin to re-think what Marx can become.

### Transitions

Marx, in a discussion with a number of Russian intellectuals and militants in the late 1870's and early 1880's was called on to comment on the situation of Russia, and the possibility of a communist revolution in a country which had not undergone the transition to capitalism. What is of interest is not whether or not Marx adequately predicted the Russian revolution; it is not a question of prediction at all.<sup>2</sup> Of interest is rather his thoughts

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<sup>1</sup> As has already been discussed in *Total Critique is a Pragmatics*, 'of', marked by its appearance in italics, will indicate an ambiguity of the genitive which refers to a question of ontological undecideability.

<sup>2</sup> Although it is interesting to note that the common claim that Marx thought revolution was not at all likely to occur in Russia (and the consequent view that Marx's views were fundamentally inadequate as an understanding of economico-historical transitions) has no textual support in his direct discussion with Russian militants, or -for that matter- with the preface to the second

on historical transitions and (over)determination. Marx in 1881 is called by Vera Zasulich to discuss the possibility of revolution in non-capitalist Russia and the supposed necessity -proposed by some- of the prior transition to capitalism (with all that goes with it: private property, wage-labour, etc.). She writes to Marx:

"You will therefore understand, Citizen, to what extent we are interested in your opinion on this question and what great service you will be rendering us by conveying your ideas on the possible future of the rural commune and the theory of the historical necessity for all countries of the world to pass through all the phases of capitalist production." (MEW24 p640, n.397)

Marx responds to Zasulich, as he had done previously in 1877 in a letter to the paper Otechestvenniye Zapiski, that his account of primitive accumulation in Capital Vol.1 referred strictly to the path taken by Western capitalism, and he gives precise quotations to that effect.<sup>3</sup> There is, he says, no trans-historical account which can be provided in order to determine historical transitions. One cannot arrive at an understanding of critical historical conjunctures by

"employing the all-purpose formula of a general historico-philosophical theory whose supreme virtue consists of being supra-historical." (MEW24 p201)

In respect to the agricultural commune, he holds that one of the strongest arguments against the possible evasion of the development

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Russian edition of The Manifesto of the Communist Party (1882): "If the Russian Revolution becomes the signal for a proletarian revolution in the West, so that the two complement each other, the present Russian common ownership of land may serve as the starting point for communist development." (Marx/Engels Work Vol.24 [MEW24], p426) It is interesting to note that the 1917 revolution (although WW1 also was crucial in this respect) did in fact provoke proletarian unrest throughout Europe, and -arguably- fascism (then Nazism) arose primarily as a means of 're-directing' proletarian energies.

<sup>3</sup> See MEW24 p370.

of private property (and capitalism as its reproductive ground), is that *historically* communal property has always been metamorphosed into private property. I think it is important to quote at length Marx's response here:

"[I]n the historical development of Western Europe, ancient and modern, the period of the agricultural commune appears as a period of transition from communal property to private property [...]. But does this mean that in all circumstances the development of the 'agricultural commune' must follow this path? Not at all. Its constitutive form allows this alternative: either the element of private property which it implies will gain the upper hand over the collective element, or the latter will gain the upper hand over the former. Both these solutions are *a priori* possible, but for either one to prevail over the other it is obvious that quite different historical surroundings are needed. All this depends on the historical surroundings in which it finds itself."<sup>4</sup>  
(MEW24 p352)

A theory of transitions, of thresholds, must escape both a rigid and simplistic determinism (fatalism or quietism), as well as a discouraged silence before the overwhelming complexity of the factors of change. Marx distinguishes between *a priori* possibilities, and an *associated historical milieu*. These are given

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<sup>4</sup> On this same point, Marx says in the letter to Otechestvenniye Zapiski that, "events strikingly analogous, but occurring in different historical milieu, led to quite different results." (MEW24 p201) These claims should not be seen merely as an absent minded 'lowering of the guard' of Marx's 'historical deterministic theory', for these thoughts were developing, and were being reworked for a period of -at least- four years, between 1877-81 (the last years of his life). The fact that Marx also did not feel the need to publicise these points widely, and quotes directly from the first volume of Capital to support these claims, implies that Marx himself did not see this as a radical shift in his theoretical position, or at least felt this to be a tendency already at work in his earlier texts. It is this 'tendency' which I have attempted to stress in my previous chapters.



as two planes, different but intersecting: at the level of the 'a priori' the two forms<sup>5</sup> coexist, they are both possible; whilst at the point of history, a selection is to be made. History is a question of selection. However, why restrict the possibilities to only two forms? Does not such a restriction indicate precisely a -dubious- derivation of the possible from actual history? If so, does this not constitute a confusion of planes, and what's more, actually operate by the practices of bourgeois political economics, whereby historically produced elements and categories are able to overcode history, subsuming all historical eras to a generalised conceptual framework "whose supreme virtue consists of being suprahistorical" (MEW24 p24, see also G p100ff)? It is in fact -as Deleuze argues in his Bergsonism- precisely the stress on the possible which tends to extract transcendental conditions from the empirically determined. This form of Kantianism is anyway radically opposed to Marx's concrete genealogical approach to historical stratifications, one which he himself notes must not overcode one historical series by elements drawn from another. To overcome these problems the a priori itself should be temporalised, but in a manner which differentiates it from the historical itself. In such a way one would evade the drawing from a particular determined historical stratum a set of elements and relations which would then overcode the conditions of other historical formations, which determine its range of potential; whilst also understanding a historical formation as being of its conditions or potentials.

The a priori of which Marx speaks can only be understood as a 'structural', or rather, *differential range* determining a variety of relations between multiplicities, one which determines a heterogeneous spread of options which can recur throughout historical time: a historical formation will be seen to always refer back to a differential complex or *diagram* which is immanent to it, and which determines its potential variations. It is in this manner that change, transition, and continuity makes sense. In fact, Foucault's account of the Annales school's 'serial method' of history clarifies things further:

"The problem now is to constitute series: to define the elements proper to each series, to fix its boundaries, to

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<sup>5</sup> Communal property and private property.

reveal its own specific type of relations, to formulate its laws, and, beyond this, to describe the relations between different series, thus constituting series of series, or 'tables': hence the ever-increasing number of strata, and the need to distinguish them, the specificity of their time and chronologies". (The Archaeology of Knowledge, M.Foucault, p7-8)

What the serial method does is extract differential series of multiplicities from the historical stratifications/formations, re-constituting them through a reconnection with the coexistent differential complexes or *diagrams* which determine their range of variation: series which form continuities and discontinuities across historical stratifications, but which enable a determination of *historical formations* through laying out series, relations, breakages, showing the divergence or convergence of series, etc. *Transitions are disclosed precisely through the relations within a single series with its breaks and continuums, or between heterogeneous series which intersect, converge, or diverge from one another, and come to be distributed in different spaces.*<sup>6</sup> The historical selection on the other hand, operates by determining a specific actualisation through the regulated divergence of series, what Deleuze calls *differentiation*: an integration of a set of

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<sup>6</sup> I have been engaged primarily with a tracking of monetary-series, labour-series, command-series, etc. a whole gamut of series which converge in the production of historical capital(ism). Although in the usage of the term 'series' I am keeping to the texts of Deleuze and Foucault written in the '60's, at the highest point of the influence of structuralism, this should not disguise the fact that what I am speaking of are *practices, habits*, or what in Alliez's Capital Times are called *conducts*, as in 'conducts of time'. Again, the genitive is ambiguous here, marking an indeterminacy between time governing the conduct -being its ontological support, and the conduct being the very being of time. This is also the case with the various other series/conducts. The crucial role played by this indeterminacy is what enables the displacement of the subject position in a practice. As will become evident, the subject is always of practice.

potentials, series of multiplicities, into an operational system through a dissociation of planes and a distribution of series. The integration is both local, proceeding by capture of singular elements, and global, as divergent series are co-ordinated, forming an assemblage. *This pragmatics of selection constitutes history as a perspective -retention/protention- from the assembled present.* Actualisation -selection/differenciatio- does not alone determine, however, for any selection is produced in reciprocal relation to concrete assemblages already distributed on a stratum, and which effect captures from it. Foucault indicates in Discipline and Punish (specifically with respect to the panopticon), that the diagram exists as an 'abstract machine' "a generalizeable model of functioning [...] detached from any specific use", which is the precondition for an A/assemblage to organise and co-ordinate the series into the two forms of expression and content which exist in, and constitute, historical formations (DP p205-9). For the diagram, or a *a priori* complex, operates with unformed matters and non-finalised functions; for it is both 'mechanism independent' and has no pre-determined finality of function, only an abstract-functionality; it is precisely this which makes it "polyvalent in its applications" (DP p205). It is a schematism distributing potentials of actualisation from the virtual, which then come to be taken up and determined in concrete assemblages.<sup>7</sup> The diagram or the *a priori* differential complex is, however, itself temporalised, in that it exists always as the potential counter-actualisation of any concrete instantiation. For it operates beyond constituted forms as their very condition, which can de-stratify that formation through a counter-actualisation returning multiplicities to the

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<sup>7</sup> Foucault's example of the panoptic schema is paradigmatic of a diagrammatic function, and its multifunctional potential: "It is a type of location of bodies, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organisation, of disposition of centres and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons. Whenever one is dealing with a multiplicity of individuals on whom a task or a particular form of behaviour must be imposed, a panoptic schema may be used." (DP p205)



(diagrammatic) series and variations whose progressive integration composes any formation.

Yet necessarily a problem arises here. Both the *diagram* and the *historical formations* appear to operate as structures of *Power*, or regulation of multiplicities, series, conducts. In other words, any diagrammatic counter-actualisation of an assembled structuration of *Power* returns the series to non-history merely in order to reconfigure them for a more effective or efficient selection in the present, i.e. it operates by making it "possible to perfect the exercise of power" (DP p206). It appears, therefore, that any selection is one operated by or for *Power*. This notion of *Power* needs further articulation, it is sufficient for present purposes to see that any selection appears to operate through the capture of series in the present in an assemblage which regulates them, co-ordinates them, and finalises a function: to make visible, to quantify, to normalise, to discipline, to control... So, it appears that any attempt to re-activate immanence operates merely to serve strategies of *Power*.

**Conducts of Time (cont.)**- Things are more complex than this however. For the present itself always passes, and does so when a new present comes along; it is, in other words, itself intra-temporal. However, how would the present instant pass if it needed to await the arrival of another present before it could pass?<sup>8</sup>

"[L]et us stop and reflect for a moment: How would a new present come about if the old present did not pass at the same time that it is present? How would any present whatsoever pass, if it were not past at the same time as present?" (B p58).

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<sup>8</sup> This is in effect a question which goes back to Zeno's paradox of the arrow, where the assertion that motion, action occurs only in the present leads to the negation of movement itself (see the discussion in The Presocratic Philosophers, G.S.Kirk, J.E.Raven and M.Schofield ed., p272-4). This is evident further from the fact that historical selections occur in the present, so that from the perspective of a historical formation, past and future appear merely as retentions and protentions modelled by its own code, with no independent force (this will be discussed more fully below).

In other words, Bergson-Deleuze conceive of the movement, passage of time in such a manner as to conceive of the past being constituted at the same time (all mirrors have their other side).<sup>9</sup> Each actuality<sup>10</sup> is at one and the same time virtual, i.e. an element of the pure non-historicised past. To paraphrase Zourabichivili, succession is not illusory, it is simply not the most profound (Deleuze. Une Philosophie de L'Événement, F.Zourabichivili, p80). As Deleuze puts it, "[t]he past is 'contemporaneous' with the present it has been" (B p58). So that it is the present which presupposes the past, for otherwise it would not be able to pass;<sup>11</sup> the virtual remains the condition of the actual. Furthermore, since each past is contemporaneous with the present it has been, all our past coexists with the new present (a coexistence in the pure past):

"although it [the past that coexists with the present it has been] is specific it is nonetheless part of the 'past in

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<sup>9</sup> This is best understood in terms of the metaphor of the cone, See B p60, and Cinema 2 p294 (see, for a further discussion of Bergsonian time, see DR p81-5). This question can be rephrased also by saying, how could a (connective) synthesis of heterogeneous elements occur, how could a conduct of time emerge, if the elements were not themselves distributed on a plane of immanent coexistence? *Chronogenesis*.

<sup>10</sup> By which I mean, each connective synthesis/practice (as discussed in *Time and Correlation in Total Critique is a Pragmatics*), or, each historical present derived from the various practices.

<sup>11</sup> It is precisely due to the openness of the system that entropy is displaced. "The past does not follow the present, but on the contrary, is presupposed by it as pure condition without which it would not pass. In other words, each present goes back to itself as past." (B p59) The pure past is the produced condition of the connective synthesis of production, of practice; it is the constitutive temporality of material-abstraction, the plane of exteriority determined fully in the syntheses which contract its elements, and which express its milieus and contemplating souls, conducts of time: to produce production.

general', in the sense that it has not yet received a date."  
(Cinema2 p79)

It has not yet received a date in the chronological (historical) time of the actual. *The past is here not understood in terms of the present, a series of past presents, for the present is always yet to arrive and already past, always about to synthesise or already synthesised.* The pure past here constitutes a *second passive synthesis*, more fundamental than the foundational first passive connective synthesis.<sup>12</sup> It operates as a *time of resistance*, one which un-grounds the ground, the stratified conditions of practice, and allows it to pass: an "immeasurably ancient relation" which "becomes true in practice" (G p105) with the decoding effected by capitalism. It is an intensive virtual time which is the condition of the supervening chronos of actualisation -whose product is history. It constitutes a *passive disjunctive synthesis*, a vast memory or recording surface:

"Le champ invoqué [the pure past] n'est pas celui d'un passé relatif au présent: en lui coexistent toutes les dimensions capables de s'actualiser, et non seulement celles qui furent autrefois actuelles." (Deleuze. Une Philosophie de L'Événement, F.Zourabichivili, p79)

This -in the words of Deleuze and Guattari, is the perspective of the Body without Organs (BwO/Matter), of the identity of production and the product (different/ciation), and the moment of anti-production. The BwO appropriates the field of differences contracted, machined by the process of the production of production of the heterogeneous conducts of time (where difference produces production and production produces difference), as a whole. It is a moment of anti-production, however, in that it comes to interrupt the field of distributed pragmatics of the productive syntheses as a produced "enormous undifferentiated object", bringing everything to a stop, thereby blocking the formation of a filiative element of derivation, or the attempted totalisation of difference-in-itself under a particular order, through a return to 0-intensity as motor of difference (see AO p7-8). It un-picks the potential totalisation

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<sup>12</sup> Which was discussed in Time and Correlation in Total Critique is a Pragmatics.



effected by any one particular conduct of time, or by the regulated and regimented (axiomatised) correlation of the variety of decoded practices -opening the heterogeneous consistent practices to the *immanent exteriority of constitutive material-abstraction*. The productive connections pass from the connective syntheses to the BwO, attaching themselves as so many points of disjunction where new syntheses are distributed, i.e. as heterogeneous coexistent series. Contracted difference, and the machinism of the connective syntheses (production of production: functioning as it is produced), here forms a network of new syntheses on the full-body of the BwO. *This second synthesis does not succeed the connective syntheses, for it coexists with them, and attracts them to itself, records them, and is the condition of their functioning, by synthesising them across a territory, or plane/level of coexistence*. It is produced at a certain point in the connective synthesis, the point of producer-product identity, though existing on all planes of the pure past (which it constitutes) into which it is perpetually reinserted as the condition of synthesis (see AO p8).

The pure past in-itself is composed of series of more or less contracted planes or levels, where the contractions are to be understood as *potentials of coexistence*: differing states of the diagrams or a priori complexes by which the productive syntheses are constituted at varying degrees of consistency and resonance in the form of a territory.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> See again Bergson's metaphor of the cone, as discussed by Deleuze in Bergsonism and Cinema2. "The idea of contemporaneity of the present and the past has one final consequence: Not only does the past coexist with the present that it has been, but, as it preserves itself in itself (while the present passes), it is the whole, integral past; it is all our past, which coexists with each present. [...] But such a state implies, finally, that in the past itself there appear all kinds of levels of profundity, marking all the possible intervals of coexistence" (B p59). 'Contraction' in terms of the virtual (the cone), is here to be understood in a manner different to the contraction of operated by a connective synthesis which actualises a milieu and its constitutive habits. This latter understanding of contraction operates within the present present, and is of the order of the actual, i.e. it takes a

This inclusive disjunctive synthesis is not subsequent to the foundational connective synthesis, the two coexist. As we have seen, the foundational passive synthesis organises a milieu, a lived vibratory block of space-time, qualified as a habit, a conduct of time, defined by a "periodic repetition" (ATP p313) of contracted cases and elements, interleaving material and perceptual characteristics, in which one is affected and acts (or is acted);<sup>14</sup> this comes to be recorded as a code in a correlative passive disjunctive synthesis. Each unit of code marks a point of disjunction of differential series, by which the connective synthesis attaches itself to the BwO (surplus-value of code), and which mark the heterogeneous series contracted at each instance:

"The data, the bits of information recorded, and their transmission form a grid of disjunctions of a type that differs from the previous connections." (AO p38)

In actual fact, there is a whole question of *composition* here. For what is clear is that there is a constitution of material-abstraction -of the BwO- through conducts of time, but that it is the exteriority of relations of material-abstraction which enables this ontological practice of constitution. As Negri says with clear reference to Spinoza,

"The wretchedness of the demystification that God is the thing is not enough for us - we live the project of the thing being God." (CT p173)

Mysticism must at all costs be avoided in this construction of a critical *materialist* pragmatics. The immanence of the space of constitution must be maintained at all costs; differences in kind

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position of relative transcendence in relation to the level of the pure past which is its implicated condition, but which cancels itself in reterritorialising within the threshold of the contracted habit which make both of past and future a succession of presents, i.e. recorded in the same fashion (on this, more below).

<sup>14</sup> I would prefer not to engage with the overused concept of the simulacrum, although the connections are clear. "Car Je est une autre" (see A.Rimbaud's letter to Paul Demeny dated 15<sup>th</sup> May 1871, in Collected Poems, p9), 'I' is an effect, but there is no actor behind the acted.

must not become ontological distinctions of species;<sup>15</sup> practice must not cease to be intimately, immanently, concerned with ontology:

"The theory of the world contains entirely within itself, and with no residue, the divine power, efficient causality; it gives existence an ontological radicality. [...] Implicitly, ethics consists of reaching the eternity of the existent, of the mode. This eternity is constructed, in its singular determinateness." (The Savage Anomaly, A.Negri, p173)

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<sup>15</sup> The critique of the genus-species distinction is critical to Deleuze's construction of an immanent ontology. For the distinction operates by distributing unity and difference from outside: a genus is predicated of a species, e.g. species= 'human' comes under the genus= 'animal'; difference occurs only between species, e.g. specific difference= 'rational'; 'rational' does not come under the genus 'animal'. So different species can be united by genus and differentiated amongst themselves through specific differences lying outside generic differences. The problem arises when one attempts to understand Being in the form of the unity of genus. For then Being cannot be asserted of specific differences, for a genus is not attributed to its differences, so that one cannot say that specific differences are: "In this sense, the univocity of species in a common genus refers back to the equivocity of being in the various genera: the one reflects the other." (DR p34) By evacuating unity from the determination of the differential transcendental field (as discussed in Total Critique is a Pragmatics), Deleuze thereby also opens the space for a truly immanent ontology: "Being is said in a single and same sense of everything of which it is said, but that of which it is said differs, it is said of difference itself." (DR p36) In this way it becomes clear in what sense Deleuze and Guattari can claim that Spinoza's Ethics is the "great book of the BwO" (ATP p153), and how the eternal return is the being of that which differs: difference and repetition (see DR p40-2, Nietzsche and Philosophy, and the excellent article by G.Antonello, 'Il Problema della Individuazione in Differenza e Ripetizione' in Aut Aut Vol.277-78, 1997).



So, as Zourabichivili indicates, the milieu formed by the passive connective synthesis comes to determine the subject of practice as much as the space of activity of practice (Deleuze. Une Philosophie de L'Événement p73); for the milieu defined by the "periodic repetition" comes to code the emergent habits in such a manner that the codes mark both the inhabited material and affective space, and the habits or conventions (coded relations) constituting it. One truly inhabits one's habits, to the point at which one's practices presuppose the contraction and recording of a habit, which is in turn the constitution of the affective subject itself, for this recording presupposes a "primary sensibility" (DR p73), i.e. the sensitivity (affectivity) of a contractile plate, which then comes to be recorded as a code. Since all code units of sign and affect are heterogeneous, they are not restricted to any one milieu, although they always code a milieu (molecular population contracted in a passive synthesis); they are therefore, always in a state of transcoding or transduction with respect to the milieu on which they are produced. Code, however, does not of course emerge as a unit, for it is inseparable from the way it is recorded and distributed across the milieu, and from the manner the relations between the various regions of the milieu are recorded on the BwO (or occupy material-abstraction through the effectuation of a diagram). In this way the constitutive practice operating by surplus value of code (code capture), marks the productive conjunction of connective syntheses and immanent material-abstraction.

### Masses and Classes

The reciprocal opposition of *diagram* and *formation* under the stratification of *Power* in the present is subverted to the extent that it allows diagrammatic functions to be put in variation by their differential repetition across all planes of the BwO, across all levels of consistency of materially-abstract elements and relations. This can be seen concretely in Marx's own explorations of class and politics. When Marx denies the political nature of the proletariat (especially in the earlier writings), he can be seen at one and the same time to be delineating the effects of the actualisation of efficient neutralisation of its force, in the form

of a *class*, effected by capital; whilst also revealing the essentially alien nature and antagonistic desires of the masses with respect to (state-form) assemblages. For each present actualises an intensive dimension, degree, a priori complex or diagram: a distribution of coexistent multiplicities of the pure past: the ordinality of time (where division or addition involves a change of nature as thresholds marking dimensions, levels of coexistence, diagrams, are hit) becoming cardinal, as the compossible difference of material-abstraction is cancelled in the divergence of series which produces a potential homogenisation of a field (impossible with other diverging series), or variously coded practices which are able to be recorded in an exclusive disjunctive syntheses, e.g. class difference, which distributes differences within a limit or threshold defining a *molar* territory (*Power*) of homogeniseable units: workers, managers, etc. Here a particular recording is massively stratified, "maintaining a monopoly of position" (The Job, W.Burroughs and D.Odier, p20) on a territory. In effect, the codes of a particular present come to operate in an exclusive manner through their proliferation in a rigorous segmentation and assembling of practices; or, a strategy of generalised decoding of flows followed by the correlation (axiomatisation) of the heterogeneity of the conducts of time in order to maintain specific conjunctions between such conducts in homeostatic form: so, either overcoding the passive territorial codes marking the heterogeneity of practices, or axiomatisation.<sup>16</sup> *Politics appears simply as the dramatisation of capitalism.* Whilst class difference is seen as the source and realisation of *Power*, it

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<sup>16</sup> We have already discussed capitalism's operation of real subsumption in such terms. As has already been discussed, the strategy of producing decoded flows does not dissolve all codes, but rather puts code strategies (disciplining, regularising of flows) in the service of the axiomatisation of the immanent materially-abstract flows which compose them. Regulatory codes are no longer designed to mark qualitative differences in the heterogeneous flows, but rather to indicate points and forms of intervention and realisation. For now flow quality comes from the manner of conjunction -it is this conjunction which requires high level surveillance.

is also seen as the embodiment of capital's limit, as command supervenes upon immanent material-abstraction.

Class identity is, therefore, always a "partial effect and never a specific property of nature" (Masses, Classes, Ideas, E.Balibar, p147). With the real 'opposition' of classes and masses, we have the actualisation of anti-systemic processes when class differences take hold and re-direct the masses; and the violent war on the strata when class difference break down into the multiplicity of mass movements. I think it is worth quoting Balibar's comments here in full, which take for their object Marx's analysis in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Napoleon:

"Not only do the 'two-class' or 'three-class', schemas explode in a series of subdivisions, but there also appears the astonishing idea that crisis (and revolutionary) conjunctures are those in which classes decompose as social groups defined by simple and distinct 'interests' with a direct expression, especially in the form of well defined parties. Marx declares at the same time that these conjunctures are also those during which the course of history 'accelerates'. These are the periods from which the polarisation of society into opposing camps in the class struggle really manifests itself. Then the conclusion must be drawn that the revolutionary polarisation does not directly develop from the existence of classes, but rather from a more complex process (Althusser would call it overdetermined) whose raw material is composed of mass movements, practices, and ideologies." (Masses, Classes, Ideas p144-5)

It is, therefore, the diagram which enables anti-systemic movements and diagrams of Power: for the non-exclusivity of distributed series of multiplicities decompose the stratification practices which they are also responsible for serving; and do so because the differential complexes, diagrams, change in nature through passing certain thresholds induced by an encounter with their Outside to which they are always open -which is in fact, their most intimate potential.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> We can see the double nature of the role of 'masses' as dis-organisers and sustainers of stratified capital command in their role as collapsers of class difference in times of revolutionary



**Conducts of Time (cont.)-** So, from the point of view of the present present, past and future exist as dimensions of the present, asymmetrical but homogenous, either existing as retained memories of already individuated (and coded) events, or as anticipated (coded) events, both representational matrices operating through recognition (constituted on the basis of the connective synthesis and the correlative disjunctive synthesis in exclusive mode) between the st(r)atic coded differences, and represented in an overcoding of all other codes. The actualisation of any one level in the form of the present leads, in other words, to an individuated temporal form (conduct of time), so that two presents define different levels or dimensions of contracted habits, heterogeneously coded, impossible and individuating. Or, the axiomatised correlation between all distributed practices engenders a homogeneous analytic of time, a universal *ideal time*: real subsumption. Here time is reduced to the dimension of a veritable tautology -past and future disappear in their own terms and re-emerge in the form of spatial articulations of unequal exchange, or centre/periphery models. The subject of practice, at the level of coexistence, immanent material-abstraction (inclusive disjunctive synthesis = BwO), moves through dimensions, levels, heterogeneous coding systems, passing through differing (impossible) individualisations or consistencies on different planes but not in the order of succession, but rather of lateral relations, resonances, systems of relay, scrambling and splicing codes, so that the different levels express the same singularity/diagram (or 'destiny', see DR p83-4): multiplicity-masses; and a succession of affective states undergone by an individual through coding and decoding of coded (impossible) milieus at the level of successive presents: class difference and movement, as sets of homogeneous units.<sup>18</sup> In this way, practice

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change as discussed in The Eighteenth Brumaire, and in the role played by the 'industrial reserve army' as reservoir of labour and as exacter of downward pressure on wages.

<sup>18</sup> The account of the heterogeneity of time and its dimensions is indebted to Zourabichivili's account in Deleuze. Une Philosophie de L'Événement, see p77-82, but see also DR p82-4 on the heterogeneity and continuity, at different levels of contraction,

faces both the *planomenon* of immanent materiality, and the *ecumenon* of intra-stratal assemblages.<sup>19</sup>

The re-configuration of the masses is effected between the processes of capitalist dissociation in such a manner as to effect the transverse connection between series on the doubled planes of *Power*: content-expression. Intensive variation of the relative serial constants -effectuated diagrams- organising the two forms, are the conditions for disruption. Classes dissolve, dis-aggregate into masses, thereby realising class (as stratified in an oppositional binary) in the moment of transgressing its limits -of passing beyond the maximal potential of variation and definition on the stratum. The masses realise class differentiation by taking force beyond the limits of *Power*, difference beyond static individualisations. Class is a (re)configuration of the masses in the mode of externality, i.e. it always operates from outside the immanent modes of determination of the masses, and does so because it is the effect of a nodal point of *Power*, molarity, arriving from outside and determining a divergence, co-ordination, assembling of series by the specification of a diagram.<sup>20</sup> On the other hand, the state (and its forms) is defined precisely by its exclusive

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at the heart of "'the same life'". William Burroughs' work is also crucial for an understanding both of individuation as a recording of contracted elements, and the potential which a splicing of codes can produce for variable organisations of control, resistance, mutation, etc. Burroughs' speaks of such an element as a virus, a unit of word and image, which for our purposes should perhaps be a unit of a-signifying sign and affect (it is disputable, to what extent Burroughs would contend this alteration, he himself says "all hate, all pain, all fear, all lust is contained in the word", The Job, W.Burroughs and D.Odier, p15. See especially 'Playbacks from Eden to Watergate' contained in The Job).

<sup>19</sup> See *Matter and Strata* in *Total Critique is a Pragmatics*.

<sup>20</sup> To say 'from outside' is not to indicate any geographical or spatio-temporal exteriority in opposition to the 'interiority' of the masses, though it may also involve such a movement -for the masses have no interiority which could be defined oppositionally to an alien Other: 'shut-down' is always the effect of a double pincer.

relation to its 'exterior', and its 'interiority' is defined by its level of stratification, by the degree to which intensive difference has been contained within the rigidity of its formation of dissociated planes (in reciprocal opposition). The openness of the masses to the Outside is a function of the immanent mutation of the diagrams, determined by the modifications the multiplicities undergo (and effect) as they connect, expand and diminish:

"These variable distances are not extensive quantities divisible by each other; rather, each is indivisible, or 'relatively indivisible', in other words, they are not divisible below or above a certain threshold, they cannot increase or diminish without their elements changing in nature." (ATP p30-1)

The openness to the outside of the assemblages, of the distributed effects of *Power*, on the other hand, is both an introduction of the alien into itself, and a proliferation of its own singular cancerous processes throughout the outside. It is in this sense that the assemblages both extend themselves into classes, whilst reintegrating intensive difference -diagrammatic variation of material-abstraction- into themselves in the form of the masses. In this way the limits of the assemblage's effectivity are reproduced within themselves in the form of the class's dissimulated twin: the masses. In other words, there is not a *model of Power* and a *model of Resistance*, the one in-folds and unfolds the other:

"[Classes] are not once and for all subservient to power or raised up against it, any more than [the masses] are."<sup>21</sup> We

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<sup>21</sup> This may on the surface appear to contradict my claims so far, but one should rather keep to the model whereby class acts as guide or marker of stress points, whilst masses are the materiality which underlies class, placing the diagram organising it in variation, thereby enabling Resistance and transition. This clearly overcomes Marx's early distinction between the 'material weapon' and 'intellectual weapon' ('Critique of Hegel's Philosophy of Right. Introduction', in Early Writings, p257, K.Marx), which would go through various transformations, resulting in the notion vanguard party. For here we have an entirely ontologically constituted immanent movement of resistance which operates wherever there are



must make allowances for the complex and unstable process whereby [class] can be both an instrument and an effect of power, but also a hindrance, a stumbling-block, a point of resistance and starting point for an opposing strategy." (The History of Sexuality Vol.1, M.Foucault, p100-1, quotation altered; see also Deleuze's 'Désir et Plaisir', in Magazine Littéraire No.257, Octobre 1994, section F p61-3)

### Diagram or Program

So, at the point of the tightest, most contracted circuit of the virtual/actual relation: different/ciation, we have what Deleuze calls the "crystal-image" (Cinema2 p80). Here the virtual need not be actualised, since it corresponds to the specific present with which it forms the most contracted circuit -facing both the *ecumenon* and *planomenon*. In this circuit we have contracted the whole of the past, as the limit point of the virtual-actual circuit, though since the present is contemporaneous with its past, it is always already of the pure past, so that the 'limit point' indicates the exhaustion of any one actualisation, the point of fatigue at the heart of a contracted habit, or the "perpetual state of transcoding or transduction" of code which regiment the assemblages of (capitalist) realisation (ATP p313; see also DR p77).<sup>22</sup> The limit, therefore, marks both the highest point of the actual: the scope of variation of limit displacement along the *horizontal axis* of expansion of subsumption (i.e. "In other words,

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supervening Power effects.

<sup>22</sup> "Transcoding or transduction is the manner in which one milieu [determined by the repetition of elements contracted by the connective synthesis] serves as the basis for another, or conversely is established atop another milieu, dissipates in it or is constituted in it." (ATP p313). It is because all milieus are in a perpetual state of relative and variable communication across dimensions of the pure past (BwO), with codes operating as points of inclusive disjunction scrambling their organisation on any one milieu, that codes can operate through processes of relative de- and re-coding in exclusive mode.

fatigue is a real component of contemplation [connective synthesis]" DR p77); degree of complexity or organisation (i.e. multiplication of contracted intensive thresholds) along its vertical axis (i.e. quantity of interior milieus upon which to re-territorialise), the different states of concentration of differences determining "variations that are tolerated below a certain threshold of identity" recorded on the BwO (ATP p50); as well as being the point closest to the transverse line of virtuality (splitting with the co-ordinate field towards an inflate-deflate, depth-surface matrix, or topological space), or immanent change in nature/material-abstraction: engendered through differential intensive rates operating by practices of resistance through inclusive disjunctive syntheses, determining potential convergence and divergence of relations and elements, provoking transitions as thresholds are hit and passed through: rates of deterritorialisation and decoding tend towards the absolute by entering excitational phases provoking further possible ruptures in real history, as well as corresponding reterritorialisations, and recodings, as multiplicities are actualised in accordance with the potential reconfigurations and (re)connections disclosed by the immanent diagrams of material conjunctures.<sup>23</sup>

Between the virtual and the actual there is a continual and reciprocal exchange (constitutive non-linearity). As the virtual becomes actualised (into say X), the actual reveals its reverse image, the virtuality which comes to be progressively contracted, actualised (into say Y). The reverse side of each actualisation reveals the virtual conditions of un-grounding-ground for other processes of divergence, and de-differenciation. (counter-actualisation):

"[e]ach circuit obliterates and creates an object. But it is precisely this 'double movement of creation and erasure' that successive planes and independent circuits, cancelling each other, contradicting each other, forking, will simultaneously constitute the layers of one and the same physical reality, and the levels of one and the same mental reality, memory or spirit." (Cinema2 p46)

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<sup>23</sup> In other words, all relative constants are placed in continuous variation on the BwO, efficient immanent material-abstraction.

At the stage of the crystal-image, the virtual directly actualises, i.e. is in the closest relation to its actualisation. At this point action ever more directly results; we are at the tightest point of the conditioning-conditioned circuit, where the limit of each touch: for the present is itself intra-temporal: practices, connective syntheses, are themselves synthesised. We are, therefore, directly in touch with the pure past with which the present present coexists; so that the individuated is always internally differentiated, as it is continued on all the planes of the pure past at differing degrees of expansion-contraction of difference, consistency and resonance between molecular populations (variability of the diagram), and it exists precisely in these differing degrees. In this way we are saved from falling into the trap of conceiving the ground in relation to the grounded, in such a manner that it remains relative to it. This is the mistake Kant made, that of drawing the transcendental from the empirical, following the model of recognition. Since the identity of the grounded lies precisely in its internal differences -or rather, in the heterogeneous differences which come to be contracted in its connective syntheses, deducting matters from the pure past (BwO) through the selection operated by the contraction of an intensive disjunctive series of material-abstraction, it remains always a synthesis of heterogeneous differences of the virtual levels which perpetually un-ground it- the model of recognition is not even able to get off the ground. It is not, therefore, the case that the actualisation of a virtual differential complex (diagram) exhausts it in the process, for between the virtual and the actual there is a difference in kind, of regime, of intensity; any actualisation of the virtual operates a divergence of series drawn from disjunctions distributed across the BwO, which produces a selection of level or dimension (specification of diagram) through a contraction of elements which determines a plane of explication of difference in extensity, i.e. a milieu, or a lived "block of space-time" (ATP p313); this in turn cancels the differential (intensive) as it comes to be coded as a habit, or a "periodic repetition" (Ibid.), which is appropriated in a qualitative form; this does not prevent it from continuing on all other planes of the BwO (the inherent/immanent variability of the diagrammatic function).



So, the contraction of a divergent series marking the potential of an actualisation (limited by the inherent thresholds of fatigue), does not exhaust the potentiality of the diagram, ideal-problem, or a priori coexistent multiplicity, i.e. "system of multiple, non-localisable connections between differential elements" (DR p183),<sup>24</sup> for, as we have said, it is the incarnation of only a set, or determinate conduct of time, selecting a divergent series through the contractions of a practice (connective synthesis) -a path which itself determines the mode and field of actualisation. Nevertheless, though the solution is determined immanently by such processes of determination, contraction can

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<sup>24</sup> The assimilation of the problem to the virtual or intensive is part of the same exigency which desires to grasp idealisation as the effect of a particular conjuncture. Any attempt to grasp the productive processes in such a manner as to avoid tracing them from the empirical instantiations (as Marx says, one cannot determine the mode of production from the product), must depend upon the genealogical unearthing of the processes within the real, or rather, on a continuum with the real (the constitutive differentiation of the ontology of the pure past); a continuum marked only by differential relations and elements, singular points and thresholds determined by the degrees of expansion and contraction of the pure past, and marking the limits of variation of one diagrammatic function and the commencement of another. In the same manner, a solution is always generated by the conditions determined by a relatively expanded set of differentials in the problem, from which are traced (in extension) in the variety of forms of solution across a symbolic field: mathematics, linguistics, biology, etc. or the organism, the socius, war. The Truth, does not exist on an entirely separate plane to which a solution needs to ascend, but is rather found through an effective mapping of the conditions of the problem, the determination of the effective relations, singular points, etc. generated out of the progressive determination of the problem: "Solutions are engendered at precisely the same time that the problem determines itself.[...] In fact, the domains of resolvability are relative to the process of self-determination of the problem." (LS p121, 122) The problem is, therefore, both transcendent and immanent to the particular cases of solution (see the second of Marx's Theses on Feurbach).

itself be *guided*, or restricted in its modes or routes taken by means of the material conjuncture, i.e. the other surrounding coded milieus (practices), assemblages, and decoded flows with which it converges, and the particular state of the BwO on which it is appropriated: feed-back is inevitable. An actualisation of any consistent plane/diagram of the pure past -developed in extensity- may fold back over preventing immanent change in nature by perpetual displacement of its limit, extending the scope of its constitutive passive synthesis by which populations are reterritorialised and recoded, but not able -thereby- to modify or control the processes operating at the level of the virtual: there is no through path of ontological determination from stabilised coded difference to processes by which difference is produced or engineered, produced at its most expanded level, at the point at which the virtual differentiations determine the very possibility of actualisation. What *Power* effects is the deterritorialisation of the code generated in the recording (by the disjunctive synthesis) of the differences contracted in the selected divergent path of the connective synthesis or constitutive practice, folding it back over, and creating thereby an overcode distribution matrix which functions by perpetuating a select range of paths of condensation or contraction: those which are required to reproduce the stratal milieu, and its habits or conventions, so that the disjunctions mapped by the code operate an *exclusive disjunction*. The deterritorialisation of a code enables it to withdraw from its embeddedness in a population or distributed set of practices, and to re-organise production from outside: overcoding. Code, however, operates in the recording process through marking difference as an *inclusive disjunction* of heterogeneous series, multiplicities, and can serve as immanent element for a conduct or practice by which a constitutive selection of diverging series is engendered; or for a conjunctive synthesis which serves to make series of code and of material/affective flows converge, producing a singularising conjunction engendering a consistent working assemblage.<sup>25</sup> The question is largely one of usage, how does it work? Do the passive syntheses distribute codes immanently as markers of inclusive disjunction across planes on the BwO? Or does the code popularised

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<sup>25</sup> For "[n]o assemblage can be characterised by one flux exclusively" (Dialogues, Deleuze and Parnet, p101).

in a milieu become sedimented on a stratum, operating through a de- and re-coding of elements, establishing exclusive relations between the matters already captured and contracted into formed substances on a stratum? To these two modes of disjunction, inclusive and exclusive, correspond two states of the abstract-machine: it either remains caught on a stratum, defining its "unity of composition" or *program*, mapping a procedure of stratification (*ecumenon*); or, it cuts across all strata, developing along the plane of consistency of material-abstraction (*planomenon*) as a *diagram* which,

"does not function [so as] to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality. Thus when it constitutes points of creation or potentiality it does not stand outside history but is instead always 'prior to' history.[...] There is a diagram whenever a singular abstract machine functions directly in matter." (ATP p142)

This is clearly not only a new 'theory of history', more complex than the model generally attributed to Marx, but one which maintains the alliance of history with the political.

"Communism is not for us a state of affairs which is to be established, an *ideal* to which reality [will] have to adjust itself. We call communism the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things." (GI, p57)

In this way, a historical formation must be understood not so much by what it *is*, but rather as a *real fiction*. That is to say, not in accordance with states of affairs, but precisely by that which escapes them on all sides along multiple 'lines-of-flight' cutting across the stratifications -mapped by the effectuated diagram, which in turn provoke new forms of capture. We have here, in this analysis of the constitutive temporality of the masses, a clue for a potential politics which operates outside any concrete historical stratification, in that its tools are not taken from the actual, but rather operate as a creative force coming from the outside. The first intimation of a 'war-machine' on the horizon.

As Deleuze and Guattari warn, however: "we should guard against any kind of ridiculous evolutionism" (ATP p49). For the movement of contraction-expansion is not linear and progressive, but is rather rhythmic and always multiple, operating both at the level of the



virtual pure past in-itself, and in the process of its actualisation, which always appears progressive and linear, a series of successive instants, from the point of view of the actuality contracted.<sup>26</sup> There is always a time of history, in which what appears are the dated events in linear succession: 'chronos'; and a 'nomad' time which operates always between two dates on the line of 'chronos', and which enables their passing: 'aion'. Balibar's summary of what is at work in these late texts of Marx indicates a proliferation of temporalities, or conducts of time which elicit the need to constructively engage (in part carried out above) with what the opening up of this problematic -whose clue we find in these texts- might mean.

"What is proposed in these texts, then, is the idea of a concrete multiplicity of paths of historical development. But that idea is indissociable from the more abstract hypothesis that in the history of different social formations there is multiplicity of 'times', each contemporary with one another, some of which present themselves as a continuous progression, whereas others effect a 'short-circuit' between the most ancient and the most modern." (PoM p108)<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> For the various presents are always contemporaneous with the past that they are, and the past coexists all at once with each present which it actualises and re-virtualises.

<sup>27</sup> Balibar goes as far as to call this stage the "third phase of the dialectic in Marx" (PoM p108). The first phase he ascribes to the rigid and deterministic causal schema of the 'Preface' to the Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy, in which a series of terms (base, superstructure, productive forces, etc.) operate as a schema of determination of concrete historical reality (see PoM p92ff). It is questionable, however, outside vulgar Dia-mat thinking, if this schematic formula was ever employed by Marx in any concrete analyses. The second phase marked by Capital (and the Grundrisse, though this is not made explicit by Balibar) involves the implicit critique of the notion of *progress* in favour of *process*. It is the relation of forces at work at any particular time which determines the direction of history's movement. Closely connected to this is the ir-reducibility of the worker-collective to the capitalist

Conducts of Time (end)- If we consider, from the point of view of capital as the tightest circuit, the levels or past-presents described by expropriation, expansion of the monetary system, and imperialist policies, the resultant actualisation of the differentiations required for large scale commodity production are yet slow in coming: open to various divergent differentiated lines by means of which industrial capitalism can be held in check, or its advent speeded up. From the point of view of the actualised present present it would seem as though a number of courses could have been followed which would have conflicted with the path to the realisation of capitalism, due to various 'inhibitions'<sup>28</sup> which could have -and were- employed at any time. It may well seem as though the less determined a plane, or past, in terms of any particular future-present, the more chances that the inevitable be pushed further away into a future-future-present, slowing the advent of the present present. This is clearly a retro-active intervention, following after divergence and (exclusive) coding, operating from the point of view of recognition (of past-presents and past-futures) of the lived present which is in turn the effect of conducts of time with their own codes and conventions. From this point of view, the present dictates the understanding of past and future on the grounds of the contracted elements of the present milieu -so that practice here informs itself self-reflexively: the rules of the present are overlain over the past and the future as dimensions of itself.<sup>29</sup> In this manner, time is understood as

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collective, i.e. worker-collective resistance as the pre-condition for capitalist expanded re-production (PoM p100ff).

<sup>28</sup> For example, legislation under feudalism by means of which expropriation was slowed down.

<sup>29</sup> See the discussion of Hume in DR p70-1. Sequence: A-B... A'-B'... A''-B''... A'''-B'''... A''''-... The imagination, says Hume, contracts a number of instances into cases; the more cases it 'perceives', the stronger the retained impression and the force of anticipation in the mind; this contraction of independent instances into one another forms a first synthesis of time in the mind, the lived present as the engendered foundational temporalisation. The understanding of past and future, an active synthesis supervening upon the passive syntheses, appropriates encoded relations and

history, a linear succession of presents, formally equal, but with possible difference of contents for each present. This is the model of the possible, where one needs to limit particular possibilities, such that the actual or real can be specified. Only through a reduction of possibilities can any particular real present be. History appears from the position of the present present as the increasing reduction of possibility -i.e. a dissipation of the possible into the 'real' present; while the future opens as a (finite) constellation of new possibilities emerging in the image of the present which distributes the field of possibilities.

Yet the time of history has its own history/time, its own conditions of emergence: *chronogenesis*. Although each level of the past is equally differentiated, there is no progress of difference, merely process. To what extent a particular virtual complex of coexistence or diagram has been determined, contracting a particular divergence of series, partially decides whether or not it becomes fully actualised. However, since at each stage the differentiated is turned towards the differential abstract-materiality of the pure past, a line of flight, a counter-actualisation, a scrambling of codes opening to the flood of molecular difference in an inclusive disjunctive synthesis is always a vertiginous possibility.

In other words, practices are a-historical differential processes which coexist across levels of the pure past, needing to gradually sediment in particular strata in order to be distributed in a time of history, with its own variety of formed substances, semiotic regimes, and individuated assemblages. For example, as Deleuze and

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functions, and re-deploys them, producing the fields of application as corollaries. This is the sense in which past and future can come to be formed as dimensions of the present-present, and as spaces of representation and recognition. The identity constituted in the contraction-contemplations-practices of the connective syntheses and recorded and then re-deployed in the exclusive usage of the disjunctive synthesis, reflects back, producing a corollary identity as object of reflection. Though both passive and (supervening) active syntheses are precipitations of differential complexes/diagrams, difference comes to be cancelled in the explicated fields of deployment of the emergent relations (though continuing on its own plane).



Guattari argue, *Power*, the exclusive disjunctive synthesis, is fundamentally the producer of the despotic socius: despotism is the realisation on a large scale of the diagram of *Power*. This does not, however, prevent *Power* from occurring at other times and on different contemporaneous strata.<sup>30</sup> A particular historical regime or formation is not defined simply by the types of processes which occur at any one time, but rather: in terms of the dominance of particular syntheses; the conjunction of particular flows (series) in certain forms of assemblages and its types of semiotic regime and subjectification procedures; the level of sedimentation and organisation of a particular stratum: its formed matters and relations, the abstract-machine or diagram forming its unity of composition, along with the particular substratum upon which it depends for its deductions and appropriations, and not least, its thresholds, degrees of deterritorialisation, and the 'lines-of-flight' which escape on all sides. One must, therefore, always realise the level, the plane, the stratum across which certain processes distribute themselves; their coexistence with other contemporaneous processes with which they enter into aleatory relations, in formalised or non-formalised encounters; as well as recognising the immanence of process, where a difference of formation does not disguise virtual coexistence, de-stratifying geological (and history is stratal) stratifications.

The question, however, is even more complex from the point of view of capitalism, which operates with high code regimentation in order to produce decoded flows to axiomatise. Under capitalism then, code is already subsumed to material-abstraction -i.e. it is ontologically and functionally derivative; capital operates on the plane of material-abstraction, and has attempted a *real subsumption of the real itself*. In this way, the question of resistance-as-

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<sup>30</sup> For example, monopolies operating as contemporary *Power* formations; digital monetary flows as supple molecular populations; examinations as an over-coding, selection, and distribution mechanism, etc. See also A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia, B.Massumi, p187, for an example of DNA coding as molar process, an activation of strategies of *Power*. These are all "events strikingly analogous, but occurring in different historical milieu, [leading] to quite different results." (MEW24 p201)

decoding needs to operate in a manner which recognises the axiomatic conjunction of the flows it decodes: to construct strategies of avoidance, and its own forms of consistency which evade the axiomatic correlation of flows; *for decoding alone is insufficient as a means of resistance under capitalist conditions.* Surplus value of code is always transformed into surplus value of flux by capitalism -the question is how to immediately operate flux. This is the question of consistency or constitution at the level of efficient (non-axiomatised) material-abstraction. The discussion of the immanent variation of the diagrammatic potential of the masses, and of the constitutive temporality composing resistance is critical for these considerations. However, capitalism has given a pragmatic 'truth' to immanence -given it a practical reality; it has become true in practice through a decoding of traditional strategies of Power, but it has not done so without introducing its own virulent tactics of correlation, and strategies of *command*.<sup>31</sup> Immanence becomes increasingly problematic as an *immediate* form of 'liberation',<sup>32</sup> though by pushing many into

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<sup>31</sup> Where traditional strategies of Power operated by the maintenance of specific qualitatively differentiating codes, *command* is indifferent to the codes which it operates in order to maintain the axiomatic of decoded flows.

<sup>32</sup> An example- The practice of transforming immanence/molarity into the couple de-regulation and regulation (or bottom-up/top-down), on the grounds that the de-regulated operates as a de-stratified purely immanent functionality, reveals the neutral character of such differences in terms of their ultimate failure to adequately determine the rates of escape or possibilities of recapture these processes involve. If one takes the massive deregulation which was able to arise in the private financial sectors during the '70's, somewhat paradoxically produced out of the increase in the regulation of banking in the late '60's in the U.S., which pushed financial ventures off-shore, and in ever closer alliance with multinationals. We can see on the one hand the immense profits which accrued to capitals through the massive speculation which occurred in foreign currencies, along with the potential collapse of the world money markets due to speculation against the dollar which went unchecked (and was exacerbated by the fall in its value), i.e. the (U.S.) state apparatuses refused to step in to

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protect its currency for a period of time -and hence the massive fall in value of dollar holdings around the globe. Central banks around the world were then forced to shore up the mass of dollars in order to thereby stabilise the currency and their own deposits. De-regulation and regulation are seen here to operate in reciprocal relation, requiring each other in order to augment capital holdings and circulation in time of slump (different interrelations operate in times of economic growth). The arguments over de-regulation or regulation which periodically arise, appear increasingly to be merely concerned with questions of capital distribution at the top rungs of capitalist relations, and have little to do with 'capitalism with a human face', or 'anarcho-capitalist libertarianism'. In this sense, one can say that capitalism is massively regulated, but at the level of serial multiplicities, i.e. within the very processes of deregulation. It is always a question for capital, of knowing when to intervene. A mistake can provoke runaway processes which reconnect the plane of immanence of efficient material-abstraction in accordance with the differential relations in continuous variation. Any processes which can be captured by de-/regulation practices are rather the dissimulation of the double processes of different/ciation, already stratified by the assembled forms of a concrete machine in reciprocal relation to the diagram that informs them. In this sense immanence is no longer immediately revolutionary and de-stabilising when monetary command effects a real -molecular- subsumption; for it is precisely the neutrality of immanence which enables connections to operate in accordance with the efficiency of the command-configurations currently inhabiting it (on this point see Negotiations, G.Deleuze, p33-4). It is clear, however, that what we have here is a prior capture of elements, their appropriation at the level of real subsumption means that de-/re-regulation do not map immanence/transcendence in a neutral fashion, but rather involve the micro-physical distribution of command tactics; and that the different orders of command operate according to the efficacy of micro-physical regulatory tactics of the particular model of realisation. So, whilst assemblages would have no series to co-ordinate into a working machine unless there existed heterogeneous multiplicities in relations of exteriority; the multiplicities



the hands of mystificatory homogenous-group politics (the politics of identity), it is able to maintain its command at the level of the underlying constitutive materiality.<sup>33</sup>

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would remain purely embryonic if there was nothing to differentiate and articulate them. Capital operates at the level of the embryo.

<sup>33</sup> See Neil Ascherson's article 'On a train draped in red flags' (The Observer, Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1998, p26), in which he describes the ineffectuality of post'68 strategies which continued a critique of the state leaving capitalism to do its own thing.

## Conclusion

Critique is now an onto-pragmatics: it operates by a negotiation, and an engineering of difference. It breaks with all pre-programming of distinctions between one and many (always the multiplicity of intensive change in nature: difference-in-itself); form and substance (always the pure matter-function of the machinic phylum of material-abstraction); temporal and non-temporal (the past is contemporaneous with the present with which it coexists; only the pure past which has never been but is, is eternal); transcendent and immanent (the transcendent is only transcendent within immanence, and the immanent transcends the transcendent which is immanent to it); individual and general (a diagram is the individuality of the general); pragmatics ignores these differences, these essentialist determinations, in order to make the inessential essential, in favour of practices, conducts of time which demand the openness of an encounter with the Outside which operates a change in nature, a becoming -so that there is no pre-programming of what can happen, "what will happen?".<sup>34</sup>

The crucial distinction to be displaced here is that of thought and matter, and this is central, though implicit in all of the above (for example in the displacement of mind by the passive connective syntheses). It is the precondition for the activation of a pragmatics. Foucault summarises this displacement well:

"Thought is no longer theoretical. As soon as it functions it offends or reconciles, attracts or repels, breaks, dissociates, unites or reunites; it cannot help but liberate and enslave. Even before prescribing, suggesting a future, saying what must be done, even before exhorting or merely

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<sup>34</sup> This is the only question which makes sense here, and in which the answer cannot be verbal (Desolation Angels, J.Kerouac, p152). The outside is always at work, precisely because the differential relations are external to the terms that they relate, the relation -which in this case can but be a fundamental encounter- always produces a difference, a change in nature. An encounter can only be prevented by locking-in encountered difference, by capturing it on another plane which over-codes it.

sounding an alarm, thought, at the level of its existence, in its very dawning, is in itself an action -a perilous act."(quoted as epigraph to Foucault's Language, Counter-Memory, Practice)

It is always a case of being suspended above the abyss of the pure past or BwO in a 'perilous act', aiming to un-pick the habits and affects composing one's milieus, the codes marking the range of selective syntheses consistent with the states of variability of the diagrams of material-abstraction across which one's constitutive practices are ranged; the question is always one of exploring the 'mode of composition' or 'dynamic range' of the practices composing, individuating one, and thereby to map a potential for deterritorialisation with a correlative production of a new state of the diagram capable of sustaining another composition. This is a question of immanence of criteria, of sensibility, of pragmatics; for the mode of composition operated by the individuating (selective) syntheses actualise a diagram determining a sensibility or subjectivity comprised of affect and act in a corresponding milieu, and a coded territory delimiting a dynamic range for further syntheses. It is, therefore, a case of counter-actualisation, of making oneself adequate to one's immanent consistent conditions through plotting a diagram, or 'vector of transformation' outlining a new dynamic range. This is a question of composition, of pragmatics, it is by:

"working through an invisible iron wall that seems to stand between what one is and what one can do. How is one to get through that wall -since pounding at it is of no use? In my opinion one has to undermine that wall, filing through it steadily and patiently" (The Letters of Vincent Van Gogh, no.237, p206).<sup>35</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> Also quoted in Artaud's Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society in Selected Works, p498. On 'mode of composition', 'dynamic range', and 'vector of transformation', see A Users Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia, B.Massumi, p93ff. I am speaking of what Foucault calls "a critical thought which has the form of an ontology of ourselves, an ontology of the present" ('Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution', M. Foucault, in Foucault's New Domains, M.Gane ed., p18).



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