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SPATIAL MATERIALISM

Grossberg's Deleuzean cultural studies

In a series of essays published in the 1990s, Lawrence Grossberg proposed a spatial-materialist cultural studies, arguing that our key metatheoretical assumptions about reality, agency, ethics and politics needed to be reconceptualized on amodern philosophical terrain — not within, or even against, the philosophical frameworks of modernism and postmodernism but outside them. To develop this alternative terrain, Grossberg has drawn on the writings of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, whose work was based on a Spinozist ontology, a 'monism of multiplicities'. Grossberg argues that Deleuzean philosophy provides cultural studies with a way out of the epistemological problematic that has dominated critical theory. He has used on Deleuzean ontology to argue against modernist, postmodernist and post-structuralist conceptualizations of identity and subjectivity and proposes, instead, that cultural studies develop a machinic theory of agency. Grossberg has also used Deleuzean philosophy to reconsider the ethics and politics of cultural studies, proposing a politics of 'spatial becoming'. This essay seeks to highlight the productive conceptual moves that Grossberg makes, to clarify some concepts that remain ambiguous in his approach, and to identify certain claims that merit further critical consideration. Grossberg's work repositions cultural studies in relation to the discursive terrain of modern philosophy and theory, opening up new routes for thought and action. In doing so, it clarifies, rearticulates and, in many ways, radicalizes the critical interventions that reshaped cultural studies in the 1980s and 1990s. But Grossberg's most important contribution to cultural studies has remained implicit: by following Deleuze and Guattari, we are drawn into an affective state of theoretical affirmation and practical composition — a stance that is quite different from both modernist and postmodernist postures of critique.

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> If cultural studies rests upon a philosophical discourse that is closely articulated into the very relations of power that it wants to dismantle, then it has to critically examine its own categories and the ways they are constrained by and articulated on this philosophical ground.
>
> (Grossberg 1997, p. 20)

> Deleuze and Guattari's work ... is not a solution for cultural studies' troubles, and their work in itself is not going to be redemptive. But what this work can do is to shift some of the questions we ask, and offer new ways of engaging with those movements and halations that sometimes rise and fall along the edges of our attention.
>
> (Seigworth and Wise 2000, p. 45)

Cultural studies has constituted itself at the crossroads of modern social theory and the myriad lines of criticism that intersect and challenge the modern. As I encountered it at the University of Illinois in the 1990s, cultural studies appeared to be, more than anything else, an ongoing debate about its own identity and place in relation to the discourses and institutional spaces of modernity.[1] Ethically and epistemologically, cultural studies seemed to consist of a series of interruptions – a running argument in which one critical discourse after another called into question existing theoretical and political assumptions and was then partially incorporated into the constellation of shared concepts, values and commitments said to define the field, only to be succeeded by a new critical perspective that problematized yet other assumptions. Cultural studies has always been defined by its politicization of theory and its theorization of culture and politics, but its earlier neomarxist approach has been challenged – and, in some cases, substantially transformed – by a long list of other critical discourses: feminism and critical gender theory, critical race and ethnicity studies, postcolonial studies, postmodernist philosophy, post-structuralist literary theory, political economy, and discourses on neoimperialism and globalization.[2] As a transnationally-articulated project, cultural studies has been a site of struggle over definitions of popular culture and the public, over modernist and postmodernist conceptualizations of the Left, and over the politics of knowledge production and of intellectual practices in general. Through this lengthy and sometimes acrimonious process of critique, response, and partial integration, those speaking in the name of cultural studies have sought to extricate it from the white, bourgeois, Anglocentric and patriarchal commitments of modernism and to construct an alternative libratory practice of knowledge production and politics.[3]

However, many of these critical interventions have themselves been grounded in modernist philosophical concepts, and thus cultural studies has retained many modernist assumptions. These assumptions include:

- *ontological dualism*, which traps the theorist in the epistemological problematic of representation and the analytical problematic of hermeneutics;[4]
- *textualism*, which reduces culture to meaning, ignoring its material and affective forces and effects;[5]
- *temporalism*, which privileges time over space and promotes linear, evolutionary models of agency and change;[6]
- *identity politics*, which conflates identity, subjectivity, and agency and assumes that all three coincide in individual or collective actors defined by logics of difference;[7] and
- *localism*, which equates space with the global and the abstract while equating place with the local and the concrete, often privileging 'the local' (usually defined as the nation) as the natural or authentic site of community and political engagement.[8]

Cultural studies' reliance on these assumptions has a range of potentially negative effects. At best, cultural studies' inability to extricate itself from modernist conceptual frameworks limits its explanatory power: it weakens its analytical grasp on current cultural formations and processes, limits and skews its political imagination, and hinders its effective intervention in the relations of power that shape contemporary contexts. At worst, these unexamined modernist commitments may implicate cultural studies in the reproduction of oppressive forms of thought and social organization (Grossberg 1997, p. 20).[9]

Drawing on the work of Spinoza, Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, Agamben and others, Lawrence Grossberg (1992, 1993, 1995, 1996a,b, 1997, 2000) has proposed an *amodern*[10] philosophical framework that he argues could provide cultural studies with a way out of the modernist problematic.[11] A cultural studies grounded in a monist, materialist, and spatial ontology, Grossberg argues, would be capable of theorizing cultural practices as 'the ongoing spatial production of the real' (1997, p. 31) in which:

- *place* is understood as an articulation of materials, bodies, discourses and affects – a process that can occur on a wide range of scales and scopes;
- *representation* is seen as a production of depth effects on a single ontological plane;
- *popular culture* is conceptualized as the articulation of affective investments to the social practices and sites of everyday life;
- *agency* is defined as a an assemblage of active transformation, an *assembled* agency in which individuality, subjectivity, identity, and power do not necessarily coincide; and
- *change and resistance to change* are understood not as history but as becoming – the ongoing production of the real without evolutionary, dialectical or teleological determination.[12]

Rearticulated around these amodern concepts, cultural studies could grasp, engage and challenge modernist forms of power and knowledge without reproducing, in its own theory and practice, the modernist forms and relations it seeks to contest.[13]

In what follows, I offer a critical overview of Grossberg's appropriation of this amodern philosophical framework and his proposal for a spatial materialist cultural studies. My aims are to emphasize the productive conceptual moves that Grossberg makes, to clarify some concepts that remain ambiguous in his approach, and to identify certain claims that I believe merit further critical consideration. I first discuss Grossberg's arguments about why cultural studies needs philosophical reflection at all – his justification of what we might call his 'detour through philosophy' (or perhaps more appropriately, given his aims, his *departure* from modernist philosophy and his flight onto another philosophical terrain). I consider the usefulness of philosophy itself as a discursive register from which the ontological, epistemological and ethical assumptions of cultural studies can be examined and rearticulated. Second, I consider the particular philosophical position Grossberg has chosen – a position strongly influenced by the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1983, 1987, 1994) and thus, implicitly, by the philosophy of Spinoza, Hume, Bergson and Nietzsche (Deleuze 1988a,b, 1992, Bogue 1989, Harris 1992, Massumi 1992, Hardt 1993). I focus here on Deleuze and Guattari's monist, materialist ontology, which serves as the conceptual basis for many of Grossberg's arguments about the theory and practice of cultural studies. Third, I review Grossberg's critique of modernist theories of subjectivity, identity and agency (Grossberg 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996a,b) and examine the range of ways in which he has developed an alternative, amodern conceptualization of agency based on the spatial-materialist ontological platform (Grossberg 1992, 2000). Finally, I reflect on the ethical and political commitments of Grossberg's cultural studies – a stance he has called a politics of 'spatial becoming' or a 'pragmatics of the multiple' (Grossberg 1993, 1996a,b).

Grossberg's work repositions cultural studies in relation to the discursive terrain of modern philosophy and theory, opening up new routes for thought and action. In doing so, it clarifies, rearticulates, and in many ways radicalizes the critical interventions that reshaped cultural studies in the 1980s and 1990s. But perhaps Grossberg's most important contribution to cultural studies remains implicit: following Deleuze and Guattari, we are drawn into an affective state that is quite different from the modernist (and postmodernist) posture of critique. Drawing on Nietzsche and Spinoza, Deleuzean ethics calls for a theoretical stance of affirmation rather than mere negation, and for a practical stance of 'joyful' passion and active composition rather than 'sad' reaction.[14] Building on the spatial-materialist framework that Grossberg proposes, cultural studies can reaffirm certain key conceptual and affective

contributions of its modernist genealogy while rearticulating them as elements of an active, joyful practice of theoretical and political composition.

The need for philosophy

Why does cultural studies need to rethink its own philosophical assumptions? Grossberg makes two arguments about the value of such meta-theoretical work. The first is pragmatic: a certain amount of critical reflection will always be necessary if cultural studies is to adapt its conceptual tools to the continuously-shifting logics of social and political contexts (Grossberg *et al*. 1992, Grossberg 1993). Philosophy, as a specific kind of intellectual practice, can help cultural studies evaluate the adequacy of its conceptual toolkit as circumstances change. Grossberg's second argument, on the other hand, is based on the notion that modernism itself must be overcome. Cultural studies has not escaped its own complicity with the modern structures of power that it so energetically denounces as oppressive, he argues (Grossberg 1996a, p. 171). 'I want to contest such theories', says Grossberg, because 'they remain within the strategic forms of modern logic' and 'they have failed to open up a space of anti- or even counter-modernity' (1996b, p. 93). Grossberg sees such theories as politically compromised by their lingering modernism: 'wary of first philosophies, they nevertheless condemn themselves to remain within the assumptive grounds of the "first philosophies" constitutive of the modern' (Grossberg 1996a, p. 171). Instead, we must 'rethink 'the real' outside of the constitution of modern categories' (1996a, p. 179). We must turn to philosophy, Grossberg claims, in order to extricate our theoretical work from its ties to modernist philosophical assumptions.

Grossberg's first argument (on pragmatic grounds) is consistent with the amodern philosophical framework he proposes: neither theory nor philosophy can provide cultural studies with metaphysical guarantees or transcendental truths, but philosophical work, as a particular kind of discursive practice, can help cultural studies examine and reshape its concepts to make them more adequate for new contexts.[15] Grossberg's second argument, however, relies implicitly on two very modernist logics: first, it depicts philosophy, and theory in general, as a conceptual apparatus whose politics inhere in its structural characteristics. Theories that rely on logics of identity or temporality – logics traditionally associated with modernism – are limited by their 'continual allegiance to the discursive apparatuses, the philosophical assumptions, and, perhaps unintentionally, the structures of power of the modern' (Grossberg 1996a, p. 177) Second, the argument temporalizes philosophy, presenting it implicitly as a history of ideas whose inadequacies we must overcome: we are called on to develop a 'counter-modern' way of thinking whose goal is to free itself from any vestiges of modern (and more specifically, Kantian) philosophy.

Theories that 'continue to rest upon the modern assumption of the distinction between time and space' (Grossberg 1996a, pp. 171–2) do not pass this test; they 'fail to open up a space of anti- or even counter-modernity' (Grossberg 1996b, p. 93). Deleuzean philosophy is then presented as the next, radicalizing step in the long process of getting out of modern philosophy.[16] In other words, in contrast to Grossberg's first argument – that philosophy provides cultural studies with a space of metatheoretical reflection and self-criticism that is needed for pragmatic, political reasons – his second argument anchors the justification for a philosophical detour in the logics of modernist philosophy itself (or more precisely, in the temporal logics of a modernist *history* of philosophy).[17]

What we must keep in mind, as Grossberg himself (and most of his readers) clearly understand, is that cultural studies is not a philosophical project; it is a political one. As Grossberg argues, cultural studies 'is not driven by – its agenda is not dictated by – theory.... It does not take its questions from theory, or even from particular academic disciplines', but from political engagements with 'the world outside the academy' (1995, p. 27). Cultural studies is 'contextualist' and 'interventionist', and it 'measures its theoretical adequacy in political terms' (Grossberg 1992, p. 21). Theories, and the philosophical assumptions that underpin them, must therefore be judged by their conceptual power and their effects in particular contexts – by what Spinoza calls their *adequacy* – and not by their reliance on (or their ability to overcome) the dominant categories of modern thought. It is quite true, as Grossberg argues, that many of the concepts that cultural studies has inherited from modern critical theory are no longer adequate, but – and this is the critical point – it is not their association with modernism *per se* that makes them so.

In fact, if we rule out 'modernist' concepts and commitments ahead of time, we are in effect limiting the debate about what constitutes adequate theory and politics in the present. It is not obvious that cultural studies should renounce all forms of modernism simply because they are modern; in fact, some modernist concepts, sensibilities, institutions, and assumptions may be necessary if we are to retain the possibility of theory and politics at all.[18] In contrast to this implicitly temporal, anti-modernist argument, a spatialized notion of theory opens up the agenda and repoliticizes questions of theory and politics, allowing us to evaluate cultural studies' modernist legacy, and its philosophical assumptions in general, without dismissing all modernist commitments *a priori*.

We should therefore see the 'detour through theory' (or, in this case, philosophy) as an ethical and political practice in its own right, and not as a temporary interruption of, or spatial disengagement from, cultural studies' real work. Theory and philosophy are discursive practices with political implications and effects like every other human activity. There is no

autonomous, or transcendental, space from which philosophy can guarantee theory: 'one cannot write sufficiently in the name of an outside;' we should see 'the book as assemblage with the outside, against the book as image of the world' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 23).[19] Instead of asking, 'what can we know?' – a properly philosophical question – cultural studies must ask, 'what can philosophy *do*?' In other words, what does Grossberg's use of spatial-materialist philosophy *do* for cultural studies?

It does several quite useful things. Setting aside the issue of Grossberg's own occasional reliance on a modernist rhetorical framework, I want to argue that his turn to spatial-materialist philosophy is helpful for pragmatic reasons. First, as Grossberg himself argues, spatial-materialist philosophy moves cultural studies out of the dualist ontological paradigm of Plato, Descartes, Kant, and Hegel, with its fixation on the epistemological problematic of reality and representation, and onto the monist ontological terrain of Spinoza, Nietzsche, Bergson, and Deleuze and Guattari. Second, a spatial-materialist approach will help cultural studies develop a more adequate theory of agency that does not rely on indefensible assumptions about subjectivity, identity and difference (Grossberg 1996b). And third, spatial-materialist philosophy foregrounds the question of ethics, moving cultural studies out of the quagmire of ethical and political relativism, into a productive practice of theoretical and political *composition* – the active constitution of being (Hardt 1993, pp. 104–11). The following three sections examine each of these issues – ontology, agency and ethics – in turn.

A monist ontology

Modernist ontological dualism, exemplified by Kant's distinction between phenomena and noumena – the world of perception and the world of reality – continues to animate debate over neomarxist theories of ideology, post-structuralist arguments about the never-ending play between language and its 'outside', postmodernist epistemological and political relativism and the ensuing retreat into the local, and a wide range of other academic battles over the politics of identity and textual authority (Grossberg 1996a). By accepting the Kantian terms of the debate, Grossberg argues, much of cultural studies has become 'a project of interpretation' revolving around 'the need to construct a correspondence between two parallel, nonintersecting planes – language and reality' (Grossberg 1992, p. 48). When that project is then politicized, cultural studies and other critical theories become engaged in an endless 'diagnostics of discourse', forever analysing the political preconditions of their own speaking positions (Grossberg 1992, p. 367).

The philosophy of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari constitutes an alternative to the ontological dualism that undergirds modern social theory,

and it offers cultural studies a way out of the epistemological problematic and the politics of identity.[20] Drawing on concepts from Spinoza, Hume, Bergson and Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari propose a monist, materialist ontology – a 'monism of multiplicities' in which thought, perception, and ideas are completely immanent to material reality. Grossberg's rearticulation of cultural studies is deeply influenced by this 'minor' philosophical tradition, and especially by Deleuze and Guattari's seminal book, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987). It is well beyond the scope of this essay to summarize Deleuzean ontology, but several key concepts that play an important role in Grossberg's spatial materialism may be briefly reviewed.[21]

In place of negatively determined Being, Deleuze and Guattari propose Becoming as the fundamental ontological reality. Becoming is the dynamic unfolding of Being; a process of active, productive differenciation.[22] Differenciation is the ongoing production of difference and multiplicity out of unity. This is a positive understanding of difference as the unfolding of Being in time – a positive differenciation that produces itself without external determination. Deleuze's Bergsonian ontology departs radically from the Hegelian approach, in which difference is seen as dialectical determination – as a being's qualities defined negatively in relation to non-Being and to other beings (Hardt 1993, pp. 1–10). Being, in Deleuzean ontology, is therefore inherently dynamic.

Becoming and differenciation can also be understood as actualization – as the movement from virtual potential to actual existence. The virtual – a concept Deleuze takes from Bergson—is a set of abstract relations and points structuring an object, organism or context. The virtual consists of 'the differential elements and relations along with the singular points which correspond to them. The reality of the virtual is structure' (Deleuze 1994, p. 209). Actualization is the process whereby a virtual multiplicity is incarnated in an actual body with extension or corporeality. Actualization can also be understood as a concrete solution to a virtual 'problem' – an organization of substance in a limited space and time that achieves a particular purpose. Actualization is driven by 'spatio-temporal dynamisms' that animate the virtual-actual circuit (Deleuze 1994, p. 214). Here Deleuze builds on the Bergsonian notion of *élan vital* – an immanent force or potential, an internal dynamism that actively produces bodies, things, and states of affairs (Hardt 1993, pp. 15–16).[23] Every actual body is on the way from what it was to what it will be; its present state is only a momentary or current (*actuel*, in the original French) configuration that both expresses its past development and enfolds – as immanent virtual potential – all its potential future states.[24] Because the virtual potential immanent to things is no less real than the actual things themselves, actualization explains the ongoing production of the real without resorting to a dualist ontology and without reducing difference to a diversity of identities.

In Deleuze and Guattari's later work (1987), actualization and differentiation are recast in terms of 'abstract machines' and 'concrete assemblages'.[25] Every context – any particular collection of matter-flows – is organized simultaneously by multiple, often contradictory, processes of stratification and flight: territorialization and deterritorialization, organization and disorganization, coding, overcoding and decoding. The concrete unity formed by the intersection of those flows is what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'concrete assemblage' – a 'constellation of singularities and traits deducted from the flow – selected, organized, stratified – in such a way as to converge ... artificially and naturally' (1987, p. 406).[26] Assemblages have two 'axes'. Along one axis, matter-flows are brought into relations of content and expression according to the various processes discussed above: a 'machinic assemblage of bodies, actions, and passions' is brought into relations with a 'collective assemblage of enunciation, of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 88). Along the other axis, the assemblage is constantly undergoing processes of territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization; that is, the assemblage works continuously to bring elements of the surrounding milieu into its organizational dynamics, but its efforts are always being undone to a certain extent – the territory it organizes is always being traversed and carried away by other flows and other assemblages (1987, p. 88).

All stratifications and concrete assemblages are constituted by what Deleuze and Guattari call a 'double articulation'. The double articulation is an articulation of content and expression, each of which is, in turn, an articulation of forms and substances: forms and substances of content articulated to forms and substances of expression:

> Fitting [the form of content and the form of expression] together, segments of content and segments of expression, requires a whole double-pincered, or rather double-headed, concrete assemblage taking their real distinction into account. It requires a whole organization articulating formations of power and regimes of signs.
>
> (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 67)

But neither of the two articulations should be understood as the joining of ontologically distinct bodies. Deleuze and Guattari are explicit about this point when it comes to the distinction between form and substance, which they say is only 'a mental or modal' one. The distinction between content and expression, on the other hand, 'is always real, in various ways, but it cannot be said that the terms pre-exist their double articulation' (1987, p. 44). In other words, in a concrete assemblage (in the anthropomorphic stratum), we can distinguish a machinic assemblage of bodies and a collective assemblage of

enunciation, but these two assemblages are in 'reciprocal presupposition' – one could not exist without the other.

The double articulation that constitutes an assemblage – the stratifications and destratifications that structure it – are organized or 'performed' by what Deleuze and Guattari call 'abstract machines'. In other words, every concrete assemblage can be understood as 'effectuating' an abstract machine: 'The abstract machine is like the diagram of an assemblage. It draws lines of continuous variation, while the concrete assemblage treats variables and organizes their highly diverse relations as a function of those lines' (1987, p. 100).

The abstract machine is what 'can account for' the forms of expression and content that compose a concrete assemblage, and simultaneously for the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization that make and remake the assemblage's territory (1987, p. 141).[27] Deleuze and Guattari conclude that the world is in fact a 'mechanosphere. .. the set of all abstract machines and machinic assemblages outside the strata, on the strata, or between strata' (1987, p. 71). But stratification is never total: 'The earth, or the body without organs, constantly eludes that judgement, flees and becomes destratified, decoded, deterritorialized' (1987, p. 40). Matter-flows in continual processes of organization and disorganization on a single plane of reality: this is the ontological vision of Deleuzean philosophy.

The Bergsonian distinction between the virtual and the actual (or later, the abstract machine and the concrete assemblage) might seem to reintroduce a form of ontological dualism. As Hardt notes in his comments on Deleuze's reading of Bergson: 'Bergson's discussion is very strong in analyzing the unfolding of the virtual in the actual – what Deleuze calls the process of differenciation or actualization. In this regard, Bergson is a philosopher of the emanation of being, and the Platonic resonances are very strong' (Hardt 1993, pp. 15–16). However, the virtual does not reside on a transcendental plane – it is not 'elsewhere'; it is completely immanent to actual bodies, things and states of affairs on the single plane of reality. Deleuze 'limits us to a strictly immanent and materialist ontological discourse that refuses any deep or hidden foundation of being. There is nothing veiled or negative about Deleuze's being; it is fully expressed in the world. Being, in this sense, is superficial, positive and full' (Hardt 1993, p. xiii). The virtual is real and immanent, so the movement from virtual to actual should not be understood as a movement from possibility to reality – an interpretation which would re-introduce the ontological dualism Deleuze is seeking to displace.[28] By the same token, abstract machines should not be understood as transcendental entities but as forces immanent to the concrete milieus and assemblages they construct. Deleuze and Guattari are clear about this point: abstract machines 'operate within concrete assemblages.... They are always singular and immanent' (1987, p. 511).

In summary, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy povides cultural studies with a monist, materialist ontology which entails 'the abolition of all metaphor' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp. 69–70). It 'refuses the Kantian distinction between phenomenon (experiences, discourses, meaning) and noumena (the real)' (Grossberg 1996a, p. 180). Instead, it operates according to logics of 'nextness' or 'juxtaposition' on a single plane. This shift to a monist ontology will help cultural studies disengage from an epistemological debate that has dominated critical theory at least since Althusser – a debate characterized by endless cycles of deconstruction that repeatedly postpone constructive theoretical development, ultimately undermine intellectual authority, and privilege a textualist politics over a deeper politicization of intellectual work and its institutional contexts. By exiting the modernist epistemological debate, cultural studies will be able to shift intellectual energies and academic resources to more pragmatic theoretical and analytical work, to more active ethical and political composition, and to renewed engagement with the public and the popular.

Assembled agency

The monist, materialist ontology that Grossberg adapts from Deleuze and Guattari also provides cultural studies with an alternative approach to theorizing agency. Modernist theory usually conflates agency, identity and subjectivity with individuality, assuming that all three coincide in individual human actors or groups. Spatial materialism, by contrast, problematizes individuality and agency; it disarticulates them from identity and subjectivity and emphasizes their processual character. Against the negative logic of identity and difference that informs most modernist theories of the subject, spatial materialism proposes a positive concept of differenciation as an active, constructive force inherent in being – as the *conatus, élan vital*, or spatio-temporal dynamism that constitutes being on a wide range of scales and scopes.

Grossberg uses the concept of agency in a variety of ways, but the various definitions he develops can be seen as compatible with one another and as components of a machinic theory of agency that draws substantially on the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Here I briefly discuss Grossberg's conceptualization of agency and the ways in which it departs from modernist theories of subjectivity and identity. Grossberg's approach will allow cultural studies to develop more adequate theories of agency and individuation as ongoing processes occurring at every scale – as assemblages of agency that do not necessarily coincide with individual or collective subjectivities or identities.

Grossberg employs several different definitions of agency. At times he suggests that agency is something *distributed by* machines. For example, 'agency is the product of a territorializing machine' (1996b, p. 100), a question of

'how access and investment are distributed within a particular structured mobility' (1993, p. 15–6). Alternatively, these places themselves are seen as sites of agency: 'agency constitutes strategic installations; these are the specific places and spaces that define specific forms of agency' (1996b, p. 102). Here, agents are 'places and vectors that make history' (1993, pp. 15–16), or 'particular sites of activity and power' (1996b, p. 99). In another formulation, agency is understood as the articulation of subjects to such places, or as the power of subjects to act once they have gained access to those sites:

> Agency is defined by the articulations of subject positions into specific places (sites of investment) and spaces (fields of activity) on socially constructed territorialities. Agency is the empowerment enabled at particular sites and along particular vectors.
>
> (1993, p. 15)

But the individual himself may already possess a certain kind of agency that allows him to move into such sites: 'affective individuality' is the individual's ability to 'invest in particular nominal groups' (1992, p. 126). It involves 'the possibilities of moving into particular sites of activity and power, and of belonging to them in such a way as to be able to enact their powers' (1996b, p. 99).

Finally, drawing on the terminology of Stuart Hall and Antonio Gramsci, Grossberg defines agency as 'tendential forces' of history—'the actual forces producing the larger structures of articulation; the long-term forces which struggle to determine the direction and shape of history' (1992, p. 397). Developing this last definition further, Grossberg distinguishes between 'agencies' and 'agents'. Agencies are 'the active forces struggling within and over history', while agents are 'actors operating, whether knowingly or unknowingly, on behalf of particular agencies' (1992, p. 122). Agents can act according to their own agendas, says Grossberg, but they still 'serve' the vector of force of an agency (1992, p. 122). Examples of agencies are capitalism and the State, as well as 'industrialism, technology, democracy, nationalism, [and] religion (1992, pp. 326–7, p. 350, p. 123). Examples of agents are 'regulatory agencies, the media, [and] the New Right' (1992, p. 397).

I want to suggest that Grossberg's model of agency is fundamentally a machinic one in line with Deleuzean ontology, and that Grossberg's other definitions of agency can best be understood as logically derivative of that model. Grossberg's more recent writings (1996a, 1996b) make it clear that machines are responsible for the making of history: 'the machinic is agency without subjectivity' (Grossberg 1996a, p. 180). The other forms of agency discussed by Grossberg (sites of agency, agents and tendential historical forces) should be seen, I would argue, as *products* of this machinic organization of

reality. Places of empowerment and sites of agency, for example, are distributed by territorializing machines: 'agency is the product of diagrams of mobility and placement which define or map the possibilities of where and how specific vectors of influence can stop and be placed' (1996b, p. 102). Agents, the concrete individual actors (whether institutional or biological) can only act 'in the service of' agencies or of the tendential forces of history, Grossberg argues (1992, p. 122). These agencies or tendential historical forces, in turn, are either machines themselves or the products of machines.

This becomes clear in Grossberg's discussions of capitalism and globalization: the current historical conjuncture is one in which a 'new abstract machine' is placing difference 'in the service of capital', while new 'ecumenical abstract machines . . . operate across all of the stratifications of reality, in every milieu, to destratify them' (1996a, pp. 184–5), threatening 'the very possibility of a practice-able world' (1996a, pp. 185–6). Capitalism itself, discussed as the most important agency in Grossberg's 1992 book, is now seen as the product of an abstract machine that 'makes capitalism into a technology of distribution rather than production' (1996a, p. 185). In short, whatever the effects of sites of agency, of actors articulated to those sites, or of historical forces such as capitalism and technology, the power to distribute, articulate, and reshape all of these belongs to the abstract machines; they are the agents of history in the last instance.

Cultural theorists working within the paradigms of modernism have always recognized that subjects – individual or collective – are constructed in history, but this creates a difficult paradox: the subject must be 'both the cause and the effect of social structures and, ultimately, of history itself' (Grossberg 1992, p. 117). How is it possible that people make history but are also made by it? Which is really determining: the subject, or the historical structures that produced that subject? Theorists have turned to one of two strategies to resolve the paradox, says Grossberg, neither of which is satisfactory. The first strategy 'substitutes structural descriptions for causal explanations, reducing diachronic events to synchronic homologies' (1992, p. 116). The second strategy attempts to solve the paradox by positing the existence of an agency – such as 'human nature' or 'the revolutionary class' – that transcends the structures of history. It 'presupposes an ontological difference between structure (history) and agency' (1992, p. 117). The former strategy fails to explain agency at all, while the latter argument conflicts with cultural studies' commitment to the belief that agency is always socially constructed and immanent to the field of historical action – that there is no transcendental subject, human or otherwise (1992, p. 117). Thus, neither structural causality nor transcendental agency is a tenable answer.

Cultural studies needs a theory of agency that can really account for historical change, but without resorting to a metaphysics of transcendence; the Deleuzean concept of machines, Grossberg argues, allows cultural studies to

construct such a theory (1992, pp. 116–7). While most modern theories conflate subjectivity ('a position within a field of subjectivity or within a phenomenological field'), identity ('the self as the mark of a social identity' within a field of 'difference and distinction') and agency ('the possibilities of moving into particular sites of activity and power'), a machinic theory of agency instead seeks to 'locate the "machinery" by which each of these… is produced and subsequently articulated into structures of individuality' (1996b, pp. 14–6). In a machinic theory, there is no necessary correspondence between subjectivity, identity, individuality and agency, so it is no longer paradoxical to say that actors are both the cause and the effect of historical structures. They are the effect of such structures inasmuch as subjectivity, identity and the possibilities of action are distributed by machines. But they make history inasmuch as they are the concrete individuals and groups among whom those forms and possibilities are (unequally) distributed.

We can clarify Grossberg's Deleuzean approach to agency by defining it as any assemblage that transforms its milieu, which includes free flows of energy and matter as well as other assemblages. A key point here is that assemblages are not necessarily discrete social groups or biological individuals (in fact, for Spinoza, the human condition is generally one of passivity, reaction and determination from external forces). Assemblages possess a certain degree of functional coherence, self-reflexivity, and autonomy with respect to their milieus – a collection of properties characterizing what systems theorists call autopoiesis[29] – but a human being (or social group) is as likely to be a *component part* of a larger assemblage as it is to constitute an assemblage in its own right.[30] As a human individual, I am an assemblage with a certain degree of autonomy, coherence, and agency (an 'affective individual' – Grossberg 1992, p. 127), but I am never only that. I am also a component of many other micro- and macro-assemblages that do not coincide with the biological boundaries of my body or the phenomenological boundaries of my perception and cognition: micro-assemblages of desire and cognition, for example, as well as macro-assemblages of disciplined labour, collective mobilization or mass media spectatorship. Every assemblage has a certain degree of autonomy with respect to its surroundings – it exercises a certain amount of power over its milieu and over other assemblages – but no assemblage is completely determining of others. As a component part of a particular macro-assemblage – for example, as a driver negotiating (and contributing to) rush-hour traffic – my actions become regularized and functionally integrated into its dynamics – Spinoza says that my body enters into relations of movement and rest with other bodies such that, together, we compose a new body (the traffic jam): 'what we identify as a body is merely a temporarily stable relationship' (Hardt 1993, p. 92). However, as an individual assemblage (or as a component part of other macro-assemblages), my actions may contradict – or simply be irrelevant to – that particular assemblage. The fact that traffic is making me

late, an effect that will have repercussions for me as a component of a domestic assemblage of family, may have little relevance for my functioning as a driver.[31] It is important to keep in mind, however, that the conflicts arising between these multiple assembled agencies are concrete, historical conflicts, not logical contradictions.

In other words, Grossberg's warnings against the conflation of identity, subjectivity, agency and biological or social individuality still apply: the coherent articulation of these three forms of individuation in a single human being (e.g. the rational individual decision-maker of liberal theory or Spinoza's active, self-constitutive being) or social group (e.g. Marx's class for itself or Hardt and Negri's (2001, 2004) emergent 'multitude') is the historical exception rather than the rule. But it is not impossible for this to happen. A biological individual *is* a concrete assemblage with a certain degree of coherence and autonomy in relation to its contexts, so there is individual human agency, among many other kinds of agency, but the individual is always caught up in other assemblages (with tools, with other individuals, with the market, with ideologies and bureaucracies, etc.).

From this discussion of agency if follows that cultural studies itself is – or can be constituted as – a concrete assemblage with a certain degree of agency. It can in fact be seen as a social movement – as an attempt 'to reorganize space and to create new places' (Grossberg 1992, pp. 17–18). Like the US civil rights movement (Grossberg 1993, p. 16), it is an effort 'to mobilize people in a common struggle', or 'to organize minorities into a new majority' (Grossberg 1992, p. 393). This means that the work of cultural studies is pragmatic and political, and not simply theoretical. As Grossberg points out, we need to begin 'rearticulating the question of identity into a question about the possibility of constructing historical agency' (1996b, p. 88). Or, stated somewhat differently, we need to rearticulate the (almost exclusively theoretical) debate about culture, power, and liberation as a political project of constituting collective agency. Of course, such a project requires theory, and even philosophy, but these must always be seen as elements of a larger assemblage whose aims are *also* strategic and political.[32]

If cultural studies is or can be made into a concrete assemblage (an active, transformative agency, an *agencement*), we must address the question of its ethical and political commitments: what logics of organization should guide its work and its aims?[33] In postmodernist and post-structuralist frameworks, the deconstructive orientation of the theorist makes it possible (and perhaps even necessary) to postpone ethical and political commitment indefinitely, or rather to practice an implicit textual politics of negation and deferral. By contrast, in a Spinozist or Deleuzean philosophical framework, ethics inhere in ontology (Hardt 1993, pp. 91–111); the definition of *being*, itself, precludes a relativist stance (Harris 1992, p. 2). Thus, once cultural studies is disarticulated from the modernist (and postmodernist) problematic, the question of ethics can no

longer be postponed. As Grossberg argues, cultural studies is indeed faced with the task of *constituting* agency: 'the task is to win various identities, subjects, knowledges and actors to specific commitments of agency' (1992, p. 122), but what exactly are these commitments? From a Spinozist standpoint, agency is to some extent a good in itself, but beyond this initial affirmation, it matters what form agency takes and what effects it produces.[34] Thus, if we seek to reorganize 'a new historical and oppositional agency' (Grossberg 1992, p. 393), we must then ask what particular ethical principles and political effects should define cultural studies' engagement with the world? These are the questions that animate the final section of this paper.

Ethics and politics

I have discussed three aspects of Grossberg's detour through Deleuzean philosophy: the justification for the philosophical detour itself, the usefulness of a spatial-materialist ontology as a specific philosophical stance, and the machinic theory of agency developed out of that ontology. In this final section, I comment on Grossberg's appropriation and rearticulation of Deleuzean ethics and politics for cultural studies. Grossberg's proposal builds on the conceptual framework of Spinoza and Deleuze, which moves from a spatial-materialist ontology to an ethics of becoming. In place of the post-structuralist orientation toward critique and deconstruction and the postmodernist tendency toward ethical and political relativism, Deleuzean philosophy articulates a stance of theoretical affirmation and political composition. This move foregrounds questions of ethics and politics, requiring theorists to face a range of issues that had been conveniently postponed by the commitment to endless critique. While Grossberg's discussions of ethics and politics suggest several potential paths, we need to develop more fully the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's Spinozism for cultural studies.

What kind of agency should cultural studies seek to produce? Grossberg argues that cultural studies should work to construct, in theory and in practice, a form of belonging that is outside modernist politics of identity and difference (Grossberg 1992, pp. 364–9, 1996a, p. 179). Identity politics is often based on one-dimensional and essentialist definitions of identity, as if human subjects could be adequately understood using one or two stable lines of difference (e.g. 'white male', 'Canadian', 'Hispanic', 'Black lesbian', 'young Republican' or 'Muslim fundamentalist'). Politics then becomes primarily a matter of 'the representation of ideological subjects' (Grossberg 1992, pp. 379–80). Instead, argues Grossberg, there is a 'need for a radical rethinking of political identity (and the possibilities of collective agency)', a new politics of 'belonging without identity, a notion of what might be called *singularity* as the basis for an alternative politics' (1996b, p. 103).

Grossberg sees this project, in part, as a way of 'getting beyond' modern structures of subjectivity (an argument I called into question at the beginning of this paper), but there are also pragmatic reasons for trying to develop a new form of belonging. Identity politics has had a negative effect on the political viability of the Left as a whole, says Grossberg, in part because its conflation of social identity with intellectual authority has led leftist theorists into a 'diagnostics of discourse' and a 'politics of guilt' (Grossberg 1992, p. 367). These tendencies derail the larger project of building political agency because they are deconstructive and divisive at a moment in which the Left needs to construct intellectual authority and to articulate people into common commitments. In Spinozist terms, such an approach carries out the 'sad' and reactive task of recognizing existing relations of power and oppression, but it stops short of the *affirmative* movement in thought and the *constitutive* moment in practice that together move being into the terrain of active, 'joyful' becoming.

Identity-based theories are also inadequate for grasping the complexity of human culture – and, by extension, for developing effective political strategies – because they erroneously assume that political struggle is primarily an ideological battle over meaning and identity. Meaning and identity certainly are important sites of struggle. But 'even if we grant that much of contemporary politics is organised around identity', says Grossberg, 'it does not follow that our task is to theorise within the category of identity' (1996a, p. 170). Human individuals and collectivities are not (or at least not necessarily) narrow, ideologically defined subjects; they are complex and dynamic assemblages of matter, energy, affect and subjectivity articulated into particular organizations of space, place and mobility. Leftist politics has been unsuccessful during the past 30 years in part because it has failed to take into account the affective dimensions of human life and the spatial, material structuring of human subjectivity and agency. If the Left is to build a new political agency, it needs to find ways to 'make people care again' by grasping and intervening in the logics that govern the spatial organization of everyday life (Grossberg 1992, p. 393).

In contrast to the ideological politics and the textualist, hermeneutical practices of the identity paradigm, Grossberg argues that cultural studies should be based on 'the concept of a belonging without identity, a notion of what might be called *singularity* as the basis for an alternative politics' (1996b, p. 103). While identity theorists define 'the other' within an economy of difference – that is, as what the self is not, cultural studies should see others as 'fragments' in their own positivity, 'without having recourse to any sort of original totality' (Grossberg 1996b, p. 94, citing Deleuze & Guattari 1987). These fragments, or singularities, are assemblages of material elements and affective capabilities whose relations to each other are not necessarily mediated by any intersubjective code. A singularity is a 'mode of existence which is

neither universal (i.e. conceptual) nor particular (i.e. individual (Grossberg 1996b, p. 103)). It is 'a being whose community is mediated not by any condition of belonging… nor by the simple absence of conditions… but by belonging itself.' (Agamben 1993, p. 85, cited in Grossberg 1996b, p. 104).

A singularity is the 'thing in itself', the *Quodlibet* ' – the loved one with all its predicates' (Agamben 1993, p. 1). It is the being 'which wants to appropriate belonging itself, its own being-in-language, and thus rejects all identity and every condition of belonging' (Agamben 1993, p. 87). A politics based on the concepts of belonging and singularity therefore would not involve 'the representation of ideological subjects but the mobilization of affective subjects', says Grossberg: 'It does not have to construct a "we" which purports to represent anyone. Rather, it strategically and provisionally deploys "we" as a floating sign of a common authority and commitment to speak and to act' (1992, pp. 379–80). In other words, cultural studies' project is the articulation of historical agency based on belonging itself. It is the construction of what Agamben (1993) calls 'the coming community', or what Hardt and Negri call 'the multitude' – the unrepresentable subject of democracy that emerges as the disorganized multiplicity is assembled into a self-organized collective agency (Hardt 1993, pp. 110–11, Hardt and Negri 2001, 2004). The coming community is '"without either representation or possible description"; [it is] an absolutely unrepresentable community' (Agamben 1993, pp. 24–5, cited in Grossberg, 1996b, p. 103).

Grossberg considers the U.S. civil rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s to be a good example of this kind of politics: it was 'a machine of mobilization whose product was a singular belonging rather than a structure of membership' based on identity (1996b, p. 104). Its subsequent recuperation into identitarian ideologies (e.g. as the cultural heritage of a *particular* minority group) bureaucratized official culture (e.g. as school board-mandated diversity training) and state-dominated politics (e.g. as struggles over census categories and the federal resources whose distribution is tied to race-based coding of the population) kills the affective vitality and transformative power of the original movement, even as it stabilizes and regularizes some version of the transformation the movement brought about.[35]

If cultural studies is committed to organizing historical agency around the notion of 'singular belonging', that organization is also a practice of 'spatial becoming' (Grossberg 1996a, p. 177), a 'singular becoming of a community' (Grossberg 1996b, p. 88). It is, following Hardt's reading of Deleuze and Spinoza, 'the composition of joyful social relationships [that] moves between multiplicity and the multitude' (1993, p. 121):

> The Deleuzean practice of affirmation and joy, in other words, is directed toward creating social bodies or planes of composition that are ever more powerful, while they remain at the same time open to internal

> antagonisms, to the real forces of destruction and decomposition. Political assemblage is certainly an art in that it has to be continually made anew, continually reinvented. The multitude is assembled through this practice as a social body defined by a common set of behaviors, needs, and desires. (Hardt, 1993: 121)

Cultural studies should therefore see history as 'becomings... rather than as continuity or reproduction', and it should concern itself with 'mobilities' rather than 'change', says Grossberg (1993, p. 7). It is a 'geography of becomings, a pragmatics of the multiple' (1996a, p. 180).

However, we must beware of two risks associated with the composition of political assemblages and agency: arborification and self-destructive destratification. Arborification (which is generally the dominant form of power and social organization) occurs when external forces or structures channel and control matter-flows and affects, locking them into patterns of resonance and hierarchy. For Deleuze and Guattari, arborification is a 'death sentence':

> Once a rhizome has been obstructed, arborified, it's all over, no desire stirs; for it is always by rhizome that desire moves and produces. Whenever desire climbs a tree, internal repercussions trip it up and it falls to its death; the rhizome, on the other hand, acts on desire by external, productive outgrowths.
>
> (1987, p. 14)

Politics organized by arborescent structures is molar or majoritarian politics. Molar politics is the politics of the State, the politics of representation by which minorities are made into knowable, representable subjects of State power. Molar politics can empower minorities by giving them rights, but it always subjects them, at the same time, to its axioms, to its codes and standards and its forms of discipline (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 291). Similarly, molar structures in psychoanalysis restratify and reterritorialize the unconscious and its rhizomatic desires, subjecting them to the arborescent schemas of patriarchy, authority, and rationality. In both cases, power lies in what Deleuze calls *dispositifs* – mechanisms or plans that 'structure a social order from above, from an external space of transcendence' (Hardt 1993, p. 121; see note 34).

To resist the tyranny of State logics, Deleuze and Guattari propose an ethics of becoming. As discussed above, becoming is first of all an ontological stance: what we are, what the Earth is, is a constant flux of matters and affects. Stable structures (of personality, of desire, of language, of politics) are never completely stable; steady states are never completely steady. The axioms of capitalism, the State, subjectivity, etc., subordinate living flows, but these flows are never completely ordered (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 464). We are always between the stable points constructed by such assemblages: 'a line

of becoming is not defined by the points it connects… it passes between points, it comes up through the middle' (1987, p. 293). We understand ourselves and our world as a field of discrete individuals and distinct places, but in fact we are always becoming something else, always 'establishing relations of movement and rest between particles in [our] "zone of proximity"' (1987, pp. 272–3). Thus 'it is the becoming that is real' (Grossberg 1996a, p. 180), because we are always in the process of passing between the stable points that seem to define our affective states and our subjectivity.

However, following Spinoza's famous conceptual move, this ontological claim is also an ethical imperative: being as becoming is a libratory practice of joyous affirmation and self-constitution: 'Becoming is the movement by which the line frees itself from the point, and renders the point indiscernible: the rhizome, the opposite of arborescence; break away from arborescence' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 294). Becoming is a way of freeing desire from the structures that attempt to limit and channel it, a way of throwing off those structures and following the lines that connect us to other territories, carry us into other assemblages. Thus politics for Deleuze and Guattari is often a matter of producing, or reactivating, rhizomatic connections 'against the great conjunctions of the apparatuses of capture and domination' (1987, p. 423): 'Schizoanalysis, or pragmatics, has no other meaning: Make a rhizome' (1987, p. 251).

This politics goes by many names in Deleuze and Guattari's work: nomadicity, minoritarian politics, micropolitics, the production of 'war machines', becoming-minoritarian, pragmatics, and 'making oneself a haecceity'. In all cases, it is a matter of challenging the arborescent structures produced by the dominant axiomatics, of 'destroying the dominant equilibrium of denumerable sets' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 472). But this can only be accomplished if the minoritarian movement refuses to construe itself as a definable, molar whole: 'A minority is capable of serving as the active medium of becoming' only if it 'ceases to be a definable aggregate in relation to the majority' (1987, p. 291): 'The axiomatic manipulates only denumerable sets, even infinite ones, whereas minorities constitute 'fuzzy', nondenumerable, nonaxiomizable sets, in short, 'masses', multiplicities of escape and flux' (1987, p. 470). Becoming-minoritarian is 'the opposite of macropolitics,… in which it is a question of knowing how to win or obtain a majority' (1987, p. 292).

The nomadic bands of the Asian steppe, who periodically invaded and deterritorialized the great State structures of the pre-capitalist empires, serve as Deleuze and Guattari's primary historical examples of minoritarian politics, but Agamben (1993, p. 87) offers a more recent illustration: Tienanmen Square. The participants in the Tienanmen uprising did not seek *recognition* from the Chinese State; they came together spontaneously and with no other

purpose than to assert their freedom to be together despite the power of the State. They were an 'absolutely unrepresentable community' (Agamben 1993, p. 86), a becoming-community that deeply shook the foundations of the Chinese State without ever gaining, or even seeking, power within it.

Molecular politics, becoming, and destratification should not be taken as an absolute ethical imperative, however. Arborification is always *potentially* repressive; however, it is not *necessarily* so, and the politics of becoming has its own dangers. Thus, Deleuze and Guattari extol moderation when it comes to practical politics (whether of the self or of the collective). For example, they caution against the dangers of indiscriminate destratification and the fascist potential of becomings:

> Every undertaking of destratification... must... observe concrete rules of extreme caution: a too-sudden destratification may be suicidal, or turn cancerous. In other words, it will sometimes end in chaos, the void and destruction, and sometimes lead us back into the strata which become more rigid still, losing their degrees of diversity, differentiation, and mobility.
>
> (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 503)

We must be a 'master of speeds' when undertaking a becoming, they say – not a victim of 'black holes and reterritorialization' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, pp. 284–5). Conversely, molar politics is often a necessary part of change. Stratification 'is beneficial in many respects and unfortunate in many others', they note (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 40). Some degree of organization is a precondition of agency and action: 'Is it not necessary to retain a minimum of strata, a minimum of forms and functions, a minimal subject from which to extract materials, affects, and assemblages?' Deleuze and Guattari ask (1987, p. 270). Deleuzean ethics and politics should be understood, therefore, as a pragmatic practice of articulation that links molecular strategies with molar ones without allowing the latter to dominate the former. As they note, 'molecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the molar organizations to reshuffle their segments, their binary distributions of sexes, classes and parties' (1987, pp. 216–17).[36]

What, then, are the implications of Deleuzean ethics for the theoretical and practical work of cultural studies? I will argue that while cultural studies should accept the basic tenets of spatial-materialist ontology and the machinic theory of agency, its vision of politics must be rigorously pragmatic and constructionist. In general, Grossberg's work resists the pull of anarchism and romanticism that inheres in the notion of becoming, but the spatial-materialist critique of structure does seem to inhibit discussion, in his writings, of concrete political strategy.

Grossberg's own formulations sometimes imply that politics is a matter of 'escaping' the bounds of power, as if power were the province solely of macro-assemblages (Deleuze's *dispositifs*): 'To be optimistic, power is never able to totalize itself. There are always fissures and fault lines that may become active sites of change. Power never quite accomplishes everything it might like to everywhere' (Grossberg 1992). This language suggests that power itself is oppressive and must be resisted or eluded (a notion that undergirds much modernist critical theory). Within a Spinozist ontology, however, power is not so much something to be avoided as it is something to be sought; in fact, the core of our very being – *conatus* – is an urge to increase our own power relative to our context (Deleuze 1988b, pp. 98–104).[37] Power, in fact, is everywhere, and freedom is not absolute (an escape from determination) but relational (Bauman 1988). Similarly, desire is not an absence of structure or the opposite of organization; it is always assembled – it is 'never separable from complex assemblages' (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 215). And deterritorialization is 'inseparable from correlative reterritorializations' (1987: 509). In other passages, Grossberg himself is clear about the need to avoid a romantic politics of escaping power: we need to abandon 'notions of resistance that assume a subject standing entirely outside of and against a well established structure of power' (Grossberg 1996b, p. 88). Against a potentially romanticized quest for spaces beyond power, cultural studies should instead seek to develop a Nietzschean and Spinozist ethics of claiming power and using it constructively.

At least two obvious conclusions follow from this: first, the Left 'has to reassert the moral and political authority of specific ideas and visions which can provide the grounds of struggle' (Grossberg 1992, p. 384). 'Too much contemporary intellectual work renounces all intellectual authority', Grossberg argues (1992, p. 19):

> In their desire to renounce vanguardism, hierarchy and authoritarianism, too many intellectuals have also renounced the value of political and intellectual authority. This renunciation of authority is predicated on a theoretical crisis of representation in which the authority of knowledge is suspect, since all knowledge is historically determined and implicated in hierarchical relations of power.
>
> (1992, p. 362)

Cultural studies is committed to political transformation, not to philosophical correctness. Instead of deconstructing the legitimacy of all political or ethical claims (or, alternatively, marking them as particular epistemological and ethical 'standpoints'), cultural studies must accept the anti-modern philosophical move (the denial of metaphysical ethical guarantees) and then work to reconstruct intellectual and political authority on the Left:

> If theory is a struggle over how we represent and engage the world, *it is also a political practice attempting to make its own articulation dominant* (i.e. taken up as the representation of the truth) and thus to affect the very ways in which we live that reality. Such conjunctural theories are not caught up in the constant (modernist) dilemma between truth and falsity, or success and failure, but rather, operate in the ongoing articulation of political and cultural struggles.
>
> (Grossberg 1987, p. 97, emphasis added)

Thus the work of asserting authority is both a struggle 'to re-establish the political possibility of theory' and a more pragmatic effort 'to construct politically effective authorities' (Grossberg 1992, p. 363). That is, it is a battle that must be fought on both intellectual and political (and in both cases, institutional) terrain.

The second conclusion we must draw concerns political organization itself. A certain 'moral purism' has led leftist theorists to 'refuse the moment of organization' on the grounds that organization is hierarchical and repressive (Grossberg 1992, p. 388). The 'valorization of the "schizo"' in some forms of postmodern politics, for example, leaves 'little possibility of organizing and articulating agency into social and historical structures of resistance' (1992, p. 121). It is important to struggle against authoritarian forms of organization wherever they are found, Grossberg asserts, but organization itself – even hierarchical organization – is not necessarily a sin. It is in fact 'a strategic and tactical, even empowering, necessity' (1992, p. 121).

As discussed in the previous section, this is a project of building historical agency from the Left. It is not a task of overcoming the fragmentation of ideological subjectivities, of finding a common identity that would adequately represent all subaltern groups (Grossberg 1992, p. 371). It is instead 'the construction of an affective commonality', an attempt 'to mobilize people in a common struggle, despite the fact that they have no common identity' (1992, p. 393). 'The task is to win various identities, subjects, knowledges and actors to specific commitments of agency' (1992, p. 122). Rejecting a purely minoritarian politics, Grossberg argues that the Left must 'strive to organize minorities into a new majority' (1992, p. 393). The challenge is to compose this new assemblage of agency as an *immanent* majority – that is, without alienating power from its rhizomatic source in the becoming of the multitude (Hardt & Negri 2004).

Grossberg's work develops a sophisticated argument in defence of the necessity and legitimacy of intellectual authority and political organization. It engages the postmodernist and post-structuralist currents within cultural studies but rejects a politics of endless deconstruction. It is an argument – a much needed one – that the Left (or rather, some form of Left agency) can and should be exist after the 'postmodern turn'. Cultural studies 'does seek to

give a better understanding of where "we" are so "we" can get somewhere else, hopefully somewhere better, leaving open the question of what is better and how one decides, as well as the question of who "we" are' (Grossberg 1995, p. 14). These questions are indeed open and in some sense must remain so always; however, to effectively engage the current context and build a new assemblage of agency, cultural studies needs to face a range of theoretical and practical challenges:

- *the redefinition of 'the public' and 'the people' in transnational and globalized contexts* and the development of engaged, active strategies to build and empower publics and peoples beyond (or despite) nationalistic and neocolonial forms of coding and territorialization;
- *the pragmatic analysis of and political engagement with capitalism* and other forms of power as opposed to the romantic and utopian critique of such structures from an imagined ethical or institutional 'outside';
- *the development of alternative logics of organization and power* in the wake of the critique of bureaucratic-authoritarian articulations of the Left and the collapse of state-dominated 'socialism' – in other words, the development of new forms of agency;
- *a reappraisal of the value of the institutions, practices, and policies of democracy* (often dismissed as 'bourgeois liberalism') in light of the resurgence of nationalist discourses and policies of state security, the rise of exclusionist religious and ethnic movements, and the increasing use of violence against civilian populations (whether in the name of national security or anti-systemic resistance);
- *a more nuanced approach to the definition of the public, the private, and the self* and to the politics of their articulation – an approach in which the legitimate critique of the subject and of domestic (or private) space is balanced by a recognition of the pragmatic everyday need for coherent subjectivity and a stable sense of belonging and 'home'.

If cultural studies is to speak to present contexts with clarity and authority, such issues cannot be approached from a merely critical or deconstructive perspective. Instead, cultural studies must work constructively to generate appropriate theories (adequate concepts); effective methodological and analytical tools with empirical purchase; and proactive, engaged strategies for political change. This is perhaps the most important, but least developed, implication of Grossberg's Deleuzeanism: rather than reproducing a reactive, critical stance, cultural studies must work for an *affirmative* theoretical practice and a *constitutive* political practice based on active and joyful passions.

The monist materialism of Deleuze and Guattari does not do this work for us; it does not provide definitive theoretical frameworks or permanent political answers. However, it does constitute an alternative philosophical ground on which new theoretical, methodological, and political strategies can

be developed. Perhaps, then, Grossberg's work should not be seen as a philosophical detour but as a line of flight, an oblique movement away from the discursive field of modernist and postmodernist social theory. This shift in perspective – or rather, this change in position and direction – reveals a different philosophical horizon and opens up a less-travelled conceptual space within which cultural studies can ask new questions and develop new analytical and political strategies.

Notes

1 I am referring to the unique assemblage of faculty, graduate students, university programmes and institutional spaces that had developed at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in the 1970s and 1980s and which was reaching, by the early 1990s, a point of intensity and force that its institutional context could not (or would not) tolerate. Based in the Institute of Communication Research, the Department of Speech Communication, the Department of English, the Unit for Criticism and Interpretive Theory, and several other academic departments and units, faculty such as James Carey, Norman Denzin, Dilip Gaonkar, Larry Grossberg, James Hay, Cary Nelson and Paula Treichler drew a diverse and passionate group of graduate students to Illinois, led vibrant and sometimes contentious university colloquia and study groups, organized significant international cultural studies conferences, and produced many of the individually- and collectively-authored texts that have shaped American cultural studies (see, for example, Carey 1988, 1997, Denzin 1992, Grossberg 1992, 1993, 1995, 1996a, 1996b, Grossberg *et al*. 1992, Grossberg & Wartella 1996, Hay 1987, 1997). Of course, many histories (or genealogies) of cultural studies are possible, and the Illinois tradition, while clearly one of the most important North American experiences, is not the only possible point of departure (or arrival). The cultural studies I address in this essay, however, is by and large that tradition, and more specifically, it is the body of texts, authors, and concepts through which Grossberg defined cultural studies at Illinois. My account and my comments should be read, therefore, as a situated discourse that responds to a particular academic context and a particular constellation of concepts and claims.

2 For feminism and critical gender theory, see, for example, Treichler and Wartella (1986), Morris (1989), Braidotti (1991) and Weedon (1991). For critical race and ethnicity studies, see Anzaldúa (1991), Gray (1993), Gilroy (1996) and Hall (1997). For postcolonial studies, see Said (1979), Wolf (1982), Chatterjee (1986), Spivak (1987, 1990), Clifford (1989, 1992), Min-ha (1989), Morris (1989, 1992), Ahmad (1992), Amin (1992), Chakrabarty (1992), Grossberg (1993, 1996a, 1996b), Hall (1993, 1996, 1997), Viswanathan (1993), Ang and Stratton (1996), Chambers and Curti (1996), Chen (1996) and Gilroy (1996). For postmodernist philosophy, see Foucault (1970), Lyotard (1984), Baudrillard (1983), Deleuze and Guattari

(1987) and Agamben (1993); for post-structuralist theory, see Derrida (1974), Bhabha (1990), Young (1990) and Weedon (1991). For political economy, see Ahmad (1992), Schiller (1992), Garnham (1995), Chen (1996), Mosco (1996) and Herman and McChesney (1997). For theories of globalization, see Appadurai (1990), Massey (1991), Wallerstein (1991), Grossberg (1993, 1996a, 1996b, 2000), Morley and Robins (1995), King (1997) and Morley (2000).

3 I want to emphasize that my reification (and even anthropomorphization) of cultural studies in the present discussion is intended as a rhetorical device and not as an essentialist or universalizing claim. However, I do think that this reification – which has also grounded Grossberg's arguments – can play an important discursive and political role in the construction of a more democratic and less Eurocentric cultural studies. Arguments about what cultural studies 'is' can be seen as constitutive moves that produce and reproduce an imagined – and real – community that can then be engaged and transformed by others. Of course, cultural studies is more accurately seen as a discursive formation or as a concrete assemblage of academic and commercial networks and practices, not as a theoretical ideal type.

4 Critiques of ontological dualism include Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 1994), Deleuze (1988a, 1988b, 1992), Harris (1992) and Nietzsche (1954). On Spinoza and Deleuze's Spinozist monism, see Hardt (1993) and Massumi (1992). For a critique of dualism and the 'politics of interpretation' within cultural studies, see Grossberg (1992).

5 Anti-textualist approaches to cultural theory include Foucault (1970), de Certeau (1984) Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and LeFebvre (1991). Critiques of textualist cultural studies include Grossberg (1996b) and Hay (1987, 1997).

6 Regarding the temporal bias of modern theory and philosophy, see Chakrabarty (1992), Foucault (1970) Grossberg (1996a) and Young (1990). As we will see below, Deleuze actually develops the amodern temporalism of Bergson as an alternative to the modernist, historical temporalism of Hegel.

7 Critiques of identity-based theory include Agamben (1993), Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Grossberg (1996b), Hall (1997), Said (1979) and Spivak (1990).

8 Theories of place and space that question the modernist understanding of 'local' and 'global' include Clifford (1989, 1992), Gilroy (1996), Grossberg (1996a, 1996b), Massey (1991), Morley (2000) and Morris (1989, 1992).

9 Identity politics, for example, may empower a minority by granting it official recognition within a policy on racially or ethnically defined cultural diversity. That same process of recognition and representation is also a form of capture, coding and control with which the state or other apparatus of power channels the creative, transformative potential of a social movement and translates it into a manageable, officially recognized category of legitimate status and demand.

10 I use the term 'amodern' to refer to philosophical concepts that are *outside of* or *apart from* modern ontologies. Such concepts are not necessarily *post*-modern or *anti*-modern – terms that imply a degree of reactivity and rely, for their definition, on modernism itself as a negative point of reference.

11 See Agamben (1993), Deleuze and Guattari (1987), Foucault (1970) and Harris (1992). For Deleuze and Guattari, Grossberg draws primarily the seminal book, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1987).

12 This list is comprised of my own condensations or paraphrasing of arguments made by Grossberg (1992, 1996a, 1996b, 2000). The key concepts of these arguments will be explored in greater detail in the body of the essay.

13 Cultural studies practitioners such as Meaghan Morris, Jennifer Slack, Greg Seigworth and Greg Wise have indeed taken up Deleuzean philosophy in various ways and are developing productive analyses using such concepts. See, for example, Morris (1989, 1992), Seigworth (2000), Seigworth and Wise (2000), Wise (1997, 2000), and the other essays in the April 2000 special issue of *Cultural Studies* (vol. 14, no. 2), edited by Seigworth and Wise. See also the essays collected in *Animations of Deleuze and Guattari*, edited by Jennifer Slack (2003). For a Deleuzean approach to nationality and globalization, see Wiley (2003, 2004). In this article, I do not attempt to review this work. My focus is more narrow, on the ways in which Grossberg's own work takes up Deleuze and Guattari. Grossberg, it should be noted, has played a catalytic role in several of the aforementioned authors' introduction to Deleuzean philosophy.

14 Deleuze summarizes Spinoza's concepts of joy and sadness as follows:

> . . .either the existing mode encounters other existing modes that agree with it and bring their relation into composition with its relation (for example, in very different ways, a food, a loved being, an ally); or the existing mode encounters others that do not agree with it and tend to decompose it, to destroy it (a poison, a hated being, an enemy). In the first case, the existing mode's ability to be affected is fulfilled by joyful feelings-affects, affects based on joy and love; in the other case, by sad feelings-affects, based on sadness and hatred. . . . joy, and what follows from it, fulfils the ability to be affected in such a way that the power of acting or force of existing increases relatively; the reverse is true of sadness.
>
> (Deleuze 1988b, pp. 100–1)

The 'effort to augment the power of acting or to experience joyful passions' is what Spinoza calls the *conatus* (Deleuze 1988b, p. 101). On the distinction between sad and joyful passive affections and the distinction between passive and active affections, see Hardt (1993, pp. 91–100, p. 121).

15 On philosophy as the construction of concepts, see Deleuze and Guattari's (1994) *What Is Philosophy?*

16 On occasion Deleuze and Guattari legitimize their own work in similar fashion. They say they are writing against dichotomous, 'arborescent' thinking, which they characterize as 'the oldest and weariest kind of thought' (1987, p. 5). In fact, modernism should probably be considered relatively 'young' in the context of the history of human thought.

17 I am not suggesting that Grossberg would defend these modernist ways of legitimating theory. In fact, in many places he argues against Eurocentric histories of philosophy and myths about the autonomy of theory. Cultural studies' theoretical work is always a 'detour' on the way to other ends, not a self-enclosed exercise in self-reflexivity (Grossberg 1992, p. 19). The point is that, regardless of his explicit statements about theory, the rhetorical structure of some of his arguments is susceptible to these criticisms. In fact, as Jon Pheloung notes (personal communication), the very notion of founding, entering, or embracing a *new* philosophical system or position is a typically modernist trope.

18 Noting the Deleuzean (and Spinozist) emphasis on political indeterminacy, Michael Hardt goes so far as to say that a vision of radical democracy inspired by Deleuzean ethics coincides, 'to an extent . . .with that of liberalism' (Hardt 1993, p. 120). That project is developed in Hardt and Negri (2004).

19 As cultural studies practitioners, we are fond of pointing out that intellectual work is not a disengagement from the 'outside world', but a particular kind of engagement with the world. However, we often speak of cultural studies as a theoretical 'detour' from politics or as a practice of crossing the (imaginary) border between the space of intellection and the space of 'the popular'. While there may be 'a certain autonomy of intellectual work' (Grossberg 1995, pp. 27–8), that autonomy is itself socially constructed within economies of intellectual or academic production, the economies of the reproductive work of everyday life, etc. Acknowledging the work of Tony Bennett, Grossberg argues that the Left needs to learn to operate 'within systems of governance' (Grossberg 1992, pp. 390–1). Of course, this is not a choice that cultural studies can make; it is not a strategic move 'into' politics. Intellectual practices are already situated in particular institutional and social contexts; and those contexts, and the connections they make possible or make difficult, shape our work, our thinking and our intellectual agendas from the start. This does not mean we should succumb to the 'fetishism of the local' and the 'constant problematizing of [the theorist's] relations to the map' often involved in calls to politicize the place of the intellectual (Grossberg 1996a, p. 176, 1992, p. 66). But we must be careful about how we invoke the 'outside', whether that outside is 'politics', 'the popular', or any other imagined exterior. If cultural studies' practice of mapping is a matter of experimenting in the milieu, that milieu is *our* milieu.

20 According to Michael Hardt, the primary target of Deleuze's early philosophical writings was not Kantian phenomenology but the Hegelian

dialectic, with its central concept of negative determination (Hardt 1993). As Hardt puts it, Deleuze reads Bergson, Nietzsche and Spinoza to develop

> a critique of negative ontology and [propose] in its stead an absolutely positive movement of being that rests on an efficient and internal notion of causality. To the negative movement of determination, he opposes the positive movement of differentiation; to the dialectical unity of the One and the Multiple, he opposes the irreducible multiplicity of becoming.
>
> (1993, p. xiv)

Grossberg's use of Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, emphasizes the anti-Kantianism of their ontology, and so it is the critique of Kantian dualism that is the focus of the present discussion.

21 The following section draws on three very helpful discussions of Deleuzean philosophy: Bogue (1989), Hardt (1993) and Massumi (1992). On the virtual and the actual, see, especially, Hardt (1993, pp. 13–22) and Massumi (1992, pp. 34–46, pp. 167–70, n. 44). I also thank the anonymous reviewers of this article for their extensive and very helpful comments on earlier versions of this section.

22 Deleuze employs two spellings – differen*t*iation and differen*c*iation – to distinguish between the production of a multiplicity of virtual potentials (differen*t*iation) and the production of different actual bodies and relations that incarnate virtual problems in concrete milieus (differen*c*iation). See Deleuze (1994 [1968], p. 207). The concepts of virtuality and actualization will be discussed below.

23 Two examples discussed by Deleuze illustrate the actualization of virtual potentials within different strata. On the organic stratum, the development of an embryo is one kind of actualization: the transformation of genetic information and undifferentiated organic matter into an actual organism with an individuated internal milieu (a body), characteristic traits of its species, and actual differentiated body parts (Deleuze 1994, pp. 214–15). The egg needs little or no input from its external milieu (at least in the case of birds and reptiles). Although it begins as a more or less undifferentiated mass, it contains, as immanent virtual potential, all that is needed to become a complex, functioning organism. The actual, living animal that hatches from the egg is a solution to a virtual problem, or rather a constellation of problems: how to move, how to take nourishment from the environment, how to gather information, etc. Each species solves these problems in different ways, and each individual within each species actualizes that solution in a unique manner that involves both repetition (of the relations and points that define the species) and difference (of the actual organs and parts that compose the unique individual).

An example of actualization on the anthropomorphic stratum – the dimension of social and cultural organization – is the division of labour

in society. All societies must solve an abstract 'problem' of labour: how to organize work in order to meet the society's needs. In capitalist societies, this problem is solved through the division of labour into wage labour and capital. However, concrete, historical societies have actualized the capitalist division of labour in different ways (see Deleuze 1994, pp. 207–8). All such societies are organized by a capitalist 'machine', but they actualize the abstract relations of capital and labour in unique historical formations – in what Deleuze and Guattari call concrete assemblages (1987, p. 406). The abstract machine of capital, like the genetic code of the egg, is a virtual multiplicity – a potential set of relations and points – that is actualized in a particular spatio-temporal milieu.

24 Brian Massumi reads the Deleuzean virtual-actual ontology as implying the fractal nature of existence: the inherence of an infinite series of potential past and future states in every actual, present body:

> The virtual is the future-past of the present: a thing's destiny and condition of existence. . . . A thing's actuality is its duration as a process — of genesis and annihilation, of movement across thresholds and toward the limit. The virtual is real and in reciprocal presupposition with the actual, but does not exist even to the extent that the actual could be said to exist. It subsists in the actual or is immanent to it.
>
> (Massumi 1992, pp. 36–7)

25 I thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing out the connection between actualization and machinic structuration.

26 Grossberg (1992, p. 57), citing an earlier version of Deleuze and Guattari's essay 'Rhizome', uses the terms 'assemblage' and 'rhizome' interchangeably. According to my understanding of *A Thousand Plateaus*, a rhizome is instead *one kind* of assemblage. An assemblage can then be characterized as more or less rhizomatic, or more or less 'arborescent', depending on the ways in which it is organized. Of course no assemblage is ever organized completely by hierarchical forms – stratification is never total – and thus all assemblages are to some extent rhizomatic, 'composing multiplicities' and 'burgeoning' in ways that exceed the arborescent structure (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 15); in this more general sense, then, every assemblage is a rhizome.

27 There are two kinds of abstract machine: the 'Ecumenon' and the 'Planomenon'. The Ecumenon defines the unity of composition of a given stratum; it is an abstract machine 'enveloped within' a stratum. The Planomenon, on the other hand, works across strata, carrying out processes of destratification on the plane of consistency (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, pp. 50–6, p. 73).

28 Michael Hardt summarizes this point as follows:

> Deleuze asserts that it is essential that we conceive of the Bergsonian emanation of being, differentiation, as a relationship between the virtual and the actual, rather than as a relationship between the possible and the real. . . . The possible is never real, even though it may be actual; however, while the virtual may not be actual, it is nonetheless real. In other words, there are several contemporary (actual) possibilities of which some may be realized in the future; in contrast, virtualities are always real (in the past, in memory) and may become actualized in the present . . . . This is Deleuze's basis for asserting that the movement of being must be understood in terms of the virtual-actual relationship rather than the possible-real relationship.
>
> (Hardt 1993, pp. 16–17)

29 This notion of assembled agency is similar to Niklas Luhmann's concept of an autopoietic system (see, e.g., Luhmann, 1985), but it doesn't assume as much coherence and teleology as does systems theory: instead of an algorithm or rule-set governing a finite set of processes (systems theory), a 'machine' imposes a temporary hegemony over an ever-changing flow of materials and practices.

30 The thrust of Deleuze's last writings on human subjectivity is to decentre this modernist concept of individuality. The Lockean possessive individual of mainstream modern philosophy is assumed to be the agent of his own actions as well as the locus of rights. Deleuze draws on Hume to develop the alternative concept of 'a life'. In this view, human beings are characterized as impersonal *individuations* on the broader plane of immanence. The experience of selfhood or individuality is an illusory psychological complex that obscures the deeper connectedness of the human organism to anonymous and transindividual processes. A 'transcendental empiricism' is needed to penetrate the illusion created by consciousness and common sense and to grasp the plane of immanence of one's life. See Deleuze (2001, pp. 25–33).

31 I thank Jon Pheloung (personal communication) for this example.

32 As Michael Hardt notes in his discussion of Deleuze's Spinozism, theory and practice are interdependent: 'ontological speculation prepares the terrain for a constitutive practice; or rather, after ontological speculation… has brought to light the distinctions of the terrain, this same terrain is traversed a second time in a different direction, with a different bearing, with a practical attitude' (Hardt 1993, p. 105). Or, as Deleuze put it, 'practice is a set of relays from one theoretical point to another, theory is a relay from one practice to another' (quoted in Hardt 1993, p. 105).

33 On the concept of assemblages or *agencements*, see Hardt (1993, p. 121).

34 Spinoza's understanding of the relation between individual power and collective order is in some ways similar to that of Hobbes: being cannot

increase its power unilaterally, without regard to the effects it has on others; rather it must enter into relations of civic organization that co-ordinate its actions with those of others in such a way that a maximum of relations are composed as joyful and active. Spinoza (and Deleuze) differ from Hobbes, however, in their solution to this problem. Hobbes calls for an omnipotent State that will guarantee order from above (even though it rises originally – or hypothetically – from the interests and will of the population), whereas Spinoza and Deleuze aim for an assemblage of bodies and relations that remains immanent to the field of power. Deleuze characterizes this latter form as an *agencement de la puissance*, as opposed to the *dispositif du pouvoir* (see Hardt 1993, pp. 119–22). Brian Massumi notes: 'Force is not to be confused with power. Power is the domestication of force. Force in its wild state arrives from outside to break constraints and open new vistas. Power builds walls' (1992, p. 6). Hardt and Negri's recent book, *Multitude (2004)* is an attempt to develop a Deleuzean concept of agency – the 'multitude' – in the contemporary context of globalization, empire and war.

35 Writing about authority, Max Weber argued that all social change follows this path, from the liminality and transformative creativity of charismatic authority to the rigidified inertia of bureaucratic authority (see Weber 1946).

36 Ted Stolze's reading of the micro/macro relation makes micropolitics into a kind of corrective measure:

> Micropolitics isn't intended to replace class struggle but to operate as a militant analysis (or an analysis for militants) which might help prevent left organizations and mass movements from reproducing within their ranks precisely the same hierarchies, the same dogmatisms, the same oppressions that already exist in class society . . . .Micropolitics does not bypass or replace the socialist project. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari's aim is to hasten capitalism's demise precisely by supplying a more complex analysis of capitalist relations of power and structures of domination.
>
> (Stolze 1990, pp. 291–2)

This is an interesting interpretation. However, it seems to pull the Deleuzean project too far in the other direction, making micropolitics merely a supplement to traditional macropolitical organization – a sort of reminder or caution for leftist organizers who want to avoid authoritarianism. It seems to me that Deleuze and Guattari's proposal runs much deeper, questioning the very logic on which most leftist politics has been based:

> The issue is not at all anarchy versus organization, nor even centralism versus decentralization, but a calculus or conception of

> the problems of nondenumerable sets, against the axiomatic of denumerable sets. Such a calculus may have its own compositions, its own organizations, even centralizations; nevertheless, it proceeds not via the States or the axiomatic process but via a pure becoming of minorities.
>
> (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, p. 471)

37 In fact, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between power and force. Force is productive; it 'takes the uniqueness of the event to its limit', while power domesticates and regularizes force into a repeatable 'circuit of reproduction and systematic variation' (Massumi 1992, p. 19). See note 35.

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