



THE TROUBLE WITH
Pleasure
DELEUZE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

AARON SCHUSTER

Short Circuits series

THE TROUBLE WITH PLEASURE

SHORT CIRCUITS

Mladen Dolar, Alenka Zupančič, and Slavoj Žižek, editors

The Puppet and the Dwarf: The Perverse Core of Christianity, by Slavoj Žižek

The Shortest Shadow: Nietzsche's Philosophy of the Two, by Alenka Zupančič

Is Oedipus Online? Siting Freud after Freud, by Jerry Aline Flieger

Interrogation Machine: Laibach and NSK, by Alexei Monroe

The Parallax View, by Slavoj Žižek

A Voice and Nothing More, by Mladen Dolar

Subjectivity and Otherness: A Philosophical Reading of Lacan, by Lorenzo Chiesa

The Odd One In: On Comedy, by Alenka Zupančič

The Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic? by Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank,
edited by Creston Davis

Interface Fantasy: A Lacanian Cyborg Ontology, by André Nusselder

Lacan at the Scene, by Henry Bond

Laughter: Notes on a Passion, by Anca Parvulescu

All for Nothing: Hamlet's Negativity, by Andrew Cutrofello

The Trouble with Pleasure: Deleuze and Psychoanalysis, by Aaron Schuster

THE TROUBLE WITH PLEASURE

DELEUZE AND PSYCHOANALYSIS

Aaron Schuster

THE MIT PRESS CAMBRIDGE, MASSACHUSETTS LONDON, ENGLAND

© 2016 Massachusetts Institute of Technology

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reproduced in any form by any electronic or mechanical means (including photocopying, recording, or information storage and retrieval) without permission in writing from the publisher.

This book was set in Joanna and Copperplate by The MIT Press. Printed and bound in the United States of America.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Names: Schuster, Aaron, 1974– author.

Title: The trouble with pleasure : Deleuze and psychoanalysis / Schuster, Aaron.

Description: Cambridge, MA : The MIT Press, 2016. | Series: Short circuits |

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2015038372 | ISBN 9780262528597 (pbk. : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Deleuze, Gilles, 1925–1995. | Psychoanalysis—Social aspects.

Classification: LCC BF 175 .S3868 2016 | DDC 150.19/5—dc23 LC record available at <http://lcn.loc.gov/2015038372>

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

For Stewart A. Schuster and Helen H. Schuster, in memory

CONTENTS

Series Foreword	ix
PREFACE:	
CRITIQUE OF PURE COMPLAINT	1
Was I Thirsty . . . — In Pessimism More Than Pessimism — Truth Is a Complaint — The Intellectual Complaint of God — The Failure Not to Be — In Praise of Lamentation — A Complainer’s Discourse — The Saintly Hypochondriac	
INTRODUCTION:	
CLINICAL PROSPECTS FOR A FUTURE PHILOSOPHY	27
The Odd Couple — Is Life a Disease? — Virtual Extinction — The Trouble with Pleasure	
1 THE BEYONDS OF THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE	47
Subjectivation without Subject — <i>Habitus</i> , or the Id — <i>Mnemosyne</i> , or the Virtual Object — <i>Thanatos</i> , or the Deleuzian Oedipus Complex — Primal Repression — The Scorpion and the Frog	
2 THE STRANGE SPINOZISM OF PERVERSION	73
Return to Melanie Klein — Schizoid Pre-Socratics and Depressive Platonism — The Oedipus Complex and Its Successful Resolution — The Sublime Object of Perversion — Logic of Sense or Logic of the Signifier	
3 IS PLEASURE A ROTTEN IDEA?	97
The Speculative Sense of Lust — Elements for a History of Pleasure — Freud’s Philosophy of Pleasure — Pleasure and Sublimation — The Lethargy of Being	

4	TO HAVE DONE WITH LACK	127
	The Artist and the Panther—Compatible Symptoms—Courtly Love, or the Thing—We Shall Give Priority to Trash . . . — <i>Between Instincts and Institutions</i>	
5	THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCHIZOPHRENIA	153
	Schizophrenia as a Philosophical Problem—The Schizophrenic Process—Drive and Desire—Oblomov and Stakhanov—From Death Drive to Debt Drive—A Philosophical Clinic	
	Notes	183
	Index	213

SERIES FOREWORD

A short circuit occurs when there is a faulty connection in the network—faulty, of course, from the standpoint of the network’s smooth functioning. Is not the shock of short-circuiting, therefore, one of the best metaphors for a critical reading? Is not one of the most effective critical procedures to cross wires that do not usually touch: to take a major classic (text, author, notion) and read it in a short-circuiting way, through the lens of a “minor” author, text, or conceptual apparatus (“minor” should be understood here in Deleuze’s sense: not “of lesser quality,” but marginalized, disavowed by the hegemonic ideology, or dealing with a “lower,” less dignified topic)? If the minor reference is well chosen, such a procedure can lead to insights which completely shatter and undermine our common perceptions. This is what Marx, among others, did with philosophy and religion (short-circuiting philosophical speculation through the lens of political economy, that is to say, economic speculation); this is what Freud and Nietzsche did with morality (short-circuiting the highest ethical notions through the lens of the unconscious libidinal economy). What such a reading achieves is not a simple “desublimation,” a reduction of the higher intellectual content to its lower economic or libidinal cause; the aim of such an approach is, rather, the inherent decentering of the interpreted text, which brings to light its “unthought,” its disavowed presuppositions and consequences.

And this is what “Short Circuits” wants to do, again and again. The underlying premise of the series is that Lacanian psychoanalysis is a privileged instrument of such an approach, whose purpose is to illuminate a standard text or ideological formation, making it readable in a totally new way—the long history of Lacanian interventions in philosophy, religion, the arts (from the visual arts to the cinema, music, and literature), ideology, and politics justifies this premise. This, then, is not a new series of books on psychoanalysis, but a series of “connections in the Freudian field”—of short Lacanian interventions

in art, philosophy, theology, and ideology. “Short Circuits” intends to revive a practice of reading which confronts a classic text, author, or notion with its own hidden presuppositions, and thus reveals its disavowed truth. The basic criterion for the texts that will be published is that they effectuate such a theoretical short circuit. After reading a book in this series, the reader should not simply have learned something new: the point is, rather, to make him or her aware of another—disturbing—side of something he or she knew all the time.

Slavoj Žižek

PREFACE

CRITIQUE OF PURE COMPLAINT

WAS I THIRSTY ...

There is a Jewish joke that goes:

Somewhere, back in Russia, a traveler gets on a train and sits down next to an old Jewish man. Before long, the old man starts muttering, “Oy, am I thirsty.” The traveler ignores him for a while, but the old man persists: “Oy, am I thirsty. Oy, am I thirsty.” Finally the traveler can stand it no longer. He gets up, walks to the car where drinks are sold, and buys a bottle of water. The old man accepts it gratefully, drinks it, and settles down. A few minutes pass. The traveler can feel the tension building up in the old man. Finally, the tension gets the best of him, and he blurts out, “Oy, was I thirsty!”

Though the philosophical literature on complaining is not very well developed—apart from a few exceptions which I shall discuss below—this joke can help point us in the right direction. It may be analyzed along three main lines: what is complained about, who is complained to, and the activity of complaining itself. To begin with, the joke nicely illustrates the Lacanian distinction between need, demand, and desire: one may fulfill the need explicitly named in the other’s demand, but the implicit desire remains unsatisfied and therefore persists. That is what the devious final *oy* tells us: even though the old man’s thirst is quenched, something else keeps thirsting beyond his parched palate, something which, the joke suggests, can be satisfied by no object but thrives on its own dissatisfaction. As Michael Wex, who deems this joke a veritable paradigm of the “Yiddish-speaking mind-set,” explains, “If the Stones’s ‘(I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction’ had been written in Yiddish, it would have been called ‘(I Love to Keep Telling You that I Can’t Get No) Satisfaction (Because Telling You I’m Not Satisfied Is All that Can Satisfy Me).’”¹ For Lacan, this “desire for unsatisfied desire” is the hysterical position par excellence, whose ambivalence is summed up in the formula *Don’t give me what*

I'm asking for, because that's not what I want. For the true complainer, every object is lacking and life is an endless parade of "that's not it, that's not it."

We can also understand the dynamics of this railway scene in terms of relations of manipulation and control. Alexandre Kojève taught that human desire is ultimately a desire for nothing tangible but a battle for pure prestige, a struggle to enslave the other's desire to one's own. From this perspective, what the old man really wants, beyond the satisfaction of his physical need, is to be recognized as a thirsty human being; he demands that the other serve him. This fits the classic Oedipal stereotype of the manipulative mother who is always complaining about something, but only in order to better dominate her son (for the Italian variation, think Livia in *The Sopranos*). Here complaining gains its value from the part it plays in an intersubjective dialectic; an analysis could be extended to include all the different social dimensions of complaint, the ways that it forges ties of sympathy and identification, or serves as an instrument of domination and control. Anthropologist Nancy Ries's study of the gripes and grievances of perestroika-era Russia is a particularly rich source of information on this point. Analyzing the ways that Russians talked during the turbulent years 1989–1990, Ries identified the "litaney" as the key genre of everyday discourse, from narratives of poverty and suffering to tales of heroic shopping and the absurd Russian world, memorably described by one Muscovite as an "Anti-Disneyland."² If these litanies served to create social bonds in times of crisis, a "community of shared suffering,"³ they also, through the very sense of belonging and moral worth they fostered, "may have helped to sustain relative powerlessness and alienation from the political process at the same time as [they] lamented them."⁴ Far from being a merely private affair, complaining is an ideological factor.

For my purposes I wish to highlight just one of the more subtle uses of the litaney that Ries identifies, which illustrates well its intersubjective dynamic: to mask one's relative successes from the other. One of her informants explains: "The lament also fulfills a veiling function, it has a camouflaging side, because if, living among people, you have managed to pile up three dollars more than someone else, you can't disclose the fact that you live better, not because the Russian person is sly, but because someone else will be ashamed, if he knows you have more than he."⁵ Here we have the opposite of Veblen, an inconspicuous consumption: enjoy, but discreetly. The problem is not simply the pragmatic one of guarding one's surplus enjoyment, one's little extra prosperity, against possible loss or theft, but something at once more refined and more extravagant. Beyond whatever is being griped about, fake or exaggerated complaining sends a message to the other which serves to reinforce the social bond: Don't worry, my life is miserable too. The basic ethical stance of the complainer is to avoid shaming or embarrassing the other by revealing his or her lack; what's important is not the value of the item per se, some money, extra

groceries, vacation days, whatever, but that its lack can take on a loaded sign value; sometimes a couple of missing eggs is enough to evoke one's existential nullity. But there is also something else at stake: to ward off evil forces that might be tempted to sabotage one's small success. Even, and especially, if there is little or no empirical danger, complaint serves to ritually exorcize the envious gaze of the Other. Do we not see here one of the basic foundations of communal life? To be properly socialized means to learn to treat one's enjoyment delicately; complaining is a mixture of reservation and superstition, good manners and magical incantation, a regulating of affairs both with one's neighbors and with the big Other. This typically Slavic attitude finds its opposite in American ostentation and compulsive positivity, the profane tendency to overperform enjoyment (*jouissance*). If litanizing serves to veil surplus enjoyment, what excessive enthusiasm dissimulates is the lack-of-being (*manque-à-être*), an inner emptiness and despair; its anxious message is: Don't worry, life is wonderful, amazing, fantastic, etc. It is ironic that relatively poor Eastern societies are confronted more with the problem of surplus, while the affluent West must deal with lack; the title of Larry David's comedy series "Curb Your Enthusiasm" aims precisely at deflating this overperformed enjoyment in favor of real negativity. What is to be rejected is the obvious solution of some kind of middle road, a harmonious agreement between one's public self-presentation and the level of enjoyment—don't be too excited, don't complain too much, or rather, act excitedly only when you really are excited, complain only when things really are bad. The problem with finding such a balance is that enjoyment as such is imbalanced; it oscillates between surplus and lack, a stifling "too much" and a miserable "too little," and what culture offers is not harmonization but different strategies for inscribing this libidinal turbulence in social space—like Slavic grumbling and American overenthusiasm—without being able to fully contain or control it.

There is still the third aspect of the joke to be considered: the pleasure of complaining itself. Indeed, complaining is a particularly excellent illustration of *jouissance* insofar as it demonstrates that real joy has nothing to do with feelings per se but consists in the devotion and surrender to an activity, which may include very different and even negative affective states. Hardships, failures, abuse, social slights, stupidity, etc., are hardly fun, but complaining about them can be a deeply absorbing occupation; in the words of French writer Georges Perros, "Nothing proves that pleasure is a happy affair."⁶ To return to the hapless traveler: the joke's punch line reveals the futility of his (condescending) politeness; whatever he does, the old man is going to complain simply because he likes doing so. It's what animates him, what drives him, as if it were inscribed in his very being. In an Aristophanes-worthy moment in *Life is a Dream*, Calderón pokes fun precisely at the twisted philosophical logic that makes of complaining a goal unto itself.

ROSAURA. Remember the philosopher
 Who said that to complain was such a pleasure
 That misfortunes should be looked for, like a moral treasure.
 CLaurin. Lady, your philosopher's an idiot, and I wish he was here
 So I could kick his head in. Only then I'd have to hear him
 Complaining about my utterly amazing skill in kicking.⁷

Courting suffering for the pleasure of whining about it certainly is a ridiculous perversion, but that's only the half of it. Complaining not only "thrives" on misfortunes and well-placed kicks to the head, but is crafty enough to turn even a happy outcome into an occasion for lament. To put it in Kantian terms: in order to grasp the true art of complaining, one must understand it not simply as a reaction to the wrongness and failings of an already given world, but as a properly transcendental structure, a cranky mode of access to things: "Kvetching can be applied indifferently to hunger or satiety, satisfaction or disappointment: it is a way of knowing, a means of apprehension that sees the world through cataract-colored glasses."⁸ Therein lies complaining's creativity and inventiveness, its devious schematism. Kvetching is a way of life, a weird flourishing in the Aristotelian sense, which instrumentalizes or immanentizes both the good and the bad to provide more grist for its cantankerous mill. And from the perspective of this peevish enjoyment, the other's response or recognition has no more intrinsic interest than thirst, lost dry cleaning, a too sunny day, or anything else. In the end, the complainer is not really interested in recognition. The intersubjective dialectic that seemed so important—the circuit of implicit messages and manipulations, demands for acknowledgment and solidarity, veiled signs and pleas—dissolves into a quasi-autistic enjoyment, where the other becomes the "partner" in a monologue that vaguely addresses him or her, but only in order to expand and elaborate its own movement. What matters is simply to have something to moan about, to keep constructing and deconstructing the infernal complaining-machine.

IN PESSIMISM MORE THAN PESSIMISM

I am a sick man . . . I am a wicked man. An unattractive man. I think my liver hurts.⁹

These three levels—that of desire and its dissatisfaction, the struggle for recognition that constitutes the ego, and the crafty enjoyment of the drives—are at the heart of the theory of mental life elaborated by Sigmund Freud, whose collected works no doubt comprise one of the greatest catalogs of complaints ever assembled. Among all the ailments and afflictions recounted there, there is one kind of complaint that enjoys a particular privilege: the *neurotic complaint*. Inexplicable tics and bodily ailments, irrational fears, obsessive and intrusive

thoughts, sexual malaise, entrenched guilt, and generally self-defeating behavior: in examining these various ills, Freud discovered that the neurotic complaint has a peculiar structure. In spite of their grumbling and dissatisfaction, his patients proved stubbornly attached to the conditions from which they suffered, and Freud claimed that they were, in ways unbeknownst to themselves, deeply complicit in their own discontent. This is one of the most revolutionary aspects of psychoanalysis, whose full implications still remain to be discovered today: to consider those afflicted with psychopathologies not merely as passive victims of an illness, but as the unwitting architects of their own unhappiness. As Freud writes, while the ego “says to itself: ‘This is an illness, a foreign invasion’” and is thus unable to understand why “it feels so strangely paralyzed,” analysis reveals that the malady is actually “a derivative of [the neurotic’s] own rejected instincts.”¹⁰ What appears to be externally imposed is nothing other than the mutilated product of one’s most intimate desires and fantasies. In other words, at a certain (unconscious) level, symptoms are very much wanted and “enjoyed.”

The radicality of Freud’s conception of pleasure was nicely expressed in another witticism by Perros: “It is true that people go to a lot of trouble in order to be unhappy. But are they?”¹¹ The wording here is very precise: instead of the standard picture of man striving after happiness but encountering all sorts of conflicts and obstacles along the way, Perros suggests just the opposite. There is something deeply flawed about the human condition, such that people actively sabotage their own desires and aspirations, maneuvering in ways (often unbeknownst to themselves) to ensure that things turn out badly. If we were to stop at this insight, however, we would remain at the level of tragedy. Yet the situation is even worse—the human condition is so miserable that it does not even manage to successfully negate itself. This is what the second sentence tells us, with its sly skeptical retort: “But are they [really so unhappy] . . . ?” In spite of their best efforts for the worst and loud protests to the contrary, people turn out to be oddly content in their discontent. It is not that the negative flips over into the positive, but something more subtle and elusive takes place: the negative finds itself undermined or deviated from within, and it is this secondary deviation, the screwing up of the discontent, that provides the rich matter of comedy.¹² To vary a phrase from Freud, men enjoy less than they imagine (hedonistic fantasies and images of total gratification that fill their heads) and far more than they think (where and when it’s least expected or even wanted, an insistent pleasure suddenly crops up). Here we can offer a very general thesis concerning ethics: in modernity, happiness is not the direct aim of life, it is not the *telos* of fully actualized being, but the product (or, better, by-product) of a double failure. This is a negative Aristotelianism with an ironically optimistic or comic twist: man lives by failing not to flourish. Or, to put it otherwise, the human being is that animal that strives

to sabotage its own being but is so incompetent it ends up bungling even that. And this is exactly what is at stake in the Freudian conception of the symptom, whose offbeat vitality condenses both these dimensions: it is at once tragedy and comedy, a tale of inescapable conflict and fatal destiny, and of the incredible plasticity of life that manages to get by in the most strange and surprising ways. If repression is tragic, the return of the repressed is comic, or at least contains the kernel of comedy. (As Freud shows in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, unconscious mental processes employ the same mechanisms as those used in jokes, but the former are not really funny because they are not constrained by the desire to entertain or communicate with an audience; the unconscious is a kind of incredibly private comedy club of bad puns and failed routines.) First there is an act of brutal exclusion, the expulsion of what is horrible and inadmissible from the psyche, then there follows the comic moment when that which has been excluded tries to sneak back in, as it were, wearing a fake beard, the whole farcical play of disguises, displacements, and transformations that comprise the unconscious, of not-getting-what-you-want-but-enjoying-something-else-that-is-actually-what-you-wanted-anyway. Except that the situation is even more complex, since the temporal order is jumbled up. In the neurotic symptom, the two historical moments that Marx described as occurring one after the other—Napoleon's coup of 1799, then his nephew's seizure of power in 1851—appear simultaneously: the symptom is “at the same time” the first time as tragedy, the second time as farce.

It is tempting to dismiss optimism and pessimism as subphilosophical notions, the expression of vague moods or worldviews without any analytic pertinence. Yet these otherwise fuzzy concepts can be rephrased more precisely along the Freudian lines of tragedy and comedy that I have been sketching. Optimism is a strictly untenable, stupid position: naive optimism or hopefulness is the belief that repression is accidental, so that with enough luck and daring one can escape the conflicts and antagonisms of life relatively unscathed; or, even more idiotic, that “love of life” triumphs over suffering and loss, joy is deeper still than agony. Pessimism, on the contrary, is the doctrine of the primacy of repression: every existence is wrecked and unbearable in its own way. (The paradox is that one cannot directly enunciate this idea without missing its truth: the blanket statement “life is terrible” necessarily functions as a way of keeping one's own subjectivity safely out of the equation, uncompromised by the terror that it somberly pronounces upon. The only honest declaration of pessimism is thus to assert it in the guise of its denial; as Pessoa said: “I am not a pessimist. I do not think that life is terrible. I think that my life is terrible.”) And yet this despair without exception and without reservation, a desolation which excludes all hope, does not exactly exclude all hope—if we understand this in an unorthodox way. A strange

sort of “comedic” or “buffoonish” optimism arises indirectly as a fatal crack within pessimism, as a further turn of the screw, what is “in pessimism more than pessimism.” Optimism is not the opposite of pessimism, it has no positive substance or consistency, no resilient spirit that could stand on its own, but is a further elaboration of pessimism’s relentless negativity: it is what is subtracted from the nothingness of pessimism, the thorn that doesn’t allow pessimism to comfortably settle into itself, to vanish into its own nihilism, yet without exactly converting it into its opposite. The logic here is much more subtle than the typical argument about the self-refuting character of pessimism. As Bergson once quipped, whatever one may say about the pain and horror and stupidity of existence, “humanity holds fast to life, which proves that it is good.”¹³ Against this common sense, one should rather defend the mad “idealist” claim that the concept is correct and life itself is wrong: if there were any ontological justice, the human species would disappear in a puff of smoke, like the computer in *Star Trek* that explodes when ordered to solve a logical paradox. The fact that life doesn’t do so does not refute pessimism but requires us to admit a certain ironic twist: rather than the proof of an indomitable vitality and richness, this clinging to life is the supreme ontological injustice, a violent perturbation of the self-canceling nothing, a laugh in the face of the concept’s unbearably impossible rigor. To put it rather pathetically, true optimism can arise only by fully surrendering oneself to despair: not the typically humanist lament that man is mortal, we are all going to die, but the situation is even more grave—the catastrophe has happened, we are already dead, this is the afterlife.

TRUTH IS A COMPLAINT

Whew! Have I got grievances! Do I harbor hatreds I didn’t even know were there! Is it the process, Doctor, or is it what we call the “material”?¹⁴

The great whiner and masturbating prince of twentieth-century literature, Alexander Portnoy, asks: “Is this truth I’m delivering up, or is it just plain kvetching? Or is kvetching for people like me a form of truth?”¹⁵ “What is a truth if not a complaint?” replies Jacques Lacan in one of his late seminars, and goes on to add: “It is not the meaning of the complaint that is important for us, it is what one might find beyond, as definable in terms of the Real.”¹⁶ This may seem an odd conception of truth, and indeed Lacan is speaking about a very particular kind of truth: the truth of the unconscious, of that which is excluded from consciousness but nevertheless returns to distort and divert its flow. Lacan’s unique contribution to the philosophy of complaint is to focus on the language of complaining, and the question of its subject: who complains? This derives from a reflection on the peculiar situation of analytic

practice, as the “talking cure.” Psychoanalysis as a clinical technique is centered on the speech of the analysand (“say whatever comes to mind . . .”) which it treats in a unique and artificial way with respect to the “natural attitude” toward communication and conversation. At roughly the same time that Husserl was formulating his phenomenological reduction as a way of studying the pure appearances of consciousness freed from the prejudices of psychology, Freud was developing the technique of free association to “reduce” human speech and gain access to the pure realm of the unconscious (one can also compare this with avant-garde experiments in automatic writing and stream-of-consciousness technique). Instead of the spoken word being accepted in the normal spirit of hermeneutic generosity as the personal expression of the speaker, it is received in a distanced and impersonal way in order to explore how ideas and associations hang together and fall apart freed from conscious intentions and the rules of common sense. Words thereby lose their “mineness” and take on a somewhat alienated or ventriloquized quality: they are less my own than those of an other, or others, within me, fragments of a borrowed discourse from which I cannot detach myself and yet with which I do not fully coincide. Analysis consists of tracing the connections and wayward pathways of this “intimately alien” language, of discovering the subject not as the origin of speech but as implied and implicated within it. And not only is a certain estrangement of speech effected by this odd conversational practice, but also an experience of the emptiness and impossibility of language, a confrontation with the question of why one is speaking at all, and what really matters in this babbling flow of words or unresponsive silence. In Madrid and Warsaw there recently opened tickling salons, touting the health benefits of this notoriously torturous pleasure (perhaps the beginning of a spasmodic wellness trend). My immediate reaction to this was: and why not a complaining salon—wouldn’t this be the most concise definition of psychoanalysis? In effect, the analyst’s office is a laboratory of complaint, whose central aim is not so much to solve the patient’s problem or cure his or her illness, at least not in any immediate way, but to unravel how an individual mind functions, i.e., how it processes signifiers. Indeed, rather than offering any direct help or advice, such preconceived notions of health and happiness, or of the goal of the process, are strictly suspended in order not to prejudice the free inquiry into the workings of the mind. It is a safe place separated from the regular commotion and interactions of the social world in order to explore a strange and disconcerting reversal: that the “I” is not the fount of personality or the agent of speech, but a mere character caught up in a play put on by signifiers for other signifiers.

Yet this alienation in language, this decentering of the subject in the “discourse of the Other,” is not the final word, and that is why Lacan says that the meaning of the complaint is ultimately not decisive—there is a *beyond* to

complaint, which is “definable in terms of the Real.” How should we understand this? First of all, it does not mean that there is some psychological depth or authentic character to the subject that resists alienation. There is no true self and no false self, there is just the fiction of having a self which makes the fact of total alienation in the symbolic order more or less functional and bearable. Hence Lacan’s focus in the early stages of his career on the imaginary “me” as a necessary social prosthetic, the illusion of a walking-and-talking human being covering over the puppet-like character of the symbolic “I” and bringing it into the world of human intercourse with other walking-and-talking social prosthetics. If there is a real limit to symbolic alienation it does not come from within the individual, but rather from the structure of the symbolic discourse itself, from something that trips up its workings from the inside. Lacan once argued that if the “I” could directly pronounce its truth, it would speak like the mesmerized corpse in the horror story, “I am dead,” and then quickly turn to sludge; the upshot is that if the subject could speak in its own voice, it would proclaim its nonexistence—the impossible self-consciousness of a puppet—before dissolving back into the anonymous machinery of the symbolic order. Yet the subject cannot quite do this; it is disturbed in its death not by some leftover liveliness (self-affection, the “lived body”), but by an *object* that is lodged in the holes and inconsistencies of the system, and prevents the subject from disappearing into it. There is a screwy “optimism” of the object that wells up to disturb the “pessimism” of the subject (or, to put it differently, a stain of enjoyment that spoils the purity of the negative). Lacan’s thought became more and more focused on this peculiar object, on specifying its exact status and relation with the three registers of the symbolic, imaginary, and real. Let us say that if every truth is a complaint (and not vice versa)—that is, the articulation of a crack or fissure in reality as the sign of an exclusion, the uncovering of what a given order needs to repress to be able to effectively function—the object is the residue of this truth, that point where the complaint itself stumbles, lapses, falls into silence.¹⁷ To return to Portnoy: if analysis uncovers a seemingly inexhaustible chain of gripes and grievances, even “hatreds one didn’t even know were there,” at a certain point this movement of interpretation comes to a halt, and a double dispossession takes place: not only is the subject revealed as a lifeless dummy spoken by the complaints of its history, but this very language is turned inside out by certain elements which it cannot place or digest. It is at these points that a recalcitrant life emerges from “between the signifiers,” that the drive most directly manifests itself.

Humorist Jane Wagner hypothesized that language evolved in order to fulfill mankind’s “deep inner need to complain”; we might surmise that the very first linguistic utterances were caveman grumblings about stubbed toes and chipped spearheads or the like.¹⁸ This amusing evolutionary theory (no more

ridiculous than many “just so” stories) could be further generalized: imagine all of nature waiting for the gift of speech so it can express how bad it is to be a vegetable or a fish. Is it not the special torment of nature to be deprived of the means of conveying its pent-up aggravation, unable to articulate even the simplest lament, “Ah me! I am the sea”?¹⁹ And does not the emergence of the speaking being effectively release this terrible organic tension and bring it to a higher level of nonresolution? While there are some intriguing passages in Lacan’s seminars where he speculates on the infinite pain of being a plant, raising the possibility of an *Unbehagen in der Natur*, for the most part he conceives the relationship between nature and culture to be one of radical discontinuity. Again, language is the primary focus of Lacan—and although it is certainly “not all,” the autonomy of the symbolic order, the cut between the presymbolic real and the signifier, or rather the signifier itself as this cut, remains the consistent starting point of his thought. If one had to pick a single line to sum up Lacan’s philosophy, it would no doubt be: “Man is the subject captured and tortured by language.”²⁰ In one of his *écrits*, Lacan employs a striking metaphor to describe this capture. Freud characterized the id as the “great reservoir of libido,” a pool of psychic energies that can be distributed, diverted, dammed up, and discharged. When discussing this image of the libido, Lacan mentions the *bocce di leone* of Venice, the “lion’s mouths” into which citizens could anonymously deposit accusations and denunciations to be investigated by the ruling Council of Ten. These receptacles are located throughout the city, and can still be seen today (the most famous one is in the Doge’s Palace); some are accompanied by inscriptions for specific complaints, like public health, tax evasion, blasphemy, treason, and so on. The carved stone faces with open slits in their mouths have a rather sinister air, and Mark Twain, in his travel recollections, memorably described “the throats down which went the anonymous accusation thrust in secretly in the dead of night by an enemy.” Correcting Freud, Lacan writes: “A reservoir, yes, as it were, that is what the id is, and even a reserve; but what is produced in it, missives of prayer or denunciation, comes from the outside, and if it accumulates inside, it is in order to sleep there.”²¹ Instead of a cauldron of energies and passions bubbling up from within, the drives are in the first place a storehouse of messages emanating from the Other, a collection of grievances, charges, claims, and indictments that have been secretly inserted into the id and left there to fester. The unconscious is structured like a complaint box.

THE INTELLECTUAL COMPLAINT OF GOD

Freud’s famous aphorism about the trajectory of psychoanalytic therapy might be paraphrased as follows: “Where the complaint was, there I shall be.” In other words, it is at the very place of my griping that I must come to locate my innermost being: the end point of analysis is identification with the singular

woe. But this identification cannot be achieved directly; it takes time, and must proceed through stages. There is a whole hierarchy of complaints, or rather, different levels of the perfection of complaining. Spinoza's treatise on the art of complaint, titled simply *Ethics*, sets this out with unparalleled rigor.

As Spinoza specifies, there are three distinct stages in the way of the complainer, moving from what we may call a false psychology to a true psychology to what is beyond psychology; in schematic terms, these correspond with the three Lacanian registers of imaginary, symbolic, and real. In the beginning there is unhappiness and discontent, but its reasons are ambiguous: the love of a person suddenly turns to hatred, a minor aggravation sparks an outsized crisis, paralyzing fear is triggered by something harmless, sexual desire provokes anxiety, and so on. The feelings are real, but their causes and true objects are uncertain. What is the matter? One tries to rationalize these discordant sentiments and affective upheavals with all sorts of self-justifying explanations, thus remaining mired in a false egoistic psychology. What is most striking at this first level is the odd disproportion between cause and effect, the over- or underexaggerated character of one's emotional reactions, and the explanatory gaps in consciousness. The clarification of these uncertain feelings—what Spinoza calls the bondage to the passions—depends on showing how they are situated in a symbolic framework which transcends and decenters them. We now arrive at a higher cognition of suffering, the second level of complaint. The mental processes that determine the course of the passions are discovered to be largely unconscious; the volatility of the affects and the *mésalliances* between emotional states and their ideational contents are secretly caused by a machine of associations that runs, as it were, on its own. What Freud adds to Spinoza is how these linkages hang on a certain productive nonsense, the condensations and displacements, fragmentations and recombinations of basic elements (signifiers) that have become stuck in the mind and repeat there. This active understanding reestablishes the missing causes, it makes sense of what was disordered in the imaginary, but at the price of introducing a new kind of disorder: the structural dependence of meaning on nonmeaning, the primacy of chance and wordplay in the workings of the mind, the installation of insignificance at the heart of significance. An unbalanced affectivity meets a nonsense hermeneutics. This "true psychology" of the association-machine is in fact already de-psychologized insofar as it makes mental processes depend on a signifying chain divorced from conscious intentions and motivations: though I may not be sure why I feel a certain way, in spite of my long acquaintance with myself, it knows, having automatically produced the connection. (There is a marvelous exchange in Ernst Lubitsch's film *That Uncertain Feeling* that gracefully captures this self-alienation. "Wouldn't you like to meet you?," the psychoanalyst asks his new patient. "No," she replies, "you see, I'm a little shy.") But there is still another

level, a leap beyond the symbolic automaton—this is the third kind of complaint, what Spinoza also calls the intuitive complaint or the intellectual complaint of God. In this final reduction we are confronted with something that disturbs the movement of “true” symbolic causality, that breaks through and distorts the network of associative links that determines the flux of the passions—or, to put it otherwise, that decenters the decentering of the disequilibrium of mental life. In the beginning was the Defect—but what sort of defect? What if we followed the causal chain all the way back to the first faulty connection? Would we find some sort of traumatic abandonment (mourning a loss; love and hatred), or the intolerable sacrifice demanded by the Law (prohibition and transgression, the “pound of flesh” exacted for entrance into civilization), or a lack-of-being that can never be filled (the metaphysics of eternal dissatisfaction), or else—more Spinozistic or Nietzschean—a pandemonium of forces blindly impacting on each other (the speeds and intensities of the partial drives)? Or perhaps there is just an unexplainable gap, a glitch, a cut (the missing link)? “Anybody with real knowledge already knows that whatever is, is wrong,”²² but the problem is that of attaining the highest wrong, of reaching the absolute Grievance whereby, to put it again in Spinoza’s terms, the disagreement of an individual mode’s essence necessarily disagrees internally with the essence of God and all other essences.

THE FAILURE NOT TO BE

Usually one takes a dim view of complaining, so that a healthy psychology would be one that largely purifies itself of complaint, or learns to make a good and balanced use of it. Thus we are told that we should stop whining and start acting, or that the energy spent in futile and self-indulgent moaning should be redirected into positive, socially constructive protest. For all the commonsensical appeal of this moral sermon, our problem is just the reverse: how to purify complaint of human psychology. What is needed is a “Critique of Pure Complaint”—*Kritik der reinen Beschwerde*, the missing fourth critique that would finally unite the domains of theory, praxis, and aesthetics—a philosophical elucidation of what went wrong, or all too right, at the very beginning. (Critique itself is but a highly refined and sophisticated form of complaint, its neglected cousin, so that in the critique of complaint the critical project confronts its own limits.) How should we proceed with this inquiry? For psychoanalysis, at the bottom of all of the broken relationships, failed projects, and aborted dramas there is really only one lament: *mē phunai*, never to have been born—unfortunately, as the joke goes, this happens less than once in a hundred thousand times. Let us take this existential protest as our model, the radical reduction of complaining to its pure and empty form. What complaining ultimately aims at is not this or that wrong but the very framework in which wrongs may appear: it seeks the dissolution of Being into Nothingness. And

not just any nothingness, but a nothingness that would precede the very opposition between something and nothing, and thus retain its sovereign purity. Never to have emerged from the sanctity of the void: in every gripe there is at least a distant echo of this wish for absolute nonbeing, which lends it an extra weight and pathos. There is an extravagance to complaining, a passion, which cannot be explained solely by the degree of empirical harm and frustration a person undergoes. Beyond the specific nuisance that immediately occasions it, complaining aims at a Total Wrong—the wrongness of being—that is at once intolerable and inescapable, the inexhaustible source of its litanies and the implacable foe against whom it eternally rebels. Or, to somewhat moderate this thesis: it is not that every complaint necessarily evokes this supreme injustice, but rather any complaint, from the most banal to the utterly catastrophic, can take on an overloaded significance and become the vessel through which a metaphysical malediction resonates. The train is late . . . best not to be. Unpaid bills . . . best not to be. I accidentally murdered my father and slept with my mother . . . best not to be. Again, this is not a matter of empirical deduction. It is not because of some hedonic calculus, in which pleasure and pains are added up and compared, that a person concludes that life is not or is no longer worth living. Rather, it is the sum of pains and pleasures that can suddenly appear derisory in the light of an incomparable and incalculable wrong. Anything can come to symbolize this ultimate harm, the “pain of being.” To be or not to be? The answer is easy: Not to be. But the catch is that by the time the matter has been raised, it is too late. The brooding questioner already is and pure nothingness is no longer an option; in fact it never was. Suicide, from this perspective, is a relatively impotent deed. It can only terminate the continued harm of living, but it cannot repair the damage of having come into being, it cannot go back in time and erase the existence that already was; but this impossible erasure is precisely what the pure complaint demands, and gives to it its unspeakable despair.

Never to be born: The original line comes from the elegies of Theognis of Megara, and was later reworked by Sophocles; if anything, Sophocles’ leaner version is even more shocking and brutal. The curse is spoken by the chorus in *Oedipus at Colonus*, the second installment in the Theban trilogy, though the text was composed last, when the playwright was at the end of his own life. The action of the play follows on the revelation of Oedipus’ horrible crimes, and his subsequent self-punishment and exile. Compared to the murder-and-incest whodunit story of *Oedipus Rex*, and the lone-woman-against-the-State drama of *Antigone*, *Oedipus at Colonus* is a rather slow and uneventful tale; it is essentially the long lament of the former king now reduced to a miserable beggar—an Oedipus “beyond Oedipus,”²³ as Lacan once memorably described him—wandering in search of a final resting place, mixed with some political intrigue about which city will get to host the tomb. Though

narratively less exciting than the other plays, for a philosophy of complaint it is the most significant work in the trilogy. The chorus's pronouncement on "what is best in life" is the ultimate malediction and a crystalline expression of Greek tragic wisdom.

Not to be born is the first choice,
 the prize beyond any other.
 But once he has seen the light,
 the next best is to go back
 to that dark place from which he came
 as soon as possible.²⁴

We still have yet to comment on the joke. It is reported by Freud in *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, in the context of his discussion of joke techniques.

"Never to be born would be the best thing for mortal men." "But," adds the philosophical comment in *Fliegende Blätter*, "this happens to scarcely one person in a hundred thousand."²⁵

Does this joke not stage the fateful meeting of Athens and Jerusalem, the point where these two great cultures of complaint converge?²⁶ Not only is nonbeing best (Greek), but even worse, this scarcely ever happens (Jew). Freud's own interpretation of the joke misses the mark here. He concentrates on its formal mechanism, what he calls the technique of sense-in-nonsense whereby one absurd proposition is employed to unmask another: what the ridiculous reply, accentuated by the "scarcely," reveals is the meaninglessness of the initial proposition, it exposes its supposedly profound wisdom to be nothing more than a piece of faulty reasoning. As Freud explains, the thesis that it is best not to be born is strictly nonsense, since "anyone who is not born is not a mortal man at all, and there is no good and no best for him."²⁷ According to this reading, the joke has a deflationary effect: the meaning conveyed by the punch line is the stupidity of wisdom itself. And it is certainly true that a good deal of humor has to do with smashing idols and deflating puffed-up egos; comedy is the enemy of piety, and philosophical wisdom has always been one of its favorite targets. But in this case Freud moves too quickly to reduce the paradoxicality of the joke to a readily understandable motive. What if there were something in the joke that rings true, so that instead of a mere cognitive error we were dealing with a libidinally operative paradox, an impossibility deeply rooted in psychic reality?

What is fascinating about the joke's illogic is the bizarre scenario it implicitly posits: one should somehow survive one's not being born precisely in order to enjoy it as the "best." In different ways throughout his career Lacan

explores exactly this thesis that the subject can survive itself only by subjectivizing its disappearance in fantasy. Deep down in the unconscious, what one ultimately discovers are not sordid sexual fantasms or violent wishes—the usual stuff of Freudian analysis—but something altogether more formal and ascetic: a negation that has gone wrong, a “failed nothing” or a “failure not to be.” The most profound dream of the subject is the impossible dream of its own nonexistence, and the kernel of unconscious fantasy consists in a scene where a partial object or waste object emerges to stand in for the subject’s radical erasure.²⁸ Here again we see the logic of what we earlier designated as “subtractive optimism.” Contrary to natural evidence, the human being is not directly or immediately alive, it does not spontaneously cling to or affirm life; rather, its exuberance and vitality stem from an odd double negation: failing not to have been born. *The human being is the sick animal that does not live its life but lives its failure not to be born.*

Incidentally, there is an interesting detail in the Oedipus story that is usually not remarked on, though Lacan picks up on it. In the aftermath of the events of *Oedipus Rex*, once the disgraced king has ripped out his eyeballs and left in exile from Thebes, he curses his sons, condemning them to kill each other in battle. According to one account (recorded in the fragments of the *Thebais*), Oedipus pronounces this curse because at a feast following a sacrifice they served him a thigh instead of the shoulder, an inferior piece of meat. Lacan remarks: “Although he has renounced the service of goods, nothing of the preeminence of his dignity in relation to these same goods is ever abandoned.”²⁹ This is an interesting side observation. Even in his extreme position of denigration and exile, Oedipus maintains a certain relation to material goods and enforces his rights regarding them: although he has given up life among mortals and has no more worldly aspirations, although he has entered the “zone beyond death,” he still insists on the correct observance of rituals. What is purified here is the imaginary dimension, the interest in what Lacan calls the “service of goods,” but this should be understood in a double sense: not only does Oedipus forgo all that pertains to the good life, he also forgoes an imaginary interpretation of this sacrifice; he does not wallow in his renunciation, or attribute any grand meaning to it, but instead maintains a dignified detachment which, somewhat paradoxically, can express itself only by reasserting a strong (symbolic) connection to these same goods. “My existence is damned, but even so, it doesn’t matter, the proper forms must still be obeyed.” The autonomy of the symbolic order is thus reaffirmed, deprived of support in the usual pleasures and attachments of life. Does this not provide one example of how everyday moral attitudes may be modified following “subjective destitution,” a purely intellectual form of complaint? Just because Oedipus is already dead to this world doesn’t mean you can serve him a cheap cut of meat.

IN PRAISE OF LAMENTATION

To pursue this “critique of pure complaint” further, let us turn to what may at first seem like an unlikely source. According to a common prejudice, the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze leaves no space for the kvetch, and even supposes his dissolution in an eternal return that selects only positive, self-affirming affects and dispenses with those steeped in resentment and spite. However, in the *Abécédaire*, a videotaped interview with Claire Parnet made in 1988–1989, Deleuze offers some interesting reflections on the phenomenon of complaint, precisely, and tellingly, in the context of his discussion of “J for Joy.”

Parnet asks Deleuze why, if he has successfully escaped that “infinite debt” which has plagued so many philosophies (and especially, according to the author of *Anti-Oedipus*, psychoanalysis), he is such an enthusiastic defender of the complaint and the elegy? In response, Deleuze explains that complaining is not a sad or negative activity per se, but has a real expressive power: the lament has historically served as a major source of poetic creation. Unlike whining that is a mere expression of impotence or petty recriminations directed against others or the self, the “great complaint” (*la grande plainte*) is a kind of song possessing its own peculiar liveliness, an unsparing and even “unlivable” vitality. We can cite numerous examples: Philoctetes moaning about his stinking wound, Qu Yuan lamenting his exile among the savages, Job’s protests against the trials of a cruel and arbitrary God (“I loathe my life; I will give free utterance to my complaint . . .”)—the history of complaint remains to be written, Deleuze remarks, but throughout it a certain basic form is discernible. According to Deleuze, at its most elementary the formula of complaint is: *what is happening is too much for me*. Complaining bears witness to the presence of something that is stronger than the ego, and threatens to overwhelm it. The prophet struck with terror at his mission wails “Why did God choose me?,” deploring a task that he feels he cannot possibly fulfill; but even the old lady who moans about her rheumatism is not so much lamenting a loss of mobility as protesting against an alien power that has seized hold of one of her appendages. This reversal, whereby what seems like an incapacity or a lack is actually grounded on an invasive and depersonalizing force (God, rheumatism), can be applied to many plaintworthy situations. The professor who complains of having too much work to do (too many projects, too many speaking engagements) is not fundamentally concerned with lack of time or ability, but rather “enjoys” an ambitious theoretical drive that is just a bit too much for him to handle—if he oversteps too far, he risks cracking up. Or take a more radical example, drawn from one of Freud’s case histories. A horse phobia is a restriction of the sufferer’s freedom of movement, symbolically linked to disturbed relations with the parents, a crisis in the child’s Oedipus complex. But from another perspective, this fear is the frightening and exhilarating process of becoming-horse. The sign value of the phobia, its

function and meaning in a network of intersubjective relations, is set aside in favor of a naive reading that takes seriously the forces on the surface. A kind of savage phenomenology takes the place of a hermeneutics: the horse is too much in a way that puts pressure on the child's own self-identity, it creates a "zone of indistinction" between boy and horse, and what the great complaint will express is precisely this grueling transformation or blurring of boundaries from the "impossible" (non)perspective of the transformation itself. Therein resides the poetry of complaint, its unique "fourth person singular" voice (Ferlinghetti),³⁰ which is divorced from the imaginary and symbolic coordinates of the subject in order to capture that most tumultuous and evanescent reality, the drives in their becoming.

This description presents a completely different picture than the typical negative definition of complaint. When I complain, I register my objection to some state of affairs that fails to match my desire: my leg hurts, they lost my dry cleaning, I can't leave with that horse running around. Even further, complaining is not just a reaction to lack and deficiency, but the very essence of desire insofar as the latter actively finds fault with whatever is in order to persist as desire. Deleuze squarely rejects this depressing logic of "I Love to Keep Telling You that I Can't Get No Satisfaction Because Telling You I'm Not Satisfied Is All that Can Satisfy Me": complaining is not a question of lack, or rather, lack is only a secondary and derived interpretation of an affirmative and intensive process. His own conception is closer to the etymological sense of the word *kvetch*, which comes from the German *quetschen*, to squeeze or crush: complaining is a matter of pressures and intensities before being a question of inadequation or negation. To express and elaborate these forces, to devote oneself to the calamity that overtakes one, is the art of complaint, its "gay science," which in this sense is not the embittered expression of weary and exhausted soul but a powerful stimulant to the drives, a testy kind of health.

Here we can distinguish between common complaints and the sublime or transformative one. The former function essentially as a coping mechanism, they permit the ego to refind and reassert itself in the face of misfortunes and disasters that threaten its control. Complaining is a way of remapping a situation that has become too unhinged, of reimposing not exactly order but the familiar broken coordinates—already just saying "this is too much" can sometimes help. (Indeed, a certain degree of grumbling is constitutive for the ego, so that if things go too right, a complaint needs to be introduced in order to reinstate the comfortable off-balance.) The great complaint, on the other hand, is not about psychological coping but about self-loss; it is not concerned with persisting in dissatisfaction but with the transmutation of suffering into joy. Complaining can be like prayer or song or dance, a hymn to what is above the person and greater than him or her: but this is nothing other than a dense

combination of forces and affects that compose and decompose an individual existence. For the truly gifted complainer, it is no longer the person who complains but the complaint that complains itself in and through the person. This is the properly Spinozistic or Nietzschean complaint, as a form of self-overcoming. On a personal level, Deleuze remarks that if he hadn't been a philosopher and had been born a woman, he would have wanted to be a *pleureuse*, a professional wailer, hired for her virtuoso lamentations.

A COMPLAINER'S DISCOURSE

Julio Cortázar provides a remarkable description of weepers in his short story "Our Demeanor at Wakes," which accords well with Deleuze's dream profession as well as his taste for paradox. The story concerns a family with an "unusual occupation" (the title of the collection from which the story is drawn): mourning at other people's funerals.³¹ The family survey local funerals, and when they are not convinced by the bereaved's expressions of grief, they swing into action. The family members don their best outfits, quietly insinuate themselves into the crowd of mourners, and undertake their own lamentations. They follow a specific method: they arrive separately or in pairs, greet the relatives of the deceased; usually it is the younger sister who kneels at the foot of the coffin and begins sobbing, which soon turns to wailing. She is joined by three female cousins who also weep "without affectation, no loud cries, but so touchingly that the relatives and the neighbors feel envious" and are compelled to join the dirge. Now the brothers gather round the coffin. "Strange as it may seem, we really are grief-stricken." The wake is gathering steam. The relatives try to edge their way back in and prove that it is their affair, that only they have the right to cry, but their effusions are not quite convincing. The father and the uncle join the rest. The relatives begin to drop out, exhausted, while the mourners continue crying in shifts, never letting up. "Before six in the morning we are the acknowledged masters of the wake." They direct the final farewells, and accompany the coffin to the funeral. Again seizing control of the proceedings, it is the youngest uncle who mounts the platform and gives an elegy for the deceased that is "the very soul of truth and discretion ... he is deeply moved, and at times it is difficult for him to quit." The official orators have no chance to deliver their prepared speeches. The coffin is lowered into the tomb. The family suddenly depart, leaving the relatives and the neighbors to clutch at the ropes of the coffin. What is the point of this story? The family of mourners are guardians of the impersonal event of death. They act according to a strict ethical code: to fight insincere fakery with sincere simulation. "If the weeping is genuine," they stay away, observing from afar; it is only when they detect "the machinery of hypocrisy" that they descend on the bereaved. They too are hypocrites, but sincere ones, like great actors who allow something true to life to come into appearance

onstage. Their virtuoso performance of mourning achieves something that those personally affected by the death are unable to express. It is not simply that the family put on a better show, but rather that their authentic simulation touches on a truth, a true lament, that the spontaneous feelings of the mourners are unable to achieve. Complaining is a matter of fiction.

As a literary genre, complaint is difficult to define precisely because it is one of the oldest and most widespread forms, covering various expressions of grief, lamentation, protest, reproof, and reprobation. “The complaint monologue is found in the *chanson de geste*; it appears in Latin as the *planctus*, as the lament in Anglo-Saxon, and indeed can easily be traced in Western literature as far back as the Old Testament.”³² In the medieval period, one can discern four distinct kinds of complaint.³³ First, there are laments against the depravity of the world, whose most advanced expression is found in *contemptus mundi* literature—John Peter argues that this Christian complaint developed out of the Latin satiric tradition, translating its more personal attacks into a moralistic condemnation of vice in general.³⁴ Then there are cautionary tales about the vicissitudes of Fortune, detailing the lives of great men cut down by fate. The third type involves personal griefs like poverty and exile, the poet railing against his own miserable lot. Apart from these, however, there is one complaint that stands out for special attention: the amatory complaint. This was developed and arguably perfected in the poetry of courtly love, a historical phenomenon that interested both Deleuze and Lacan. Courtly love was the invention of troubadours in the Provençal region of France at the end of the eleventh and beginning of the twelfth centuries. It was a highly conventionalized form of adulterous love between a nobleman and the Lady to whom he pledged his loyal service. This love, while unconsummated, was not a chaste or Platonic love, as it was motivated by sexual attraction and frankly erotic; some of the poems can be quite obscene. The poetry of the troubadours exalts the Lady, extolling her beauty and many virtues, praising her to the heavens. But it is also, and above all, concerned with the hardships and trials her devoted servant must undergo, the lover’s *planh*. The list of recriminations is long: there are complaints about the coldness of the Lady, about her disdainful and capricious character; complaints to try to win the Lady’s pity; complaints about the uselessness of complaining (in vain does he implore her); complaints about the Lady’s indifference; complaints about unrequited affection, about his cruel treatment and the rigors of his service; complaints about longing and distance and absence, complaints about rivals, complaints about his own unworthiness, complaints in the guise of not complaining (“If it pleases her, may she kill me, for I complain of nothing”); complaints about sleeplessness, complaints about dying from not dying of desire, complaints about the injustice of Love itself. There is a definite legalistic ring to many of these claims, and in so-called “Courts of Love” love-wronged plaintiffs could plead

their cases before a tribunal of women who would rule in Cupid's stead (this seems to have been an invention of Andreas Capellanus, who authored the definitive treatise on courtly love). Chaucer was the first to use the French word *complainte* in English, and he wrote a number of elaborate complaints himself, not forgetting the masterful laments he inserted in other longer works. His last poem, *Complaint to His Purse*, is a marvelous parody of courtly love conventions, where the cruel mistress to whom he pleads is none other than his empty money bag:

To you, my purse, you whom I will not slight
 For any other, you my lady dear,
 Bitterly I complain. You are so light
 That certainly you give me heavy cheer.
 I had as lief be laid upon my bier,
 And hoping for your mercy, thus I cry:
 Be heavy again, for if not I shall die.³⁵

The legacy of courtly love is usually understood to be the cult of the idealized Lady, which remains a powerful element in the Western erotic imagination. This lofty and inaccessible female figure was reinvented in the nineteenth century as the masochistic dominatrix; with “Venus in Furs” taking the place of “La Belle Femme Sans Merci,” fetishistic elements and theatricalized punishment come to the fore, and coldness and cruelty take on a new libidinal significance. But perhaps equally fateful was this fashioning of an entire poetics in the form of the plaint. The lover's discourse is at the same time a complainer's discourse—this is the lesson that has long been absorbed by culture, and endlessly repeated. If to love is to complain, and to complain is to complain about love, is it complaining then that one really loves? Lacan more than Deleuze emphasizes the fictive character of courtly love, its sincere hypocrisy. Courtly love was never a lived reality but a fictional artifice, a poetics rather than a practice; the troubadour could well be busy with more prosaic sexual affairs while professing undying love for the one true Lady. In a scene separated from the rest of life there was performed the drama of desire, suspended before an unreachable partner and filled with unfulfillment, mixed with elements of tragedy and humor, obscenity and despair. The lover's complaints are not the negation or rejection of love, but the ardent expression of a passion that is difficult to withstand, and puts itself to the test. Paul Éluard, a French surrealist poet inspired by the tradition of courtly love, beautifully captured this perseverance with the phrase *le dur désir de durer*, the hard desire to endure.³⁶

For Deleuze, a great complaint is never a demand, and does not ask for a response. This may seem like a strange conception of complaint, but what Deleuze intends is far from mere whining or complaining for complaining's

sake. For him, complaining concerns forces that are tough to bear and put the self under pressure. Complaining is not a plea or an entreaty, and does not seek recognition or recompense. Rather, it is the song of these overwhelming forces. The complainer does not want to be helped; he wants to express the joy that consumes him.

THE SAINTLY HYPOCHONDRIAC

As Beckett might have said, the point is not to stop complaining but complain better; or, to vary a line from *Anti-Oedipus*, “Complaining is nothing if not a song of life.”³⁷ At a certain point in his career, Deleuze was enthusiastic about psychoanalysis and viewed its theory of the unconscious as allied with his own philosophical project, which is sustained in large part by a reflection on problems of the clinic (pathology and culture, diagnostics and symptomatology, creativity and madness, and so on). But later he spectacularly turned against Freud and Lacan, or at least against an orthodox version of Freudianism and Lacanianism that he came to see as too cultish, too neurotic, too conformist, too therapeutic: if Freud supposedly whispered to his colleagues on their arrival in America that they were bringing the “plague,” for Deleuze and Guattari in post-May ’68 France, the sickness was not sick enough. One way to understand Deleuze’s polemical turn is as a meta-complaint about how boring and lifeless Freud and his followers have made our grievances. It’s the family (in the immortal words of Philip Larkin, “They fuck you up, your mum and dad”); it’s the Law (I want it because I can’t have it: the forbidden fruit theory of desire); it’s the lack that can never be filled (Freudian discontent: “our possibilities of happiness are already restricted by our constitution”). That is why we, Portnoy’s complainers, are so badly messed up. To break out of these clichéd litanies and reinject complaining with some of its pitilessness and cruelty is the aim of *Anti-Oedipus* and the new discipline or antidiscipline it endeavors to found, schizoanalysis.

One might pause here: Did not psychoanalysis give us a revolutionary new vocabulary for speaking of human misery and “letting it be,” as opposed to simply trying to eliminate it through means like cognitive reprogramming and neurochemical manipulations? Does not this singular practice deserve to be defended against therapeutic clichés and theoretical banalizations? Perhaps this would be its best definition: Psychoanalysis was, for the twentieth century, a new fictional frame for staging the difficult desire that is man. Not unlike the brief efflorescence of courtly love in medieval times, psychoanalysis constitutes a scene separated from everyday life where the irreconcilability of desire can manifest itself—and is not analysis also effectively a love affair with a cold and distant partner, albeit one oriented by a more specifically modernist practice, the exploration of the unconscious? Lacan would add that Freud’s modernity lies in the fact that he not only provides a new language

for complaint, but lays bare the discord that belongs to language as such, to the human being as the speaking subject. Psychoanalysis involves the creation of an artificial space where a strange sort of “conversation” can take place, not so much a dialogue as a monologue, but a monologue for two meant to crack open the identity of the one. It is the theory of the subject existing in a fictional, virtual universe, living a “second life” or “afterlife,” and marked by the ongoing crisis of how to situate itself within it. One should not overlook the *greatness* of the neurotic complaint, which bears witness, through its fidelity to dissatisfaction and endless ironic challenges to the Other, to the glorious maladaptedness of the human being in spite of its insertion into the social world, structures of authority, kinship ties, sexual norms, metaphysical programs, etc. Neurosis is the name for the crack in these frameworks, the protest that stems from their internal fissures and inconsistencies—the neurotic is somehow both a sad and a heroic figure, the reject of civilization and the embodiment of its explosive dynamism. Perhaps it would be better to speak of different styles of complaint, linked to different psychopathologies. For every subject, its style of complaint. (And, one could add, for every historical constellation, its paradigmatic madness.) In the Deleuzian version of this clinico-critical project there is a definite *parti pris*, a preference, an evaluation—one could even say a judgment of taste. The world-historical struggles and bodily metamorphoses of schizophrenics, Deleuze argues, are more directly plugged into reality than the negative dialectics of neurosis. If the neurotic exemplifies self-division and critical consciousness, psychosis demonstrates the primacy of creation and destruction: the birth and twilight of the world rather than the discontent within it. Whereas psychotics are especially sensitive to and concerned with the beginnings and endings of things—hence their “revolutionary” pathos and becoming—neurotics dwell more in the ambiguous space of the middle.

Deleuze’s challenge to psychoanalysis involves a shift in symptomatology, a move away from the classic Freudian idea of the symptom as a coded message, a cipher of enjoyment, to the immediate lived experience of the drives, “vibrations, rotations, whirlings, gravitations, dances or leaps which directly touch the mind.”³⁸ For the neurotic demand, stuck on the swaying will and contradictory directives of the Other—what do I want? what does the Other want? does the Other exist? is my existence justified or not?—Deleuze proposes to substitute another kind of worry: the hypochondriac’s supersensitivity to bodily forces. As he explains to Parnet, “the intensity of their complaint is beautiful, sublime.” Elsewhere he writes of the “saintly hypochondriac.”³⁹ Now, the point is not to romanticize a serious illness, but to grasp what is at stake in this suffering—a suffering that is less captured by systems of representation, less caught up in dreams and fantasies, and closer to the beating heart of reality: desire (Deleuze) or enjoyment (Lacan).

A hypochondriac lamenting the tiniest discomforts of his rebel organs is a better model than a neurotic tormented by his dead father's ghost. Deleuze once announced that he wanted to give a whole lecture course on hypochondria, joking that it should be reserved for nonhypochondriacs, to prevent the lecture hall from being overcrowded.⁴⁰ What might this missing seminar have looked like? In fact, the clinical concept of hypochondria is close to many of Deleuze's concerns about sensation, embodiment, becoming, the limits of perceptibility, and impersonal life, and a certain selection of his writings taken together would already constitute such a course. We can surmise that the guiding thread would have been that hypochondria is not so much a sickness, and especially not the "imaginary malady" it is often made out to be, but rather a strange kind of insight, a heightened form of perception. The hypochondriac is the subject who sees what he should not see and feels what he should not feel. He senses, for example, the microscopic deaths of thousands of individual cells,⁴¹ or conceives a completely different arrangement of the organs—"why not have one all-purpose hole to eat and eliminate,"⁴² as Deleuze quotes William Burroughs—or experiences a voluptuous multiplicity of sexes, far finer gradations of sexuality, beneath the socially sanctioned division of man and woman. The hypochondriac is closer to the raw stuff of experience, more a *malade originaire* than a *malade imaginaire*. Instead of hypochondria being a defect or malfunctioning of the senses, it is "normal" life that is based on a filtration and numbing of the flux of microperceptions that the hypochondriac feels too acutely and knows all too well. Deleuze's special sympathy for this condition—his "pity for flesh," to quote Francis Bacon—stems from what he sees as its unique combination of forces, a frailty and vulnerability that is not only a weakness, a diminishment of the body's powers of action, but also the possibility of something unprecedented: a greater, more violent, and more original sensorium, "new possibilities for life." A number of case studies could be drawn from Deleuze's work: Antonin Artaud with his desiccated and organless body; Vincent van Gogh's acute sensitivity to color or the unheard-of forces of a sunflower seed; the rocking back and forth of Buster Keaton at the end of Beckett's *Film*; the psychedelic explorations of Henri Michaux; the schizophrenic voyages recorded by R. D. Laing. And what about psychoanalysis? "When psychoanalysis is no longer subject to the neurotic regime of demand, but instead the regime of the psychosomatic complaint, including the complaint of the psychoanalyst, the whole field undergoes a transformation."⁴³ The focus shifts from intersubjectivity to innervation, from the dialectics of self and other mediated by the Law to the impersonal drives that compose and detonate bodies, and the task of analysis becomes that of inventing means to explore this volatile and fertile domain for, to again paraphrase Spinoza, "No one knows what the body is capable of aching from."

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze writes: “A single voice raises the clamor of being” (“Une seule voix fait la clameur de l’être”).⁴⁴ This striking phrase was brought to wider attention by Alain Badiou, who used it as the subtitle of his book *Deleuze, The Clamor of Being*. The first entry for the definition of *clamour* in the *Oxford English Dictionary* reads: “Loud shouting or outcry, vociferation; esp. the excited outcry of vehement appeal, complaint, or opposition: commonly, but not always, implying a mingling of voices.”⁴⁵ The *Historical Dictionary of the French Language* traces the origins of *clameur* back to “clamor (1050), which comes from the Latin clamor (in the accusative, clamorem) ‘cry,’ especially ‘acclamation’ and ‘complaint’ (often with a collective value), and in medieval times, ‘legal complaint’ [*plainte en justice*].”⁴⁶ Clamor, the complaint of Being? In fact, with a little imagination it would be possible to reconstruct Deleuze’s philosophy from the perspective of his curious wish to be a professional complainer. For Deleuze, being melts along its edges into imperceptible microcomplaints, *les petites plaintes*, which are constantly transforming and blending into one another—a Leibnizian hypochondriasis. But all these multiplicities must themselves be grasped as the *disjecta membra* of one colossal Gripe, the *querimonium tantum*, or so-called Complaint-without-Organs. This is the Deleuzian “pure complaint,” the pure and empty form of complaining, which ought to be compared to the Oedipal *mē phunai*, never to have been born. Deleuzian philosophy is a kind of monism (pun intended). This does not mean, however, that all forms of complaining are subordinated to a single, transcendent nuisance—the mother, the weather—but just the opposite: the metaphysical oneness of complaining means that it is *without limits*. There is no beyond or outside, no Other to limit its field, no final point in which it would terminate or dream of doing so. There are only shocks, difficulties, problems, and traumas that force one to think and create, and the violent shifts and ruptures these entail. And the sublime sense of complaining consists in elaborating the problems that have one in their grip and following them to their end: this is the clamor of being. The term CwO was first introduced in *Logic of Sense* with reference to the cosmic lamentations of Antonin Artaud (“what does the earth complain of,” he wondered, under the wings of Van Gogh’s “truffle black crows”),⁴⁷ then its scope considerably expanded in his collaborative books with Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. To summarize, in these latter works the concept takes on a threefold significance. On the one hand, the CwO is what is wrong when nothing is wrong, a complaint when there is nothing to complain about, something twisted or awry before anything bad has happened. This is the “smooth” complaint that insinuates itself even and especially in the most agreeable situations, the minimal grain of tension that perturbs the easygoing flow. (Strictly speaking, there is no flow prior to its disturbance; movement has no positive origin but only starts with an irritation or breakdown—the Complaint-without-Organs

is the name of this minimal rupture, the gap or difference at the “beginning.”) On the other, the CwO presents the opposite paradox of an anti-complaint aimed at stopping a tide of bitching become unbearable: “I can’t take it anymore! Stop your complaining!” The CwO thus has two faces: it is the zero point of complaining as well as the excess of complaint that provokes the complaint to end all complaints. Between these extremes of emptiness and saturation, the pure complaint without content (“What’s wrong? Nothing, that’s what”) and the violent repulsion of the partial complaints, lies the vertiginous ground of complaining in all its grumpy glory, the CwO as “recording surface” (its third and most important determination) for the multitudes of misfortunes and goings-wrong. In this dyspeptic Absolute, all that exists are infinite variations and transformations of a single universal litany. Throughout all its protests, whines, grumbles, and moans, Creation kvetches in a single voice. A single and same complaint for the whole thousand-voiced multiple, a single and same grievance of Being for all beings, a single pathetic little glass of water for all the parched souls on Russian trains clamoring: *Oy, was I thirsty.*

INTRODUCTION

CLINICAL PROSPECTS FOR A FUTURE PHILOSOPHY

THE ODD COUPLE

This confrontation between the thought of Jacques Lacan and Gilles Deleuze that I have been staging through an analysis of complaining immediately raises the more general question: How should we understand the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis in twentieth-century thought (and, to be optimistic, beyond)? In his recent elegy to postwar French philosophy—the third great moment in philosophy after Ancient Greece and German Idealism, it is argued—Badiou highlights the dialogue with psychoanalysis as one of the period's essential sources of creativity and conceptual inventiveness.¹ There is rich material here for an intellectual history yet to be written, “A Century of Psychoanalysis,” or, in a more Badiouian vein, “The Freud Event”: from Bachelard to Sartre, Merleau-Ponty to Maldiney, Foucault to Lyotard, Althusser to Derrida, and Henry to Badiou himself, among others, French philosophy has been deeply marked by its encounter with Freud's singular invention. Whatever the attitude or approach, there was something revolutionary in the theory of the unconscious born from Freud's clinical practice which demanded a response—one simply could not go on as before. As with any momentous undertaking, this endeavor was marked by its share of conflicts and polemics, rivalries and misunderstandings. Behind these lay the vexed question of the exact nature of the relationship between philosophy and psychoanalysis. Are they *allies* in the venture to think a “decentered” subject no longer master in its own house? Are they *rivals*, with psychoanalysis claiming to unmask the hidden structure of philosophical discourse, while philosophers purport to rescue the truth of psychoanalysis from its own naïve metaphysics? Or are they, rather, *strangers* whose paths fortuitously crossed, but who ultimately remain foreign to one another in their respective procedures and concerns? From the side of psychoanalysis, what makes it so difficult to seize is its own complex relation to the fields external to it.

Psychoanalysis is a highly promiscuous discourse, borrowing from and intervening in disparate disciplines: anthropology, aesthetics, cinema, literature, linguistics, biology, neuroscience, psychology, psychiatry, theology, sociology, law, political science, philosophy; this engagement is necessary for its relevance and renewal. Yet it is also, to use Deleuze and Guattari's term, a "celibate machine," withdrawn into itself and aloof to the fields that it touches upon and affects, refusing to be captured or absorbed by, to "wed," any other discipline. Psychoanalysis as a singularity that imitates, within the domain of sciences, the singularities to which it ministers?

It is remarkable that Deleuze adopted all three of these positions at different stages in his career. He may alternately be viewed as deeply sympathetic to Freud, Klein, and Lacan, translating and developing their psychodynamic insights according to his own metaphysical system; or as a biting sarcastic critic of psychoanalytic ideology, as in his collaborative works with Félix Guattari; or simply as indifferent to Freud and his legacy, nourishing himself on other, largely forgotten romantic and occult philosophies of the unconscious: Jung, Bergson, D. H. Lawrence, Aleister Crowley, and others. Indeed, there is a measure of truth in each of these assertions. His major philosophical works, *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, contain highly original discussions of psychoanalytic theory, and can be seen as partially written in dialogue with psychoanalysis. Prior to this Deleuze wrote a groundbreaking study of masochism, which was the first to disengage the specificity of this perversion from the Freudian entity sadomasochism, as well as to propose an interpretation of *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* in terms of a new transcendental philosophy. During this time Deleuze expressed admiration for the work of Lacan, interpreting such concepts as lack, castration, fantasy, Oedipus, sublimation, structure, and the partial object in novel directions, while Lacan praised the writing of the philosopher, recommending it to his auditors as a model of intellectual rigor. Then comes Deleuze's meeting with Félix Guattari, an analyst trained by Lacan who worked at the experimental psychiatric clinic La Borde; their work together is one of the unique collaborations in the history of philosophy. By the time *Anti-Oedipus* is published in 1972, the tone has totally changed: taking inspiration from Wilhelm Reich and the later work of R. D. Laing, and especially Guattari's notion of machine against structure, psychoanalysis is denounced as a conformist and reactionary discipline, responsible for a repressive "reterritorialization" of desire. Whether this turnabout should be read as faithful to Lacan's own subversive program or not (a "true betrayal"), or whether it reveals a fault line that was already long there, the rupture appears complete, and the dialogue with Lacan is no longer possible. With the arrival of *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What Is Philosophy?* a new phase is announced, where polemicism has given way to an almost serene indifference. Now there is hardly any mention of psychoanalysis at

all, as if Deleuze had left his old preoccupation behind. Perhaps the best way of grasping this strained relation of proximity and distance is as a repetition of the intellectual affinity between Freud and Nietzsche, the link between Lacan and Deleuze transposing that of the two great modern pathologists of the soul to more recent times. Freud once remarked that he couldn't read Nietzsche because he was "too interesting." This is usually interpreted in terms of the classic anxiety of influence thesis, but we should take Freud literally here: it is not concern over originality that blocks him, but excessive excitement. Maybe this is what makes it hard for a Lacanian to read Deleuze: it's just too good.

Does not Deleuze's trajectory follow the standard course of romantic relationships: first love, then hatred, and finally indifference? From a psychoanalytic point of view, this would seem to present a clear case of "working through," a long labor of separation and eventual independence from psychoanalysis, having incorporated its lessons and finally dissolved the transference bond. From a Spinozistic angle, however, one could characterize the relationship quite differently: as a chance encounter between two particles traversing the same milieu that generated some sparks and eventually expended its creative energy. Deleuzian philosophy bumps up against psychoanalysis, it combines with it, produces some novel configurations, and then breaks away and continues in its own direction. Probably this latter "Deleuzian" characterization of the Deleuze-psychoanalysis relation rings more true. Yet, to use a favorite Lacanian expression, there is also in this meeting something of a "missed encounter"; it not only involves the contingent mixture of different forces, but touches on a kind of difficult or traumatic kernel, an elusive theoretical object. The starting point of this book is that Deleuze posed a profound and far-reaching philosophical challenge to psychoanalysis that is all the more challenging in that it is difficult to know exactly how to place it. This is underscored by the fact that in the small but growing literature dedicated to Deleuze's engagement with psychoanalysis, one finds outlined a whole series of mutually exclusive positions. Either Deleuze and Lacan are absolutely opposed to one another so that, apart from some superficial similarities, the deeper structure of their thought brooks no dialogue—one must choose Deleuze or Lacan; or else, just the opposite, their positions are profoundly compatible and the manifest disputes merely superficial, to the point where their systems almost seem to mirror one another; or else, while there is a definite alliance between Lacan and the Deleuze of *Logic of Sense* in their theorization of a symbolic dimension detached from the realm of bodily causes, Deleuze betrays his greatest insights with his anti-Oedipal Guattarian "turn," opting for a simpler ontology of flat material becoming; or finally, it is Deleuze and Guattari who effectively radicalize late Lacan, taking his own critique of Oedipus

and pluralization of the names-of-the-father in a delirious new direction: a metaphysics of the real.² Without immediately inserting ourselves into the fray, the very existence of this controversy points us in an interesting direction. If anything, Lacanian psychoanalysis and Deleuzian philosophy are unbearably close, and the real problem is: what generates the gap between their two positions?

IS LIFE A DISEASE?

If there is a single question that links philosophy and psychoanalysis, it is no doubt this: What can the study of psychopathology teach us about the human condition? The answer depends on the way one conceives the relationship between normality and psychopathology, sanity and madness. According to the standard medical model, mental illness reveals very little about human existence as such, save for its vulnerability to all kinds of external shocks and contingent derailments. In this perspective, psychopathology consists in a deviation from normal mental functioning produced by a damaged development (this may include sexual abuse and other physical and emotional traumas, defective care and nurturing, or else genetic defects, neurochemical imbalances, and so on). Freud broke decisively with this model by positing a continuity between normality and pathology, best summarized by the title of one of his more famous books, “The Psychopathology of Everyday Life”: the same mechanisms at work in grave mental disturbances also manifest themselves—less spectacularly, to be sure—in the slips, bungled actions, reveries, confusions, and witticisms (see his book on jokes) of daily existence. Even more audaciously, Freud pointed out the affinities of civilization’s highest achievements with different pathological phenomena—religion with the compulsive rituals of the obsessional neurotic, philosophical theories with paranoiac systems, art with infantile sexual fantasies. Viewed in this way, not only does the distinction between normality and pathology blur, but the original priority of the terms finds itself reversed: it is the study of mental illness that provides the key to understanding the myriad vicissitudes of human existence, rather than the analysis of pathology being guided by some conception of what it means to be normal, healthy, or mature. In this sense Freud can be seen as the first antipsychiatrist, taking madness out of its confinement in clinics and hospitals and relocating it at the very heart of social life. Just as Arthur Schopenhauer once offered the suitably Beckettian definition of walking as “a continuously arrested falling,” so psychoanalysis invites us to conceive of sanity as not the antipode of but a more or less well-regulated madness.

That the study of mental illness provides the key to understanding the structures of human existence in general might be termed Freud’s “crystal principle”: in the same way that crystals cleave and break along preestablished

yet invisible fault lines, so too does man “break” according to fractures which secretly traverse his existence.

[W]e are familiar with the notion that pathology, by making things larger and coarser, can draw our attention to normal conditions which would otherwise have escaped us. Where it points to a breach or a rent, there may normally be an articulation present. If we throw a crystal to the floor, it breaks; but not into haphazard pieces. It comes apart along its lines of cleavage into fragments whose boundaries, though they were invisible, were predetermined by the crystal’s structure. Mental patients are split and broken structures of this same kind. Even we cannot withhold from them something of the reverential awe which peoples of the past felt for the insane. They have turned away from external reality, but for that very reason they know more about internal, psychical reality and can reveal a number of things to us that would otherwise be inaccessible to us.³

Following this passage Freud offers the example of people suffering from delusions of being watched by an alien gaze and hearing voices that report on their actions down to the most intimate details. These pathological phenomena, he suggests, are essentially an exaggeration of the more familiar experiences of self-observation and self-surveillance associated with moral conscience: everyone can recognize these mild forms of psychic division. According to Freud, guilt feelings and self-accusations are essentially attenuated versions of delusions of persecution, which openly reveal a fracture in the psyche that is usually experienced in a more or less continuous manner. It is significant that Freud’s examples here are taken not from the clinic of neurosis but from psychosis; it is not a question of showing the continuity of neurotic symptoms with dreams and slips of the tongue, but of arguing for the link between “everyday” psychic fractures and more severe disturbances. Empathy with grave mental illnesses is sometimes deemed impossible, the world of the insane being separated from “us” by a chasm of incomprehensibility (this was Karl Jaspers’s view). Even though Freud did not have any practical experience with psychotic patients, he still maintained the applicability of the crystal principle in their case. Near the end of his analysis of the memoirs of Daniel Paul Schreber, Freud remarks on the uncanny proximity between his theory of the libido and Schreber’s own schizophrenic reports of nerve-language and divine rays: “It remains for the future to decide whether there is more delusion in my theory than I should like to admit, or whether there is more truth in Schreber’s delusion than other people are as yet prepared to believe.”⁴ It was as if the psychotic, in his suffering and delirium, had a special insight into the nature of psychological processes that are normally reduced and obscured. Lacan makes the same point when he calls the psychotic a “martyr of the unconscious,”⁵ in the etymological sense of being

a witness to its existence and structure—even though he is choked by what he apprehends. In particular, what the psychotic bears witness to is the exteriority of the symbolic order, the fact that the subject is spoken rather than speaking, that language, far from being an inner possession of the human being and tool for self-expression, is a kind of autonomously functioning medium, the discourse of the Other, which (to put it mildly) is not always easy to inhabit. And Deleuze and Guattari will also argue something similar with respect to the social-historical and nature-philosophic character of schizophrenic delusions. They take the machinic delirium of certain schizophrenics *à la lettre*—desire is a machine—using it as the starting point for articulating a new metaphysics and what might be termed a “delirious realism.” The psychotic, and in particular the schizophrenic, is not so much a martyr as a *revolutionary* of the unconscious, liberating life and desire from their capture in ideological and repressive systems, the machinery of social reproduction, with all the risk this entails. Echoing Freud, any sympathetic reader of *Anti-Oedipus* must at some point wonder whether there is more delusion in the theory or more truth in the delusion.

In his later work, Freud develops his pathological conception of human existence into the grand metaphysical speculation that life as such is a disease, a sickness of inanimate matter, which is impelled to return to lifelessness and the bosom of the inorganic: the death drive. The theory of the death drive marks a turning point in Freud’s work, overthrowing the primacy of the pleasure principle and inaugurating a new series of investigations into primitive defense mechanisms, repetition, primary masochism, anxiety, and psychic violence. The concept was (and remains) highly controversial, and its meaning is subject to intense debate. Does it refer primarily to a demonic compulsion to repeat? Or to an aggressive force of self-sabotage and self-destruction? Or to a metaphysical biology that makes of life a painful detour of inorganic matter? One could say that in the history of the philosophical reception of Freud, the death drive practically functions as a kind of “mana-concept,” an empty signifier that may be filled with various meanings but which, across them, stands for one thing: the field of psychoanalysis as such, in its “philosophical dignity,” i.e., the gap between psychoanalysis and empirical psychology, the impossibility of collapsing the former into the latter. Deleuze’s formulation is exemplary in this regard, when he claims that in “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” Freud is, effectively, both Newton and Kant: an empirical physicist of pleasure and a speculative philosopher concerned with the transcendental conditions of the pleasure principle, that is, with how the psyche is constituted such that it can be ruled by pleasure and unpleasure (with the twist in the story being that what makes possible the pleasure principle’s reign also undermines it from within).⁶ This transcendental reading of Freud is supported by his own admission that there is no direct empirical

confirmation of the death drive, since it only ever operates in life, that is, in combination with other positive drives and processes. Instead of picturing the death drive as a substantial force “opposed” to Eros and life, it is more like the knife’s edge that separates life from itself, insinuating a gap or dehiscence in its dynamic flux. The death drive is the weird twist or interruption of life that takes away its self-evidence, that suspends the “natural attitude” toward life as continuous flow and variation and vital energy. Never visible as such, Thanatos is what makes life hampered or blocked or resisted from within; it manifests itself through the cracks and fissures that make human life what it is: something not only profoundly at odds with itself but also detached from itself, dead to its own commotion and flow.

The theory of the death drive may be understood as Freud’s late attempt to name the particular consistency of the field of psychoanalysis, or rather, its peculiar inconsistency, the gap or rupture that is its proper object. What is remarkable is that this theoretical gesture had to be made twice: once for language and consciousness, and once again for the theory of pleasure and the bodily drives. It is as if the rupture needed to be repeated in order to prevent it from settling into some kind of stable meaning. It is not enough to assert a *Spaltung* of consciousness; the gap itself must be displaced from its place. The first phase of Freud’s career is marked by the discovery of the unconscious, which remained the centerpiece of his thought and the moniker of psychoanalysis. Here the focus is on dreams, slips of the tongue, bungled actions, symptoms, and jokes: phenomena that operate at the margins of consciousness, warping its structure and logic. Freud famously called the unconscious “another scene,” a thinking that takes place elsewhere and by other means, but this does not mean that the unconscious should be conceived as a separate entity, or still less a second consciousness, doubling and interfering with the “first.” The unconscious does not have its own independent existence but, rather, persists and subsists in the disruptions, glitches, and slidings of consciousness; ultimately it is nothing other than this inconsistency of consciousness, its internal skew and division. In a second phase, a deepening reflection on the nature of the bodily drives leads Freud to accomplish a similar move with respect to the pleasure principle and the hedonic regulation of psychic life. The death drive is “beyond” the pleasure principle, but again this does not mean that it is located somewhere else. The death drive is not a separate power that fights against or opposes life, but rather what denaturalizes or devalorizes the flux of life. It takes away the self-evidence of that powerful compass of nature, the orientation provided by feelings of pleasure and pain. If the unconscious is the distortion, the glitch, the deviation of consciousness, the death drive is the skew of Eros, the twist that makes of life not a direct expression of vital forces but the deviation of the negative: instead of a perseverance in being, a “failing not to be.” And from a clinical perspective,

the different psychopathologies can be understood as the concrete anthropological expressions of this fatal fracture within drive life, so many ways of failing not to be born, or screwing up the purity of the negative. Many discussions of the death drive focus on Freud's phrase "the organism wishes to die only in its own fashion": the life drives protect the organism from accidental destruction in order to guide it on the path of its own imminent demise.⁷ This might seem like a softening of the original provocation, as if to say "Don't worry, I'm not arguing for some kind of spontaneous combustion of the species, death drive will take some time, it also allows for Eros and life." But in fact, it should have the opposite effect: from the Freudian perspective, life is a cause of wonder not in its infinite diversity and creativity but in the sense that it is deeply curious that the human species has not already vanished. If you marvel at the extraordinary forms and transformations of life, you are Bergsonian; if you wonder how it is possible that the species is not extinct, you are Freudian. And for Freud, if the species is not factually extinct, it is because each of its members wants to die in its own way, that is: to die as a neurotic, to die as a pervert, to die as a psychotic.

It is remarkable to observe that a trio of novels published in the years closely following Freud's invention of the death drive effectively dramatize the concept, exploring a series of fatal variations. This might even constitute a minor genre of sorts, a literature of the death drive. I am referring to Thomas Mann's *Magic Mountain*, Italo Svevo's *Confessions of Zeno*, and, strangest of the three, Blaise Cendrars's *Moravagine*. All are set, like Freud's speculations, against the backdrop of World War I, and all conclude with images of death and destruction: Mann's novel with the probable demise of the protagonist on the battlefield, the other two with more fanciful and far-reaching morbid visions. *Magic Mountain* takes place in a sanatorium, and is concerned throughout with the nature of sickness and disease. During his unexpectedly long stay in the Swiss mountain retreat, the novel's main character, Hans Castorp, is exposed to different views on the relationship between sickness and health, body and mind, suffering and spirituality, but remains undecided. In the section of chapter V titled "Research," Castorp undertakes his own scientific inquiry, reading numerous volumes on anatomy, physiology, and biology: What is life? What is its origin? By what mysterious leap did the first living protoplasm come into being? This investigation into the earliest stirrings of life eventually leads him from biology to physics, the gulf between the organic and the inorganic harking back to the perhaps even more mysterious and unfathomable breach between the material and the immaterial. At the end of this episode, Castorp comes to a thought that perfectly captures Freud's patho-biological speculations, while daringly pushing them one step further. "Disease was a perverse, a dissolute form of life. And life? Life itself? Was it perhaps only an infection, a sickening of matter? Was that which one

might call the original procreation of matter only a disease, a growth produced by morbid stimulation of the immaterial?"⁸ The question with which we began, "Is life a disease?" here finds itself transformed into the even more radical (or absurd) question "Is matter a disease?" Patho-biology becomes patho-materialism, and in this vein one could write a treatise not on "Vibrant Matter," nor on "Bodies That Matter," but on "Sick Matter." For the sanatorium-bound hero, the answer to the eternal metaphysical question, why is there something rather than nothing?, is evident: because the universe is sick. Matter emerges through a kind of primordial perversion, a first wrong move, the morbid stimulation of the void. This is the tragic story of the Fall into being, whose original "error" is later compounded by organicity, corporeality, and finally consciousness.

The first step toward evil, toward desire and death, was taken precisely then, when there took place that first increase in the density of the spiritual, that pathologically luxuriant morbid growth, produced by the irritant of some unknown infiltration; this, in part pleasurable, in part a motion of self-defense, was the primeval stage of matter, the transition from the insubstantial to the substance. This was the Fall. The second creation, the birth of the organic out of the inorganic, was only another fatal stage in the progress of the corporeal toward consciousness.⁹

Turning to *Confessions of Zeno*, which is arguably the great psychoanalytic novel, we also find extensive reflections on the nature of illness and health. The book is narrated by Zeno Cosini at the behest of his psychoanalyst, who asked him to write his memoirs as part of his treatment, and subsequently published them as revenge against his patient for prematurely terminating his analysis. The novel recounts Zeno's many troubles and crises: the death of his father, the farcical way he winds up getting married to the sister of the woman he loves, his mistress, his misadventures in business, his conflict with his analyst, and especially that major drama of his life, quitting smoking. One could say that for Zeno smoking is a constantly arrested quitting, every cigarette being the last one until the addiction is finally "cured" by death. (In real life Svevo was also an inveterate smoker; on his deathbed he asked his nephew for a cigarette and was refused, after which he drily remarked: "Now that really would have been the last cigarette.") Zeno is both deeply attached to psychoanalysis and a ferociously witty critic of it; like Karl Kraus, who once quipped that psychoanalysis is "the cure which is a disease," Zeno mocks his analyst's pretensions to having successfully cured him of an illness that psychoanalysis itself invented. *Confessions of Zeno* is a literary Anti-Oedipus: "I ought to be cured, for they have found out what was the matter with me. The diagnosis is exactly the same as the one that Sophocles drew up long ago for poor Oedipus: I was in love with my mother and wanted to murder my father.

It was a disease that exalted me to a place among the great ones of the earth; a disease so dignified it could trace back its pedigree even to the mythological age!”¹⁰ Zeno has nothing but contempt for that “intolerable conceit that allows the [analyst] to group all the phenomena of the world round his grand new theory,” yet he presents the portrait of a model neurotic clinging to his symptoms, and especially to his analysis, which becomes for him yet another symptom about which to complain. In the end Zeno announces that he is well but that life is a disease, or like a disease, “with its crises and periods of quiescence, its daily improvements and setbacks,” yet this sickness admits no cure. As the war begins, his neurosis seems to take on planetary proportions, and in his final diary entry, dated March 24, 1916, Zeno imagines that a great bomb will come to cleanse the planet entirely of the malady wrought by man and his technological civilization: “There will be a tremendous explosion, but no one will hear it and the earth will return to its nebulous state and go wandering through the sky, free at last from parasites and disease.”¹¹

Blaise Cendrars’s *Moravagine* (the title literally means “Death-to-vagina,” or alternatively “Death-by-vagina”—one could imagine a trashy B-movie adaptation, and indeed Cendrars was an early enthusiast of Hollywood cinema) is a philosophical Jack the Ripper story mixed with exotic travel, revolutionary politics, even an episode on Mars. At the heart of the story is an inseparable couple, one an antipsychiatrist *avant la lettre* and the other a murderous madman in the guise of a Nietzschean *Übermensch*, who embark on a series of adventures through a tumultuous and lunatic world. “The activity of consciousness is a congenital hallucination,”¹² Cendrars proclaims, and the dizzying trajectory of the plot bears this out: from their escape from a mental hospital in Switzerland to a killing rampage in Berlin, revolutionary activity and masochistic love in Moscow, rambles through the industrial USA, a stint spent in the jungle with the Jivaros Indians, then back to Europe and Paris, where *Moravagine* becomes a pilot and the pair meet Blaise Cendrars, the Great War starts, and the duo are separated only to be finally reunited at another asylum where a delirious *Moravagine* subsists on morphine injections and feverishly writes his outlandish final testament. *Moravagine* takes place between the years 1900, the official publication date of Freud’s *Interpretation of Dreams*, and 1917, marking the death of its eponymous antihero and the start of the October Revolution. The novel opens with the psychiatrist-narrator Raymond la Science expounding on notions of health and disease. Health, he informs us, is an utterly empty concept; it has no positive content but is merely an ossified and “normalized” form of sickness: “What convention calls health is, after all, no more than this or that passing aspect of a morbid condition, frozen into an abstraction.”¹³ “Diseases,” on the other hand, “are a transitory, intermediary, future state of health. It may be that they are health itself.”¹⁴ The narrator espouses a kind of romantic antipsychiatry,

deconstructing and ultimately jettisoning the distinction between health and sickness in favor of an accursed vitalism: there are only strong drives and weak drives, the powerful rhythm of “life, life, life, life, life, life, life, life, life”¹⁵ and its eventual cancellation by the “successful” adaptation that annuls life’s rebellious spark and causes its energy to flow back to the environment. This is the Cendrarsian critique of adaptation: life as such is a dangerous disequilibrium, the affirmative power of difference: “A living being never adapts to his environment, or, if he does, he dies in the process. The struggle for life is the struggle for non-adaptation. To live is to be different.”¹⁶ With Moravagine, Cendrars creates a character who is “larger than life,” a “striking individual” or “great human wild animal” whose disproportion mirrors the madness of a world at war (at one point the narrator observes that “the whole world was doing a ‘Moravagine’”), and, on a more metaphysical level, the flux of “life, life, life, life, life, life, life, life, life,” the primordial rhythm for which there is and can be no proper science: the Nietzschean “transvaluation of all social values and of life itself.”¹⁷ But at the same time this hypervitalism corresponds with an ultramorbidity, a death that is “larger than death,” an overblown galactic death drive. Like Svevo, Cendrars too imagines a bomb that will do away with disease, but, even more radically, his “astral explosive” will annihilate the whole planet and beyond. “Condensed in the smallest volume industrially possible ... this pill would drive in a heap all the fulminating masses of the Milky Way,” releasing the “luminous energy” of the sun (Cendrars is often credited here with an early premonition of the atomic bomb).¹⁸ The story ends with Moravagine’s descent into madness and final demise; he dreams that he is on Mars, he pens a massive manuscript, the second part of which, titled “The End of the World,” seems tailor-made for a Hollywood blockbuster.

VIRTUAL EXTINCTION

The notion of the sick animal sometimes appears in unlikely places. Consider the case of Norbert Wiener, whose cybernetics is the grandfather of today’s cognitive science. In the (rarely read) chapter of his classic study *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* titled “Cybernetics and Psychopathology,” Wiener proposes a model of mental illness based on the analogy of the brain with a computer. Psychopathology is the inevitable result of the complexity of the brain’s neuronal pathways, which create a fertile ground for breakdowns in information and control mechanisms. As he explains: “Man, with the best developed nervous system of all the animals, with behavior that probably depends on the longest chains of effectively operated neuron chains, is then likely to perform a complicated type of behavior efficiently very close to the edge of an overload, when he will give way in a serious and catastrophic way. This overload may take place in several ways: either by an excess in the amount of traffic to be carried, by a physical

removal of channels for the carrying of traffic, or by the excessive occupation of such channels by undesirable systems of traffic, like circulating memories which have increased to the extent of becoming pathological worries. In all these cases, a point will come—quite suddenly—when the normal traffic will not have space enough allotted to it, and we shall have a form of mental breakdown, very possibly amounting to insanity.”¹⁹ The potential for mental illness is thus inscribed in the very nature of brain functioning, as the price to be paid for having the best-developed nervous system. Indeed, the optimal condition of the human mind is to operate “very close” to the edge of a breakdown, so that, in Schopenhauerian fashion, the informational circuits should catch their speeding computations right before overloading. Insanity is the inherent risk of the complexity of our mental operations. The end of the chapter goes even further in articulating a cybernetic antihumanism. At a time when neuroscientists and neuroscientifically oriented philosophers increasingly speak about the plasticity and hyperadaptability of the brain, it is worth recalling this dark vision at the origin of cognitive science. The brain, Wiener argues, is “probably already too large” to make effective use of its full capacities; prone to myriad failures and breakdowns, this oversized and overspecialized organ appears to be on an evolutionary downward slope, destined for a final crash. “[W]e may be facing one of those limitations of nature in which highly specialized organs reach a level of declining efficiency and ultimately lead to the extinction of the species. The human brain may be as far along its road to this destructive specialization as the great nose horns of the last of the titanotheres.”²⁰

The problem with this cognitivist version of the death drive is not that it is too pessimistic (who knows? maybe it will not be the brain’s hyperspecialization that brings the species down), but that it is not pessimistic enough. It still posits extinction as a future event, the doom on the horizon. But what if, like the case of the psychotic who is living in constant fear of having a breakdown, only to be reassured by his doctor “Don’t worry, the breakdown has already happened, you are mad,” the catastrophe has already occurred? We are already dead. Death is not the apocalyptic end point of the drive but its starting point, or rather lack thereof. There is a wonderful exchange in Beckett’s *Endgame* to this effect: “Do you believe in the life to come?” “Mine was always that.” In other words, the “first” life is already a kind of post-life or after-life. Or, to add one further reference: in a passage from Andrei Platonov’s novel *Happy Moscow*, one of the heroine’s lovers expresses to her his antivitalistic *Lebensphilosophie*.

“I’m all right,” said Komyagin. “After all, I’m not living—life’s just something I got caught up in. Somehow I’ve got entangled in all this, but I wish I hadn’t.”
 “Why?” asked Moscow.

“I can’t be bothered,” said Komyagin. “You have to keep puffing yourself up all the time—you have to think, speak, go somewhere or other, do this and that. But I can’t be bothered with any of it. I keep forgetting that I’m alive—and when I remember it scares me.”²¹

The passivity in Platonov’s formulation is striking: I do not live, life is something I got caught up in. There is a kind of suspension of the immediate necessity of life, of the inner thrust of the organism to preserve itself and to persevere in its existence. The subject and its life—although one already hesitates here with the “its”—do not form an organic unity. Instead this innermost drive is felt as an external compulsion, as a foreign element in which one has become “entangled.” Which is why it can appear as a terrible bother and a drudgery, a series of chores to be carried out: thinking, speaking, traveling, working, copulating, and so on—I’d rather not. Life does not immediately identify with itself, but is something separated from the subject that is compelled to live it. It (life) weighs on the self who tries to forget the whole affair, yet cannot manage to consign its troublesome memory to oblivion. To paraphrase the logic of the old Jewish joke: one doesn’t live one’s life but lives one’s failure to forget that one is alive. This peculiar attitude could be viewed as the expression of a sick mind, a loss of vital energy, a pathological lethargy or depression. But following the logic of the crystal principle, we may also see in Komyagin’s complaint the lucid expression of a universal predicament. One cannot take for granted the force of self-preservation or the binding love of Eros. For the human being, life does not present itself as a self-evident inner power, but as a commandment and a duty. Freud writes: “To tolerate life remains, after all, the first duty of all living beings.”²² This should be read literally: to live is not a natural and spontaneous *energeia* but a duty, a superego imperative, even the most fundamental one. Vitalism is the formula of the superego.

But death comes first. This strange-sounding idea was developed by Lacan apropos the writings of the Marquis de Sade, who, despite his reputation for scandal and perversion, was rather conventional on this score. One of the most well-known passages in Sade’s work is the long philosophical dissertation delivered to Juliette by Pope Pius VI, where he propounds an atheistic theory of Nature. At first this disenchanting view presents itself as an apology for crime: there is nothing wrong with rape, torture, murder, and so on, since these conform to the violence that is the universal law of things. To act in accordance with Nature means to actively take part in its orgy of destruction. The trouble is that man’s capacity for crime is highly limited, and his atrocities, no matter how debauched, ultimately outrage nothing. This is a depressing thought for the libertine. The human being, along with all organic life and even inorganic matter, is caught in an endless cycle of death and rebirth, generation and corruption, so that “there is indeed no real death,”²³ only a

permanent transformation and recycling of matter according to the immanent laws of “the three kingdoms,” animal, vegetable, and mineral. Destruction may accelerate this process, but it cannot stop it. The true crime would be the one that no longer operates within the three kingdoms but annihilates them altogether, that puts a stop to the eternal cycle of generation and corruption and, by doing so, returns to Nature her absolute privilege of contingent creation, of casting the dice anew. Only “the extinction of all beings would make room for the new castings Nature desires.” Hence, “the criminal who could smite down the three kingdoms all at once by annihilating both them and their capacity to reproduce would be he who serves Nature best.”²⁴ The summit of Sadeian libertinism is this delirious thought of pure negation.²⁵ This is why the aim of the true libertine is not to give free rein to his licentious passions but, rather, to purge himself of the passions. Instead of indulging his violent desires in a hedonistic manner, the sadist should become cold-blooded and apathetic. To this end he trains himself, through the commission of outrages, to empty himself of feelings and attain a higher insensitivity. Through this supremely detached debauchery, the libertine’s violence approaches the indifferent cruelty of Nature itself. And what the sadist ultimately seeks is to rival this cruelty, and even outdo it. The radical destructiveness to which the sadist aspires, an absolute negation beyond the cycle of generation and corruption, this sheer chaos or absolute void, is what Lacan calls the “second death.” If the first, prosaic death is the one that terminates the individuated organism, releasing its molecules back to the great recycling bin of creation, the second death is what cancels this eternal return and delivers the universe to the pure contingency of primary nature.

Lacan then remarks on the difference between himself and Sade: “It is just that, being a psychoanalyst, I can see that the second death is prior to the first, and not after, as de Sade dreams it.”²⁶ Sade would at first seem to present a radicalization of Freud (to put it anachronistically). His death drive augurs not only a return to the inorganic but the total annihilation of both the organic and the inorganic in the return to sheer meaningless contingency, Nature’s “castings”: let everything go to hell, and throw the dice again. With respect to Freud’s definition of instinct as “an urge inherent in organic matter to restore an earlier state of things,”²⁷ Sade considerably ups the ante: there is an urge not only in the living but also in the nonliving to restore an earlier state of things, viz. that state where there were no things at all. If the stars could speak, they would also complain: *mē phunai*. This is surely the deadliest death drive, the return of Being to Nothingness, of order to sheer chaos, and Pope Pius’s libertine materialism could be seen as an anticipation of Mann’s patho-materialism. Yet despite this stunning extension of the Freudian concept, Lacan maintains that Sade is ultimately the more conservative of the two—why? Sade believes that there exists a well-established second nature that operates

according to immanent laws. Against this ontologically consistent realm he can only dream of an absolute Crime that would abolish the three kingdoms and attain the pure disorder of primary Nature. But in aiming to speed up the violence of nature to the point of its autodestruction, Sadeian libertinism also reveals the lie of accelerationism. "When I have exterminated all the creatures that cover the earth, still shall I be far from my mark, since I shall have merely served Thee, O unkind Mother, for it is to vengeance I aspire, vengeance for what, whether through stupidity or malice, Thou doest to men in never furnishing them the means to translate fairly into deeds the appalling desires Thou dost ever rouse in them."²⁸ Sade is a great accelerationist thinker whose speculative atrocities expose the impasse of accelerationism. The misery of the sadist is that his bloody deeds cannot but fall short of the very command Nature instills in him. In a mirror image of the paradox of the saint analyzed by Freud, whose superego becomes more exacting and cruel the more he morally purifies himself, the Sadeian libertine is taunted by a cruel superego which berates him for his relatively impotent orgies of destruction even as he becomes more and more perfectly debauched. In short, libertinism is haunted by the figure of the bad infinite. Its cold enjoyment is bound up with the dream of the final destruction of the system that it can never realize, and in truth does not want to, for it is the system of destruction that the sadist faithfully serves. As we have seen, this fantasy of escalating destruction is a key aspect of the literature of the death drive: the death of Hans Castorp on the battlefield and the end of old Europe, Zeno Cosini's bomb that would wipe disease off the planet, Moravagine's astral explosive detonating the Milky Way ... all the way up to the Sadeian dream of universal annihilation.

Just how deadly is the death drive? It is not only that the catastrophe can never be catastrophic enough, but Sade commits a kind of category mistake. The negative is not something ahead of us, still waiting to be fully realized, but already behind us. It is not the ultimate goal to end all goals but what undermines and warps the sure reign of the teleological from within. If for Sade second nature is ruled by immanent laws in which primary nature cannot interfere, for Lacan this supposedly unified order is never as whole as it pretends to be. In contrast to Sade, who makes a distinction between two ontologically separate domains, Lacan posits a single one marked by an internal split or inconsistency; the logic of dualism is thereby replaced by that of a cut. Somewhat paradoxically, for all its wantonness and havoc the Sadeian will-to-extinction is premised on a fetishistic denial of the death drive. The sadist makes himself into the servant of universal extinction precisely in order to avoid the deadlock of subjectivity, the "virtual extinction" that splits the life of the subject from within. The Sadeian libertine expels this negativity outside himself in order to be able to slavishly devote himself to it; the apocalyptic vision of an absolute Crime thus functions as a screen against a more

intractable internal split. What the diabolical reason of the sadist masks is the fact that the Other is barred, inconsistent, lacking, that it cannot be served, for it presents no law to obey, not even the wild law of its accelerating autodestruction. There is no nature to be followed, rivaled, or outdone, and it is this void or lack, the nonexistence of the Other, that is incomparably more violent than even the most destructive fantasm of the death drive. Or, as Lacan argues, Sade is right if we just turn around his evil thought: subjectivity is the catastrophe it fantasizes about, the death beyond death, the “second death.” While the sadist dreams of violently forcing a cataclysm that will wipe the slate clean, what he does not want to know is that this unprecedented calamity has already taken place. Every subject is the end of the world, or rather, this impossibly explosive end that is equally a “fresh start,”²⁹ the unabolishable chance of the dice throw.

THE TROUBLE WITH PLEASURE

In one of the sessions from his ninth seminar, *Identification*, delivered in 1961–1962, Lacan remarks that he has been asked a number of times why he never speaks of “normal desire.” Should not the psychoanalyst also articulate a positive vision of health and human flourishing as a counterpoint to his focus on suffering and illness? A contemporary version of this objection was posed by Alasdair MacIntyre in his criticism of Lacan’s reading of Aristotle. According to MacIntyre, while psychoanalysis greatly enriches our understanding of the conflicts and difficulties that beset human existence, this picture not only remains compatible with Aristotelian teleology, the view that we are “rational beings engaged in achieving our good,” but even presupposes it.³⁰ Psychopathologies are conceived by MacIntyre as aberrations of a “normal and natural development,” obstacles to be overcome on the path to “maturity,” and Lacan’s claim that desire is without satisfying finality is rejected as “unsupported by clinical or other experience.”³¹ We shall have occasion to return to Aristotle and the significance of his ideas regarding pleasure and self-actualization later. In the Preface I argued that Freud makes any straightforward return to Aristotle impossible, but presents instead what might be seen as an ironical negative Aristotelianism: rather than striving to achieve its good, the human being flourishes by bungling its self-sabotage; its exuberance and extraordinary plasticity pass by the way of an abyssal negativity. The human being is so incompetent, it cannot even successfully sabotage itself, and this superlative incompetence is the Freudian form of a deviant negativity. Lacan adopts a similarly ironic stance with respect to the notion of “normal desire.” He responds to the question by saying, in effect, “I always speak of normal desire, there are three types: neurotic, pervert, and psychotic.” These clinical categories are the different “faces of the normal structure,” and Lacan goes on to observe how each of them foregrounds a distinct aspect of this

structure: “The neurotic is normal insofar as, for him, the Other with a big O is all-important. The pervert is normal insofar as for him the Phallus . . . is all-important. For the psychotic his own body, which is to be distinguished in its place, in this structuring of desire, his own body is all-important.”³² This schematic parceling of psychopathologies is the Lacanian version of Freud’s crystal principle: human beings fracture along three main fault lines, the relation to the Other, sexuality, and the real body, each of which is highlighted by a different clinical entity. Put differently, from the perspective of Lacan’s structural clinic there are three main ways of surviving the catastrophe of subjectivity, three ways of constructing a life and a world in the wake of the second death, or three *afterlives*: neurosis, perversion, and psychosis. Lacan’s presentation here is rather didactic and formal in style, and thus risks appearing overly rigid. In fact all three of these “fault lines” are at play in the different pathologies, and never simply one or the other, though one is always in a dominant position and gives a certain consistency to the subjective structure as a whole. Thus in psychosis, the relations to the Other and sexuality are lived from the perspective of a grave crisis in the symbolic and imaginary identifications that individuate the psyche and provide it with a minimum of ontological security, the borders that separate self and other and constitute the limits of bodily experience; in perversion, sexuality and sexual difference take precedence insofar as these are marked by difficulties around phallic identification and its various fetishistic supplements, which consequently shape the relationship toward the Other and the experience of the drives; and in neurosis, it is the unfathomable question of the Other’s desire—what does the Other want? What am I for the Other? And what do I want?—along with the loss and sacrifice imposed by the Law that dominate issues of embodiment and the expression of sexuality. For Lacan these pathological types comprise the three faces of the “normal structure.” The various crises and fractures relating to the desire of the Other, sexual difference and the sexual drives, and the borders and limits of the body are not obstacles to achieving the human good, but open and insoluble problems to which each singular existence must provide its ad hoc solutions—in this respect, everyone is following a “normal and natural development.”

There are two statements from Lacan’s seminars, one from the early days and the other closer to the end, that set out the main theses of what may be called Lacan’s clinical anthropology. The first is: “Man is the subject captured and tortured by language.”³³ And the second: “What specifies this animal species is quite probably the following: a completely anomalous and bizarre relationship with its *jouissance*.”³⁴ In a key passage from Seminar XIII, Lacan brings these two aspects together, while throwing down the gauntlet to philosophy: “I would defy any philosophy whatsoever to account to us, at present, for the relationship between the emergence of the signifier and this relationship

of being to *jouissance*.”³⁵ This is, to my mind, the major research problem of Lacanian psychoanalysis, and constitutes its enduring interest: to examine the fraught connection between language and the body, the symbolic constitution of human reality, with all the equivocations and paradoxes and slip-pages that belong to the “illogical logic” of the signifier, on the one hand, and the strangeness or perversity of an animal whose enjoyment is far from being always or unequivocally “enjoyable,” on the other. If the cornerstone of Lacanian theory is the exteriority of language, the subject caught up in a network of signifiers beyond its control, the same goes for enjoyment and the bodily drives. Enjoyment is inherently problematic for the human animal because it never completely falls together with the subject that must bear it; we are related to enjoyment as something which intimately belongs to us, to our corporeal existence and inner vitality, yet is separated from and independent of us, and thus can be surprising, bewildering, burdensome, disgusting, overwhelming, terrifying, thrilling, conflicted, uncanny, uncontrollable (and sometimes even pleasurable). Life, like language, is not something that we intrinsically possess and that flows naturally from the inside, but something that we “get caught up in,” a foreign element in which we are uncertainly entangled. How does this entanglement take place? That is the key question, and although there is no simple solution, at this point we can at least give a very short, preliminary answer. It is at the juncture of the symbolic and the somatic that Lacan locates what he considered to be his most important concept, the *objet a*, which thus has a special status: it is neither simply on the side of the physical body, with its needs and rhythms and pressures, nor fully part of the structure of symbolically constituted reality, but arises as a kind of surplus at their faulty point of intersection; it gives body to a certain impasse or gap between sensuousness and the symbolic order. Fantasy is the staging of this intersection, and its object is the mark of a failed synthesis, the precarious hinge between language and life.

This is what I call, in the broadest terms, “the trouble with pleasure,” the human being’s strange, problematic, and paradoxical relationship with the forces that move and enliven it—its “enjoyment” in Lacan’s vocabulary, or “desire” for Deleuze—insofar as these are bound up with the sense and nonsense of its virtual or fictional universe, the subject’s never quite right, or maybe all too perfect, insertion into the convoluted symbolic order. If I have chosen to explore this problem via Deleuze, or via the “missing dialogue” between Deleuze and Lacan, it is not only because he may be seen as one of the few philosophers to have taken up Lacan’s challenge to think together “the emergence of the signifier and the relation of being to enjoyment,” but also because he in turn challenges Lacan’s own way of theorizing this relation through his original recasting of psychoanalytic theory. In what follows I will proceed by examining what I consider to be Deleuze’s three major works:

Difference and Repetition, *Logic of Sense*, and, with Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, limiting myself to their engagement with psychoanalysis. We have already touched on many of the points around which this controversy turns: a positive conception of desire and the creative powers of the body; the role of language in the process of psychic individuation and the formation of subjectivity; the reinvention and eventual critique of the Oedipus complex, that “intolerable conceit that allows the [analyst] to group all the phenomena of the world round his grand new theory” (Svevo); and a rethinking of the clinical categories of neurosis, perversion, and psychosis together with a conception of a superior health that is reversible with sickness—as I shall argue, *Anti-Oedipus* should be read as an attempt at founding a new clinical anthropology on the basis of a metaphysics of desire. Closely connected with this is the search for what Cendrars so marvelously refers to as “life, life, life, life, life, life, life, life, life.” Indeed, in speaking of virtual extinction, are we not a long way from Deleuze’s signature concept of virtual life? This is one of the crucial points that divides Lacan and Deleuze, and continues to resonate, if anything even more strongly, in their respective intellectual legacies. To put it bluntly: if for a Lacanian what appears to be alive is in fact already dead—Eros, the drives, the speaking being—for a Deleuzian what we usually think of as dead is actually bursting with vibrancy and life, but another kind of life released from the familiar human coordinates, a machinic life or an inorganic life or a cosmic life, or—to quote the title of Deleuze’s last essay—“immanence, a life.” Which is more radical, the extension of the concept of death or of life? In fact, there is something false about this question, for it is the aim of both thinkers to problematize this very distinction, even as they do so in different ways which, I would argue, reflect the essential ambiguity of the intersection between language and the body, enjoyment and the symbolic order, life and death. It is the intersection that has priority, not one or the other of its terms. And as should be clear from my not so tongue-in-cheek description of Deleuze as a “better complainer,” my intention is to present a less positive and less affirmationist Deleuze,³⁶ to abjure the all too easy opposition between negativity, impossibility, castration, and lack versus creativity, difference, and becoming, and instead to interpret Deleuze’s philosophy as an extended and highly original attempt to think negativity and the violence of the negative differently.

CHAPTER 1

THE BEYONDS OF THE PLEASURE PRINCIPLE

SUBJECTIVATION WITHOUT SUBJECT

It has been observed that Freud's theoretical edifice is marked by a fundamental split or asymmetry; in this case, two halves don't quite make a whole. On the one hand, there are his analyses of the formations of the unconscious, detailed in his great trilogy of works from 1900 to 1905, *Interpretation of Dreams*, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, and *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*. Here the slippages and scrambled expressions of desire are patiently tracked down and decoded, with incongruences, repetitions, and misfires providing the clues to the workings of the unconscious. The dream is a rebus, the symptom is a censored text, and the slips and bungled actions of everyday life are so many ciphers through which the repressed obliquely manifests itself. In these works Freud's position could almost be described as a twisted cognitivism: the unconscious, he argues, is fundamentally a matter of thoughts, yet the unconscious thinks differently from consciousness, linking together (and breaking apart) representations without respect for the usual rules of order and common sense. Hence the puns, wordplays, bad jokes, and bad poetry that are the stuff of classic Freudian interpretation. From minor slips to catastrophic psychopathologies a kind of intricate symbolism is at work, a complex and unwitting subjectivity that manifests itself precisely through the distortions, disturbances, and short circuits of mental life. In short, the unconscious is the continuation of speech by other means. On the other hand, there is the theory of the drives, elaborated in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* and Freud's later papers on metapsychology. Here the psyche is presented in quasi-machinic terms, as an apparatus for managing the stimuli that affect it from both without and within, above all the tension arising from the sexual drives. Freud famously criticizes the notion of sexuality as a unitary instinct aimed at the reproduction of species, arguing that the body is fragmented into a multiplicity of impulses oriented by no preset program or goal but each

pursuing its own independent organ-pleasure. According to this perspective, the psyche is driven by a meaningless pleasure economy, a proliferating network of cathexes and investments, excitations and discharges, intensities and flows. If the unconscious speaks, the drives do, they are silent and pragmatic (“whatever works,” to quote Woody Allen), and one of the great challenges in interpreting Freud’s metapsychology is trying to understand how these two dimensions hang together. What is the relationship between the hermeneutics of the unconscious—the meaning-making or symbolic activity of the mind in Freud’s expanded sense—and the energetics of the drives? In more Lacanian terms, how do signifiers coming from the domain of culture, the codes, messages, imperatives, and normative frameworks which define the symbolic order, impact upon and affect the corporeal machinery governed by pleasure and unpleasure? Do these signifiers radically transform the drives, introducing in an abrupt and unilateral manner a structure that was previously unknown to them? Or would it be better to say that signifiers interact with the drives, symbolizing and reorganizing a primordial layer of experience that already contains its own dynamism and differentiation? Or is it, rather, the partial drives that attract and infiltrate cultural meanings, instrumentalizing them as so many pretexts to pursue their own pleasure aims? Or is there some other way of conceiving this relation?

One could say that Lacan’s and Deleuze’s approaches to psychoanalysis differ according to which half of the Freudian corpus they privilege. To reformulate the previous questions: Is it Freud’s unique decoding procedure, his way of interpreting the formations of the unconscious like they were a mutilated language, that provides the key to understanding the driving forces of psychic life? Or is it, rather, starting from the pressures and intensities of this life that we can put into proper perspective the role of language in the formation and expression of desire? “All begins with sensibility,”¹ writes Deleuze; “In the beginning was the Word, which is to say, the signifier,”² states Lacan. This would seem to be a clear-cut opposition, the one insisting on the primacy of sensation or experience, the other on the primacy of the symbolic. This contrast comes out even more sharply when we compare the guiding phrase from Lacan’s “Rome Report” with the opening lines of *Anti-Oedipus*: “Whether it wishes to be an agent of healing, training, or sounding the depths, psychoanalysis has but one medium: the patient’s speech”; “It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said the id.”³ If Lacan emphasizes speech as the sole medium of psychoanalysis, in *Anti-Oedipus* language appears to have been almost entirely replaced by bodily machinery. Yet there is something suspicious about this too-neat partition between sensibility and language, as if it were a return of the classic metaphysical division of body and mind, and it is easier to state the distinction than to maintain it—at the very least, one should observe that sensation too has a “logic,”

and that the symbolic subject is also “incarnate,” i.e., fundamentally related to enjoyment. In fact we shall see how, starting with different premises and drawing on different traditions, the systems of Deleuze and Lacan continue to intersect one another. One of these crucial crossing points—and, as I shall argue, the key point of intersection—is the concept of the drive. Commentators roughly divide Lacan’s work into three phases, corresponding to the three registers of the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real.⁴ According to this standard schematization, beginning in the mid-1960s Lacan turns his attention to the real, and as a crucial part of this new focus he undertakes a detailed reading of Freud’s “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes” in order to develop the drive as one of the “four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis” (the title of his eleventh seminar). Now Lacan speaks not only of the barred subject, the subject split by language, but also of another, arguably more radical kind of subjectivity or proto-subjectivity, which forms the “other side” of the symbolic order and its lacking or holed structure: this is the strange headless subject of the drive, rooted in the gaps and orifices of the body and circulating around corporeal partial objects that confound any clear distinction between inside and outside, self and other.

The object of the drive is to be situated at the level of what I have metaphorically called a headless subjectivation (*une subjectivation acéphale*), a subjectivation without subject (*une subjectivation sans sujet*), a bone, a structure, an outline, which represents one side of the topology. The other side is that which is responsible for the fact that a subject, through his relations with the signifier, is a holed subject (*un sujet troué*).⁵

Deleuze’s entire philosophical enterprise might be seen as an extensive elaboration of this notion of “headless subjectivation” or “subjectivation without subject,” paradoxical formulations that aptly characterize the sprawling universe of “impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities” which *Difference and Repetition* makes its privileged object of study.⁶ As I shall argue, the split between Lacan and Deleuze can ultimately be understood as different theoretical approaches to what is for each a similarly double-sided “topology”—a topology which is strongly linked to the “impossible synthesis” of the two aspects of Freudian metapsychology, the speaking subject and the drive-machine, but also has much wider implications and reference points. It is as if we were presented with an inaugural decision, a remodeled version of modern philosophy’s obsessive question: Where to begin? Either one starts from the subject in its relations to the symbolic order, the discourse of the Other, and demonstrates how the “headless” drive emerges as a by-product of its holes and inconsistencies, as an element that “cannot be swallowed,”⁷ that is both lodged inside the signifying structure and yet cannot be fully integrated by it. Or else one starts with this “intimately alien” or “internally

excluded” element and makes of it the thing itself, the source of a new metaphysics and a new kind of insubstantial substance: an ontology of difference, on the one hand, and repetition, on the other. From this reverse perspective, the view on language changes too; while the problem of the tension between the symbolic structure and the libidinal drives by no means disappears, it does not look quite the same either.

The second chapter of *Difference and Repetition*, entitled “Repetition for Itself,” contains one of Deleuze’s most sustained engagements with psychoanalysis, and should be counted among the most brilliant texts in his oeuvre. In this chapter Deleuze fulfills the project outlined a year earlier in his study on masochism, “Coldness and Cruelty,” to read “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” as a new kind of post-Kantian transcendental philosophy, what he calls transcendental empiricism. In that earlier work, Deleuze praised Freud’s text as a “masterpiece” of “specifically philosophical reflection” which sought to ground the empirical workings of the pleasure principle in an inquiry into first principles.⁸ Deleuze’s central insight is that what concerns Freud is not so much exceptions to the pleasure principle but its foundations. Indeed, on closer inspection it appears that there are no exceptions to the pleasure principle at all. Even the most seemingly flagrant violations and contradictions can ultimately be explained as roundabout attempts to win enjoyment or get rid of suffering. From the detours and sacrifices imposed by the reality principle to the conflicts which make things pleasurable and unpleasurable to different psychic agencies, and from the reproduction of painful scenes in play and nightmares as a retrospective attempt to master them to the revival of traumatic events in the transference—everything can be reconciled with the logic of seeking pleasure, avoiding unpleasure: Freud never wavers from this naturalistic premise. But the real problem is, why does pleasure-seeking take on such weird, and backward, and even tortuous forms? Deleuze explains: “There are no exceptions to the principle but there is a residue that is irreducible to it; nothing contradicts the principle, but there remains something which falls outside it and is not homogeneous with it—something, in short, *beyond* . . .”⁹

There is a very specific logic being described here. There are no exceptions to the pleasure principle’s reign, no violations or transgressions, not even the famous exception-that-proves-the-rule. Yet somehow it is “not all,” something is skewed about its operation, an inassimilable remainder warps it from within. How to explain this recalcitrant element, this fateful twist? Deleuze’s ingenious answer is: The problem lies neither in the pleasure principle per se nor in another power that would oppose it, but in how the pleasure principle is stitched onto the empirical field, how it comes to regulate the manifold currents of psychic life. In order to account for the circuitousness and peculiarity of the pleasure principle’s applications, Freud traces its

origins back to a more primitive level of mental activity. For the mind to operate as it should—regulating its own level of tension, guiding the discharge of drive energies along different associative pathways, and so on—a certain “task” is presupposed.¹⁰ That task, situated prior to the pleasure and reality principles, consists in the binding of psychic tensions, a minimal structuration of stimuli, or, in terms of transcendental philosophy, a synthesis. Repetition is the name of this primitive synthesis, it is what first creates and sustains a psychic continuum by collecting together disparate and scattered excitations and giving to them a more or less stable rhythm. However—and this is key to Deleuze’s interpretation of Freud—this constitutive activity is never fully accomplished. Though the reign of the pleasure principle covers all, it contains fissures and weak points that betray its “unbound” origins. Traces of this original constitutive process can be observed in psychic phenomena whose motivations, while not exactly falling outside the purview of the pleasure principle, are not entirely reducible to it either. For Freud and Deleuze, this is a universal problem of mental life: bends and complications in the pleasure principle’s workings are not only or primarily the result of accidental damage, but stem from the psyche’s lack of “specific forms”¹¹ that would spontaneously orient it; or, as Freud argues, in its original helplessness and lack of protection against internal excitations, the human mind operates under conditions akin to traumatic neurosis.¹² The mind must become what it is, it must invent itself, without the “benefit” of any pre-given filters or innate coordination of its faculties or “image” with which to conform. It is because of this groundlessness and radical exposure that every mind, in the course of its “incomplete constitution” or “failed synthesis,” will acquire its pathological skew, its idiosyncratic modes of enjoyment, its touch of madness (if not more than a touch)—it is these unique deviances and distortions that hold it together, that compose the secret coherence of the individual and express its abyssal freedom.

Deleuzian philosophy is famous for its militantly affirmative stance; its imperative is to undo the multilayered construction of the psyche in order to liberate the “impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities” which constitute, beyond its characteristic forms of identification and self-representation, its real substance (this would also serve as a good definition of the aim of psychoanalysis, and shows that it has no directly therapeutic intention: to reverse engineer an individual mind by unraveling its associative pathways and habitual linkages in order to discover what really makes it tick). The old Freudian maxim is thereby turned around: not *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden* but *Wo Ich war, soll Es werden*, where I was, there it shall be—let the ego, the self-same, the pseudo-differences perish, and unleash the radical difference of the drives. If this is the punch line, I wish to pay more attention to the setup: Deleuze’s account of the constitution of the psyche, and the specific

way he conceptualizes the deviancy or twist in its main regulatory mechanism, the pleasure principle. Deleuze's exposition of this is highly structured and detailed, and even where the text may appear more loosely organized it obeys a rigorous division. Part of the originality of Deleuze's reading of Freud is his thesis that there is not one but three "beyonds" of the pleasure principle (also called the three syntheses of the unconscious), which correspond to the three dimensions of time. In "Coldness and Cruelty," Deleuze already explained the grounding of the pleasure principle according to its temporal structure: there is a repetition that synthesizes and stabilizes the present, but this repetition is itself founded on another that repeats and preserves the prior "groundlessness of the ground," and by doing so opens the path to a third repetition that "saves or fails to save,"¹³ the dimension of the future. In *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze elaborates the ideas present in the earlier essay with new philosophical, literary, and scientific references, while keeping to the same temporal scheme. The syntheses now receive the names of *Habitus* (Habit), the primitive binding together of the psychic apparatus in the present; the pure past of *Mnemosyne* (Memory), which constitutes the erotic realm of the drives and their elusive "virtual" objects; and *Thanatos* or the death instinct as the pure and empty form of the fracture in psychic life, in its radical openness to the new (the future). Each moment of the synthesis is linked to a specific philosophical constellation, which itself follows the pattern of one or more key authors whose thought is perverted or radicalized by other dissident or minor figures. Hence habit is explicated through Hume, yet with the panpsychic assistance of Neoplatonism and Samuel Butler; memory through Bergson, but crucially modified by Proust; and the death instinct via the concept of transcendental subjectivity in Descartes and Kant, whose subversive core is revealed in Hölderlin. To be clear: in what follows it is not my intention to explore every nuance of this dazzling reinvention of the philosophical tradition, but rather to highlight in Deleuze's account of psychic individuation the persistent dialogue with psychoanalysis. In examining the exposition of the three beyonds, we shall see how Deleuze provides a theory of the genesis of mind in close proximity to Freud and Lacan, yet at a no less crucial theoretical distance.

HABITUS, OR THE ID

If "all begins with sensibility," the basic form of its organization is what Deleuze terms habit. Habit designates the repeated connection between two or more elements. Deleuze draws on Hume to characterize the mind as an association machine, which creates order by making links between the different sensations and impressions that impinge on it. These links do not belong to the things themselves but are imposed on them from without, like bridges connecting together "a Harlequin world of colored patterns and

non-totalizable fragments.”¹⁴ The mind’s synthetic activity is governed by no pre-given plan, fulfills no intention, and serves no purpose; it occurs automatically and blindly. Rather than being directed in top-down fashion, it takes place in and through the mind; Deleuze thus calls the process “passive synthesis.” In Humean terms, the principles of association (contiguity, resemblance, and causality) allow the mind to transcend the “delirium of the given,” the immediacy of sensuous experience, and thereby become human nature. How does this occur? The minimal unit of psychic organization is the contraction of two separate impressions or instants, such that the appearance of one creates the expectation of the appearance of the other. Through this contraction or “originary synthesis,” the succession of instants is no longer an unrelated scattering but takes on a certain consistency: an anticipation, a belief, a habit is formed. Deleuze gives Hume’s associationism a Neoplatonic twist in describing these contractions as the contemplations of micro-egos or “larval subjects”: the psyche is originally a multiplicity of little egos, each one animating a specific local conjunction of elements and impressions. Moreover, these autocontemplations extend beyond the human mind to the most elementary syntheses of nature, and Deleuze finds in the speculative writings of Samuel Butler a sweeping metaphysical vision of habit as the binding power of ever greater ensembles of reality.

These component souls are of many and very different natures, living in territories which are to them vast continents, and rivers, and seas, but which are yet only the bodies of our other component souls; coral reefs and sponge-beds within us; the animal itself being a kind of mean proportional between its house and its soul, and none being able to say where house ends and animal begins, more than they can say where animal ends and soul begins.¹⁵

With respect to psychoanalysis and the question of psychic individuation, Deleuze uses this broad conception of habit—we do not *have* habits, we *are* habits—in order to reconceive the foundations of the Freudian pleasure principle. According to a certain moral psychology, the formation of habit is guided by pleasure and pain. Either we repeat something because it brings us pleasure, or else education manipulates our instinctive hedonism with rewards and punishments to instill “good” habits until they become second nature. Deleuze argues just the opposite: the pleasure principle can only govern a mind already formed by habits. The clusters of impressions and associations, the network of contracted elements that comprise the individual psyche are not “chosen” on the basis of their pleasing or displeasing character, or in light of some ideal of fulfillment or self-perfection. Which connections establish themselves, which particular syntheses end up composing the dense reality of the individual, is a throw of the dice. They are motivated

by nothing, save a “passion for repetition.”¹⁶ This is how Deleuze interprets the Freudian notion of binding. The id is a field of fluctuating excitations or “intensive differences” that are gradually structured by reiteration into discrete processes and investments that in turn produce new differences. To put it simply, “drives are nothing more than bound excitations.”¹⁷ And while the pleasure principle rules over the drives, it is not initially responsible for their formation. The organism’s search for pleasure will be marked and guided by certain elements that are themselves indifferent to it. How and where the organism finds pleasure is a function of its habits, not the other way around.

But this is not the whole story. In a further move, Deleuze qualifies this “passion for repetition” in terms of a more *primordial pleasure*, a pleasure that precedes and makes possible the pleasure principle’s reign. Here we must be careful: the pleasure that Deleuze is speaking of here cannot be understood in the sense of motivating repetition, lest the latter collapse into the principle that it is meant to prepare and condition. Pleasure is not the aim of repetition. Mastering excitation, which is equivalent to reducing unpleasure, must not be seen as the purpose of repetition even if it may have that effect. In a way loosely analogous with Kant’s notion of a nonpathological feeling, we could perhaps see this pleasure as a “pure” or “archaic” enjoyment belonging to the motiveless play of repetition itself. How does Deleuze describe it? Each drive is animated by a component soul, a little ego or “larval self,” which is filled with a contemplative satisfaction. “There is a beatitude associated with passive synthesis, and we are all Narcissus in virtue of the pleasure (autosatisfaction) we experience in contemplating, even though we contemplate things quite apart from ourselves.”¹⁸ This narcissism is not that of the ego reflected in the Gestalt of the mirror image, but rather the blind narcissism of the drive: the pleasure of a micro-ego totally absorbed in the things it contemplates, a miniphilosopher happily lost in his meditations and not thinking of himself at all. The drive at its most elementary is composed of fragments of reality that rejoice in their connections and conjugations, their dazzling patchwork. What reigns at this level is not the logic of reflection—the dialectics of self-alienation and return—but the vibrant immediacy of hallucination. “The satisfaction which flows from binding is necessarily a ‘hallucinatory’ satisfaction of the ego itself.”¹⁹ Here Deleuze reworks Freud’s idea of hallucinatory satisfaction in a new direction. For Freud, when the infant is unable to cope with the pressure of unmet needs, it literally dreams its way out, recathecting the memory of an earlier experience of satisfaction. This hallucinatory fulfillment is the most radical and direct expression of the pleasure principle’s imperative to evacuate tension. Deleuze sees something else at stake: behind the psyche’s abortive attempt at discharge lies the positive enjoyment of imagination,²⁰ the pleasure in forming and repeating links and associations. Need according

to Deleuze is an inappropriate model for understanding desire; it is a secondary, not an original, dimension of psychic life. It is only on the basis of later active syntheses that the idea of a unified self arises in relation to painful lack and the fantasy of a fulfilling object. But underlying these active syntheses is a prolific “contemplative base.”²¹ Even the most basic of needs, like hunger, presupposes all the little powers that make up appetite, sensation, perception, nutrition, and so on, a whole expansive network of contracted elements, and these are what constitute the real driving force of the organism. The rhythm proper to the living present is not that of need and satisfaction but the ebb and flow of these multiple powers, or what Deleuze calls the oscillation of contraction and fatigue. “Fatigue marks the point at which the soul can no longer contract what it contemplates, the moment at which contemplation and contraction come apart.”²² For Deleuze, the present is not simply a punctual point but already contains within itself all three dimensions of time: the “now” of habit is constituted as a jumbled movement of retentions and protentions, past associations and future expectations. Yet this rich, dynamic present is itself limited and expires in fatigue, the weariness of component souls into which the present vanishes. There is a Beckettian aspect of the present which cannot quite hold itself together, which lags behind itself, which can’t go on but nevertheless starts up again. This expiration prepares the next stage of the synthesis: the passing of the present indicates that it must be grounded in another time more original than itself, the time of the past and of memory.

Deleuze’s new understanding of hallucinatory satisfaction allows him to elegantly sidestep the central problem that plagued Freud’s economic model of mental life: should pleasure be defined as an augmentation or a reduction of psychic tension, mounting excitation or discharge, thrill or relief? “Whether pleasure is itself a contraction or a tension, or whether it is always tied to a process of relaxation, is not a well-formed question.”²³ We need not decide between alternatives: empirically speaking, pleasure can of course take both forms, but neither definition touches on the key—that is, the properly transcendental—question of why pleasure should govern *over* mental life rather than being merely an episodic occurrence *within* it. The problem is not to list the different forms of pleasure but to explain how it may be elevated to the dignity of a principle. What gives pleasure its “general value”?²⁴ Neither the exigency of needs, nor a fantasized satisfaction that drives the self in its projects and desires, but an impersonal enjoyment that pervades and sustains existence down to its tiniest, imperceptible expressions. The pleasure principle presupposes a pleasure that it did not institute but which is nonetheless indispensable for its operation.

At one point Deleuze writes, in a Neoplatonic and Butlerian vein, “By its existence alone, the lily of the field sings the glory of the heavens, the

goddesses and gods.”²⁵ Is this the hymn of a new cosmic hedonism? The verse from the Gospel of Matthew that Deleuze is alluding to, “Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin” (6:28), is typically interpreted as an illustration of God’s joyful creation and an exhortation to the simple life; Deleuze gives it a lusty pagan twist. By an odd coincidence, in a seminar contemporary with the publication of *Difference and Repetition* Lacan comments on the same biblical passage, yet the psychoanalyst inflects it in a more Sadeian direction: “It is true that we can well imagine the lily in the fields as a body entirely given over to *jouissance*. . . . It is perhaps infinitely painful to be a plant.”²⁶ Incidentally, Marx and Engels also ridiculed the pastoral vision of Matthew: “Yes, consider the lilies of the field, how they are eaten by goats, transplanted by ‘man’ into his buttonhole, how they are crushed beneath the immodest embraces of the dairymaid and the donkey-driver!”²⁷ And let us not forget Leopardi’s dark vision of a suffering nature—the “whole family of vegetation is in a state of *souffrance*”—recalling the great Oedipal complaint: “Here a rose is attacked by the sun, which has given it life; it withers, languishes, wilts. There a lily is sucked cruelly by a bee, in its most sensitive, most life-giving parts. . . . Every garden is like a vast hospital (a place much more deplorable than a cemetery), and if these beings feel, or rather, were to feel, surely not being would be better for them than being.”²⁸ What to make of this? Pleasure or pain, the glorious affirmation of the joy of creation versus the terrifying torment of living matter—how are we to understand these various remarks on the biblical flower? Deleuze’s Neoplatonic-Christian “ode to joy,” with its emphasis on an originally fruitful pleasure as the basis of the id, is foreign to the thought of Lacan. Yet even this cheerful portrait is beset by its own form of negativity. For Deleuze the starting point for thinking the drives is pure affirmation, a prereflexive, self-absorbed, impersonal joy, yet one that is at the same time menaced by a lapse, a lag, a drag, the impossibility of going on.

MNEMOSYNE, OR THE VIRTUAL OBJECT

If habit provides the foundation for the swarm of impersonal drives that compose the id, Deleuze must now describe the passage from the autistic enjoyment of all these little egos to the psyche’s effective engagement with external reality. How is the movement accomplished from hallucinatory satisfaction to object-oriented satisfaction, from local integrations of excitation to a global integration, from pleasure principle to reality principle, from id to ego? In a sense, the micro-egos are already invested in the outside world: they are contemplations of things, impressions, and sensations in which a certain habitual ordering is established. If these contemplations may be qualified as narcissistic, it is not in the classical sense of Narcissus captivated by his own reflection, but their blind self-absorption in the thing contemplated: instead of the

global ego admiring its reflection in the watery surface, it is the water which enjoys contemplating itself in and through a multiplicity of droplet-egos. But now a further organization will take place, which moves in two parallel directions. On the one hand, active syntheses establish themselves on the basis of the shimmering multiplicity of passive syntheses, which effect a unification of the ego and its relations to reality: it is at this point that goals, effort, testing, and criteria of success and failure come into play. At the same time, the passive syntheses undergo their own development, in which the narcissistic satisfaction of the micro-egos becomes the contemplation of a new and more intricate entity that Deleuze calls the virtual object. "Drives, which are defined only as bound excitation, now appear in differentiated form: as self-preservative drives following the active line of reality, as sexual drives in the new passive extension."²⁹ The mind becomes more complex at this stage, splitting along the two lines Freud designated as self-preservation and sexuality: an adaptation to a teleologically ordered reality, on the one hand, and a disadaptation to this same reality as the impressions and connections of habit are rearranged and twisted by the fantasms, reveries, and fragments of a virtual universe.

This complexification or "new passive extension" entails a new temporality, and Deleuze's main accomplishment in this section is to bring together Eros and Memory: if the present is the time of habit, the return of associations and linkages which creates a certain temporal continuity, sexuality is always at least minimally out of step with these patterns and routines: it is lived in the past. Freud famously wrote of the sexual drive that every finding of an object is a refinding of it, and Deleuze will also describe Eros as a movement of repetition or return, but this must be understood in a specific sense: the past of Eros is a "pure past" which differs in kind from any former present. Deleuze's main inspiration for his description of the second synthesis of the unconscious is Bergson. What Bergson allows Deleuze to theorize is a past that is not derived from the present, but is presupposed by and coexists with it; rather than being constituted afterward, as a faded and recollected former "now," the past is already there, doubling the movement of present time and adding to it the depth and richness of its accumulated layers. There is no actual perception that is not infused with thousands of details of memory. What is remarkable about Bergson's concept of memory is the broad sense he gives to it, not merely as a faculty for reproducing the past but as an original synthesis of all three aspects of time. Just as the "present" is not a mere naked point but envelops the different dimensions of time as the retentions and anticipations, associations and expectations of habit, so too does the "past" constitute the whole of time in its own manner, with the present figuring as but "the entire past in its most contracted state,"³⁰ and the future as the *insistence* of a past that cannot stay in the past but presses

to realize itself in fresh and unpredictable ways. Far from merely being the recall of what once was, memory for Bergson has a driveline character. The Bergsonian universe is structured around a double pole or “duality of centers.”³¹ On the one hand, there is perception in the present oriented by bodily movement and goal-oriented action: the focus of the present is on solving problems that arise in the environment and overcoming obstacles in light of vital exigencies; it is aided in these ends by a habit-memory which mobilizes past experience to the benefit of present adaptations. But beyond this lies the great unconscious stream of the pure past in which the present secretly bathes. Present consciousness, with its teleological imperatives, is based on a filtration and inhibition of pure memory, an expansive virtual universe that is always in motion and constitutes the other hidden side of the mind. It is as if we were living with blinkers on, in a chopped-up and impoverished reality, largely unaware of the continuous vibrations and polyvalent levels that make up our subjective being. For Bergson it is the past that is truly dynamic and still yet “undecided”—therein lies the provocation of his philosophy—and acts as the source for the renewal of consciousness, providing it with an unheard-of depth and diverting it from its narrow ends.

Let us focus on one key example to understand how memory works. To show how one can have access to the unconscious, to show how one can gain entry to the pure past or how the virtual can appear as virtual, “it is more or less at this point that Proust intervenes, taking up the baton from Bergson.”³² Deleuze considers the scene at the beginning of *Swann’s Way*, arguably the most famous instance of remembrance in the whole of twentieth-century literature, in which the trivial detail of a tea-soaked cake triggers a profound recall of the Narrator’s childhood home, Combray. Now, according to Deleuze, the point of this accidental and sudden evocation of memory is not simply that the past returns in an unpredictable manner, but that in returning memory disrupts the continuity of the present and the past, undoing both through the insistence of something (object = *x*) that cannot be properly placed in any timeline. “Combray reappears, not as it was or as it could be, but in a splendor which was never lived, like a pure past.”³³ Here is Proust’s description:

[T]hese Combray streets exist in so remote a quarter of my memory, painted in colors so different from those in which the world is decked for me to-day, that in fact one and all of them, and the church which towered above them in the Square, seem to me now more unsubstantial than the projections of my magic-lantern; while at times I feel that to be able to cross the Rue Saint-Hilaire again, to engage a room in the Rue de l’Oiseau, in the old hostelry of the Oiseau Flesché, from whose windows in the pavement used to rise a smell of cooking which rises still in my mind, now and then, in the same

warm gusts of comfort, would be to secure a contact with the unseen world more marvelously supernatural than it would be to make Golo's acquaintance and to chat with Geneviève de Brabant.³⁴

The Combray that insists in memory is not simply the Combray that was once lived and preserved in an archived past, but an impossible or "marvelously supernatural" object that flickers in the interval between the madeleine-dipping present and the Narrator's lost childhood. It is the "qualitative difference" that the taste of tea and cake suddenly makes, "Combray as it is in itself,"³⁵ a sensation which makes resonate two series of a "past present" and a "present present" without belonging to either. When the vision of Combray rushes forth into the Narrator's memory, it is not his particular subjective apprehension that is at stake. Rather, the person becomes the witness of the autorevelation of Combray itself. *The noumenal appears*. Combray imposes itself in a certain way, involuntarily, "real without being present, ideal without being abstract," according to Proust's famous formula. Let us propose a thought experiment: If one were to try to film this scene (Proust is notoriously considered unfilmable), the image of Combray would have to be shown in such a way as to indicate that while it is deeply part of the Narrator's subjective universe, it is not accessible from his point of view. A standard flashback sequence would not suffice; what is needed is neither a subjective nor an objective shot but to show the scene as "somehow 'subjectivized' without the subject being given." The trick would be to capture "the pure, pre-subjective phenomenon" as "a kind of acephalous passion,"³⁶ a subjectivation without subject. Or, in other words, to show the scene from Combray's point of view. In this reversal lies the power of memory: the usual egological coordinates of reality dissolve and we are transposed into a "superior viewpoint," one which "signifies at once the birth of the world and the original character of a world," no longer that of the "individual" but a "principle of individuation."³⁷

Deleuze interprets such memory fragments or "shreds of pure past"³⁸ in terms of the psychoanalytic concept of the partial object—or rather, he reinterprets this key notion in light of Bergson and Proust. The partial object has a long history in psychoanalytic thought, stretching from Freud's drive-object and sexual fetish to Abraham's part object, Klein's pre-Oedipal body split into good and bad fragments, Winnicott's transitional object, and especially Lacan's *objet petit a* with its four paradigmatic forms, breast, shit, gaze, and voice (five if one includes the phallus, which has a special status—more on that in chapter 2). All of these describe presubjective processes, psychic vicissitudes that elude any clear distinction between inside and outside, self and other, and concern parts (above all, bodily organs) that lead their own detached existences. What appeals to Deleuze in Lacan's concept

of the partial object is his notion of a nontotalizable fragment, an element that does not fit into a greater whole and cannot be assigned a fixed place in a series of relations—and for that reason has a unique dynamism and mobility. Following Lacan, Deleuze defines his virtual object by two fundamental characteristics. Put negatively, the object “has no place other than that from which it is ‘missing,’ no identity other than that which it lacks.”³⁹ But this lack equally manifests itself in the form of surplus: the fragment protrudes from the totality like “trees from another world, like Gogol’s nose or Deucalion’s stones.”⁴⁰ Not belonging and sticking out, constitutive lack and excessive presence—these are the traits that give the object its singular charge, making it a motor of displacement and drift. What Deleuze’s Bergsonism adds to the psychoanalytic concept is the accent on time: for Deleuze, partial objects are not so much separated body parts as *autonomous temporal organs* or, to use his own term, destinies. Just as the body is conceived by psychoanalysis as a body-in-pieces, so too should time be conceived as a fragmented “body,” a collection of temporal fragments without any single unifying stream or history. Involuntary memories are partial temporal objects. On an empirical level, individual existence consists in a succession of moments that are linked together through relations of resemblance, causality, anticipation, contradiction, and so on; yet on a noumenal level this same existence is stratified across multiple layers, so that its various moments are obliquely related by virtue of the way each one condenses or contracts a third thing: the destiny (object = x) that resonates within it. As “shreds of pure past” virtual objects complexify the continuous flow of present time, creating a piecemeal collage of motley timelines and rhythms without themselves being temporally localizable. “Perhaps that is what time is: the ultimate existence of parts of different sizes and shapes, which cannot be adapted, which do not develop at the same rhythm, and which the stream of style does not sweep along at the same speed.”⁴¹

Now despite its undeniable importance, it would nonetheless be an exaggeration to claim that for Deleuze “truth is ultimately memory,”⁴² or that Deleuze’s psychoanalysis is strictly a Bergsonian one. Deleuze makes use of the metaphysics of memory in order to explain the doubling of psychic life (virtual/actual) while avoiding the conflictual dualism of Freud’s drive theory (sexuality/self-preservation, Eros/Thanatos). However, memory is not the deepest layer of the psyche, nor is the past the most profound dimension of time. Deleuze will go on to theorize the subject that corresponds to these shreds of pure past, memories developing and flowing at their own speeds. This subject, however, is not one that gathers together and unifies the diverse temporal fragments in a single history; on the contrary, to these autonomous temporal objects there corresponds an instance of absolute dispersion. In fact Deleuze distrusts memory, which he views as harboring an

intrinsic tendency toward fabulation and nostalgia. "It is inevitable that the two references become confused, the pure past assuming thereby the status of a former present, albeit mythical, and reconstituting the illusion it was supposed to denounce, resuscitating the illusion of an original and a derived, of an identity in the origin and a resemblance in the derived."⁴³ There is an inherent risk for virtuality to turn into mythology, for the past to appear as something once possessed and now lost, for the flux of memory to turn into a fantasy of origins. If habit is marked by a kind of negativity which drives it beyond itself, namely fatigue, so too is memory carried away by its own sort of oblivion: forgetting. Beyond memory and the pure past there lies a "great amnesiac,"⁴⁴ "the man without name, without family, without qualities, without self or I,"⁴⁵ the void, the rupture, the crack as the ultimate figure (or better: anti-figure) of subjectivity and psychic life.

THANATOS, OR THE DELEUZIAN OEDIPUS COMPLEX

This brings us to what Deleuze calls, following Freud, Thanatos or the death instinct. In psychodynamic terms, Deleuze explains the third and final synthesis of the unconscious as the drama of the ego's botched libidinal constitution, the wound inflicted to its narcissism. The narcissism at stake here is no longer that of the micro-egos animating the drives, with their immediate hallucinatory satisfaction, but instead concerns the global ego reflecting upon itself and trying to grasp its own identity. It is only at this level that difference is thought, and, one could also say, that thought is difference: for Deleuze, the crucial figure of difference in-itself is the internal splitting of self-consciousness, the otherness at the heart of the thinking I. In a manner similar to Lacan, Deleuze brings together the decentering of the Freudian ego with the modern philosophical problematic of the subject, but for him it is Kant who, in his critique and radicalization of the Cartesian cogito, provides the first rigorous presentation of "the ego who is not master in its own home." Moreover, according to Deleuze, Kant already goes beyond Freud in demonstrating how this decentered subject must be understood according to its temporal structure. What is Deleuze's argument? The question of how Deleuze and Lacan situate themselves with regard to the legacy of the Cartesian subject is a vast and complicated one, to say the least, but it is worthwhile here to sketch a brief comparison.⁴⁶ Lacan's *tour de force* is to make of the Cartesian subject the subject not of consciousness but of the unconscious. Instead of standing for self-transparency and identity, the Lacanian cogito is a vanishing point, an antisynthetic instance which disturbs and displaces the imaginary integrity of self-experience. Save for his early writing on the mirror stage, Lacan consistently defends the significance of the Cartesian breakthrough, which, he argues, is properly brought to light only with psychoanalysis and its theory of the subject divided by language. In Deleuze's case the relationship to

Descartes is more ambiguous. Deleuze is famous for championing the dissolution of the subject in favor of a multiplicity of mini-selves. “We speak of our ‘self’ only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says ‘me.’”⁴⁷ This sentiment is echoed in Deleuze and Guattari’s famous tongue-in-cheek remark, “The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd.”⁴⁸ Yet the theory of the fragmented mind amounts to more than a multiplication of mini-egos. While denouncing the notion of the unified subject, *Difference and Repetition* presents the breakup of this unity as a complex affair, itself split into two different figures: the “dissolved self” (*le moi dissous*) and the “fractured I” (*le Je fêlé*). These are not synonymous terms, and their difference deserves to be underlined—not all breakups are the same. In the exploded system of *Difference and Repetition*, “a broken Earth corresponds to a fractured sky,”⁴⁹ and the real problem lies in specifying the nature of the correspondence between these two figures of psychic disintegration: the dissolved self of habits and memories on the one hand, and the fractured I of thought on the other. There is a strong analogy with Lacan in the setup of this problem. If for Lacan the crucial question is “how does the subject of the unconscious, as cogito, relate to *jouissance*?”⁵⁰—or, in other words, how does the barred subject of the symbolic order relate to the multiplicity of “headless” drives—for Deleuze the problem is similarly that of understanding how (a fractured) ego and (a dissolved) id go together.⁵¹ To conceptualize the latter means working through Hume and Bergson; for the former it is necessary to return to Descartes.

In his 1978 lecture course on Kant, which takes up and develops the line of argument in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze plainly states: “Obviously I would like to spare you a lesson on Descartes, but everything comes from this formula: ‘I think therefore I am.’”⁵² Deleuze follows the standard line in viewing Descartes as the founding father of modern philosophy. Descartes invents the modern *subject* as opposed to the empirical *self* via the operation of methodical doubt that is universal and repeatable. Everyone can follow the steps of the narrator of the *Meditations* and obtain the same result: a subject removed from the customs and familiarities of the world and stripped of individual qualities and idiosyncrasies, in order to be reduced to the naked certainty of its own cognition. Everything may in principle be doubted save for the existence of the doubter, which alone is able to provide the ground for its own certainty. Descartes famously defines this purified subject as thinking substance, *res cogitans*: “I am a thing that thinks.” A seamless continuity or “implicit relation” is thus posited between doubting, thinking, and being.⁵³ I doubt, I think, I am—so what am I? A thing that thinks. Now it is precisely this ontological claim that Kant calls into question. Descartes’s argument goes too fast, as it were, and indeed for Kant the crucial element

missing from the Cartesian cogito is time. As Deleuze explains, what is problematic for Kant is the way Descartes immediately joins the determination “I think” with the undetermined existence “I am” in order to draw the conclusion “I am a thing that thinks.” What is thereby elided is the third crucial “logical value,” the form of determination, namely time.⁵⁴ For Kant, time is the form of interiority and every appearance, including that of the own self, must be passively determined within it. A gap thus insinuates itself where Descartes saw an identity between thought and being: the spontaneity of the “I think” can be determined only via a series of phenomenal appearances without ever appearing as such, in its pure activity. This is the paradox of inner sense, the Kantian anticipation of Rimbaud’s famous phrase “I is an other”: we intuit ourselves only as we appear to ourselves, not as we are in ourselves, so that the “I, or He, or It (the thing), which thinks” remains phenomenally inaccessible, a kind of Other within the self.⁵⁵ Deleuze heralds this desubstantialization of the cogito, but wants to push this crack much further than Kant, who, after all, still maintains the unity of the psyche under the watchful I of transcendental apperception. Instead Deleuze remakes the crack in transcendental subjectivity into a total decimation of self-unity, and in doing so develops Kant’s thesis that time, or the pure form of time, is the operator of the psyche’s fracture.

In order to elaborate this further, Deleuze turns to Hölderlin. And more specifically, to Hölderlin’s version of the tragedy of Oedipus: it is here that the structure of the split subject is properly revealed, and the full consequences of the Kantian breakthrough are unfolded. “[N]either Fichte nor Hegel is the descendant of Kant—rather, it is Hölderlin, who discovers the emptiness of pure time and, in this emptiness, simultaneously the continued diversion of the divine, the prolonged fracture of the I and the constitutive passion of the self. Hölderlin saw in this form of time both the essence of tragedy and the adventure of Oedipus, as though these were complementary figures of the same death instinct. Is it possible that Kantian philosophy should thus be the heir of Oedipus?”⁵⁶ This passage contains *in nuce* Deleuze’s take on German Idealism (not counting his references to Salomon Maimon, but that is another story), and its intrinsic connection with psychoanalysis: Hölderlin is the thinker who takes up and radicalizes the Kantian paradox of inner sense, precisely through his intense engagement with Greek tragedy, and by doing so opens the way for a renewed notion of death drive.⁵⁷ (This would be Deleuze’s version of the “psychoanalysis with German Idealism” project, pursued today by the Slovenian School.) Hölderlin worked on highly original translations of *Oedipus Rex* and *Antigone* from sometime in the late 1790s to 1803; they were published in 1804, the last works of his lucid period before his final breakdown and refuge in his friend Zimmer’s tower; the pall of schizophrenia somehow hangs over these texts. One of

the remarkable things about Hölderlin's interpretation of Oedipus, which is articulated in the short but dense notes that accompany the translations, is that it avoids the now-standard Freudian focus on incest and parricide. For Hölderlin, Oedipus' tragic flaw does not lie in the terrible crimes he committed unawares, but rather in the single-minded drive with which he pursues the evil that has befallen Thebes. "To understand the whole we must above all look closely at the scene in which Oedipus interprets the message from the oracle too infinitely, and is tempted toward the *nefas*."⁵⁸ Hölderlin argues that the prophetic message recounted by Creon near the start of the play is actually pretty vague, and could simply have meant that the King needs to judge well and maintain civic order. But rather than acting as a pragmatic leader, Oedipus responds in a "priestly" fashion: he wants not only to restore peace but to "cleanse" the city of contamination, and to identify a "particular" crime at the heart of the crisis. The connection between the oracular pronouncement and the story of the murder of Laius is not at all self-evident or "necessary," Hölderlin writes, but is made by Oedipus himself.⁵⁹ Instead of taking a more practical view of things, Oedipus is driven to uncover and root out evil at its deepest source, thus precipitating his own doom—what Hölderlin refers to in Latin as the *nefas*, or in Greek *atē*. Christoph Friedrich Nicolai, a fellow traveler of Lessing and Mendelssohn, had already argued in his 1757 *Treatise on Tragedy* that Oedipus' tragic flaw lay not so much in his criminal acts but in his curiosity; to cite Hölderlin's witticism, perhaps Oedipus had one eye too many. According to Hölderlin, tragedy follows a certain rule of construction or "calculable law" in which two parts are joined and disjoined by a fundamental break, or "counter-rhythmic interruption." Due to this *caesura*—which Hölderlin identifies in *Oedipus Rex* with the appearance of Tiresias—the tension of the drama pivots on a underlying asymmetry, so that the "beginning and end cannot at all be made to fit."⁶⁰ Before, Oedipus was the self-possessed and capable solver of the riddle of the Sphinx, ready to do whatever is necessary to save his city; afterward he is reduced to being the very criminal he seeks, the cause of Thebes' woes and a stain to be mercilessly rubbed out. The transition or "transport" between the two "Oedipuses" is a completely empty one insofar as there is nothing to bridge the gap: their difference is irreconcilable, or in Hölderlin's language, the "most unbounded"—and Hölderlin's point is that the "real Oedipus" is neither one nor the other, neither the wily hero nor the accursed criminal, but their bare and unthinkable difference: Oedipus is the impossibility of making himself "rhyme." In his "infinite" pursuit of the guilty, he arrives at the extreme point where he is no longer able to think himself. He is a strangely maniacal Cartesian subject, a "sick mind questioning after consciousness,"⁶¹ who is unwittingly driven to discover his innermost self as nothing but a fractured I, an "aborted cogito."⁶² His real fault is

neither sexual transgression nor murder but excessive speculation, and in this sense Oedipus is indeed the forefather of Kantian critique: his tragic fate is a philosophical crack-up.⁶³

Hölderlin underlines the uniqueness of Sophoclean tragedy with respect to that of Aeschylus or Euripides, or Greek mythology more generally. The latter typically turn around the transgression or violation of a limit, the hero who passes beyond his station and acts as if he were a god, and the action is resolved when the order of things is restored and the rule of divine law reasserted. Sophoclean tragedy challenges the notion of order in a more radical way. What is at stake is not the transgression of the limit, it is rather the limit itself which vacillates, gives way, becoming precarious and terrifying.⁶⁴ Instead of rebelling against the law or heroically struggling against opposing forces, even and especially in the face of certain defeat, Sophoclean tragedy, while incorporating these dramatic elements, partakes of another and more profound intrigue: it shows the consequences of the loss of the very framework in which transgression and opposition make sense, the confrontation with a metaphysical disorientation and desolation. "Aeschylus and Euripides are better able to objectify suffering and anger but less the mind of man going on its way under the unthinkable."⁶⁵ For Hölderlin, Sophoclean tragedy anticipates an atheistic modernity in the way it stages a "categorical turning point" whereby both man and god turn their backs on each other, leaving nothing but the "conditions of time and place,"⁶⁶ the empty transport or caesura (the Kantian language here is unmistakable). Just as Freud sought a universal lesson in Oedipus' plight, so too does Deleuze. However, Hölderlin's is not the neurotic Oedipus who, transmitted to Freud via Diderot, secretly wants to strangle his father and lie with his mother, but an *insane* Oedipus who, in his "sick questing after consciousness," ventures into a transitional zone where life and death, freedom and unfreedom, eternity and temporality, blur and cross over into each other. "For a brief moment we enter into that schizophrenia in principle which characterizes the highest power of thought, and opens Being directly on to difference, despite all the mediations, all the reconciliations, of the concept."⁶⁷

PRIMAL REPRESSION

We can now return to the beginning, or rather to a kind of "beginning before the beginning," to the problem of difference and repetition, the mystery of their conjuncture. The great psychoanalytic formula of *Difference and Repetition* is: "I do not repeat because I repress, I repress because I repeat."⁶⁸ For Deleuze repetition is the precondition of repression, not its consequence, and it is due to the primacy of repetition that there is such a thing as the unconscious. This picture must at first seem counterintuitive. It turns on its head the folk Freudian wisdom which explains repetition precisely

by the repression of negative experiences: I end up repeating, in a distorted manner, those psychic realities which are too powerful and too terrible for me to otherwise cope with. According to this scheme the mind defends itself against painful thoughts and traumatic events by pushing them into the unconscious, but the price it pays for this is that they are never truly left behind or forgotten; they continue to haunt the psyche, returning unpredictably in different guises and contexts, disrupting the smooth flow of psychic life. Here there is a more or less clear causal chain leading from a conflict to its symptomatic expression, from accidental damage to the psyche's repetitive malfunctioning. Freud himself, however, was not satisfied with this strictly negative view. Repression, he thought, would never stick unless there already existed in the unconscious certain elements that exerted a gravitational pull on the repressed material and held it there. Repression is never solely a "pushing away" from consciousness but also a "pulling toward" the unconscious; both forces are necessary to fully account for the process.⁶⁹ The secondary repression of painful ideas—what we usually think of as repression—presupposes a "primal repression" that accounts for the formation of the earliest unconscious material, yet whose cause in Freud's writings remains obscure. At one point he suggests that this repression takes place before the formation of the superego, and is connected with economic factors, the intensity of excitations and impressions prior to the creation of a protective crust.⁷⁰ Freud is struggling with the difficult question of the origins of the unconscious, and the notion of primal repression seems to entail a temporal paradox: the unconscious must already be there prior to the repression which creates it in order for the latter to be able to effectively function. From a Deleuzian (and equally Lacanian) perspective, Freud's hesitations and difficulties on this point, all his failed or not quite successful attempts to identify the deepest roots of psychopathology, are not so much a theoretical weakness as a sign that he hit upon a veritable problem: that a linear genesis of the mind is not possible, that at its earliest beginnings what one discovers is not a some first cause or positively definable primal scene, but a rupture or a gap or, in Deleuze's vocabulary, pure difference. There is a break in the causal chain, a missing link. And the drama of psychic life consists in the process of living this break and repeating it, of cracking up in one's own fashion.

Repetition is not a secondary effect or the consequence of something going wrong, but expresses the very core of the drives, the fact that they are skewed from the start. Put otherwise, repression does not take place in a neutral psychic space, disrupting a prior equilibrium or harmony, but intervenes in a space that is already distorted or awry. This is the positive foundation of the unconscious, the primal repression that constitutes its nucleus. "[W]hen Freud shows—beyond repression 'properly speaking,' which bears

upon representations—the necessity of supposing a primary repression [*refoulement originaire*] which concerns first and foremost pure presentations, or the manner in which the drives are necessarily lived, we believe that he comes closest to a positive internal principle of repetition.”⁷¹ Where do these primordial psychic elements, these pure presentations of the drives, come from? Deleuze does not really have an answer to this question, but that is not necessarily a problem. On the contrary: there is no “source” of repetition. Where these primordial elements come from, the most fundamental impressions that structure the drives, is a matter of chance. If they derive from somewhere, it is in the contingent connections of habit. Or, more precisely, a complexification of habit, the direct hallucinatory pleasure of the countless mini-egos whose contraction and expiration compose the primal beat of psychic life. Habit provides the living stuff out of which the core elements of the unconscious will take shape, the primordial “presentations” which suck other ideas and “representations” into the vortex of the unconscious. To sum it up in a rather clunky formula: the passive synthesis of habit is submitted to the passive synthesis of memory, which is enabled by the transcendental instance of the death instinct, which is nothing other than the guarantee of the failure of synthesis—this is how the virtual is constituted, its dynamic genesis or, in Freudian terms, the primal repression of the unconscious.⁷² Prior to the losses and ordeals of its history, and the repressions which protect it against its own wishes and painful thoughts, the mind is already skewed by certain elements that have become fixed there, and put their stamp on later conflicts, frustrations, and complexes. These elements—which could be anything whatsoever—are the motor of repetition and the positive basis of the unconscious. Transcendental empiricism means that there are no “pregiven” a priori structures that govern the mind, but that the a priori must itself be constructed a posteriori: in the process of the mind’s constitution certain empirical impressions are, by chance, elevated to the level of transcendental, and come to rearrange the field of experience, to give it their own singular twist. These “transvaluated” elements are no longer bound to the context in which they first appeared, but float free and come to interfere with and reshape other contexts and circumstances. Though they enter into individual life at a given time and place, their virtualization means that they lose their original spatiotemporal coordinates and act as if they were already there before they “first” appeared: the original instance gets caught up in the dynamic it initiates, so that it ends up becoming a disguise of itself, displaced from its place, the repetition of something different. Any impression can, in principle, be transcendentalized or virtualized in this fashion; as Walter Benjamin once said, “The eternal . . . is far more the ruffle on a dress than some idea.”⁷³ These primordially repressed elements dynamize the mind but in a way that cannot be fully integrated

by it, like a stain in a well-composed picture; or, to return to the Freudian problematic of “beyond the pleasure principle,” they warp the pleasure principle’s regulation of the drives from within (the “irreducible residue” mentioned in “Coldness and Cruelty”).

At this point we can offer a summary of Deleuze’s scheme of the three syntheses of the unconscious, or the three beyonds of the pleasure principle. Habit provides the foundation of the pleasure principle in the primordial enjoyment of all the mini-egos; the ebb and flow of psychic life is, in the first instance, sustained by a self-enjoyment which comes before any loss or frustration and expresses all the powers that make up the organism. Memory concerns not the foundation but the application of the pleasure principle, how it effectively governs over or steers the various currents of the mind. This takes place via a doubling of the psyche. On the basis of active syntheses the mind is oriented toward a teleologically ordered world (the reality principle), surveyed from the viewpoint of the global ego. But at the same time a deepening of the passive syntheses pulls the psyche out of this reality and disturbs its order by introducing a new virtual focus: the perspectives of the partial drives. The last stage of the synthesis renders this groundlessness of memory or Eros explicit, and thus is actually a culminating moment of anti-synthesis. This is the power of Thanatos or the death instinct, and the violent confusion and disorientation it entails is the reason for the greatest upheaval in the operation of the pleasure principle, while equally serving as its highest condition. This anti-synthetic moment is also what Deleuze designates as the future. Unlike the present of habit and the past of memory which synthesize all three dimensions of time from their unique vantage points, the future is not a third and final way of bringing together past, present, and future, but rather the “pure and empty form of time” as such. The final and most accomplished expression of time is a straight line. This line, however, is not one of linear progression but, rather, of division and interruption, and Deleuze cites Borges’s idea of the most treacherous labyrinth which is nothing other than a single line, “invisible and unceasing”: the future is precisely that which destroys any idea of progress, evolution, or continuity, of rhyme between before and after. Time at its purest is a cut.

THE SCORPION AND THE FROG

To conclude, I wish to look more closely at Deleuze’s drive theory by focusing on two key examples; these can also help us to sketch a difference with psychoanalysis. The first requires us to jump ahead to *Anti-Oedipus*: one of the only positive psychoanalytic references in the book (but it is a crucial one) is to Serge Leclair’s essay “The Reality of Desire,” which Deleuze and Guattari credit for advancing a conception of desire close to their own desiring machines. Leclair describes the kernel of the unconscious as consisting of a

realm of “pure singularities,” contingent impressions that compose the final syntax of the subject’s desire. He offers a list of hypothetical examples: the smell of a woman’s neck, the modulation of an echoing voice that seems to say “You,” the hint of acidity in baked apples, the fullness of the hand as it seizes a ball, a beauty mark (one might imagine other, less “poetic” examples, like, for instance, the rattling sound of a clogged sink).⁷⁴ He calls this collection of irreducible elements the “pure being of desire,” what would be revealed if we could gain access to the unconscious in-itself without any conscious or preconscious entanglements. This is the most primordial level of the psyche, the “reality of desire.” It is encountered in the course of analysis when certain ideas or impressions no longer participate in the movement of signifiers, when a particular content falls out of the play of connections, associations, and substitutions that constitute the patient’s discourse. Such elements insist in psychic life, they are stubborn, they do not budge (“one forever stumbles on the same set of ‘pure singularities’”),⁷⁵ but one can no longer say why: they cannot be linked with other signifiers, and thereby explained or further analyzed. They are basic (molecular) terms. And though they are solitary, having no relation to one another, they form a definite ensemble; as Leclaire writes, they are “soldered” together precisely by their “absence of link.”⁷⁶ Deleuze and Guattari enthusiastically approve “the rule of the right to nonsense as well as to the absence of link,” repeating with Leclaire: “you will not have reached the ultimate and irreducible terms of the unconscious so long as you find or restore a link between two elements.”⁷⁷ In *Difference and Repetition* this ensemble of singularities corresponds with the pure presentations of the drives; in *Anti-Oedipus* they are Lacan’s *objets a* restyled as “celibate” desiring machines. But the point I wish to highlight here is a different one. Although *Anti-Oedipus* is sometimes read as a poetic elegy to the infinite malleability and productivity of the libido, it is in fact what Freud called points of fixation, not flow, that are at the heart of the desiring machines. Leclaire’s notion of the reality of desire is meant to account precisely for the “exceptional fixity” of the most primordial elements of the unconscious, their indestructibility, their stubborn insistence.⁷⁸ The psychoanalytic theory of the drives is marked by a fundamental ambiguity, which was succinctly put by Lacan: “Everything that has to do with the *Trieb*e raises the question of plasticity and of limits.”⁷⁹ On the one hand, the libido is characterized by its extraordinary openness and capacity for transformation. Objects, aims, even the drives themselves are essentially fungible: one can take the place of another in a nearly limitless movement of exchange and substitution. On the other, the drive names the exact opposite tendency to get hooked on something, to refuse to give it up, to repeat it over and over again whether it brings pleasure or not. Freud referred to this sameness or stuckness as the pertinacity or adhesiveness of the libido. And far from being a mere brake on the plasticity

of Eros, a contingent obstacle to its free-flowing movement, this inertia is “the strongest yet most paradoxical of all forces, emanating from something that doesn’t move. When a body goes limp, when a car pushed by ten strong men refuses to budge, when a child lies in a heap in front of the TV for hours and hours, and when an inane idea continues to exert its noxious influence, one confronts the numbing, terrifying grip of inertia.”⁸⁰

The second example goes straight to this problem. It is one that Deleuze discusses in his book *Cinema 2*, the apologue of the scorpion and the frog from Orson Welles’s film *Mr. Arkadin*.

A scorpion asks a frog to carry him across the river. The frog refuses since he knows the scorpion will sting him. That would not be logical, explains the scorpion, because if he stung him they would both drown. So the frog agrees to transport him. Half way across the river, the frog feels a terrible pain—the scorpion has stung him. But there is no logic in this, exclaims the frog. I know, replies the scorpion, I cannot help it, it is my character . . .

How should we read this parable? At first it seems like a textbook illustration of the death drive—are we not all, on some level, self-sabotaging scorpions? Or maybe cruelly exploited frogs . . . ?—but here we should be careful. One way to interpret the tale is as a kind of “Liebestod” of the scorpion, a violent and enigmatic creature whose true sting is meant only for himself. But an alternative, less romantic reading is arguably more convincing. The scorpion is not possessed by a secret longing for oblivion; he does not wish to die, or to return to the inorganic, or to destroy himself, or to otherwise sabotage his being. It is by stubbornly following his “character”—that which insists in him in spite of his ill or gain—that he also, by chance, ends up killing himself. The scorpion is the victim of circumstance; his desire becomes fatal destiny owing to an unfortunate combination of contingent factors. One could imagine the outcome differently: had there been an armor-shelled turtle instead of a fleshy frog, the scorpion would have made it safely across the river. It is not that his character is bad, but it combines badly with the situation, and so he ends up drowning.⁸¹ In this respect Spinoza is more correct than Freud: death is not the secret trajectory of the drive, it is not an inner striving for the cancellation of tension and a return to the inanimate, but an event that comes from the outside. According to Deleuze’s Spinozistic perspective, no drive seeks its own extinction. The drive is originally a positive force, and is self-destructive only *per accidens*. If the drive is self-destructive, it is not because extinction is its goal, but because in its blind perseverance to realize itself it negates other things and forces, which may incidentally include those it needs for its very survival. Death understood as a limit and an end is *from the drive’s perspective* strictly contingent; for the drive there is no such

thing as the assumption of finitude or being-toward-death, every ending is “brutal, violent and fortuitous.”⁸²

And yet Deleuze does not interpret the story, as we might expect, as demonstrating the perseverance and tenacity of the drive. On the contrary, the stubbornness of the scorpion’s character is portrayed as a symptom of depression, a loss of vital power. In a Nietzschean way Deleuze reads the parable as an allegory of the depressed existence of Welles’s great villains, a sign of exhaustion and decadence, a negative reaction against life. Each of these characters, like the compulsively stinging scorpion, is reduced to a single mode of action: Elsa Bannister, the femme fatale in *Lady from Shanghai*, can only scheme (she’s a “big scorpion”), the detective Quinlan from *Touch of Evil* can only fix evidence, and Mr. Arkadin himself can only kill. Unlike “the kind [of life] which knows how to transform itself, to metamorphose itself according to the forces it encounters, and which forms a constantly larger force with them, always increasing the power to live, always opening new ‘possibilities,’”⁸³ they are portraits of a monotonous and arthritic existence, dominant yet sour. The clichéd understanding of normality must be turned around: instead of normality consisting in adherence to a fixed set of rules and pathology a deviation from them, it is sickness that is characterized by rigidity and inflexibility, whereas to be normal means to be capable of variation, of transformation, of negotiating between multiple norms and even creating new ones.⁸⁴ As Blaise Cendrars neatly put it, “To live is to be different.” To characters like Bannister, Quinlan, and Arkadin, Deleuze opposes the generosity and innocence of Falstaff and Don Quixote (the subject of an unfinished film by Welles); even, and especially, in their foolishness and ridiculousness, they are “experts in metamorphoses of life.”⁸⁵

It is interesting to note, however, that Deleuze’s interpretation does not exactly jibe with Welles’s own. “The point of the story,” Welles explains, “is that the man who declares to the world ‘I am as I am, take me or leave me as such’ has a kind of tragic dignity.”⁸⁶ Welles’s position is more ambiguous than that of Deleuze. Instead of condemning the scorpion for his impoverished vitality, his reduced capacity for action, Welles accords him a kind of grandeur or dignity. The dignity that Welles is speaking about is a very specific kind: it does not concern a universal moral value (“human dignity”) but rather the singular elements that compose a person’s character, even in spite of him- or herself. “This is me, I cannot do otherwise.” Within the variations and flux of life there are certain things that cannot be exchanged, compromised, or bargained with: “My character is my character” (or, as Antigone might have said, “My brother is my brother”). This attitude, as Welles further remarks, has something about it which is both “anarchic” and “aristocratic.” On the one hand, the object of dignity can be anything at all, it has no intrinsic meaning or moral worth, it may be as deadly as a

scorpion's sting or as frivolous as Leclair's baked apple. Its content need not be "dignified" (in the sense of corresponding to an imaginary ideal of value or worthiness). On the other, what is aristocratic is that this thing is above the fray of the market or the "libidinal economy." It is defined, as Leclair said, by its absence of link; it cannot be exchanged or replaced, there is no price, no equivalence, for one's character.⁸⁷ How to reconcile this notion of dignity with the Nietzschean interpretation of the parable proposed by Deleuze? Does not Welles's aristocratic anarchism recall Deleuze's own description of his ontology as a "crowned anarchy"?⁸⁸ If to live is to be different, then the drive stands for what is "dead" in life; it is the paradoxical force that emanates from that which does not move. The drive refuses to budge, and it does not transform itself. Rather, it compels other forces to change and adapt according to its perspective. This stuckness or intransigence is not a secondary reaction against the richness of life's possibilities, a narrowing down of an original openness, but the very essence of the drive, as an implacable counterweight to the connectivity and forward thrust of Eros. From a Freudian viewpoint, the opposition between stuckness and rigidity versus creativity and metamorphosis is too simple, or, rather, too "rigid"; while normality cannot be defined as the straight path and pathologies as deviations from it, neither can health be identified with variation and transformation, and pathology with the rigid and the fixed. How the tenacity of the drive manifests itself varies according to the context and situation. It can be the source of tragic conflict, or else appear comic or ridiculous, but such a constraint is also essential to creativity and the possibility of real transformation, for a purely changing flux—change without the counterweight of the same, the immobile, the obstinate, the mechanical, in a word, the unchanging—is surely the most dreary and monotonous thing of all. That is why, as Deleuze writes, "If repetition makes us ill, it also heals us; if it enchains and destroys us, it also frees us, testifying in both cases to its 'demonic' power."⁸⁹

CHAPTER 2

THE STRANGE SPINOZISM OF PERVERSION

RETURN TO MELANIE KLEIN

Let us go back to the problem with which we began the previous chapter, the difficult or seemingly impossible synthesis between the two sides of the Freudian equation, the speaking subject and the drive-machine. This is the challenge that Lacan posed to philosophy, to think together “the emergence of the signifier and the bizarreness of enjoyment.” Deleuze endeavors to do just that in the book following only one year after *Difference and Repetition*, *Logic of Sense*. There Deleuze turns to the psychoanalytic theory of Melanie Klein in order to show how language, or what he calls the surface of sense, arises out of a chaotic mixture of partial objects and drives, and comes to assert its relative autonomy from them as a space of incorporeal events—the “mother of all events” or *Eventum tantum* being the emergence of this symbolic space as such. What is at stake is not simply learning how to speak a language, but rather inhabiting a symbolic (virtual) universe, beginning with the most archaic forms of bodily experience; as Deleuze remarks, it is “as if the child was learning to speak on its own body.”¹ Klein’s scheme of psychic development allows Deleuze to articulate a dynamic genesis of sense from out of the flux of bodily experience. This is not to say, however, that Deleuze simply follows Klein’s psychoanalytic account. He modifies it with significant Freudian and Lacanian accents, as well as making a number of his own innovations. The remarkable conclusion of this amalgamated theory is that the two aspects of the bodily drives and the speaking subject, enjoyment and the symbolic order, are joined together by and through their very disjunction, they come together due to the fact that each is broken in its own way. Just as *Difference and Repetition* distinguishes between the dissolved self (*le moi dissous*) and the fractured I (*le Je fêlé*), so in *Logic of Sense* Deleuze writes of a “Spaltung of the depths” and a “crack of the surface.” There is a specific kind of dispersion and splitting that belongs to the actions and passions of the

body, as well as a fracture or cut that pertains to the realm of sense. Through the psychodynamic processes of castration, sublimation, symbolization, and the formation of the phantasm, Deleuze shows how these two splits come to be joined in a higher state of nonresolution, a “disjunctive synthesis” which at this stage in his thought is best illustrated by a new clinic of perversion.

In what follows I shall focus on the last quarter of *Logic of Sense*, which engages in detail with Kleinian theory and presents what is without a doubt the most original philosophical interpretation of her work ever written. If *Difference and Repetition* sought, following Freud, to excavate the psychic processes which both enable and disrupt the operation of the pleasure principle, in *Logic of Sense* Deleuze turns to Klein for her theory of the pre-Oedipal psyche splintered apart by archaic forces and striving to make sense of its damaged world. The most striking difference in these two accounts of the dynamic genesis relates to this choice of psychoanalytic references: while the Freudian body is fundamentally a pleasure body, fragmented into a multiplicity of autoerotic drives, Kleinian theory puts the accent on embodied or corporeal sense engendered through the primitive mechanisms of splitting, projection, and introjection (we shall return to Freud’s conception of pleasure in chapter 3).² These contrasting starting points aside, the overall structure of both accounts is similar, if not exactly homologous. The focus on temporality shifts to the problem of the genesis of sense, and the three moments of habit, memory, and death instinct are refigured according to the topological scheme of depths, heights, and surface. To be clear, *Logic of Sense* contains significant discussions about the nature of time, and *Difference and Repetition* also deals with language and the problem of sense and non-sense. However, there is a marked change of emphasis from one book to the other and, more important from our perspective, *Logic of Sense* offers a far more detailed analysis of pre-Oedipal and Oedipal development than *Difference and Repetition*. We should also observe that the engagement with Kleinian theory plays a key role in the development of both Deleuze’s and Lacan’s thought. Deleuze’s constructive engagement with Klein largely takes place in 1969; later references to her work tend to be more critical, following Deleuze’s antipsychoanalytic turn. Lacan’s reading of Klein is elaborated mainly in Seminars IV and V, during the years 1956 to 1958, while he was developing his concepts of the imaginary and the symbolic and articulating his structuralist interpretation of the Oedipus complex, though one can find significant discussions of Klein in earlier and later seminars as well.³ Both Deleuze’s and Lacan’s readings target the same central issue: the insufficiency of Klein’s conception of language and symbolization, and the necessity to theorize this dimension in a more sophisticated manner. The way they tackle this problem, however, leads to quite divergent results.

SCHIZOID PRE-SOCRATICS AND DEPRESSIVE PLATONISM

Melanie Klein was the first analyst who took Freud's controversial idea of the death drive seriously, reformulating it in her own manner on the basis of her clinical work with young children. For Freud, the death drive has two basic expressions: a compulsion to repeat that is not reducible to the reproduction of a prior pleasure, and an aggressiveness that is not explainable in terms of deprivation and frustration.⁴ It is the latter which Klein identifies with the death drive *tout court*: the human infant is born with a furious energy that attacks the nascent ego from within, and which initially can be defended against only in an extravagant, surreal manner, primarily by projecting its cruelty and hostility to the outside world. There is a destructive force present at the start of life that is not the result of any negative experience or conflict, but part of the innate architecture of the mind. The infant deals with the terrors and anxieties provoked by the death drive by deflecting its energy away from itself and onto another target, viz. that paradigmatic first object: the breast. In this way the internal threat of death is turned into an external danger, the infant becoming afraid that the breast will bite or attack it or scoop out its body. These hostile objects are then in turn introjected, creating a new battleground where the child fears both internal and external attacks from the part objects. When the child becomes aware of the mother as a whole object in the depressive position, and the later intrigues of the Oedipus complex, it feels guilty for the violence it has wrought and tries to repair what has been torn asunder. But the early stages of psychic life are characterized by little integration, only a shaky constellation of anxieties, partial objects, and primitive defense mechanisms. Klein's is a violent universe of splittings and fragmentation, attacks and counterattacks, fear and persecution, where the reigning law is the vengeful one of *lex talionis*, an eye for an eye. The most memorable characterization of this model was provided by British analyst Edward Glover, who described it as "a combination of a butcher's shop, a public lavatory under shell-fire, and a post-mortem room"⁵—an image echoed by Lacan in his reference to Klein as "the tripe butcher."⁶ Not to be outdone, Deleuze paints a similarly brutal picture of the primitive psyche as a "theater of terror" where "bodies burst and cause others to burst in a universal cesspool."⁷

"Everything starts out in the abyss."⁸ Deleuze accepts Klein's starting point, but significantly modifies it according to his own novel distinction between the fragmented body and what he calls the "liquid body" or "body without organs." *Logic of Sense* introduces the latter term, which will become increasingly important in Deleuze's work, especially his collaborative books with Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. Taken from Antonin Artaud's late writings (his radio play "To Have Done with the Judgment of God," where Artaud says that "Man is sick because he is badly constructed," and that his "true freedom" will be "restored" only "When you will have made him a body

without organs”),⁹ it is often considered one of the most difficult concepts in Deleuze’s corpus. In *Logic of Sense* it is used as an important corrective to Klein’s description of the paranoid-schizoid position. According to Deleuze, the body exists at the outset in a state of decomposition and fragmentation. This chaotic mixture of partial objects is what constitutes the bodily depths. But the dispersed body also has the power to react upon its own fragmentation and constitute itself as a proto-unity. In contrast to Klein, who sees in the paranoid-schizoid position a clash between anxiety-inducing and loving elements, represented above all by the persecuting breast versus the caring and nourishing one, for Deleuze there are no good fragments. “Every piece is bad in principle”¹⁰ because fragmentation is already the result of psychic violence, and one can never be sure whether a seemingly loving part does not conceal a cruel and vengeful persecutor. What is opposed to bad pieces are not benevolent ones, but rather a body that has no parts or pieces whatsoever. The depths are structured by a double polarity, “a hollow depth, wherein bits whirl about and explode, and full depth.”¹¹ This is one of Deleuze’s major innovations with respect to Kleinian theory: if the paranoid-schizoid position is characterized by the primitive mechanisms of splitting, projection, and introjection, it also involves the creation of a body that is completely devoid of these mechanisms, “an organism without parts [...], with neither mouth nor anus, having given up all introjection and projection, and being complete, at this price.”¹² Note the formulation “organism without parts” (*organisme sans parties*). In his later development of the concept, Deleuze will stress that the partial objects and the body without organs are opposed not so much to each other as to the “organism” which consists in a more or less stable structuration of the drives. Both entail a breakdown of the organism’s governing order or “organization.” Yet they do so in very different ways. On the one hand, there is the violence and frenetic motion of the partial objects, the splittings and projections that characterize the primitive psyche; on the other, the liquidation of these dispersed elements into a “glorious” completeness or wholeness which overcomes the body’s sickness or bad construction (Artaud) by erasing all parts and distinctions: this is a “dead body [...] eternally conserved.”¹³ Deleuze considers this polarity an important contribution to what might be called a phenomenology of schizophrenic experience. On the level of bodily substance, this dynamic is represented by the two waste products, feces and urine, but it is also expressed on a symbolic level in terms of different kinds of nonsense, words chopped up into syllables and phonetic elements versus breath-words or howl-words that have no parts but are actions of respiration and gargling. Or else symptomatic behaviors, like jaw-grinding as opposed to blank stares and catatonia. The point is not that the infant is psychotic, but that there is an intrinsic “duality of the body”¹⁴ which can manifest itself in all sorts of diverse ways, most acutely in schizophrenic symptoms.

For Lacan, bodily unification is made possible through the process of identification with an external image; it is the fascinating power of the imaginary Gestalt that gives the body a wholeness and a mastery that it cannot provide itself. Such is the formative power of the mirror image, and as Lacan further develops this notion, mirror identification will be seen as rendered effective only through symbolic identifications that enable the child to locate itself in its own body.¹⁵ For Deleuze, on the contrary, the body provides itself with its own unity, it effects an initial rudimentary synthesis of the dispersed organs and, by so doing, creates a new kind of body. The body without organs is the name of the primordial synthesis that the body performs upon itself; or rather, it is the first synthesis to which the fragmented body is submitted, and through which a kind of unity (a rather bizarre kind) is created. This new body is not one of mastery or coordination, it is not a structured “organism,” but instead, as the name indicates, a body without parts or internal divisions, one that is therefore simultaneously empty and full. It is a body on the point of not being a body at all: a purified or, as Deleuze writes, a liquefied body. Deleuze adds that this radical dissolution is also the original site of the ego: there is a primitive bodily ego prior to any specular or symbolic identification, a primary narcissism of the body without organs which provides the kernel for the subsequent formation of the personalized ego. “The ego, as factor of the ‘primary narcissism,’ is initially lodged in the depths, in the vesicle itself or the body without organs.”¹⁶ The polarity of the depths thus contains within itself an archaic version of the tension between id and ego, where the tearing and cutting of the aggressive impulses are opposed by their liquefaction into a vapid corporeal oneness, a strange kind of id-ego.

What is the body without organs? There is a short story by Russian writer Daniil Kharms that goes as follows:

There was a redheaded man who had no eyes or ears. He didn't have hair either, so he was called a redhead arbitrarily. He couldn't talk because he had no mouth. He didn't have a nose either. He didn't even have arms or legs. He had no stomach, he had no back, no spine, and he didn't have any insides at all. There was nothing! So, we don't even know who we're talking about. We'd better not talk about him any more.¹⁷

For a Freudian, this story immediately calls to mind Lichtenberg's joke about the “knife without a blade which has no handle,” a kind of Cotard's syndrome for kitchen utensils. In both cases we are dealing with a self-canceling nothing that does not simply disappear but, on the contrary, becomes all the more pressing in its very nothingness. This paradoxical absent presence or presentified absence is what produces the humorous effect, which, like the best of comedy, is very close to anxiety: take everything away and there “it” appears, the redheaded man without hair who is not a man. Something that

is not a thing persists in and through the operation of radical subtraction, of which perhaps all one can say is that it's better not to talk about it. The body without organs performs a unification of the scattered organs and impulses, but it does so in a way that is opposite to the mirror Gestalt. If the Gestalt is a whole that is greater than the sum of its parts, the body without organs is a whole that is *less than the subtraction of its parts*. As opposed to the unifying unity of the mirror image, the body without organs refers to a kind of negative unity, the density of the void that emerges when everything has been stripped away, including gaps and absences and fissures.¹⁸ This "full void" is what Deleuze calls the ego in the depths.

Now, this intracorporeal dynamic is at the same time framed and transcended by another dimension: the world of the Other, and more precisely, the Other's voice which resonates from on high. The corporeal depths are opposed to the signifying, or rather proto-signifying, heights, bodily "simulacra" to sacred "idols." It is at this stage that we see the first glimmers of sense, the initial inception of language. The Other is encountered as a whole object or good object, whose appearance reconfigures the tension between the partial objects and the body without organs. The object of the heights draws on the previous paranoid-schizoid position, taking its "force" from the destructive energy of the partial objects and its "form" from the vapid wholeness of the body without organs. But it also turns against the aggressive impulses, and initiates a new dynamic. "The body of the infant is like a den full of introjected savage beasts which endeavor to snap up the good object; the good object, in turn, behaves in their presence like a pitiless bird of prey."¹⁹ The good object serves as the basis for the superego, accusing and berating the body of partial drives which, in their turn, endeavor to drag the Other down into their inferno. There is a cruelty proper to the heights that is distinct from the attacks and counterattacks of the depths. This cruelty stems not from the mechanisms of projection and introjection but, rather, from identification. The split between bodily fragmentation and its liquidation in the depths is overtaken by a different kind of division: the ego identifies itself both with the chaotic mixture of partial objects and with the good object in the heights. But this latter identification can only be a failed or frustrated one, since the Other is not responsive to the child, and retreats from its grasp. The object holds itself aloft, it cannot be seized, it is unreachable and inaccessible. "The good object is by nature a lost object."²⁰ This distance is what creates the depressive effect, or conversely the mania of imagining oneself overcoming this distance and joining the object in the stratosphere. Whereas before there were only actions and passions, corporeal drives oscillating between hollowness and fullness, now there is a new dimension of psychic life: lack and frustration enter into the picture. Here Deleuze follows Lacan more than Klein. There is a primordial symbolization of the Other as an agency that bestows

goodness, or withholds it and withdraws; but the will of this agency, the logic of the Other's presence and absence, cannot be discerned, it is the transcendent object missing from the world. The depressive position involves the advent of symbolization and language. Though the depressive position is temporally later than the schizoid-paranoid one, it refers to a time that distantly precedes it, to the pregiveness of language and the cultural tradition, the symbolic order into which the child is thrown. But at this point, access to the symbolic remains at a rudimentary level. The symbolic space is not yet fully operative for the child, the "event" that will ratify the autonomy of language is still missing. Just as there is an "under-sense" of the depths, with its two poles of "hollow" phonematic fragmentation versus "full" howls and cries, so there is a "pre-sense" of the heights: the child has a premonition of language and its interpellation by the Other before being able to understand the meaning of this speech that calls to it and surrounds it. "The child, of course, comes to a language that she cannot yet understand as language, but only as a voice, or as a familial hum of voices which already speaks of her."²¹

Summing up this scheme, Deleuze offers a brilliant Kleinian interpretation of the history of Greek thought: "schizophrenic pre-Socratic philosophy is followed by depressive Platonism."²² The spontaneous metaphysics of the baby is both pre-Socratic and Platonic: on the one hand, its body is a mixture of fiery fragments and the pure liquid element in which they are dissolved, a combination of Heraclitus and Thales ("Who does not feel in the flows of his desire both the lava and the water?") Deleuze and Guattari ask in *Anti-Oedipus*;²³ on the other, the Other manifests itself as the Good that has departed from this world and withdrawn into the unreachable heavens. Every subject must live through these distinct metaphysical "positions," and the child effectively recapitulates in the course of its development the history of ancient philosophy: from the schizoid fragmentation of pre-Socratic metaphysics to the lost object of depressive Platonism and finally to the constitution of the symbolic surface, where at last it becomes properly Stoic.

THE OEDIPUS COMPLEX AND ITS SUCCESSFUL RESOLUTION

But we are not there yet. If the pre-Oedipal positions involve the oscillation between fragmentation and wholeness in the bodily depths, the trajectory of Oedipal development concerns a different kind of fragmentation: that of the sexualized body divided into different erogenous zones. Sexuality involves a new parceling of the body that supersedes its archaic splintering. The libidinal impulses are now disentangled from the destructive components of the drives, as well as the alimentary demands of self-preservation, and freed to make their own investments. "Our sexual body is initially a Harlequin's cloak,"²⁴ a motley patchwork of different zones and drives without any unifying instance. The creation of these zones involves a new dimension of the body, which belongs

neither to the violence of the schizophrenic depths nor to the unreachable heights of the Other: the corporeal surface. "Each zone is the dynamic formation of a surface space around a singularity constituted by the orifice."²⁵ The zones have a complex structure, consisting of different elements: an opening, i.e., a point of transition between inside and outside, a surrounding surface space, the image of the object that gives satisfaction, and a little narcissistic ego that contemplates and enjoys. These dispersed drives then become coordinated through various means. There is a passing reference to Lacan's mirror stage, but only as one of the possible ways in which the erogenous body is organized; the zones are also capable of organizing themselves, through relations of contiguity (adjacent zones extending to one another) and distance (one zone used as a model and projected onto another). The most important factor in the coordination of the body is the privilege accorded to the genital: "It is this zone which must bind all the other partial zones, thanks to the phallus."²⁶ The phallus is not the male organ per se but the image of the organ, which is projected onto the genital zone, thereby becoming the privileged marker of sexuality for both sexes. Phallic identification also serves as the foundation of the global ego. Here we should note that Deleuze distinguishes between three kinds of ego: there is the impersonal ego of the depths, the "full void" that constitutes the primary narcissism of the body without organs; then there is the multiplicity of little egos that animate the autoerotic drives (just like the component souls or larval selves of habit); and finally there is the phallic ego of secondary narcissism, the ego that coordinates the dispersed bodily surfaces and, as Freud described it, is itself a projection of the surface of the body. It is this last ego that features in the Oedipus complex, and comes to grief at its end. The unified and unifying ego becomes, in the words of *Difference and Repetition*, a fractured I or an aborted cogito, but far from being a dead end, this "symbolic castration" proves to be the passageway to something else: a new and more complex form of psychic life.

How does this occur? The Oedipus complex, as Deleuze argues, following Klein, is already prepared and conditioned by the earlier pre-Oedipal positions. Anxiety and guilt are present in the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, and are not, as Freud thought, introduced by Oedipus. Rather, the complex is initiated as a reaction against and further development of the child's primitive defenses, and in particular the depressive position. In the depths, the mother's body is ravaged and splintered apart by the child's aggressivity; but in the heights, the parents are made into complete objects, the mother possessing a good penis and the father a nourishing breast. At the onset of the Oedipus complex, the child creates a more sophisticated set of images; or rather, to follow Deleuze's technical vocabulary, it starts to create *images* as opposed to *simulacra* in the paranoid-schizoid position and *idols* in the depressive one. The image of the mother is that of a wounded body,

and the father that of the good object withdrawn and inaccessible. The child wants to repair the body of the mother with his “restorative phallus,” and to bring about the return of the withdrawn father with his “evocative phallus.” This desire for reparation is the key to the psychoanalytic family romance, and what Deleuze calls the “true Oedipus complex.”²⁷ Every family is a broken family, more or less in the same way (apologies to Tolstoy). “In the unconscious, everyone is the offspring of divorced parents, dreaming of restoring the mother and bringing about the return of the father.”²⁸ In reacting to this situation, the child starts off with the best of intentions, and “never again will feel as good.”²⁹ Far from being motivated by violent and possessive impulses, by jealousy and passion, its incestuous desires aim at an “incest-restoration”³⁰ by which it attempts to make whole what was previously lost and wounded. Just as in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze turns to an alternative philosophical account of Oedipus, and as in the earlier work, Freud’s neurotic Oedipus is replaced by a decidedly more schizophrenic one: this time it is not Hölderlin but Seneca’s play *Hercules Furens*, “The Madness of Hercules,” that provides the model. The mission of Hercules, the half-mortal son of Jupiter, one of the great heroes of the Stoics, revered for his courage and strength, is to vanquish the monsters of the depths and to ally himself with the celestial powers on high. And so likewise with the child. For Deleuze, “Oedipus is a pacifying hero of the Herculean type,”³¹ a confident champion who will subdue the violence of the bodily drives and make sweet love with the Other.

And yet, the affair turns out badly, the best intentions unexpectedly produce the most terrible results, and the child is afflicted with a new anxiety and a new ordeal; or, as the title of the series goes, “Good Intentions are Inevitably Punished.” This is exactly what happens to Hercules: to his great chagrin, he discovers that the gods are not his friends: Juno the stepmother is filled with rage and hatred, and Jupiter, the father, turns away from him and is even more withdrawn. In the play, after Hercules triumphantly returns from his Labors, Juno takes her revenge, driving him insane and causing him to murder his wife and children (when the spell wears off, Hercules is convinced not to take his own life only by his old friend Theseus). The child will also undergo a certain passage through madness, although one that is distinct from the paranoid-schizoid chaos of part objects and the body without organs: a madness of the surface rather than the depths. What happens is that the child’s reparative wishes come to naught. First, not only can the child not undo the damage caused by sadistic attacks inside the mother (internal aggressive penises), but it discovers that she is also irreparably damaged on the surface. When checked against the idealized image of the phallus, the mother’s body is definitely missing something: “the phallus as projected image ... designates a lack in the mother.”³² In Lacanian terms, the mother suffers from the real privation of a symbolic object. And, following Lacan,

this precious object can only be rightfully supplied by the father: the father is the bearer of the symbolic phallus, which is the object of desire of the mother, the signifier of what she is missing, and beyond that, of the enigmatic “missing thing” of desire in general. Yet precisely as symbolic, this phallus cannot be summoned or made present by the child, and this leads to the second and more disturbing revelation: by attempting to bring back the father, the child has betrayed the “paternal essence of withdrawal” and in effect killed him—now the father is truly inaccessible, nothing but a name, a dead father. The child’s good intentions have gone seriously awry. Instead of mending the world, its incestuous desires have brought calamity and condemnation. In desperation the child repudiates its act: “It wasn’t me, that’s not what I meant.” However, in this negative outcome something of “considerable positive importance” occurs.³³ The good intentions governing the child’s action are, as Deleuze explains, a phenomenon of the corporeal surface: its image spreads out across the superficial objects of satisfaction, the idealized phallus, and the parental imagos. And while the action that is accomplished contradicts the original intentions, it does not simply oppose and negate them. Rather, it transforms the very point from where the action was initiated. Something “happens” that takes place on another plane, which is no longer the physical or corporeal surface but rather the metaphysical surface or the surface of thought. The bad outcome of the Oedipus complex is the first true event in the life of the child, and what forces it to think. We have here something like the birth of thought from the spirit of abject failure. The first thing that thought thinks about is just how badly things turned out (we return here to the “Critique of Pure Complaint”). Catastrophe is the origin of thought, the original thought, and somehow the model of all thinking.³⁴ But the real object of thought is not the disastrous result per se but, rather, the gap between intentions and result, that is, the gap between bodily intentionality and the mental projection of the act and its consequences, which is no longer strictly continuous with bodily experience but an “event” in its own right. This is the significance of the castration complex for Deleuze. The phallus of coordination becomes the phallus of castration, so that instead of unifying and restoring, it signifies a separation and a cut, but a very specific kind of cut. Deleuze gives the phallus a speculative meaning: as the sexual organ par excellence it at the same time symbolizes the gap between body and mind, insofar as this very gap must be “embodied” if the mind is to maintain its relative independence from the domain of bodily causes. The phallus is both a physical and a metaphysical organ. Or rather, it is the speculative appendix that mediates the gap between physics and metaphysics, the material instantiation of the “leap,” the “mystery” of “this passage from one surface to another,”³⁵ from the sexual drives to the crack of thought. This is surely the most original and sophisticated “phallogocentrism” ever articulated. (To borrow a term

from design, it is as if thinking, or the metaphysical surface, were phallically “skeuomorphed” from the physical surface; it retains within it a certain feature from the older model, as it were, thus recalling its sexual and bodily origins). Deleuze explains the privileged role of the phallus by describing it as a quasi-cause: it is a partial object that no longer belongs solely to the order of physical causality but instead stands for the advent of another order, the symbolic order or surface of sense, which arises out of the physical world yet has its own virtual consistency and autonomy. If we return now to the start of the complex, we see that the disastrous outcome of the child’s attempts at reparation, and the subsequent wound to its narcissism, precipitates an unexpected and altogether novel development: the birth of thought.

I will remark on this only briefly, but this scheme cannot but recall the Hegelian notion of recoil (*Rückschlag*), the circle by which the consequences of an action rebound on the subject and fundamentally transform it. Does not Deleuze’s version of the Oedipus complex bear witness to the fundamental Hegelian insight by which “the substance of the act, and consequently the act itself in its entirety, reacts upon the individual who performed it; it recoils upon him and destroys him”?³⁶ The difference for Deleuze lies in the nature of this destruction, and one could say without too much exaggeration that the whole philosophical problem lies here. Deleuze’s answer is well known: his account of “recoil” involves not negation but difference; it does not conserve the subject-object relation in a higher form but abolishes it; it leads not to an infinitely variegated identity but to a scattering of singularities and individuations. And yet, the formal mechanism of recoil, of an action whose consequences outstrip its original motive and entail a radical revision of the initial situation, remains strikingly similar. In this Hegelian spirit, we could say that for Deleuze the psychoanalytic name for “absolute recoil,” to cite the title of a recent work by Slavoj Žižek, is phantasm.³⁷ Let us follow the rest of Deleuze’s argumentation. The gap that is produced in the Oedipal mismatch between intentions and result becomes the very place, the zero point or void, from which a more complete liberation from the body will be accomplished, and the symbolic surface finally attained. In a Mallarméan way, what takes place is nothing other than this (empty) place. Unable to make good its desire to repair the damage wrought by the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions, the child finds itself powerless, its narcissism in tatters and the energies of the drives withdrawn into the self and neutralized. Yet this desexualized libido is freshly available for another task: to energize thought and create a phantasm. For this to succeed, the child must abandon its heroic dream of making the world whole, yet without either slipping back into the spiral of attacks and counterattacks that characterize the paranoid-schizoid position or getting mired in frustration and a depressive longing

for the lost object. If the psyche manages to overcome these traps (which are never completely vanquished, but remain ever-present dangers) then it can elaborate its thought of failure in the manner of a phantasm. As Deleuze describes it, the successful resolution of the Oedipus complex leads from castration to sublimation, symbolization, and the formation of the phantasm, which is the end point and culmination of psychic development. Let us consider these steps in turn. Castration involves the advent of language proper; it marks the child's entry into the symbolic order. For this to occur, the phallus must be transformed into an "organ of thought," a signifier of the difference between body and mind, the corporeal surface and the metaphysical one. Yet the phallus signifies not just the power of thought, in its freedom from the body, but also its powerlessness, its blind spot, what is unthinkable within thought or, in other words, the unconscious: the birth of thought is accompanied by an "unthought" which is nothing other than the empty place of its emergence, the caesura between itself and the body from which it springs. Sublimation designates the process of the withdrawal and desexualization of the sexual drives and the subsequent liberation of a neutral energy for thinking (which Deleuze identifies with the death instinct). With symbolization there is an investment of this energy in new objects and mental processes, and this activity leads us to the phantasm. In the phantasm the body that has been left behind comes to be reinvested by thought. The body "recoils" upon itself as the entire process of psycho-genesis returns to its abyssal origins, but in a new and transfigured way. For Deleuze, the phantasm is located neither in the bodily depths with its schizoid splittings (as is the case for Klein), nor does it coincide with autoerotism and the gratuitous pleasure of the sexual drives (according to the theory of Laplanche and Pontalis). It is rather, in line with Lacan, situated at the end point of Oedipal development. What happens is that the two outer limits of psychic life start to resonate—*les extrêmes se touchent*. The fragmented body, caught between "fiery" partial objects and the "liquefied" body without organs, what Deleuze calls the "Spaltung of the depths," comes into a kind of harmony—or, better, metaharmony—with the "crack of the surface," the empty place or void within thought. It is not that the manifold currents of psychic life are finally integrated—on the contrary, the unifying ego of secondary narcissism is here dissolved—but neither does the psyche fall apart in chaos and aggressive attacks. Instead there appears, if the process is successful, an exquisite dissonance. The body rises to the level of thought, yet without ripping apart and plunging the cerebral surface back into the corporeal depths. The phantasm is a new beginning—or rather, it is the repetition of a beginning that never really ended or began. Every phantasm "mimics endlessly the birth of a thought,"³⁸ circling back to the primitive body-in-pieces, then to the physical surface of pregenital and

genital sexuality, and onward to an abstract and incorporeal plane. Abjuring the Hegelian reference, this circling back of the phantasm is named by Deleuze, after Nietzsche, eternal recurrence.

At this point in Deleuze's thought, he believes that the pathology best suited to such a symbolic expression is perversion; or, in other words, the phantasm is in its essence perverse. The pervert is the most sublime of *malades*, the one with the requisite coldness and cruelty to properly think the body.

THE SUBLIME OBJECT OF PERVERSION

In order to understand what is at stake in this notion of perversion, let us abruptly shift gears and turn to an alternative point of view, that of Jean-Paul Sartre. According to Sartre, the essential paradox of perversion is that pleasure is intensified precisely by *not* giving in to it. The pervert (typically male) stands for clarity of consciousness and consummate self-control; he arranges his pleasures like a theatrical performance, with himself in the roles of actor, director, and spectator. The satisfaction thus derived is less sensual than theoretical, and the pervert is a kind of detached experimentalist of Eros. (Lacan also speaks of perversion as a mental thing, *cosa mentale*, animated by a quasi-scientific attitude toward *jouissance*.)³⁹ The scenarios he devises may be extremely refined, full of wit and irony, along with great cruelty (toward others and/or himself). But behind the pervert's dazzling aestheticism lies a more desperate motivation. According to the usual prejudice, perversion is something dirty and obscene, but if there is one thing the pervert cannot stand, it is precisely the messiness and confusion of sexual pleasure, the disappearance of the ego in an anonymous play of drives and organs, the impersonal machinery of bodies. The pervert clings to self-consciousness just at the moment when it ought to slip away, and derives an exquisite delight from this tension: the joy of both playing the game and keeping himself on the outside, uncompromised. A real pervert wants his sex to be immaculate and orderly; as Sartre said of Baudelaire, he made love with his gloves on.⁴⁰ This negative motivation can also help to illuminate the other pathological types. From a phenomenological perspective, the crucial feature of *jouissance* is loss of self-identity and self-control, the submerging of the ego in the impersonal flesh, the blind impulses and passions of the bodily drives. The three paradigmatic psychopathologies can be defined in terms of ambivalent defenses against this overwhelming *jouissance* and the anxiety it provokes: each one constitutes a unique way of living and deriving enjoyment from the unconscious strategies used to contain and avoid it. In neurosis, enjoyment is above all a matter of fantasy, wherein the subject imagines either letting loose its desire or else being swept away by the desire of the Other; in such scenes the subject safely plays out its self-loss, though not without the danger of losing itself in the unrestrained drive

of the imagination. The pervert is more overtly libidinous than the neurotic, but his passion for control is even greater: the pervert wants to control everything, even and especially his loss of control, which is carefully managed in his erotic rituals. And the psychotic is in the most dire situation of the three, having lost his existential bearings: the psychotic subject is effectively out of control, flooded by a terrifying and depersonalizing enjoyment, and seeks in his delirium to reconstruct a livable world on the basis of an otherwise uninhabitable ruin. Nowhere is enjoyment lived in an unproblematic or harmonious manner, as something that is unequivocally fulfilling and pleasurable. But this imbalance is the very spirit of enjoyment, which is not directly “enjoyable” but always refracted through various obstacles, resistances, defenses, and deliria. To use a visual metaphor, enjoyment is a kind of anamorphic distortion of life that cannot be set aright or put into proper perspective without itself dissolving, losing its attraction and vital charge. Lacan sums this up in a nicely paradoxical formula: “It is along the paths that appear to be contrary to enjoyment that enjoyment is obtained.”⁴¹

But this leaves out one other possibility: sublimation. What kind of enjoyment goes together with sublimation? Does it promise a libidinal harmony that is missed in the various pathological constellations, a happier or at least less “contrary” access to enjoyment? One thing is sure: for Deleuze, sublimation is not about psychic integration and it is not without risk. The psychodynamic process he describes as the outcome of the Oedipus complex, leading from castration to sublimation to symbolization and the formation of the phantasm, is one in which the fracture of the I and dissolution of the self are given new expression and brought to a higher level of nonresolution. Sublimation is balanced on a precarious edge. It is a form of self-loss and self-overcoming that comes close to psychotic splintering, yet without falling apart in a sheerly negative or violent manner. Sublimation, or “successful sublimation,” is a kind of madness without madness—or, in more Fitzgeraldian language, a way of cracking up without actually cracking up. Deleuze writes: “Are we to speak always about Bousquet’s wound, about Fitzgerald’s and Lowry’s alcoholism, Nietzsche’s and Artaud’s madness while remaining on the shore? ... Or should we go a short way to see for ourselves, be a little alcoholic, a little crazy, a little suicidal, a little of a guerilla—just enough to extend the crack, but not enough the deepen it irremediably?”⁴² The health that sublimation promises is not health in the sense of equilibrium and balanced flourishing and self-preservation but, rather, a “great Health”⁴³ which is reversible with sickness, a crack in conformist and clichéd vitality through which something new can emerge that makes life worth living, however painful or confounding that “Thing” may be—as Deleuze writes, it is through this crack that “anything that is good and great in humanity enters and exits ... better death than the health which we are given.”⁴⁴ Now, despite this exhortation to

dare, to go a little crazy, one of the consequences of this theory of sublimation is that the central moral problem of Deleuze's philosophy becomes, perhaps rather surprisingly, that of *prudence*. Just how far should one extend the crack? How to find the proper measure between health and sickness, vitality and exhaustion, sanity and madness, self-control and self-loss, or in a word, between measure and measurelessness? Deleuzian ethics can be seen as a kind of paradoxical Aristotelianism insofar as it demands the exercise of *phronesis*—prudence, practical reason—in a situation that would seem precisely to exclude it, a situation of disorientation, of intoxication, of depersonalization, of self-loss, even of madness. Does prudence require the residual existence of a coherent moral agent able to exercise it, and thus guide the process of sublimation from without (as Deleuze sometimes suggests), or is it the process itself which must be, in some way, “wise”?⁴⁵ In this—I would argue—eminently modern perspective, the classical position of ethics is both retained and decentered: while there is no golden mean or proper balance between extremes, still one is enjoined to find the missing measure within measurelessness itself, and to affirm not chaos but an order-within-chaos or an equalized disequilibrium, what Deleuze calls, after Joyce, a “chaosmos.”⁴⁶ And to return to psychoanalysis: if perversion is a privileged clinical category for Deleuze, it is because it is located in a tenuous in-between, midway between psychosis and neurosis, the violent collapse of the psyche into the bodily depths, on the one hand, and the domination of the Other who reigns from on high, on the other. Perversion is an “art of the surface.” What Deleuze means by perversion is not really compatible with Sartre's account. Instead of being a defensive structure, perversion consists in a positive transformation of the drives, a new kind of Eros.

How should we understand this transformation? Here we can compare Deleuze's concept of sublimation with the Lacanian-Žižekian theme of “Enjoy your symptom,” arguably the psychoanalytic version of Stoic *amor fati*. Take one of Deleuze's favorite examples, a quotation from poet and writer Joe Bousquet, who was seriously wounded in the First World War: “My wound existed before me, I was born to embody it.”⁴⁷ In this poetic expression of injury, a sublime reversal takes place. Rather than the symptom (the wound, the trauma) appearing as a negation of life and an obstacle to the ego's goals and flourishing, it is the ego that becomes a mere accessory to the symptom, which is a figure of destiny that both precedes and infinitely exceeds it. The I is attached to the wound, not the other way around—and it is this autonomous partial object that gives the individual its secret coherence and true standing in the world. In *Alice in Wonderland* there is a well-known scene where the Cheshire cat vanishes, leaving only his grin that lingers awhile before disappearing too. “‘Well! I've often seen a cat without a grin’, thought Alice; ‘but a grin without a cat! It's the most curious thing I ever saw in my life!’”⁴⁸ The

same goes for Bousquet's wound: a man without a wound is nothing special, but a wound without a man ... It is as if the person had evaporated leaving only the freestanding injury, a virtual wound without a "wounded," a pure happening or event, which then embodies or actualizes itself in concrete situations and its person-bearer. And to add one further image: in Pessoa's (or Álvaro de Campos's) poem "The Tobacco Shop," the poet speaks of a lizard that has lost its tail, but instead of the lizard growing back a new one, it is the tail that "keeps on twitching, without the lizard," as if the severed appendage would regenerate a new host. Deleuze calls this reversal "counter-actualization," and claims that it is in this movement "that our greatest freedom lies."⁴⁹ What freedom is at stake here? To enjoy your symptom means to no longer seek to get rid of it, or master it, or simply accept it in a mood of defeated resignation, but rather to live it as a kind of fatal destiny: not to be unworthy of the symptom that afflicts one could well serve as a formula for a psychoanalytic ethics. The shift that Lacan effects in the relation between the subject and speech may be interpreted along similar lines: in the analytic setting what matters is not expressing one's true thoughts and feelings, or finding a language adequate to the deepest desires of the self, but, rather, becoming worthy of the speech that speaks in the person, to assume and live up to its surprises, slippages, and short circuits. The Deleuzian version of "enjoy your symptom" reads, somewhat less tidily, "extract the non-actualizable part of the pure event from symptoms."⁵⁰ This means to raise the symptom to the level of the event, to grasp in the stain, the distortion, the impediment to life and desire the kernel of an impersonal destiny. Psychoanalysis is not a depth psychology concerned with uncovering hidden motivations or interpreting symptoms so as to reveal their true meaning and ultimate cause. It is, rather, a superficial science: "psychoanalysis in general is the science of events."⁵¹ Its real object is the grin without the cat, the tail without the lizard, the wound without the wounded: autonomous partial objects.

Elsewhere Deleuze writes of this transformation from a Spinozistic angle, the eternal perspective of the Sage. In his essay on Michel Tournier's novel *Friday, or The Other Island*, a rewriting of the Robinson Crusoe story, entitled "Michel Tournier and the World without Others" and included as an appendix to *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze establishes a remarkable link between perversion and Spinozism. As the title suggests, much of the essay is concerned with showing how, in perversion, the Other—which Deleuze defines not as a concrete person or other ego but, in phenomenological terms, as an a priori structure which organizes the perceptual world and assures the identities of subjects and objects that appear within it—is replaced by an elemental sexuality composed by libidinal flows and partial objects. Here I wish to highlight just one of the main aspects of his argument. Deleuze summarizes the logic of perversion as follows: "The perverse world is a world in which the category of the

necessary has completely replaced that of the possible. This is a strange Spinozism from which ‘oxygen’ is lacking, to the benefit of a more elementary energy and a more rarefied air (Sky-Necessity).”⁵² This is the crucial point: perversion involves a modal shift from possibility to necessity. Why this denigration of the category of the possible (which Deleuze will favor in later works, where he speaks of creating new “possibilities” for life)? We might say that possibility belongs to the neurotic conception of freedom, which is that of freedom of choice; within this perspective, necessity can only appear as the negation of freedom, a restriction of choice to one, or in other words, to none—the irony being that the great champion of free choice, the obsessional neurotic, is precisely the one who is unable to choose, who makes his home in an eternal “maybe.” Obsessional neurosis is the pathology of choice that reveals its inherent falsity, the lie of egoic autonomy. Perverse freedom, on the other hand, is the freedom of necessity, for which choosing is mere falsehood and illusion, a totally unserious affair. (“Nothing is less free than the pervert’s gesture,” Pierre Klossowski writes,⁵³ and Freud adds that “perverts are poor wretches . . . who have to pay extremely dear for their hard-won satisfaction.”⁵⁴ For the pervert, sexual gratification is subject to fixed conditions; as opposed to the neurotic’s vacillations, perverts are strict libidinal determinists.) One could extend this analysis by sketching a taxonomy of freedom along the lines of Freud’s second topography. For the ego, freedom is the freedom to choose, a capacity which the ego abstractly enjoys to the detriment of making any actual choice (what would be truly transformative for the ego, wiping away its indecision, is a choice that changes the very balance of choices, that alters the given framework of what is possible and impossible); for the superego, freedom is caught in the tension between obedience to the law and its transgression (Lacan’s essay “Kant avec Sade” is concerned precisely with the complex nexus of law, transgression, and desire, and his own clinical conception of perversion, as opposed to Deleuze’s, is located here: the outward transgressiveness of the pervert masks his secret piety, his deep need for a Law to serve; what defines perversion is self-instrumentalization, making oneself into a tool of the Other’s will); and as for the id, there would seem to be no freedom whatsoever, only blind and overwhelming compulsion. Deleuze’s wager is that there is a way of conceiving of a perverse id-freedom, a higher necessity that is not simply coincident with the blind striving of the drives but plays itself out in a realm slightly separated from them (but this slight separation makes all the difference), the breathless theater of the symbolic surface.

LOGIC OF SENSE OR LOGIC OF THE SIGNIFIER

Due to its emphasis on the primacy of language as the space of events, *Logic of Sense* is often considered to be the most Lacanian of Deleuze’s books.⁵⁵ Lacan

himself, in the session of March 12, 1969 of his seminar *From an Other to an other*, praises Deleuze's work—as an extension of his own. “It would not hurt to notice that Deleuze, in his felicity, has been able to take the time to gather in a sole text what is at the heart of what my discourse has stated—and there is no doubt that this discourse is at the heart of his book, because he has admitted as much, and *The Seminar on the ‘Purloined Letter’* forms its entryway, defines its threshold.”⁵⁶ There is clearly an attempt here to fold Deleuze into Lacan's general project, even to claim him as a kind of disciple, and Lacan is careful to point out that the apparent criticisms of his theory in the book apply more to Laplanche and Pontalis's misconstrual of his doctrine than to himself (Jacques Nassif makes a presentation to this effect in the subsequent session). Apart from these explicit references, we may also note that a few years prior to the publication of *Logic of Sense*, Lacan gave a radio address on Lewis Carroll in which he paid tribute to an author whose “work is a privileged site for demonstrating the true nature of sublimation in a work of art.”⁵⁷ Both Deleuze and Lacan share an admiration for the word games and sophisticated nonsense of Carroll, and agree that nonsense is not merely a secondary deviation or misuse of language but absolutely central to what it is: a virtual space disconnected from physical reality or, as Deleuze puts it, from the actions and passions of bodies. Nevertheless, while it is true that there is a joint emphasis on the autonomy of the symbolic order (Lacan) or the surface of sense (Deleuze), this autonomy ultimately means quite different things for the two thinkers.

At this stage we can articulate in summary manner a number of points where Deleuze's psychoanalysis diverges from that of Lacan. Some we have already noted. First is the positive role accorded to the body. For Deleuze, following Klein, the body has its own dynamism and power; it is capable of organizing itself and its object relations, and in a surreal and inchoate manner the “under-sense” of the body anticipates the later advent of language and symbolization. Most significant in this regard is the distinction Deleuze makes between partial objects and the body without organs, the latter consisting in a negative synthesis of the dispersed pieces, a whole that is less than the subtraction of its parts: this liquefaction provides the basis for the primitive id-ego (oneness in a diffuse sense) and is the most basic mechanism by which the body defends against its own aggression and fragmentation, i.e., creates a way to live and desire with and in spite of the (Kleinian) death instinct. In contrast, for Lacan it is imaginary and symbolic identifications which give the body its orientation and dynamism. The oscillation between violent fragmentation and anticipated unity defines the mirror stage, and later the depressive effect ensues from the confrontation with the Other's omnipotence and the subsequent debasement of imaginary mastery. The guiding thread of Lacan's interpretation of Klein is the primacy of the desire

of the Other, first embodied by the mother; this is what is missed in Klein's theory of psychic development, which rather emphasizes the drives of the child. Deleuze in this sense is more faithful to Klein. The second point involves the shift in meaning that Deleuze effects with respect to the notion of lack. While appropriating crucial elements of Lacan's structural account of the Oedipus complex, he modifies what Lacan calls the "signification of the phallus." Both maintain the phallus as the paradoxical signifier of the symbolic as such, whose inscription is necessary to ground its very openness. But instead of symbolizing what is missing in desire, that dimension of the mother's desire that is enigmatic and disordered for the child, the phallus takes on for Deleuze another meaning: it is not so much the signifier of lack but of difference, viz. the difference between the corporeal drives and incorporeal thought. This is what the construction of phantasms is about. The phantasm for Deleuze concerns the relationship between body and mind, or rather, the leap that separates them, their nonrelation; the phantasm is the repetitive enactment of this leap, bringing the bodily drives to a higher symbolization and orchestrating the psyche's multilayered life. Instead of learning to desire with lack, there is an affirmation of difference—and insofar as the (Oedipal) paradigm for the event is failure or disaster, we can say that Deleuzian affirmation takes the form of a joyful calamity: "Enjoy your symptom," or Spinoza's third kind of complaint. For Lacan, on the other hand, the fundamental fantasy consists in an unconscious scene where what is staged is the erasure or disappearance of the subject, the subject's lack of being. Fantasy is a way of posing the question of the Other's desire and of its unfathomable lack, the hole or gap in the chain of signifiers, through the invention of a strange and nonsensical bodily scenario: the *objet a* is the fragment of enjoyment that prevents the subject from disappearing into this lack, the lack that is the subject. Both the (Deleuzian) phantasm and the (Lacanian) fantasy perform a special kind of antisynthetic synthesis. They bring together language and the body, a turbulent physics and a fractured metaphysics, they stage "the emergence of the signifier and the bizarreness of enjoyment." But Deleuze and Lacan conceive this operation differently and with altogether different accents. The third point condenses the previous two: Deleuze's depreciation of the notion of the Other in favor of what amounts to a highly original conception of the partial object. Indeed, from a Lacanian point of view, this must be the most striking aspect of both *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*: hundreds of pages devoted to the object in its various guises (partial object, virtual object, shred of pure past, differentiator, individuating factor, impersonal singularity, aleatory point, dark precursor, quasi-cause), with only about four pages analyzing the "Other-structure" in *Difference and Repetition* and some additional pages in an appendix to *Logic of Sense* (we will have to wait till *Anti-Oedipus* for a more robust treatment of the Other-structure, albeit under a different name). This

relative demotion is due to the Other's role in the Deleuzian system, which is strictly an integrative and domesticating one. "It is the Other-structure that ensures individuation within the perceptual world. ... Everything happens as though the Other integrated the individuating factors and pre-individual singularities within the limits of objects and subjects, which are then offered to representation as perceivers or perceived."⁵⁸ For Deleuze, the Other refers not to a person or another subject, but rather to an anonymous a priori structure that organizes the world of representation and assures the identities of subjects and objects that appear within it, akin to the phenomenological horizon. The Other is what stage-manages the realm of appearances (although without any identifiable director), taking care of their spacing, their distance, their borders and limits, preventing things from unrecognizably blurring or overlapping too much, or violently colliding into one another. And the aim of Deleuze's philosophy is to undo the efficacy of this structure, first "apprehending the Other as No-one," and then "following the bend in sufficient reason until we reach those regions where the Other-structure no longer functions."⁵⁹

But still, is not Lacan's big Other the "treasury of signifiers," synonymous with language and the symbolic order, so that in his logic of sense Deleuze effectively accounts for the same thing by other means, the Other as the Other-surface, the separated symbolic dimension of the fluxing world? This is precisely where the decisive difference is to be located, in how Deleuze and Lacan think the autonomy of language vis-à-vis the realm of bodily causes.⁶⁰ Telling in this regard is their principal choice of theoretical references: whereas Lacan famously begins with structural linguistics and the Saussurean division of signifier and signified, the starting point for Deleuze's philosophy of sense is Stoic ontology, and Deleuze draws significantly from Émile Bréhier's study *La Théorie des incorporels dans l'Ancien Stoïcisme*. The Stoics make a distinction between bodies and incorporeals. Bodies is a broad category, including not only such things as stones and wine and people and all the usual substantial things but also virtues, thoughts, and the soul; everything that exists, and can interact with other existing things, is a body. Yet within this vast somatology the Stoics also make room for things that are "incorporeal"; these do not exist but "subsist." The Stoics list four incorporeals: void, time, place, and sayables (*lekta*), and it is this last category that interests Deleuze. While propositions are bodies, the meaning or sense expressed in them is incorporeal. In the Stoic theory of causality, only bodies can act on each other and be acted upon; the cosmos is composed of the actions and passions of material bodies, the flux of all that exists. But the effects of these mixtures are not themselves bodies, they are incorporeal. While the leaves of a tree turning green belong to the universe of material causality, the predicate "to green" or the process of "greening" is immaterial, it floats on the surface of things. As Bréhier writes: "the incorporeal event is in some sense

at the limit of the action of bodies. ... [The Stoics] make possible such a conception by radically separating that which no one before them had, two planes of being: on the one hand, real being, force; on the other hand, the plane of events, which play themselves out at the surface of being, and which constitute a multiplicity of incorporeal beings, without bounds and without end.”⁶¹ Deleuze explains that events are expressed by pure infinitives, “like the verb ‘to green,’ distinct from the tree and its greenness, the verb ‘to eat’ (or ‘to be eaten’) distinct from food and its consumable qualities, or the verb ‘to mate’ distinct from bodies and their sexes.”⁶² These pure verbal signifiers capture “eternal truths”⁶³ that flash within the stream of empirical reality, sense-effects bound up with the commotion and mixture of bodies, yet not reducible to them. Events are both material and immaterial. It is along these lines that Deleuze rereads the Saussurean distinction between signifier and signified, giving it a highly unique and unorthodox interpretation: “the signifier is primarily the event,” while “the signified is the state of affairs together with its qualities and real relations.”⁶⁴ To attain the surface of these pure events is the culminating point of psychic development, marking the liberation of language from the bodily drives. This completes the child’s not sentimental but metaphysical education, passing from the schizophrenic pre-Socratic depths to the depressive Platonic heights and on to the impassive Stoic surface (not forgetting a measure of Aristotelian *phronesis*).

From a Lacanian perspective, however, this ontological radicalization of the symbolic misses the point. For Lacan, what the cut between the signifier and the signified designates is the arbitrary and artificial character of the symbolic order, its fictional status, without any necessary relation to an outside reality, material or not. This is the difference between a world where the greening of trees is captured in a saying that expresses the “eternal truth” of the greening-event, its extra-being—a kind of hypochondriacal language that hews closely to the chaotic inmixture of bodies, even as it leaps onto another plane—and one in which the signifier “tree,” with all the associations and rich history it evokes, not to mention the green tree sitting there in the garden, could turn out to mean anything or nothing at all. For, to quote Lacan’s Alice-in-Wonderlandish formulation, “what this structure of the signifying chain discloses is the possibility I have ... to use it to signify something altogether different from what it says.”⁶⁵ Here we can take a brief detour through one of Lacan’s more interesting and accessible examples of the logic of the signifier, that of children’s questions. His remarks come during an extended account of the genesis of subjectivity in relation to language and the bodily drives, the detailed rereading of Freud’s libidinal stages in Seminar VIII, *Transference*. Discussing the concept of the lacking signifier, Lacan highlights the “particularly embarrassing moment” where the child “poses to his parents the most importunate questions, the ones that everyone knows provoke the

greatest disarray and, in truth, responses that are almost necessarily impotent. *What does running mean? What does kicking mean? What is an imbecile?*”⁶⁶ (One might add, *What does greening mean?*) These kinds of questions are exasperating precisely because they are not really looking for answers. There is nothing that would satisfy them or stop their flow, for what they are concerned with is not the acquisition of knowledge per se but examining the functioning (or malfunctioning) of the symbolic order. “What is in question at that moment is a standing back of the subject as regards the usage of the signifier itself.”⁶⁷ Through its endless queries the child is testing how language works and its limits, and especially the authority of those so-called masters of language, the parents—not only on a psychological level, but insofar as they embody the big Other who is supposed to know. There is a sketch from one of Louis C.K.’s stand-up routines that captures this point brilliantly.

You can’t answer a kid’s questions. They don’t accept any answer. A kid never goes, “Oh thanks, I get it.” They fucking never say that. They just keep coming with more questions: “Why? Why? Why?” until you don’t even know who the fuck you are anymore at the end of the conversation. It’s an insane deconstruction. This is my daughter the other day:

- Papa, why can’t we go outside?
- Well, because it’s raining.
- Why?
- Well, water’s coming out of the sky.
- Why?
- Because it was in a cloud.
- Why?
- Well, clouds form when there’s vapor.
- Why?
- I don’t know. I don’t know any more things. Those are all the things I know.
- Why?
- Because I’m stupid.
- Why?
- Well, because I didn’t pay attention in school. I went to school but I didn’t listen in class.
- Why?
- Because I was high all the time, I smoked too much pot.
- Why?
- Because my parents gave me no guidance. They didn’t give a shit.
- Why?
- Because they fucked in a car and had me, and they resented me for taking their youth.
- Why?
- Because they had bad morals.

- Why?
- Because they had shitty parents, it just keeps going like that.
- Why?
- Because, fuck it, we're alone in the universe.

I'm going to stop there. But this goes on for hours and hours, and it gets so weird and abstract, at the end it's like:

- Why?
- Because some things are and some things are not.
- Why?
- Well because things that are not can't be.
- Why?
- Because then nothing wouldn't be. You can't have fucking nothing isn't. Everything is.
- Why?
- Because if nothing wasn't there would be all kinds of shit, like giant ants with top hats dancing around. There's no room for all that shit.
- Why?
- Oh fuck you, eat your French fries you little shit.⁶⁸

Not only does this sketch illustrate the tenacity and even violence of children's questions, it also analyzes the possible strategies of dealing with them and their abyssal character, their "insane deconstruction." The whole drama proceeds in three distinct stages. First there is the stance of knowledge, with the father incarnating the big Other of the University, which is interrogated to the point of being forced to admit its ignorance: "I don't know any more things." Then, the source of this ignorance is itself investigated, leading to a concise formulation of the Oedipus complex and the discontent of civilization: the family structure is rotten, all parents are shitty, we are alone in the universe. At this maximal point of existential despair, the father shifts tack to a metaphysical discourse, and we witness a kind of parody of the *Parmenides*. Philosophy to the rescue? It is as if the problem of the signifier could be resolved by grounding it in an ontology, a discourse on being qua being: some things are and some things are not, and nonbeing can't be. When this philosophical solution also comes to grief—including the funny-desperate argument that the only thing standing between us and a flood of frightful mutants is the thin noetic line of Parmenidean ontology—the true relation to language finally comes to light. What binds us to symbolic reality is only the efficiency of the command, the master signifier that is grounded in nothing other than its own enunciation: shut up and eat your French fries! In other words, stop asking questions and accept the relationship between words and things as I articulate it, in all its arbitrariness. Here the discourse on being

reveals itself for what it really is: “it’s quite simply being at someone’s heel, being at someone’s beck and call” (*l’être à la botte, l’être aux ordres*). “The signifier is, first and foremost, imperative.”⁶⁹

The example of children’s questions is just one of the ways in which Lacan approaches what is arguably the cornerstone of his work: that there is no metalanguage, no Other of the Other, the big Other as “the treasure trove of signifiers”⁷⁰ is barred, split, marked by inconsistency and lack. “No authoritative statement has any other guarantee here than its very enunciation. . . . And when the Legislator (he who claims to lay down the Law) comes forward to make up for this, he does so as an impostor.”⁷¹ Speculative nagging is a relatively harmless way of probing this absence of guarantee and playing with the Other’s lack, of unmasking the person who claims to speak in the name of the Other as a sham, a fake, an impostor. But there is something else at stake. Ultimately, what all these questions are about, what these inane inquiries and abyssal why’s are circling around, is the question of the subject itself. The subject is looking for its place in the symbolic universe, it is seeking an Other (an “Other of the Other”) that could definitively pronounce on its destiny, but what it finds is only a sham authority and an arbitrary order. The problem is a structural one: there is no description or response that could capture the being of the subject, no signifier that would pin it down. The subject is the question par excellence, a question without an answer, a gaping hole in the treasury of signifiers that is the Other.⁷² And how the subject (unconsciously) comes to grips with this lack, how it is inscribed in the psyche, will resonate in and shape its individual pathology. Deleuze would not disagree with what Lacan calls the “imperative” nature of the signifier, and later he will characterize this coercive dimension of the symbolic as “a paranoid, signifying, despotic regime of signs,”⁷³ yet he does not put the same emphasis on it, and his own philosophy of language leads elsewhere. Beyond the sham despotism of the symbolic order, and the problem of its barred subject, there is a deeper (or more superficial) ontological connection between words and things, or rather, between words and the events that float on the surface of things, the becomings that traverse and surpass bodies. If the Deleuzian universe is teeming with sense, for Lacan subjectivity is formed through a confrontation with the impasse of the symbolic order and, in a Pascalian way, with the meaninglessness and unmoved silence of the Other. This is why, despite his appropriation of the concept of symbolic castration, from a Lacanian standpoint the cut between signifier and signified is never really effectuated in Deleuze’s logic of sense, and in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze will, while maintaining the idea of the autonomy of the recording surface and its quasi-cause, accordingly forgo the concept of castration. In its place will come a new and expanded theory of the body without organs.

CHAPTER 3

IS PLEASURE A ROTTEN IDEA?

THE SPECULATIVE SENSE OF LUST

Whereas *Difference and Repetition* sought to uncover the transcendental conditions of the pleasure principle in the genetic processes of habit, memory, and the death instinct, only a few years later Deleuze repudiates the concept of pleasure altogether. In his seminar of March 26, 1973, he claims that pleasure is a “rotten idea,” a notion totally spoiled by the Platonic tradition, with its negative ontology of lack.¹ “I can scarcely tolerate the word pleasure,” Deleuze writes in a collection of notes dedicated to Michel Foucault.² Better simply to cede the word to the enemy, and begin thinking with a different one: namely, desire. Desire, Deleuze tells us, lacks nothing and is tormented by no vain aspiration or melancholy impasse. The central problem of desire is not one of impossible fulfillment, but the disorganization of already sedimented patterns and connections (life is a process of breaking down, as Deleuze liked to quote F. Scott Fitzgerald). What is rejected here is the age-old theme of transgression—think of the litany of crimes attributed to Eros “the Tyrant” in the *Republic*—in favor of an immanent conception of desire with no aim outside its own active deployment and renewal. Desire is constructive, not transgressive; an affirmative force, not a reaction to pain and loss; a vagabond movement, not the striving to reach some goal (whether attainable or not). Foucault, for his part, rejects the term “desire” as too redolent of the Christian tradition, too steeped in sin and confession, or lack and repression, and sees in the classical Greco-Roman notion of pleasure the possibility of a more radical break: a rethinking of bodies and selves according to the ethical practices that constitute them. In a lecture from 1983 he complains that there is an “undervaluation of pleasure” in psychoanalysis, which privileges the supposedly more sophisticated concept of desire and its suspicious hermeneutics: “Why do we recognize ourselves as subjects of desire and not as agents of pleasure?”³ Lacan sides with Deleuze with respect to the theoretical

demotion of pleasure—not out of any anti-Platonism, but in fidelity to the Freudian problematic of “beyond the pleasure principle.” And while it is true that Lacan massively injected the concept of “desire” into psychoanalytic theory (via Hegel), it is another term that he ultimately chooses to designate the domain beyond pleasure: *jouissance*. Enjoyment names the articulation of the speaking subject with the bodily drives, or the link between desire and drive, and thus complicates the Foucauldian scheme of bodies and pleasures. Yet for Deleuze the Lacanian notion of *jouissance* ultimately solves nothing, since it is still defined in a negative manner, by castration and impossibility and lack. Whether it is Freud’s pleasure principle demanding the extinction of drive tensions, or Lacan’s *jouissance* that is barred for the speaking being, psychoanalysis remains stuck in a Platonic framework. It misses the “joy immanent to desire”⁴ best theorized by that dissident tradition in philosophy including Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Bergson (among others). To reconceive psychoanalysis on the basis of this tradition, and thus to replace its “rotten” foundations, is one of the main aims of the discipline or antidiscipline that Deleuze and Guattari dub schizoanalysis.

We are witness here to a particularly complicated debate, which may in turn appear as a provocative clash of ideas, a terminological mess, even an odd contest to pick the most radical voluptuous term—a confusion produced by the meeting of somehow intersecting yet very different theoretical programs. In this and the following chapters I wish to look at this controversy over the “philosophy of desire” from a fresh perspective. My aim is to reopen the question of the meaning of pleasure and enjoyment, drive and desire, by first situating these terms in a philosophical history and then taking up again, within a somewhat altered theoretical framework, the challenge posed by Deleuze to psychoanalysis. This chapter will address the question of Freud’s understanding of pleasure, the next the problem of what Lacan means by lack; Deleuze’s unsparing criticism provides the perfect occasion to return to these foundational subjects. In order to appreciate the complexities of the Freudian notion of Lust, it is necessary to situate it within a history of pleasure. Following Foucault, this history will take as its starting point discussions about hedonism in ancient Greece, but rather than focusing on ethical practices of self-creation or the self as the agent of pleasure, I will adopt what may at first look like a more flatfooted or straightforwardly philosophical approach: examining the debate between Plato and Aristotle over the “being” of pleasure, its metaphysical structure, which proved highly influential for the later tradition. As we shall see, one of the most remarkable yet strangely overlooked aspects of this debate is its philosopher-centeredness: the philosophical inquiry into the nature of pleasure leads to the question of the pleasure of philosophy itself; the problem of the ontology of pleasure becomes that of the pleasure of ontology, the enjoyment of the true or highest being. As I shall

argue, far from being an antiquated bias—and who today would take seriously the claim of philosophy as the greatest and most intense joy?—it is in this chiasmus of the theory of pleasure and the pleasure of theory that we can find resources for a renewed inquiry into the relationship between pleasure and enjoyment, drive and desire.

So, to begin with Freud: A quick glance through his work suffices to confirm Deleuze's basic point. Freud does indeed, over and over again, define pleasure in a negative manner, as the lowering or discharge of psychic tension. Compared to the imperative character of unpleasure—the kind of pain caused by unfulfilled needs and desires—Freud argues that pleasure is a marginal phenomenon, with little intrinsic reality or power. "Sensations of a pleasurable nature have not anything inherently impelling about them, whereas unpleasurable ones have it in the highest degree. The latter impel towards change, towards discharge, and that is why we interpret unpleasure as implying a heightening and pleasure a lowering of energetic cathexis."⁵ In fact, the term "pleasure principle" does not appear in Freud's published work until 1911; it is preceded by the ungainly expression "pleasure-unpleasure principle" and, in *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900), simply the "unpleasure principle." It is this earlier formulation that more adequately describes what is at stake in the concept: it is not any positive enjoyment, but the flight from unpleasure, that drives human existence. As Lacan once ironically observed, the pleasure principle is in fact "the principle ... that pleasure should cease."⁶

Deleuze has nothing but contempt for this doctrine that makes "desire to be a dirty little thing ... that wakes us up in a most disagreeable manner."⁷ Yet a closer reading of Freud's work reveals that, despite his consistent identification of pleasure with tension reduction, his views on pleasure are far more nuanced and varied than Deleuze allows. In fact, whether pleasure can be reduced to the elimination of unpleasure or whether it has a positive essence of its own is a question that cuts across Freud's oeuvre. From the *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895) to *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* (1938), Freud never wavers in his view that pleasure consists first and foremost in satisfaction, i.e., the extinction of unpleasurable psychic tension. Yet at the same time he was well aware that not all pleasures fit this picture. In his discussions of sexuality, sublimation, tragedy, and jokes there are numerous indications of the need to define pleasure in a non-negative manner. To cite one telling passage: "From a psychological point of view, it is very doubtful that pleasure is not a positive feeling in itself but only a release from unpleasure. Pleasure is a very specific psychological process. It is true, however, that the greater the tension has been, the greater the pleasure; but tension is not always unpleasant."⁸ Here Freud's equivocation is clearly displayed: on the one hand he recognizes that pleasure has its own specific nature, and thus cannot be reduced to the elimination of unpleasure; on the other, he reasserts his basic economic model in

arguing that pleasure's intensity is determined by the quantity of preceding tension; finally, this model itself is called into question by the admission that tension cannot simply be equated with unpleasure.

How to resolve this conceptual tangle? In a famous passage from the *Science of Logic*, Hegel writes: "It is remarkable that a language comes to use one and the same word to express two opposed meanings. Speculative thought is delighted to find in language words which by themselves have a speculative sense; the German language possesses several of these."⁹ To the standard list of such speculative words—like *Abgrund* (ultimate ground and bottomless abyss), *Sinn* (organ of immediate apprehension and the underlying universal), and, of course, *Aufhebung* (cancellation and preservation)¹⁰—we can make a specifically Freudian contribution: *Lust*. For *Lust*, too, contains a double and opposed sense, designating "the sensation of sexual tension ('*Ich habe Lust*' = 'I should like to,' 'I feel an impulse to') as well as the feeling of satisfaction."¹¹ One could even make the case that it is Freud's speculative word which best captures the conundrum at the heart of dialectical philosophy, namely the problem of finding a "satisfying resolution." *Lust* as the speculative concept that expresses the *Lust* of speculative thought? In the spirit of this Freudo-Hegelianism, we can construct a matrix of the different possible ways of conjoining the two opposed senses of *Lust* as desire (sexual tension) and as satisfaction. At first the terms are externally related: either desire renders satisfaction impossible (it is always striving for something more, and hence unhappy with whatever it possesses), or else satisfaction snuffs out desire (pleasure is the death and failure of desire, which vanishes with the fulfillment that should mark its culmination). Here there is only conflict and unhappiness, and libidinal life is afflicted with an unresolved contradiction. But in a second moment this external opposition is overcome, so that the two terms are related in an immanent manner: expanding desire now goes together with increasing gratification. This harmonization may itself be viewed from two distinct angles: it can either take the form of a "harmonious harmony," a desire that is perfectly filled at every moment yet without ceasing to be desire (this is, for example, how philosophical or aesthetic contemplation is classically described), or else it can appear as an inner tension, a "disharmonious harmony" where what is enjoyed is precisely the impossibility of satisfaction, the pleasure that arises from the restless movement of desire itself. Taken together these four combinations form a grid, whose diagonals would mark a pair of fateful reversals: "desire rendering satisfaction impossible" becomes "the enjoyment of the impossibility of satisfaction," and "satisfaction suppressing desire" becomes "desire supported and sustained by satisfaction." There is another possibility, however, which does not neatly fit inside this matrix. In this case, desire and satisfaction are linked together through their very disjunction: desire remains in principle unsatisfied and yet

discovers an oddball satisfaction where it was not seeking it, a supplementary or bonus pleasure that does not fulfill the original desire but surprises and displaces its prior movement. We could call this a “harmonious disharmony.” Like, for instance, a slip of the tongue where the sentence misfires and the initial intention is unfulfilled, yet something else emerges which, on another level, is exceedingly felicitous.

However fortunate this coincidence of opposites may be, Freud is much less delighted than Hegel at the prospect of a linguistic ambiguity.¹² In fact, he never resolved the question of how to bring together or reconcile these contrary meanings, how to think through their relation, and this problem dogged his theory of the libido to the very end. Despite his efforts to formulate an unequivocal definition of Lust, Freud remained throughout his career confronted with difficulties stemming precisely from the word’s “speculative sense,” that is, the relationship between wishing, wanting and desiring on the one hand, and enjoyment or satisfaction on the other.

ELEMENTS FOR A HISTORY OF PLEASURE

Oscar Wilde once wrote: “Pleasure is the only thing worth having a theory about.” The Greeks might have said: “Theory is the only thing worth taking pleasure in.” Instead of following Deleuze in his blanket condemnation of the term “pleasure,” I wish to propose a rather different genealogy of the concept. It would not be going too far to say that all later discussions of pleasure in the history of philosophy refer back to the seminal definitions provided by Plato and Aristotle. Plato and Aristotle present two different definitions, or better, two paradigms of pleasure, which oppose each other on practically every point. For Deleuze, it is the Platonic tradition that proved dominant, casting a dark shadow over the history of the concept: “Western philosophy has always consisted of saying . . . desire is desire for what one does not have; that begins with Plato, it continues with Lacan.”¹³ Against this monolithic claim I would argue that Western philosophy has always been split between two paradigms of pleasure, the Platonic and the Aristotelian, and that the tradition’s reflections on pleasure have consisted mostly in an elaboration and/or combination of these opposing views.¹⁴

Plato’s theory of pleasure is adumbrated across the dialogues from the earliest to the latest; although we are nowhere presented with a simple summary of his position, his basic approach to the problem remains relatively constant.¹⁵ Plato defines pleasure in a negative manner, as the relief from distress, the assuagement of suffering, or the satisfaction of desire; metaphysically, it takes the form of a movement that restores a state of equilibrium, often characterized in terms of the filling of a lack. “Whoever among us is emptied, it seems, desires the opposite of what he suffers. Being emptied, he desires to be filled” (*Philebus* 35a). According to this definition, pleasure has no intrinsic

consistency or independent existence, but is inextricably bound to its opposite like two creatures fused at the head (*Phaedo* 60c): there is no gratification that is not predicated on some discontent, no satisfaction without the painful feeling of a void. Though Plato will come to admit the existence of certain pleasures that do not appear to fit this model (we shall return to these so-called true or pure pleasures later), he never wavers from the thesis that pleasure consists in a restorative movement: it belongs to the realm of becoming, not of being; it arises from a process, not a stable state. It is pleasure's transitional character that leads Plato to condemn hedonism as a fruitless and even self-contradictory endeavor, tantamount to trying to carry water with a sieve. The danger is that the soul will create an ever greater lack, in order to enjoy the continued movement of filling. Pleasure is a remedial good that risks becoming harmful, following the logic of the *pharmakon*: just as a cure administered in the wrong dose turns into a poison, so pleasure, when not properly measured, becomes a destructive force. Morally speaking, pleasure cannot be trusted precisely because it is without any intrinsic measure or sense of limits; as Protarchus says (presumably speaking for Plato), "I don't think that one could find anything that is more outside all measure than pleasure and excessive joy" (*Philebus* 65d). And yet it is an indispensable part of mortal existence. "Human nature involves, above all, pleasures, pains, and desires, and no mortal animal can help being hung up dangling in the air (so to speak) in total dependence on these powerful influences" (*Laws* 732e). Within this trio pleasure occupies the subordinate position. What really drives life is pain and the desire to escape it; pleasure is but a fleeting relief in the larger current of want and suffering. In modern times, the most famous proponents of this tragic view are Schopenhauer and Sartre, but one of Deleuze's favorite authors, William Burroughs, also proves perfectly Platonic on this score: "I experienced the agonizing deprivation of junk sickness, and the pleasure of relief when junk-thirsty cells drank from the needle. Perhaps all pleasure is relief."¹⁶

The first systematic critique of this theory is found in Books VII and X of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.¹⁷ The negative definition, Aristotle argues, fails to do justice to the richness of the phenomenon, leaving incomprehensible the intimate connection between pleasure and "our human nature" (*NE* 1172a19). In order to grasp pleasure in its positivity, a new conceptual framework is needed, and so Aristotle proceeds by turning around the central premises of Plato's account. Rather than equating pleasure with a cure for sickness, Aristotle describes it as an efflorescence of life; instead of grounding it in deficiency and disharmony, he views it as an abundance of vital "energy." Crucial to this shift is the removal of pleasure from the categories of movement (*kinesis*) and becoming (*genesis*). As long as pleasure is thought according to such metaphysically subordinate terms, it can have only a very poor degree of reality: pleasure is less perfect than the balanced neutral condition, just as

any process is inferior to the complete state toward which it tends. Aristotle grants pleasure an ontological dignity by rethinking it according to *energeia*, a category that escapes the Platonic opposition between movement and rest. *Energeia* is a neologism derived from the word *ergon*, or work, and is usually translated as activity or actuality; its fullest expression consists in activities that are complete (at rest) in themselves, i.e., those whose end does not lie in any external accomplishment, but in their own performance. “There is not only an activity of movement but an activity of immobility [*energeia akinesias*], and pleasure is found more in rest than in movement” (NE 1154b27–28). Whereas Plato gives eating and drinking as his main examples of pleasure, not only as processes that satisfy vital needs but as emblematic of the excesses of desire—the real source of evil in Plato is culinary perversity—Aristotle’s primary examples are thinking and seeing, activities whose very exercise is endowed with pleasure. (To give another example, Paul Valéry’s description of dance—“La danseuse reposerait immobile au centre même de son mouvement,” the dancer remains still at the center of her movement—beautifully expresses the Aristotelian idea of a self-contained “activity of immobility.”) Instead of a restorative process, pleasure is conceived as a perfection of immanent activity. The natural condition, which for Plato designates an ideal state of balance or harmony, is understood by Aristotle as one of active flourishing: to be healthy means to be active, to do things, and pleasure is bound up with the living being’s self-actualization. Pleasure is what completes the unimpeded exercise of a faculty, it supervenes like the “bloom in those who are vigorous” upon the free performance of an activity (NE 1174b33). Rather than defining pleasure in terms of becoming, Aristotle makes it a supplementary perfection of being. Far from being a mere escape from suffering, pleasure is a heightened state of health and vitality: it is pure as such, neither mixed with nor conditioned by pain. What sets life in motion is not the desire to overcome a lack, but rather a manifold of activities—*energeiai*, positive “energies”—that enjoy being active and expanding the scope of their power. French psychologist Théodule Ribot’s definition of pleasure as “a superior form of normal life,—an augmentation, an increase, an enhancement of the state of physical and mental health”¹⁸ confirms the Aristotelian view, and, closer to Deleuze and Guattari’s interest in deviant currents of psychoanalysis, Alexander Lowen, a student of Wilhelm Reich, declares: “Pleasure is the creative force in life.”¹⁹

To sharpen the philosophical stakes here, let us engage in a little thought experiment. One could imagine that if Heidegger had written a treatise on pleasure, a “Vom Wesen der Lust”—or, in a less Freudian, more Schillerian vein, “Vom Wesen der Freude”—he would have taken as his starting point a recovery of the authentic Aristotelian sense of *hēdonē*. “Do we even know today what pleasure means? Not at all. The essence of pleasure has nothing

to do with 'having fun,' but is the pleasure of the essence itself." (The derisory rhetoric is here directed against Weimar-era decadence, but one could easily picture an updated version, with analysts railing against the contemporary "society of enjoyment" as failing to "think the question of pleasure.") In the 1920s and 1930s, Heidegger was deeply engaged in a reading of the *Nichomachean Ethics* in order to work out the existential structures of *Dasein*, and he could well have interpreted Aristotle's energetic conception of *hēdonē* as pointing toward a fundamental *Stimmung*, or "attunement." The argument would go as follows: Whereas Plato, together with most modern philosophers, thinks pleasure *ontically*, as corresponding to a particular sort of movement within the world, viz. the transition from a lesser to a greater state of being, an *ontological* theory thinks pleasure as corresponding to the presence of the world. Pleasure cannot be conceived simply as an inner-worldly entity or subjective feeling, but belongs to the world's very openness insofar as this is actualized through seeing, hearing, living, thinking, and so on, "being" in the active sense of the word.²⁰ Pleasure is not a psychological state but a state of the world. Even further: there is no worldliness, no clearing of Being, without the pleasure that pervades and sustains its disclosure, and it is this attunement, not any willful striving or passing gratification, which constitutes the authentic meaning of Lust. In fact, Heidegger argues as much near the end of his essay "Anaximander's Saying," where, via some etymological contortions, he translates Anaximander's to *chreōn* as "usage," which he links to the Latin *frui*, to bear fruit or enjoy, *geniessen* in German or *jouir* in French. He then explains that "to take joy in something and so to have it in its use" must be understood not in an ontic but an ontological sense: "frui is now no longer predicated of enjoyment as human behavior. . . . Rather, 'usage' now designates the way in which being itself presences as the relationship to what is present which is concerned and handles it as what is present."²¹ A few pages later Heidegger explicitly connects this joy in presencing with Aristotle's *energeia*, one of the master words for the "being of beings." Yet is not this pure ontological pleasure always-already stained by the oblivion of being, the hardening of presencing into presence and thinking into metaphysics, a forgetfulness that is not man's fault but the fault of being itself?—this is perhaps as close as we get to a Heideggerian "Enjoy your symptom." If we turn to Lacan, we see that, contrary to Deleuze's assimilation of his position to that of Plato, it is Aristotle who consistently furnishes the starting point for Lacan's reflections on pleasure, precisely because of the ontological dignity he affords the concept. In the crucial seminars VII and XX Aristotle is given a feature role, and already in his 1956 address "Freud and the Century" Lacan remarked that he had been "reading an old text by Aristotle, the *Nichomachean Ethics*, with the intention of rediscovering the origin of Freudian themes on pleasure in it."²² In Seminar XIV Lacan comments briefly on the passage in the *Philebus* where Plato writes

that the gods feel neither pleasure nor pain, for “these states would be quite unseemly in their case” (33b). Pleasure is beneath the dignity of the gods, since it involves the movement from a degraded to a more perfect state, and thus presupposes a lack or deficiency. A perfect existence would be one without pain or pleasure, and in the final ranking of goods pleasure is relegated to a lowly spot. Lacan concludes from this that the *Philebus* constitutes “the weak point at the beginning of philosophical discourse: to have radically misrecognized the status of enjoyment in the order of beings.”²³ Here he condemns philosophy *tout court* as a “forgetting of enjoyment,” to echo the famous Heideggerian forgetting of Being, yet elsewhere he frames the problem in a rather different light. It is not so much that philosophy forgets enjoyment by downgrading and discounting it; rather, it does just the opposite, mythologizing it as the high point of its metaphysical system—which, of course, is another way of covering it up. If Plato proposes an anhedonic theology, Aristotle places at the center of the cosmos a divine philosophical joy. His “active” God is pure enjoying substance, the eternal pleasure of thought thinking itself. In Lacan’s words, there is an “enjoyment of being” (*jouissance d’être*). “What Aristotle wanted to know, and that paved the way for everything that followed in his wake, is what the *jouissance* of being is.”²⁴ It is within this philosophical tradition of thinking enjoyment that Lacan situates psychoanalysis, and when he claims that “*Jouissance* is the substance of everything we speak about in psychoanalysis,”²⁵ we can hear a definite Aristotelian ring. Nevertheless, there is no question of a straightforward return to Aristotle, since psychoanalysis effects a decisive shift with regard to the metaphysical identification of “being and enjoyment,” to alter slightly the Parmenidean formula. The title Jacques-Alain Miller has given to one of the sessions of Seminar XX, “Freud and Aristotle: the other satisfaction,” well indicates the scope of Lacan’s project. For Lacan, the history of metaphysics is fundamentally a *hedontology*, and what he proposes in his later seminars is a kind of deconstruction of the hedontological foundations of classical philosophy, confronting the Aristotelian “joy of being” with the Freudian “other satisfaction,” that is, with the satisfaction of a being divided by the unconscious.²⁶ If Aristotle attributes the highest pleasure to *theoria*—“thought is *jouissance*,”²⁷ as Lacan says—it is slips of the tongue, jokes, dreams, and symptoms that constitute our modern “theoretical” pleasure, the enjoyment of unconscious thought. But this enjoyment is quite clearly “other” than the pure pleasure theorized by Aristotle. Lacan, together with our hypothetical Heidegger, shares the same basic problem: while Aristotle is the philosopher who grasps the true ontological import of the question of pleasure, its world-forming or disclosive character, we cannot subscribe to his cosmological and ethical vision of a harmonious rapport between “being and enjoyment.” How, then, to theorize the disharmony or lack of rapport, the discontent, between these two terms?

Instead of trying to answer this question directly,²⁸ let us pursue our exegesis a bit further. The split between Plato and Aristotle is reflected not only in the question of the metaphysical structure of pleasure—the filling of a lack versus the perfection of an activity—but also in the related phenomenological question of pleasure’s mode of appearance. Should pleasure be defined in terms of feeling? Or rather, as a feature of activity? Again, Plato and Aristotle give opposed answers. For Plato, pleasure belongs to the realm of *aisthesis*: it is the sensation of a particular kind of movement, the soul’s perception of a process of repletion. In a similar way, Freud viewed pleasure as a psychic quality corresponding to a quantitative change in levels of neuronal tension. Sometimes he defines this change as increasing excitation, at other times as release. The underlying point, however, is the same: feelings track changes in the body, and pleasure and unpleasure are perceptions of a physical (neuronal) process. Aristotle’s approach is completely different. Opposing the Platonic model, he writes: “it is not right to say that pleasure is a perceptible process, but it should be called activity of the natural state, and instead of ‘perceptible’ ‘unimpeded’” (NE 1153a 14–15). Rather than defining pleasure as a kind of perception, Aristotle makes it into a qualification of activity. Consciousness, in the sense of the awareness of a feeling or sensation, is not an essential aspect of pleasure. Instead, pleasure consists in an activity that is performed freely, without hindrance or obstruction, in an unimpeded manner. Elaborating this further, one could say that pleasure appears when, once we have begun to act, the activity itself takes over in us and starts to flow, as it were, from out of itself. At such a moment the self becomes *absorbed* within the rhythm of its own action. Pleasure entails an abandonment of self, a self-loss or surrender, a reversal of initiative from doer to deed. A sublime example of this is provided by the scene from Proust of Vinteuil’s sonata, much beloved by Merleau-Ponty: “The performer is no longer producing or reproducing the sonata: he feels himself, and the others feel him to be at the service of the sonata; the sonata sings through him or cries out so suddenly that he must ‘dash on his bow’ to follow it.”²⁹ In Aristotelian terms, it is not the self *qua* ego or conscious agent who enjoys, but rather the activity itself which is *hēdonē*.³⁰ Now for Aristotle, this pleasure expresses a deeper cosmological harmony, an attunement with the “joy of being.” From a psychoanalytic perspective, in contrast, it marks a radical split in subjectivity, best captured by Freud’s extraordinary and paradoxical formula for “neurotic unpleasure,” that is, “pleasure that cannot be felt as such.”³¹ This is arguably the paradigm case of pleasure in psychoanalysis, the strange phenomenon of a pleasure that cannot be experienced as pleasurable by the ego: something in me enjoys even though I am disturbed or horrified or disgusted by it; it continues to press on and realize itself irrespective of my needs and desires, or how I feel. Freud thus turns around the standard pessimistic claim: it is not so much the lack

of enjoyment that makes life miserable, but the fact that it is full, even too full, of unfelt or unenjoyable enjoyment. On a descriptive level, this notion of “unfelt pleasure” is difficult to square with Freud’s economic model of psychic energy (is it really simply a matter of undischarged tension?), but it makes more sense from an Aristotelian viewpoint, where pleasure is defined not in terms of perception or feeling but, rather, as the strengthening and perfecting of an *energeia*—albeit one that is completely out of tune with the satisfaction of the ego. Phenomenologically speaking, it is Aristotle who (ironically) paves the way for Freud’s notion of unconscious or unfelt pleasure. To recall the words of Georges Perros: “Nothing proves that pleasure is a happy affair.”

It is important to note that Aristotle does not deny that pleasure may be associated with different bodily processes and perceptions. He does argue, however, that the link between pleasure and movement is an *incidental* one (1152b34–39). This means that while pleasure may go together with different kinds of feelings (tickling, tension, ecstasy, excitement, relief, relaxation, etc., or even, in a more Freudian way, horror and disgust), these do not constitute the essence of pleasure. Pleasure’s defining characteristic is, rather, its self-reinforcing character: a person who acts with pleasure is less vulnerable to distraction, more focused upon what he or she is doing, and more driven to continue the same. “An activity is intensified by its proper pleasure” (1175a30); “activities are made precise and more enduring and better by their proper pleasure” (1175b14); “when we enjoy anything very much we do not throw ourselves into anything else” (1175b10). Instead of gauging pleasure’s strength by its proximity to uneasiness and suffering—as Plato does when he denounces pleasures mixed with and intensified by pain—the key criterion is how thoroughly it blocks off other impulses and stimuli, what Bergson called its *vis inertiae*.

What do we mean by a greater pleasure except a pleasure that is preferred? And what can our preference be, except a certain disposition of our organs, the effect of which is that, when two pleasures are offered simultaneously to our mind, our body inclines towards one of them? . . . When confronted by several pleasures pictured by our mind, our body turns towards one of them spontaneously, as though by a reflex action. It rests with us to check it, but the attraction of the pleasure is nothing but this movement that is begun, and the very keenness of the pleasure, while we enjoy it, is merely the inertia of the organism, which is immersed in it and rejects every other sensation. Without this *vis inertiae* of which we become conscious by the very resistance which we offer to anything that might distract us, pleasure would be a state, but no longer a magnitude.³²

For Freud, it is sexual enjoyment which exemplifies this blind rejection of every other sensation, but if we stick for the moment to philosophy, its

preferred activity also provides a compelling case. The comic scene of the thinker so deeply absorbed in his meditations that he accidentally walks into a well perfectly illustrates pleasure's "inertial force." The degree of pleasure's intensity is measured by how oblivious it makes us to all other things, including ditches and other roadside hazards. The head in the clouds gag is in fact the most ancient joke about philosophy, and moreover was made at the expense of the so-called first philosopher, Thales. As the story goes, originally recounted in the *Theaetetus*: "They say Thales was studying the stars, Theodorus, and gazing aloft, when he fell into a well; and a witty and amusing Thracian servant-girl made fun of him because, she said, he was wild to know about what was up in the sky but failed to see what was in front of him and under his feet. The same joke applies to all who spend their lives in philosophy. It really is true that the philosopher fails to see his next-door neighbor; he not only doesn't notice what he is doing; he scarcely knows whether he is a man or some other kind of creature" (174a–b). Notice how Socrates twists the joke at the end: it's even worse than the Thracian maid suspects, not only does the philosopher not notice where he is going, he doesn't even know who or what he is. (And we should not overlook the further irony that Thales falls into the water, which was of course for him the constituent element of the cosmos—a good thing the joke's not on Heraclitus.) The philosopher is the most confused and ignorant being, and hence open to ridicule, but this lack is also his greatest resource, for it is only the radical withdrawal from opinions and worldly wisdom that allows another dimension, that of the Idea, to shine through. According to the standard reading, we see here the "warfare between commonsense reasoning and speculative thinking" (in the words of Hannah Arendt), and the story of Thales has given rise to many variations, up to and including the absentminded professor, which serve as a warning against the dangers of professional thinking. But we can also read the tale in another way. The philosopher is no more impractical than anyone else in the grip of a passion. It is the deep enjoyment of theorizing, Thales' absorption in contemplating the stars, that blocks off other imperatives and concerns. Here we can also clear up a common misconception: since Nietzsche, it is usual to accuse philosophers, a notoriously feeble and sickly breed, of hating the body and of taking revenge upon it with their conceptual gymnastics and supreme valuation of the life of the mind. One of the most infamous texts in this regard is the *Phaedo*, where Socrates makes a plea for death as freeing the soul from the evils of corporeality. But it is not out of asceticism or self-loathing that philosophers despise the body, but rather joy. Their joy in thinking is so great—to use Nietzsche's phrase, it wants "deep, deep eternity"—that the body can only appear as an obstacle, as a frail and finite thing that needs to eat and defecate and sleep and so on, all of which interrupt the pure activity of thinking. With respect to the infinite desires and obsessions that can

seize hold of a human being, the body is ultimately a hindrance, a limit, a breakdown. This focus to the point of “impracticality” is the basic tendency of all pleasure, not just philosophical pleasure: any activity can become an all-engrossing endeavor, and from the sublime to the ridiculous there is but one misstep . . . into the well. Yet even though such devotion and surrender is a general feature of enjoyment, perhaps the laughter of the Thracian maid still has a point: not only is theoretical activity an especially good illustration of the self-absorbing dimension of pleasure, but is not every pleasure (per Deleuze) a kind of autocontemplation? In other words, philosophy has a perfectly good term for what Freud called the drive: namely, philosophy.

Again, we should observe that this interpretation departs in a significant way from Aristotle’s analysis. For Aristotle, the self-reinforcing or inertial character of pleasure is part and parcel of its very goodness; activities are naturally limited, and when excesses occur they are the result of an underlying ontological corruption. Starting from the premise that pleasure is good insofar as it provides a supplementary perfection to nature, Aristotle concludes that it can be bad only when there is something faulty or defective about this nature. From a psychoanalytic perspective, in contrast, nature cannot serve as a trustworthy moral guide: there is no innate path to self-actualization, no natural harmony to rely upon; pleasure itself can become a dangerous and “corrupting” force insofar as it strengthens one activity to the exclusion and death of others. With this emphasis on the compulsive dimension of enjoyment—which today goes under the popular name of addiction, so that we would call Thales’ problem a “philosophical addiction” and refer him to group therapy for obsessive theorizing—we move away from Aristotle and closer to Lacan. Lacan argued that the best translation of *pulsion* (*Trieb*, drive) is *dérive* or drift: the drive goes adrift.³³ The failure to respect or abide by limits is not the result of an accidental deviation but an intrinsic feature of what Lacan calls *jouissance*. This overstepping of boundaries should also be distinguished from the thrill of transgression characteristic of desire: the drive overruns limits not because of the attraction exerted by the outlawed and the forbidden but simply because it ignores them, blindly pursuing its own path—transgression is a side effect of the drive’s *vis inertiae*, not its aim and incitement. Against Aristotle, we thus return to Plato’s moral assessment of pleasure as necessary yet dangerous, possessing an untrustworthy nature.

FREUD’S PHILOSOPHY OF PLEASURE

What does Freud himself say about pleasure? Freud readily admits that the nature of pleasure and unpleasure posed one of the greatest challenges to his metapsychology, especially the economic perspective which conceives mental life in terms of the displacement and fluctuation of psychic energy. In the *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, he avows: “Everything relating to the

problem of pleasure and unpleasure touches upon one of the sorest spots of present-day psychology.”³⁴ Fifteen years later, the same warning reappears: “[W]e would readily express our gratitude to any philosophical or psychological theory which was able to inform us of the meaning of the feelings of pleasure and unpleasure which act so imperatively upon us. But on this point we are, alas, offered nothing to our purpose. This is the most obscure and inaccessible region of the mind.”³⁵ In fact Freud’s understanding of pleasure is a complex one, encompassing a number of divergent and even contradictory positions. On the question of pleasure, psychoanalytic theory is marked by what could be called a broad philosophical pluralism, and Freud effectively engages in an original way with many of the key debates found in the history of philosophy. The crucial text in this regard is the *Three Essays*, where he distinguishes four kinds of pleasure, which we can relate to different philosophical traditions.

END-PLEASURE

Endlust consists in the discharge of drive tension and the return of the psyche to an unexcited state. More specifically, it refers to the pleasure of orgasm, and thus makes its appearance *sensu stricto* only with the onset of puberty. “End-pleasure is something new and is thus probably conditioned by circumstances that do not arise till puberty.”³⁶ This pleasure “is the highest in intensity” and “wholly a pleasure of satisfaction” (*ganze Befriedigungslust*), “analogous to the sating of hunger.”³⁷ According to this Platonic model, pleasure resides in the movement of return to a state of equilibrium; in Freud’s words, “a release of the sexual tension and a temporary extinction of the sexual instinct.”³⁸

This mechanism seems simple enough, although the term “end” already contains a crucial ambiguity: does it mean that pleasure comes at the end, or rather the end of pleasure? This is the much-remarked-on bittersweetness of Endlust, that the greatest pleasure is also the death of pleasure. This ambiguity comes out more strongly if we try to imagine a sexuality devoted solely to the dimension of Endlust, which is what Andrei Platonov did in his 1926 satirical brochure for a universal masturbation machine called the “Anti-Sexus” (for an updated version, think of Woody Allen’s *orgasmatron*, itself a parody of Wilhelm Reich’s *orgone accumulator*). This utopian pleasure device promises to “abolish the sexual savagery of mankind” through the sure-fire satisfaction of sexual desires, thus permitting a rational management of Eros and all kinds of subsidiary “calming” benefits for the population. Ironically, the exclusive emphasis on end-pleasure leads not to a hypersexuality but to a liberation from sexuality. End-pleasure becomes the end of pleasure.³⁹

When Freud introduces the death drive as a force operating beyond the pleasure principle, he remarks that this tendency might be seen not so much as contradicting the latter but rather as its extreme expression: “The pleasure principle seems actually to serve the death instincts.”⁴⁰ One could shift this

observation somewhat and argue that the death drive, at first, “leans on” the pleasure principle (more on this mechanism below) and then later breaks free of it; this would account for the genesis of the death drive out of the absolutization of end-pleasure. As a whole tradition from Plato to Leopardi and Schopenhauer teaches, the strict equation of pleasure with satisfaction (the filling of a lack, the discharge of tension, the return to equilibrium) leads automatically to the thought of a “death drive,” i.e., to a peaceful Nirvana lying beyond the cycle of lack and fulfillment, an ultimate satisfaction that would put an end to desire’s relentless march, not temporarily but for all eternity. In other words, if evacuating tension is the living being’s sole motivation, then the aim of life can be nothing other than death. Not physical death, however, but what one might call mental death: a kind of monotonous dead life without great changes or motions, a tranquil *vita minima* that endlessly drones on and on; in short, what Plato designated as the neutral life of the gods. Or, what amounts to the same, a junky. “If all pleasure is relief from tension, junk affords relief from the whole life process . . . junk suspends the whole cycle of tension, discharge and rest. . . . Boredom, which always indicates an undischarged tension, never troubles the addict. He can look at his shoe for eight hours.” And: “A junky does not want to be warm, he wants to be Cool-Cooler-COLD. But he wants The Cold like he wants His Junk—NOT OUTSIDE where it does him no good but INSIDE so he can sit around with a spine like a frozen hydraulic jack . . . his metabolism approaching Absolute ZERO.”⁴¹

ORGAN-PLEASURE

One of the basic postulates of Freudian theory is that the body is not given at the outset as a unity. On the contrary, it is originally divided into a multitude of partial drives, each independently pursuing its own aim: *Organlust*, i.e., the pleasure connected with the activity of a particular organ.

Freud’s primary example of such pleasure is “sensual sucking,” of which he paints a rather bucolic picture: “a baby sinking back satiated from the breast and falling asleep with flushed cheeks and a blissful smile.”⁴² “Sensual sucking involves a complete absorption of the attention and leads either to sleep or to a motor reaction in the nature of an orgasm.”⁴³ In this *Aristotelian* model, the main phenomenological feature of pleasure is absorption: consciousness is transported by a “rhythmic repetition”⁴⁴ (the sucking action of the mouth, rubbing the skin, etc.) which takes over and carries on according to its own momentum. The ongoing performance provides pleasure, which in turn reinforces (perfects) the repetitive movement. The activity nevertheless respects a certain limit: it either tapers off into sleep or else ends with a shudder or motor spasm. The drives’ pursuit of pleasure, circling around different body parts, does not in Freud’s mind pose any direct danger to the organism; repression and other defenses arise owing to separate somatic

processes (organically induced shame and disgust), cultural factors (taboos, moral ideals, threats of punishment and bodily harm), and emotional conflicts (love and hate). Though it will play an important role in the construction of symptoms, through the privileged pleasure-impressions it makes upon the body, *Organlust* as such is a relatively benign affair.

It should be further noted that *Organlust* is not a primary but a derived form of pleasure, first appearing in the course of the satisfaction of the organism's vital needs, and subsequently detaching itself: "To begin with, sexual activity attaches itself to functions serving the purpose of self-preservation and does not become independent of them until later."⁴⁵ *Organlust* emerges as a bonus or surplus on top of the pleasure provided by the satisfaction of needs. In feeding, the baby enjoys not only the cessation of its hunger, but the stimuli created by the flow of milk and the sucking action of the lips and tongue awaken a new interest. The mouth that was an organ serving the purpose of self-preservation becomes an erogenous zone, which then searches for the same pleasurable stimuli independent of any vital purpose. At this moment, the *infinite enters into the body*: the body ruled by the closed cycle of need and satisfaction is now animated by an "energy" (in the Aristotelian sense) which has no intrinsic stopping point. Nothing in such activity, guided solely by free, purposeless pleasure, implies that it will ever come to an end. Like the circling of the stars in the heavens, the baby could go on sucking for eternity. However, this infinite movement of organ-pleasure is at the same time recaptured by the body's finite limits: the activity gradually lulls the child to sleep, or issues in a quasi-orgasmic climax. What Freud describes in his analysis of sensual sucking is in fact a kind of happy mixture of the finite and the infinite, a gratuitous pleasure that spins around itself for a while only to eventually return to the body that tires and shudders in accordance with its limited nature. This, however, need not necessarily be the case: there is nothing in the pleasure-drive that makes it automatically or spontaneously self-limiting.

When the baby is sucking at the breast, self-preservation and sexuality are fused together and practically indistinguishable; the pleasure of sucking is intermingled with the sating of hunger. It is only when the child seeks pleasure independently of any need—sucking its thumb, to cite the famous example—that sexuality appears as an autonomous force. The earliest manifestations of the sexual drives are what Freud calls, following Havelock Ellis, "auto-erotic," that is, they take as an object a part of the child's own body, which then becomes a "second erotogenic zone." In this way the body folds in upon itself, and pleasure circulates in the interchange between sucking and being sucked, touching and being touched, looking and being seen, and so on. The drive combines activity and passivity. Sometimes autoeroticism is understood in phenomenological terms as auto-affection, but this is too weak to express what is at stake; it also involves a more radical kind of

splitting. First, organ-pleasure is what perverts the functionality of the body, deflecting it from its practical ends and limits. A surplus pleasure can enter anywhere and divert the body onto a new path that no longer serves any vital or functional purpose: this is what the polymorphous perversity of the infantile body signifies. Second, organ-pleasure is a self-contained pleasure, cut off from the Other and the wider familial and social context; in sucking its thumb the child relies on nothing other than its own body—or does it? This is a key point of contention. It is often argued that organ-pleasure is accompanied by fantasy, that in sucking its thumb the child is (consciously or unconsciously) seeking to regain a lost pleasure, a union with the mother, which itself is nothing other than a fantasmatic construction; or, in a more sophisticated way, that the pleasure of the autoerotic drive has to be understood from the perspective of the symbolic structure of desire (e.g., oral sexuality revolves around the demand to the mother, and the lack-of-being that is revealed there). In this way, autoerotism is embedded in a larger intersubjective circuit even as it withdraws from that circuit and cannot be recuperated by it. On the other hand, one can hold, as Deleuze and Guattari do, that organ-pleasure constitutes a “celibate machine” which has nothing to do with the Other whatsoever—it is celibate, socially sterile, solitary—nor with fantasy. Autoerotism rather expresses the body’s power to enjoy itself, in radical independence from the codes and imperatives of the social world. According to this scheme, the crucial figure for understanding organ-pleasure is not masturbation with fantasy but tinkering, the ad hoc creation of connections and syntheses, ruptures and flows.⁴⁶

We should also highlight one additional point: even though the pleasure in autoerotism is described as emerging as a bonus on top of the satisfaction of needs, one can argue that this surplus is in fact necessary to support the vital function it leans on. In that case, the supplement would ground that which it supplements. According to Freud’s later drive theory, informed by his research on narcissism and psychosis, the self-preservative instincts are not strong enough to function on their own; they must be bolstered by energy coming from the sexual drives if they are to ensure the survival of the organism. Self-preservation has an essential libidinal component; the gratuitous enjoyment of the partial drives is necessary in order to sustain the link with life.⁴⁷ As Aristotle argues, the pleasure that belongs to restorative processes is located primarily in the underlying activity, not in the movement of restoration as such; instead of residing in the lacking or deficient element, pleasure is situated in the part that remains in a healthy condition.⁴⁸ Stretching Aristotle’s argument a little, one could say that need alone is insufficient to keep the organism alive. Hunger will not drive a person to eat if he or she has no appetite for it, if he or she can find no pleasure in the activity of eating. Freud never goes this far, however. Embracing the Aristotelian perspective

would come too close to the folk psychological wisdom that “life is love of life,” whereas Freud prefers to underscore necessity or compulsion, *Ananke*, as the ultimate driving force of the psyche.

FOREPLEASURE

Vorlust designates the pleasure of tension, the enjoyment of the energy of the drives. This kind of pleasure immediately presents Freud with a problem: if tension is by definition unpleasurable, how is it possible to derive pleasure from it? How can the phenomenon of pleasure in excitation be squared with the economic scheme of the pleasure principle? It should be emphasized that this is not a phenomenological problem—pleasure in excitation is readily observable, as Freud himself admits—but a difficulty stemming from Freud’s model of psychic economy. If Freud wants to maintain the equation of tension with unpleasure, then the existence of *Vorlust* can only appear as a conceptual paradox. “How, then, are this unpleasurable tension and this feeling of pleasure to be reconciled?”⁴⁹

There are two ways to approach the “economic problem” of *Vorlust*.

(1) First, as the word indicates, *Vorlust* is a preliminary pleasure, a “partial” pleasure that comes before the final “satisfying” one. *Vorlust* in the strict sense applies only to adult, and not infantile, sexuality. Infantile sexuality is characterized by *Organlust*, not *Vorlust*, since it consists in autoerotic pleasure without any intrinsic finality. With the onset of puberty (and to some extent earlier, in the phallic phase), the anarchy of the partial drives is reorganized and reoriented according to the primacy of the genitals.⁵⁰ The infantile pleasures are then pressed into the service of a new aim, the attainment of *Endlust*, genital satisfaction, and thereby become “component” parts of a larger movement that contains and transcends them. “Fore-pleasure is thus the same pleasure that has already been produced, although on a smaller scale, by the infantile sexual instinct.”⁵¹ Now, however, that same pleasure serves to make possible “the production of the greater pleasure of satisfaction.”⁵² Peeping, sniffing, licking, etc.—once the autonomous expressions of the infantile drives—are transformed into “preliminary sexual aims,” which are “themselves accompanied by pleasure” while also “intensify[ing] the excitation” for the completion of the sexual act.⁵³ Does this mean that genital sexuality is so strong that it manages to subordinate all other bodily drives to its own movement (everything is ultimately aiming at that), or rather, that it is so weak that it needs to be helped along by all sorts of other pleasures in order to be able to arrive at its goal? Let us consider this question in a slightly different light. In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, the other major work in which fore-pleasure is discussed, Freud calls the general mechanism whereby one pleasure prepares the way for a final satisfaction “the forepleasure principle,”⁵⁴ and provides a more nuanced account of its operation. The libidinal basis of joking is infantile wordplay, “pleasure in nonsense.”⁵⁵ In tendentious jokes,

this purely aesthetic pleasure in wordplay works to “bribe” the listener into responding positively to what would otherwise be rejected if stated openly and crudely: the pleasure provided by the form of the joke allows the otherwise objectionable hostile or sexual content to be accepted. In this way the enjoyment of nonsense is subordinated to the greater satisfaction of expressing some unconscious or preconscious wish. But one can also take the reverse perspective, and argue that “the meaning of the joke is merely intended to protect that pleasure [in nonsense] from being done away with by criticism.”⁵⁶ As Freud explains, the joy of playing with words loses its innocence with the end of childhood and the installation of that great censor, “critical reason.” The real aim of jokes is to regain the lost infantile enjoyment of nonsense by providing it with a veneer of meaningfulness, in this way placating the censor. Instead of the medium (the joke technique) serving the message, the message of the joke is a pretext for recovering the free play of the medium. This is what Freud calls the “aesthetic” mode of psychic functioning, and we can apply the same logic to the theory of sexuality.⁵⁷ According to the official operation of the forepleasure principle, it is the final goal, the end-pleasure, which mobilizes the partial pleasures in order to realize itself; thus forepleasure harmonizes with the wider aims of the pleasure principle. But from another perspective this goal is nothing but a ruse, a trick on the part of the “means.” Adult sexuality is a pretext that allows for the reactivation of the diverse pleasures of infantile sexuality which have since fallen under repression owing to shame and disgust and internalized prohibitions. This reversal constitutes the other meaning of the forepleasure principle: the end becomes the means for the exercise, expansion, and enjoyment of the means. Adult sexuality is an alibi, a necessary fiction for the reanimation of the partial drives.

Adult sexuality is composed of two contrasting ontologies of pleasure. It is both Aristotelian and Platonic, aimless immanent activity and teleologically driven punctual satisfaction. As Freud’s analysis makes clear, though, these two models do not harmoniously fall together: adult sexuality is constructed bric-à-brac from a variety of component interests that tend to follow their own path in spite of the organization imposed on them. The *Endlust* of genital sexuality is a new aim grafted onto the earlier impulses, not something that they were originally looking for. Insofar as a loose synthesis is achieved, adult sexuality is essentially Thomistic. The problem of *Vorlust*, restated as “How can it come about that an experience of pleasure can give rise to a need for greater pleasure,”⁵⁸ echoes the question from *De delectatione*, “Does pleasure create a thirst or desire for more?”⁵⁹ At first sight it would appear not to, since (according to Plato and, ipso facto, Freud), “pleasure is the rest that terminates the movement of desire.”⁶⁰ However, “when a thing is possessed incompletely, in one sense it is possessed, and in another it is not. It may therefore be the object

both of desire and of pleasure at the same time.”⁶¹ Strictly speaking, then, pleasure does not create the need for more pleasure, but it may be “indirectly” (*per accidens*) linked with such a need when the possession of the desired good is imperfect.⁶² Thus “hearing and enjoying the first part of a verse, one wants to hear the rest of it.”⁶³ Though in such cases pleasure is mixed with desire, this excess is “bound” within a larger framework; once the text has been recited, the pleasure is complete and comes to an end. Returning to Freud, this arc describes a relatively balanced picture of the sexual drive.

There is, however, one special object in which “desire for more” and “satisfaction” perfectly harmonize: “For even of the angels, who know God perfectly and delight in him, the Scripture says, *They long to gaze on Him*.”⁶⁴ This is, for Aquinas, the second sense in which pleasure and desire may be conjugated, a supreme enjoyment where expanding desire goes together with consummate fulfillment—to recall our earlier discussion, this contemplative pleasure is the “divine sublation” of the speculative sense of Lust. There is one place where Freud touches upon such an ecstasy of a body without organs. During his discussion of sensual sucking, a footnote from the 1920 edition of the *Three Essays* recounts the confessions of a certain “grown-up girl.”

It is impossible to describe what a lovely feeling goes through your whole body when you suck; you are right away from this world. You are absolutely satisfied and happy beyond all desire. It is a wonderful feeling; you long for nothing but peace—uninterrupted peace. It is just unspeakably lovely: you feel no pain and no sorrow and ah! you are carried into another world.⁶⁵

(2) The other possibility is to consider *Vorlust* as an independent force, “unbound” from any transcendent framework (sexual or divine). In this case, *Vorlust* is no longer an incentive that paves the way for final satisfaction, but an insatiable “hunger for excitation” (*Reizhunger*), a restless striving without end.⁶⁶ According to this Nietzschean perspective, what drives the psyche is neither lack nor—what amounts to the same thing—an unpleasurable excess, but a force that enjoys its own power and seeks to expand the radius of its actions. The drive actively seeks obstacles, conflict, and resistances in order to strengthen and affirm itself. “What is a pleasure other than a stimulation of the feeling of power by an obstacle (more strongly still by rhythmical obstacles and resistances)—leading it to swell? Thus, every pleasure includes pain.—If the pleasure is to become very great, the pain must be very long and the tension of the drawn bow prodigious.”⁶⁷ The questions we posed earlier: How can pleasure also be unpleasurable? How can the painfulness of tension be reconciled with its manifest enjoyment?, may be answered in two ways. One can either explain these contradictory qualities in terms of the incomplete attainment of the desired good à la Aquinas, or else, following Nietzsche,

deny the contradiction outright. Far from being its opposite, pain is a “category” of pleasure, an ingredient essential to the mix. For Nietzsche it is not *per accidens* that pleasure and desire are connected, but *per se*; the tension toward something greater, the self-overcoming of the will, is constitutive of pleasure itself. This is so even in those cases where the organism appears to be motivated purely by need. Feeding is originally an expression of the drives’ overwhelming force rather than a striving to fill a lack. “Let us take the simplest case, that of primitive feeding: protoplasm stretches out pseudopodia to seek something that resists it—not out of hunger but out of will to power. Then it tries to overcome what it had found, to appropriate it, incorporate it—what is called ‘feeding’ is merely a subsequent phenomenon, a practical application of that original will to become stronger.”⁶⁸ From this perspective, Freud’s anaclitic or leaning-on theory of infantile sexuality, in which the drives first emerge in the course of the satisfaction of vital needs, gets things backward. It is self-preservation that is an unintentional by-product of the drives’ inner push to realize and strengthen themselves, a secondary practical organization, not the other way around.

This pleasure in excitation is what Freud later comes to call primary or erotogenic masochism. The theory of primary masochism effects a major turnabout with respect to Freud’s original conception of psychic economy. In his earlier work, masochism is understood as a secondary or derived structure; it emerges either as a consequence of the idealization of the love object (the willingness to suffer for it), or else through the eroticization and turning around of the aggressive components of the drives. By the time of the “Economic Problem of Masochism” Freud has reversed his position: masochism has its own dynamic that cannot be derived from idealization or aggression; it is a primary rather than derivative psychic structure. What is this new sense of masochism? In a word, to find pleasure is the tension of the drives: primary masochism designates the pleasure of stimulation and excitation.⁶⁹ The problem is that this pleasure runs counter to the tendency to seek satisfaction; it does not admit any calm or rest, nor is it sensitive to what is good for the preservation of the organism. Freud writes that masochism is the major threat to the operation of the pleasure principle, “paralyz[ing]” it as if it “were put out of action by a drug”; and in light of this “great danger” he qualifies the pleasure principle as the “watchman” over psychic life.⁷⁰ If, in his earlier writings, the reality principle was tasked with slowing down the pleasure principle’s mad rush to discharge tension, now the pleasure principle is made responsible for countering and tempering the drives’ masochistic propensities, their insatiable craving for excitation.⁷¹

This late notion of masochism is the key entry point for Lacan’s conceptualization of enjoyment (*jouissance*) in contradistinction to pleasure (*plaisir*). Lacan’s basic insight can be summarized as follows: the psyche “lives” from

an enjoyment that is indifferent to its life or death, and pleasure consists in a moderation of this tempestuous enjoyment, maintaining it on this side of the limit of satisfaction and self-preservation without ever fully taming or placating it.⁷² “Pleasure,” Lacan states, playing on a phrase of Baudelaire, “is not an executioner without mercy, pleasure keeps you within a fairly buffered limit precisely in order to be pleasurable.”⁷³ The trouble is that this measured pleasure is not enough to sustain life, and so the psyche is moved to disrupt the limits that it elsewhere strives to maintain. The logic of enjoyment is that of “too much” and “too little” without a “just right”—which is what pleasure is, except that this “just right” is never really right enough, so one is soon tossed back into the unhappy turbulence of *jouissance*. There is no golden mean; psychic life takes the form of an ambivalent defense against the forces that move and enliven it. From a Freudian perspective, one could say that the pleasure principle protects against the masochism of the drives, which in turn protect against the radicalization of the pleasure principle’s imperative to extinguish tension. And the same logic also applies to sexuality: adult sexuality is a defense against its own dynamic, the natural limit of orgasmic pleasure preventing the body from drowning in limitless organ-pleasure.

To recall our earlier discussion, enjoyment may be defined in two ways: in Platonic terms, it refers to an excess of excitation or an exceptional numbness or coldness; following a more Aristotelian inspiration, however, the crucial feature is not the intensity of feeling per se but absorption in and surrender to an activity that flows from out of itself, and follows its own trajectory. It is this impersonal dimension of enjoyment, with the loss of protective boundaries it entails, that can be threatening to the psyche and provoke anxiety.⁷⁴ In a manner similar to Lacan, Deleuze distinguishes between (not enjoyment but) desire and pleasure, pleasure being the provisional halting and stabilization of a desiring process, and the reassertion of the ego’s self-control. “Pleasure is the attribution of affect, the affection for a person or subject, it is the only means for a person to ‘find himself again’ in the process of desire which overwhelms him.”⁷⁵ There is a nice term in Polish for this, “little stabilization,” *mała stabilizacja*, coined by the playwright Tadeusz Różewicz to ironically designate the period of relative calm and reform in Poland between 1957 and 1963. This is what pleasure is, an attempt to shore up the situation, to keep things running more or less smoothly until the next crisis hits, to confirm the ego’s “little mastery.” (With the proviso that self-control can also become a boundless passion and end up taking over a person’s whole life.) If “desire is revolutionary in its essence,”⁷⁶ as Deleuze and Guattari argue in *Anti-Oedipus*, then pleasure constitutes the reformist politics of the body. However, we should note that Deleuze and Guattari are careful to qualify their claim: desire is the “potential” for revolution, not revolutionary per se.⁷⁷ As Plato held, we cannot put our faith in enjoyment. The situation is an open one: *jouissance* is first and

foremost a crisis; the psyche does not spontaneously know how to handle its own excitation and arousal, the drives put the body under pressure, and the question is how and by what forces will this crisis be exploited: will it provoke a retrenchment of the ego's defenses, or can it be elaborated in a different direction?

PLEASURE-IN-MOVEMENT

In the last section of the second of the *Three Essays*, entitled "The Sources of Infantile Sexuality," Freud speaks of the "the pleasurable character of the sensations of movement" (*Lustcharakter der Bewegungsempfindungen*).⁷⁸ The "rhythmic mechanical agitation of the body" produced by swaying and bumping is exciting, especially to "older children," in the same way that kids enjoy swinging back and forth or being thrown in the air.⁷⁹ Freud cites the jostling movement of train rides as an example of the sexually exciting character of movement—as Alphonse Allais's verse goes, recorded in one of Apollinaire's pornographic novels: "The exciting shaking of trains/ Puts fire to marrow in loins" (*La trépidation excitante des trains/ Vous glisse des désirs dans la moelle des reins*). What interests Freud in such physical activities as romping, muscular exercise, and children's games, but also concentrated mental labor and strong emotions like anxiety or stress, is that they produce new excitations as a by-product or "concomitant effect."⁸⁰ These collateral excitations cannot be fully contained by the context in which they arise, but spill over and affect other (unrelated) impulses and mental processes. They are nomadic intensities. This constitutes another avenue for sexuality to enter the body, in addition to anaclitic "bonus pleasure." In fact, sexuality has multiple sources: the surplus pleasure that arises in the course of functional activities, nomadic intensities produced by mechanical stimulation or affective processes, internal excitations whose source cannot be precisely localized, and the way the child's body is touched and handled by others. In this section Freud underlines how practically any sufficiently powerful event can awaken a mobile sexual excitation. "[A]ll comparatively intense affective processes, including even terrifying ones, trench upon sexuality"; "[I]n the case of a great number of internal processes sexual excitation arises as a concomitant effect, as soon as the intensity of those processes passes beyond certain quantitative limits. . . . It may well be that nothing of considerable importance can occur in the organism without contributing some component to the excitation of the sexual drive."⁸¹

Let us consider a trivial example. William James was struck by the "genuine and curious fact" that a person concentrating on a difficult subject will often move his body in all sorts of odd ways, "pacing the room, drumming with the fingers, playing with keys or watch-chain, scratching head, pulling mustache, vibrating foot . . ."⁸² What is the connection between intellectual labor and these compulsive bodily tics? On the one hand, such activities serve

to discharge potentially distracting external stimuli so as to keep the attention focused; they “draft off all the irrelevant sensations of the moment,” thus “protect[ing] the thought-centers from interference from without.” In doing so, the movements create new stimuli which then have to be discharged through additional movement in a “circular process.” But on the other hand, they also act to drain off “the overflow of emotional excitement” caused by thinking itself, an excess of energy that, if pent up, would impede the flow of ideas and disrupt the concentration. These stupid gestures thus protect intellectual activity against a disturbance from within, the fact that thinking can be too exciting for its own good.

Another example. Although Freud typically portrays sublimation as a one-way process of desexualization, his arguments here concerning the “pathways of mutual influence” imply a much more dialectical relationship between the sexual and the nonsexual. Intellectual research can serve as a sublimation of infantile sexual curiosity, as Freud argues in the case of Leonardo da Vinci—this is, of course, the standard picture of sublimation.⁸⁵ But strenuous mental exertions can also give rise to collateral excitations that may later provoke sexual manifestations. Thinking is not only an activity that can be invested by the sexual drives, it can also serve as an autonomous source of sexual tensions. For a philosopher, sex is a sublimation of intellectual labor, not the other way around.

PLEASURE AND SUBLIMATION

One of the key places where Freud grapples with the problem of the positive nature of pleasure is the theory of sublimation. Sublimation is a bridge concept, linking the sexual drives and their search for satisfaction, on the one hand, with the activities belonging to the cultural forms of science, art, and religion on the other. Freud’s audacity and theoretical ingenuity consists in having brought together, in true modernist fashion, the “highest” and “lowest”: mankind’s loftiest pursuits and achievements are fundamentally rooted in and transformations of his most idiotic infantile impulses. This assertion of the identity (or interrelation) of opposites must be understood in a double sense. On the one hand, *the highest is at the same time the lowest*: Freud draws attention to the structural similarities between sublimated cultural activities and the symptoms of mental illness—religion with the compulsive rituals of the obsessional neurotic, philosophical theories with paranoid systems, art with infantile sexual fantasies, etc.—and asks us to consider the former as highly refined “pathologies,” no longer purely individual but collective ways of dealing with traumas, the disappointments of reality, and the impasses of drive-life. On the other, *the lowest already contains the highest*: at one point in Plato’s *Parmenides* the embarrassing question arises as to whether shit (“vile and paltry” things like “hair, mud and dirt”) has its complement in the realm of

the Forms (130c). It is tempting to say that it was not until psychoanalysis that shit received its properly transcendental signification, as an object that, precisely as waste, is capable of organizing a person's entire "being in the world."

One of Freud's major difficulties was describing the specific kind of pleasure afforded by sublimation. In a relatively optimistic passage from *Civilization and Its Discontents*, Freud writes that sublimated pleasure, "such as an artist's joy in creating, in giving his phantasies body, or a scientist's in solving problems or discovering truths, has a special quality which we shall certainly one day be able to characterize in metapsychological terms."⁸⁴ In what does this special quality consist? "At present we can only say figuratively that such satisfactions seem 'finer and higher.' But," Freud adds, "their intensity is mild as compared with that derived from the sating of crude and primary instinctual impulses; it does not convulse our physical being."⁸⁵ Here Freud touches on exactly the same difficulty as that of Plato when he sought to distinguish the pure or true pleasures from the false or mixed ones. The joy in philosophical contemplation, as well as the aesthetic appreciation of pure colors and geometrical shapes, agreeable scents, and "smooth and bright" sounds (*Philebus* 51d), pose a serious problem for Plato's theory, since they do not seem to involve a filling of a lack, nor are they mixed with pain. How to square the existence of such uncontaminated joys with the general definition of pleasure? Plato has a beautiful formula for describing the nature of true pleasure: the filling of a lack that was never felt as such. The true pleasures share the same underlying structure as the mixed or false ones, but without the preceding sensation of a lack. As Plato explains, they consist of "all those based on imperceptible and painless lacks, while their fulfillments are perceptible and pleasant" (51b). (This raises the fascinating possibility of a negative Leibnizianism: not *petites perceptions* but *petites manques*, a metaphysics of little lacks and imperceptible voids—why should the nothing be any less supple and variegated than being?) A true pleasure is one that fills the soul without it ever being aware that it was previously missing something; it is a cure for a pain that was never felt, a balm for a wound we never knew we suffered. This is the gracefulness of true pleasure, to reveal to us our lack only at the moment of fulfilling it. Now, this remarkable theory may be read in two different ways. On the one hand, it confirms Plato's view of the inherently flawed character of mortal existence. Even the purest pleasures are not untouched by human finitude. They contain a reference to lack, though unperceived, and ultimately serve as a kind of remedy for mankind's deficient and corruptible nature. Indeed, one could say that the theory of imperceptible lack makes this nature even worse: the mortal condition is so corrupt that it is lacking even when nothing appears to be amiss. A perfect existence would be one bereft of pleasures and pains altogether, the neutral life of the gods. This would seem to be Plato's official position. On the other hand, we can raise the question: was the lack

really there prior to its filling? Or is it something that is supposed after the fact, *post festum*? What if the lack were a retrospective creation which served to explain and “ontologically” justify the uncanny experience of a joy that was neither sought after nor expected? This is the special quality of sublimated pleasure, its unique existential and temporal logic: it takes the form of a surplus that is not “wanted”—no preceding desire corresponds to its arrival—yet is nevertheless enjoyed. It is like an answer without a question, to turn around the old philosophical cliché of the question without an answer. Far more challenging than the mysterious question that calls for endless comment and investigation—as Blanchot said, *la réponse est le malheur de la question*, the only thing that can make a philosopher sad is finding an answer, for that would spell the end of his thought—is the wayward answer in search of a question, an answer that forces a new question precisely because it does not quite fit into any previously existing ones, or maybe even an answer that does not need a question at all.⁸⁶ The strangeness of this experience is such that one tends to resolve its incongruity by reinscribing it into the standard logic of lack and fulfillment. What is found turns out to be what one had been looking for all along. This fantasy of a predestined match is precisely a retroactive illusion, a domestication of the oddness of the initial encounter, the fateful meeting of an unwanted satisfaction with an imperceptible desire. The sublime moment is balanced on this precarious edge, this mismatch between the object and the void, prior to the (false) moment of recognition, the realization that “this is what I’d been searching for all along.”

We can return here to what we called the central difficulty in Freud’s conceptualization of Lust, the problem of its speculative sense. At first one could say that Freud’s inability to properly synthesize the two dimensions of Lust, desire and satisfaction, points to a real theoretical weakness, of which Freud himself repeatedly complained. Yet does not this failure ultimately bear witness to one of the great insights of psychoanalysis, namely the fundamental disjunction between the two terms? This may be considered one of the strangest and most profound discoveries of psychoanalysis: that desire goes one way, and satisfaction another.⁸⁷ What we want and what we enjoy are never exactly the same, they never precisely coincide; we want something other than what we enjoy, and we enjoy something other than what we thought we wanted. On the one hand, human existence is riven by libidinal conflicts, frustrated by reality, and blocked by the imperatives of culture: unpleasure is what impels the psyche, and satisfaction is but a fleeting relief in the larger current of pain and suffering. This is what is typically referred to as Freud’s tragic outlook: human desire is doomed to dissatisfaction, and the search for pleasure is fraught with insurmountable obstacles. On the other hand, psychoanalysis effects an unheard-of extension of the notion of pleasure, uncovering furtive and unsuspected satisfactions precisely where they

would seem to be most absent. From the slips and bungled actions of everyday life to the catastrophic symptoms of mental illness, the pleasure principle seems to be everywhere at work. Instead of satisfaction being impossible to attain, the opposite conclusion imposes itself: pleasure is impossible to avoid. Now normally this predicament is the cause of unhappiness, even a double unhappiness: not only am I frustrated and my desire is unsatisfied, but there is an awkward “enjoyment” harassing me that I can’t get rid of. Sublimation offers the possibility not of overcoming this disjunction, but of turning it into a source of pleasure. Plato has an excellent term for this: *alēthēs hēdonē*, true pleasure. Though he restricts his notion of true pleasure to an objective domain of “really” pleasing objects (geometrical shapes, certain harmonies, correct knowledge, etc.), we can abstract from this imaginary delimitation a more general structure. It is not any particular content that defines the field of sublimation, but rather the specific form of a split between desire and satisfaction, nonbeing and extra-being, and it is in this split that the truth of pleasure resides. Sublimation does not make good the subject’s lack; it leaves it where it is, but adds something extra on the side. To a lack that can never be filled there corresponds a surplus joy which answers to no preceding want. True pleasure is situated in this gap, in the “harmonious disharmony” that links together these irreconcilable dimensions.⁸⁸

THE LETHARGY OF BEING

Finally, we can also take seriously Freud’s much-maligned portrait of a lethargic psyche, which, far from bathing in autoerotic enjoyment, is only grudgingly roused to action by the pricks and blows of noxious stimuli. Despite the plurality of senses of pleasure in his work, Freud clearly favored one model of the mind above others. According to this model, the psyche is essentially a complex tension management device. The mind is an apparatus for processing and eliminating internal and external stimuli governed by the “unpleasure principle,” where pleasure is nothing but a by-product of tension reduction, which is the system’s overarching goal. Life reacts, it does not act, and it does so in order to ward off the pain of living. Everything the mind does is thus a matter of defense, and all activity is at bottom a defense mechanism. But what is being defended? “The direct, lawful, immediate fruit of consciousness is inertia,” writes Dostoevsky, “consciousness sitting with folded arms.”⁸⁹ Human being is lazy being, and movement as such is a grudging departure from its “normal” state of lethargy. It does not eat, heat, shit, and fuck; it stays in bed. Or, to cite Lacan’s gloss on Freud’s drive theory, “All that life is concerned with is seeking repose as much as possible while awaiting death.”⁹⁰

According to the usual image of Freud’s second topography, the id is pictured as a cauldron of unruly forces threatening to burst out and cause all sorts of mayhem and chaos; the superego is the agent of moral conscience,

the censor charged with controlling the wild impulses of the id, yet whose law enforcement duties can themselves take on an obscene id-like dimension; and the ego is the reasonable compromiser trying to adapt to the demands of reality while mollifying the id with a measured dose of satisfaction. What if we were to reverse this picture, so that the profound desire of the id is to sleep, and it is the superego that constantly harasses and presses for frenetic activity, with the ego caught in the middle doing its best to curb the superego's ferocious enthusiasm (and thus bring itself closer in line with the drowsy id)? According to this "supereogic vitalism" Eros is not a free circulation of pleasure-drives but, at its most fundamental, a commandment and a duty. Culture does not consist primarily in the education of an underlying liveliness and flourishing, the perfecting of the human being's natural aptitudes and energies, but neither is it about the necessity of repression and the ineradicable conflicts and discontents this entails. What culture is, in the first place, is a stream of implicit and explicit commands to "Wake up!," keep on living, working, producing, consuming, copulating, loving, and enjoying: without this massive external life support system, the mind would simply turn to inert sludge. Again, there is no spontaneity to mental life, the impetus for living must come from the outside—a better image for the primal act of culture is not the rambunctious child being disciplined by his parents but the butler coming to stir Oblomov from his bed. The ideal of culture is neither education nor discipline, but resuscitation.

Here we can return to the question raised earlier in our exposition of the Freudian theory of pleasure: What keeps the organism alive? Why are we living? As we have seen, there are a number of possible answers to this question, and each one involves its own way of knotting together the different senses of pleasure. Freud believed that it was the pressure of needs that compelled the survival of the organism; such is his hard vital realism. The satisfaction of needs, however, quickly spins off to another pleasure, which pursues its own path independent of the circumstances that gave rise to it (Freud's name for this deviation is "sexuality"). For Aristotle, on the contrary, living is an *energeia* perfected by its proper pleasure. This pleasure is not derived from another source but is the basic expression of "being" in the active sense of the term. Freud seems to move a bit in this direction if we make the argument that the surplus erotic pleasure of the drives, the body's polymorphous perversity, is necessary to support the vital functions that it leans on; yet the theory of autoerotism never leads him so far as to dethrone the supremacy of vital needs. Nietzsche denies the primacy of needs outright: self-preservation is a by-product of the striving of the will, which is only interested in expanding and strengthening its power through overcoming obstacles and resistances. We only ever incidentally preserve ourselves. Deleuze also views need as a secondary formation, while criticizing Freud for his meager conception of

tension-reducing pleasure. If the pleasure principle is able to govern psychic life, it is only because the psyche is already borne by a prolific impersonal pleasure, the autocontemplations of thousands of little egos, a supple weave of repeated connections and conjunctions. The body is composed of a multiplicity of micro-powers. More fundamental than need is the contemplation and expiration of these countless souls, the primordial beat of contraction and fatigue. In the preface to the English edition of *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, Deleuze writes: “We are habits, nothing but habits—the habit of saying ‘I.’ Perhaps, there is no more striking answer to the problem of the Self.”⁹¹ And perhaps there is no better answer to the problem of life, which is essentially a matter of habit, the repetition of certain regular patterns and rhythms. And at the heart of this habitual existence there is something like the lazy id, the feeling that life is nothing but a chore and a drudgery and a burden, and cannot go on, yet does not stop doing so. But habit is a poor form of life. To really be alive it is necessary that the habits which sustain life down to its tiniest imperceptible foundations break down, that a crisis (a desire) forces the body to lose its dull clichéd vitality in order to produce a new arrangement of its forces, to discover afresh what it can do and from which affections it can suffer. This loss of habitual orientation points and exposure to chaos is how Deleuze reconceives the Freudian death drive, as the power of unbinding—not the opposite of life and Eros (the return to the inorganic), but their extreme point and highest condition, what is most alive and unlivable at the same time.

There is another way to conceive this problem, in line with our rough typology of the different regimes of culture and the vitalism of the superego. In this case, enjoyment is not, in the first place, a matter of the energy of the drives, whether excessive or lacking, too much or too little, or of the dynamic interrelation between the different forms of pleasure (end-pleasure, organ-pleasure, forepleasure, pleasure-in-movement). Life is, rather, dependent on a symbolic framework that hedonically orients the psyche and instructs it how to enjoy and, even further, commands it to do so. What binds the different forms of pleasure together is inseparable from the “life support system” of culture, the system of imperatives coming from the Other (even on the most rudimentary level, like a mother telling her child to “Eat!”), so that enjoyment is profoundly interwoven with the problem of situating oneself vis-à-vis this authority, with all the confusions, ambivalences, and fantasies this entails. To put it otherwise: life does not come naturally to the psyche, it does not automatically flow from the inside, but the child must be seduced, cajoled, and commanded into living. Psychic life is not a spontaneous *energeia* but is sustained by a “normative pressure.”⁹² Living is a duty, a social imperative, the most basic imperative of all imperatives, implied and transmitted in the chain of signifiers whose nature is imperative. But this never goes off without a hitch, and it is this tripping up of the injunction “to be,” or the gap

in the relationship between “instincts and institutions,” which we shall have to examine next. But for now, we can return to our typology of cultural logics. If life in the Aristotelian sense is an active flourishing, embellished and augmented by culture, in a disciplinary regime the encounter between the bodily drives and civilization necessarily involves violence, repression, sacrifice, and loss. The Aristotelian idea of culture lives on in the positive sense of discipline, as submission to an external regime which expands and perfects the body’s capabilities, even to the point where these exceed any technical expertise. But this is not the primary meaning of culture in modernity, which instead manifests itself in discontent and libidinal misery—the testimony of the neurotic. Sometimes it is said that we are living in a postdisciplinary society, where social control is exerted not so much through prohibitions and symbolic authorities as through positive inducements to the libido and injunctions to enjoy. If anything, this idea of a “society of enjoyment” promotes even more strongly a naturalization of *jouissance*: the bodily drives have become our fundamental reality, erratic but indubitable. The message is that we are at home in our bodies and the body is our home; this identification with the drives is a way of conjuring our exile. But the underside of this compulsory enjoyment is a lack of drive or the lethargy of being, which Freud somehow saw as the truth of the psyche’s dysfunctional libidinal economy. From the perspective of our restyled Freudian topography, it is not the partial drives but the ego which becomes the site of resistance to the cultural imposition of life or superegoic vitalism: it refuses to completely go along with the ideological imperative to live, aligning itself, if only marginally, with the Oblomovesque bedridden id.

CHAPTER 4

TO HAVE DONE WITH LACK

THE ARTIST AND THE PANTHER

Kafka's story "A Hunger Artist" recounts the fate of a unique kind of performance artist, a "specialist in the art of fasting." It is said that fasting came easily to this showman, since he couldn't find any food to his liking. Once a popular attraction, the hunger artist ends his days in a sad circus cage, unrecognized and unloved; he is finally replaced by his seeming opposite, a fearsome panther who is the very image of health and power. "The panther was all right. The food he liked was brought to him without hesitation by the attendants; he seemed not even to miss his freedom; his noble body, furnished almost to the bursting point with all that it needed, seemed to carry freedom around with it too; somewhere in the jaws it seemed to lurk; and the joy of life streamed with such ardent passion from his throat that for the onlookers it was not easy to stand the shock of it. But they braced themselves, crowded around the cage, and did not want ever to move away."¹ Does not the contrast between the miserable hunger artist and the noble panther exemplify, in an ironic way, the divide between Lacan and Deleuze? While the hunger artist is a living embodiment of the lack of desire, a witness to impossibility of *jouissance* and the futile quest for the unattainable lost object—"no food will ever satisfy the oral drive, except by turning around the eternally lacking object"²—the panther stands for desire's overflowing exuberance, its "profound and almost unlivable Power."³ And in the end, it is the panther who fascinates while the emaciated artist is doomed to wither away, becoming the pure lack that he seeks.

The animal vitalism that concludes Kafka's tale recalls a relatively neglected passage from Freud's "On Narcissism: An Introduction." Narcissism is typically understood in terms of the drives' investment of the image of the ego, a love of self made possible through the mediation of idealized representations, in the first place the projected image of the surface of the body. But for Freud

this was only one of the possible meanings of the term. He also speaks of narcissism as an “unassailable libidinal condition,” a kind of invincibility or self-sufficiency that is manifest in particular by young children, animals like cats and beasts of prey, great criminals, and beautiful women.

The charm of a child lies to a great extent in his narcissism, his self-contentment and inaccessibility, just as does the charm of certain animals which seem not to concern themselves about us, such as cats and the large beasts of prey. Indeed, even great criminals and humorists, as they are represented in literature, compel our interest by the narcissistic consistency with which they manage to keep away from their ego anything that would diminish it. It is as if we envied them for maintaining a blissful state of mind—an unassailable libidinal condition which we ourselves have since abandoned. The great charm of narcissistic women has, however, its reverse side; a large part of the lover’s dissatisfaction, of his doubts of the woman’s love, of his complaints of her enigmatic nature, has its roots in this incongruity between types of object-choice.⁴

Let us develop this description. The elements that Freud highlights are lack of concern for others, self-contentment, impenetrability, and force of attraction or charm. Now these qualities are not those typically associated with the ego, which would be just the opposite: a hyperattentiveness to the reactions of others, self-division, gregariousness, and the desire to seduce or be loved. Instead of egotism, narcissism means perfection. Rather than a reflexive self-estimation, always sensitive to and dependent on the love and approval of others, what Freud emphasizes here is a libidinal élan, an unconscious confidence or force (“mojo”) that is indifferent to recognition because it “carries its freedom around with itself;” it needs no external perspective in order to affirm its existence. This untouchable inwardness creates an aura of attraction and mystery, as if the radical narcissist were completely self-absorbed and self-sufficient, and thus floating above the regular dialectical commerce of the world. The spectacle of such power can arouse admiration and fascination, but it can also provoke envy, a desire to possess that “blissful state of mind” which we, as Freud writes, “have since abandoned.” In this case, the other’s narcissistic perfection evokes feelings of inadequacy and loss. The panther’s freedom, the criminal’s verve, and the baby’s bliss recall an enjoyment that “we”—properly neurotic, divided subjects—have renounced in order to take our place in the social world defined by limits and prohibitions. Dissatisfaction is the driving principle of our lives, while it incarnates an immediacy and a vibrancy untouched by the usual constraints. Is this not a neurotic fantasy par excellence? Indeed, we might suspect that the image of self-contentment presented here is nothing but an illusion, a projection onto the other of our libidinal ideal and a denial of its own lack. Yet, to paraphrase the old line

about the paranoiac: “just because you’re neurotic doesn’t mean the other is not uncastrated.” From a neurotic perspective, informed by the dialectic of law and transgression, such untrammelled enjoyment can only appear as a fantastic “state of exception,” literally out-law. But the question is: why should we privilege this perspective? Why not, instead of dreaming about this exception with a mixture of fear and fascination, nostalgia and regret, become the real exception?

“There is nothing more living, I tell you, than the Louvre abandoned to itself at night,” Pierre Klossowski writes in his philosophical novel *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, and he goes on to extoll “the supreme pleasure of the work shining its radiance into space and recovering its own radiance therefrom.”⁵ In this surreal praise of artistic masterpieces, the enjoyment of the artwork must be understood in the sense of the objective genitive: it is the work that enjoys, not the spectator, who rather becomes the fascinated witness of its enchanted self-sufficiency. Here we have the beginnings of a nonrelational aesthetics. Like Kafka’s jungle cat, the artwork needs nothing, it makes no appeal, it is not “dialogical.” The painting in the Louvre and the panther in his cage present another kind of narcissism; not a social narcissism but an antisocial one, not a narcissism that depends on the Other but one that is radically separated from it. Narcissism in this sense is no longer a matter of mental representations, the delighted contemplation of one’s mirror reflection, but, rather, what could be called the narcissism of the drive that is not conscious of itself and, for that reason, radiates an even greater force. I use the notion “unconscious” here in the descriptive sense, not a dynamic one; it is not a question of repression, but a lack of reflection or mediation. This may be contrasted with the standard approach of Lacan, for whom egological narcissism involves a dual, or rather triadic, structure. The ego achieves its identity only outside itself, through the intermediary of an imaginary double which is itself framed and supported by a point of symbolic identification: I see myself as a loveable object (ideal ego) through the perspective of a desired third (ego ideal).⁶ The symbolic determinants of the subject must thus be distinguished from the imaginary coherence of the ego, for the place from where the subject desires is always extrinsic to the images that provide it with a substantial identity. Now, in contrast to this complex intra- and intersubjective ballet, the narcissism of the drive is immediate and non-representational. It does not involve the distancing inherent to images and representations, but is the direct expression of an inner force, the aura of *jouissance*. It is, following Freud’s examples, the daring of a master criminal’s exploits, the invincibility of a “poet of evil” like Balzac’s *Vautrin* or one of Orson Welles’s larger-than-life villains whose sheer exuberance suspends our usual moral judgments; or the vivacity of the baby animated by an “obstinate, stubborn, and indomitable will to live”⁷ that is all the more potent for not yet

being chained to a personal ego; or the radiant beauty of a woman who is not anxiously vain about her appearance but filled with a natural grace and confidence—this innocent beauty, precisely because it lacks psychological depth, can have something cold and diabolical about it. If the cat is the privileged animal representative of this narcissistic sufficiency, it is because—unlike the trainable dog, who is in this sense much closer to the dialectic of culture—its wildness and predator instinct prevent it from being fully absorbed into the human world: a cat remains an aloof and undialectical creature no matter how domesticated it may be (compare with Deleuze’s comments on the dog’s bow-wow as the stupidest cry of the animal kingdom). All these various figures incarnate that nondialectical sovereignty which Deleuze describes as its only true and affirmative form: the mastery of a power that is not defined by opposition and negation but goes its own way, coolly indifferent to any external viewpoint including that of one’s own self. While the narcissism of self-love is essentially a social affair—“I always wanted you to admire my fast-ing,” avows the hunger artist on the point of dying—the narcissism of the drive is solitary and detached from the circuit of identification. The only way to really be a master is not to care if one is.⁸

We find the ultimate philosophical example of this drive-narcissism in Aristotle’s theology, an example that is especially interesting due to its immense prestige in the history of philosophy. In a passage from *Metaphysics* Λ Aristotle defines God, the prime mover of the cosmos, as the mind whose “thinking is a thinking of thinking” (1074b34). Since pleasure consists in the perfection of activity (*energeia*), and the divine mind is eternally in act thinking the highest and most perfect thought (namely itself), God could also be described as pure enjoying substance. “God always enjoys a single and simple pleasure” (NE 1154b26), the joy of “the thought which has itself for its object” (*Metaphysics* 1075a10). Here we seem to have a case of philosophical narcissism at its purest: the thinker has made God in his own blissful image. But more interesting than the philosopher finding his ideal reflection at the center of the cosmos is the strange case of narcissism of this Philosopher-God itself. How exactly does this deity move the universe? Not through any direct effort or design, but rather through the power of attraction. It moves as the object of desire moves, i.e., it moves without moving, it sets the stars into orbit and sublunar beings along their courses simply by being what is. God is not the efficient but the final cause of motion, the “final” final cause for the sake of which all other things achieve their essences. Let us venture an unorthodox interpretation of this classic teleological scheme. What if it were the thinking thought’s fully energized and “unassailable libidinal condition” that exerted an irresistible magnetism on all lesser beings, drawing them toward it like the circus-goers glued to the spectacle of the panther? Maybe the sublunar beings can also hardly withstand the shock of it, yet, bracing themselves, they never

wish to pull away. In this surreal cosmic vision, all lesser entities, in seeking their own perfection, strive to imitate this fully actualized deity who is nevertheless totally wrapped up in its own supreme enjoyment—like the panther in the cage or the painting in the Louvre, the prime mover exerts a power of fascination by its very narcissistic withdrawal. I am, of course, exaggerating and dramatizing the distance between the divine thought and the rest of the cosmos, even neuroticizing it—as if finite beings were set into motion by an absolute enjoyment that is closed to them, condemned to bear a tension toward an indifferent and inaccessible Good. It might seem a peculiar theology where God is isolated from all lesser creatures in a cocoon of autocontemplation, and commentators have often derided just such a narcissistic interpretation of Aristotle’s prime mover. As one critic once put it, “Are we really to be left with a divinity that is no more than a self-gnawing mouth?”⁹ Yet even a more generous and textually circumspect reading must still admit that the issue of how God’s thinking is related to the mundane world is far from obvious. Indeed, the disjunction between the two has historically posed a real problem for interpreters, so that whatever the “correct” interpretation may be—does God know the sublunar universe, or only itself? and if it knows only itself, what, then, does it know?—much of the subsequent reception of Aristotelian theology can be read as a long, piecemeal attempt to heal the gap between God and world, as if his readers were disturbed by a possibility that they held to be impossible and absurd.¹⁰ This process culminates with Hegel, who famously saw in Aristotle’s self-thinking thought the precursor of his own conception of absolute thinking; at the end of the *Encyclopedia* he quotes a long passage on the divine mind from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, leaving it untranslated and uncommented at the summit of his system. With Hegel, divine autocontemplation becomes the self-understanding of Spirit achieved through the dialectical movement of its various shapes: substance becomes subject. Yet we can also take seriously the maligned radical narcissist God, and read Aristotle in the “absurd” way. For a Freudian, the self-thinking thought cannot help but recall the exquisite line in the *Three Essays* about the passion of autoerotism: “It’s a pity I can’t kiss myself,” Freud writes in describing the circular logic of the oral drive, which turns around itself yet without quite being able to close its circuit.¹¹ Autocontemplation (or, less prudishly, intellectual masturbation) is the original form of the drive, or rather, the way philosophy conceives of itself as drive. And if the drive, according to Freud, is characterized by a minimal gap, by its inability to close its loop, then perhaps this is the best definition of the soul: the gap, the interruption, the displacement, the crack that trips up the smooth circuit of thought—that which cannot be thought and which forces one to think. “It’s a pity I can’t think myself”: is this not the basic formula of the unconscious, what it means to be a divided subject?

Here we can return to our argument from the previous chapter, regarding the chiasmus of pleasure and theory, the philosophical (or “hedontological”) thesis that the theory of pleasure finds its truth in the pleasure of theory. Now it acquires a decisive new twist: in order to understand the structure of the noetic drive it must be grasped according to a twofold dynamic, a dynamic in which lack and force are not simply opposed but thought together. On the one hand, there is the impossibility of thought to think itself, an inertness or stupor at the very heart of thought—a void where thought does not think, and therefore cannot enjoy. And on the other, we are confronted by the drive’s unprecedented force, a thought that thinks itself so well that, in its unassailable narcissism, it is sovereignly detached from other mental processes and contents.

COMPATIBLE SYMPTOMS

But perhaps these examples, the panther and the criminal, the painting and the God, still remain too caught up in the neurotic imagination, too grandiose and dignified, too Other, not mad enough. We need to shift perspectives. There is an anti-Kantian joke where the loyal servant of the Law indignantly asks the delinquent: “Do you think you’re an exception?” To which the “exception” replies: “I think that everyone is an exception, but only the exceptions know it.” Though the prior examples are extraordinary figures, rare standouts in the crowd, the lesson they provide may be generalized or democratized: all subjects are the bearers of certain uncommon elements, their own “self-thinking thoughts,” which both belong to them and desubjectivize them, which cling to their individuality yet cannot be absorbed by their egos. If one could imagine these stray elements somehow collected together, we would have, in contrast to the Law’s scheme of vertical transcendence, a horizontal plane of immanence populated entirely by “exceptions”—something like, to vary the old Groucho Marx joke, a club of members who would never belong to a club that would have them as members. This shift will be key to the Deleuzian clinic: while neurosis is structured around a central transcendent instance, the fantasmatic exception that proves the rule, the schizophrenic universe is dissolved into a multiplicity of impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities, real exceptions whose meeting point or “club” would be a body without organs. It is this idea of a paradoxical meeting that I would now like to explore further. As we have seen, the real exceptions—or *objets a*, to make a leap into Lacan’s vocabulary—are characterized by their sovereign aloofness and isolation, their profoundly asocial narcissism. Yet despite this isolation they may nevertheless enter into a kind of oblique communication. Underneath and beyond the intersubjectivity of speaking subjects, there are the resonances and fortuitous encounters of these solitary partial objects. Instead of the dialectics of intersubjectivity,

we have a nondialectics of *interobjectivity*, intersecting monologues between isolated desert islands. In his book on Proust, Deleuze speaks of a system of indirect communication between “sealed vessels,”¹² and in *Anti-Oedipus* of “hermetically sealed boxes, noncommunicating vessels, watertight compartments” that enter into “aberrant communication,” the “connections of partial objects and flows”¹³ (an idea that Deleuze and Guattari also take from Serge Leclaire, the molecular elements of the unconscious defined by their “absence of link”). This togetherness in aloneness, or “populous solitude,”¹⁴ is crucial to Deleuze’s vision of a world without lack and without others; or rather, a world where others figure not as other subjects, with their claims of recognition and identity, but as “otherwise others,” drifting partial objects.

Let us consider one case in order to render this potentially obscure idea of “interobjectivity” more concrete: love. If we consult the work of Freud, despite the fact that it is a near-ubiquitous topic throughout his case studies and theoretical writings, nowhere are we presented with a straightforward definition of love. Instead Freud analyzes the phenomenon according to the way it appears in different mental illnesses, as if the true meaning of love were revealed only through the pathologies to which it is prey. This pathological optic constitutes the strength of Freud’s approach which, unlike that of most philosophers who start from a single definition, allows us to grasp the multiform nature of the phenomenon precisely through its fissures and weak points, the myriad ways in which it breaks down. Thus perversion poses the question of “love and suffering” (how love awakens masochism as an almost automatic by-product of the valorization of the love object, a willingness to suffer for the beloved; conversely, perversion consists in the elevation of suffering to a necessary condition for love); hysteria that of “love and sexuality” (the tenderness of love and the violence of sexuality never completely fall together; this divide is posed in a dramatic fashion in hysteria, where feelings of romantic longing go together with sexual disgust, the impossibility of expressing love on a bodily level); obsessional neurosis “love and hate” (the obsessional suffers from an exaggerated emotional ambivalence that is a normal aspect of psychic life: love hides and represses a more primitive hatred, which comprises our original attitude toward the resistance and recalcitrance that is the outside world); and psychosis “love and madness” (Freud writes that the state of being-in-love is the “normal prototype” of the psychoses in its loss of ego boundaries and disinvestment of everything but the exalted object—if a normal-neurotic person wants to have some sense of what it’s like to be psychotic, just try falling madly in love). The closest Freud comes to a general definition is in “Instinct and Their Vicissitudes,” where he distinguishes the attitude of love from that of the partial drives: “We might at a pinch say of an instinct that it ‘loves’ the objects towards which it strives for purposes of satisfaction; but to say that an instinct ‘hates’ an object strikes

us as odd. Thus we become aware that the attitudes of love and hate cannot be made use of for the relations of instincts to their objects, but are reserved for the relations of the *total ego* to objects.”¹⁵ In other words, I love but it does not love; love supposes a unification of the psyche around a “total ego” that then attaches itself to objects. To the list of essential dimensions we have outlined—suffering, sexuality, hatred, and madness—we must therefore add a fifth term: “love and selfhood.” The topic of love in Freud is closely connected with that of narcissism, and although his attention is not focused on theological and philosophical problems, his notion of love as an aggrandizement of the ego raises the question of whether a “true” or “pure” love for the other is possible, a love that would not be reducible to love of self. What would it mean to really love the other, beyond the image that he or she reflects to you?¹⁶

There is another way of approaching this question, or rather, of sidestepping it. For Freud, love concerns the “total ego.” But need this be the case? What if we were to turn around Freud’s idea, so that it is not I but it that loves? Despite his official stance, this would actually be an authentically Freudian definition of love: Love is a matter of mutually compatible symptoms. That is to say, what constitutes the substance of the amorous relation is the different modes of enjoyment, tics, styles, patterns, and ex-centric ways of being of the partners, and not the persons *per se*. One could even say that, viewed from this perspective, the persons become superfluous: they are appendages to their symptoms. Normally the symptom is understood as a complex of behaviors and thoughts which “sticks out” from a person; it is something that disturbs the integrity of a person’s life, yet is somehow essential to his or her being in the world. The ego is forced to lug around its symptom as if it were some unwieldy baggage, with the proviso that if the baggage were to be dropped the porter, too, would disappear. In the case of love there occurs a kind of magical reversal, the load is suddenly lightened: it’s now the persons who are toted by their symptoms. This is not exactly a resolution to the problem of narcissism on the egological level, what is at stake is not a “pure love” of the other, but rather the substitution of one kind of narcissism for another. Instead of a dialogue, motivated by the desire for true exchange and true understanding—which, of course, produces above all its opposite—love is a matter of intersecting monologues. From the gregarious self-love of the ego we arrive at the radical solitude of interconnecting partial objects. One of Lacan’s famous expressions is “in you more than you,” meant to designate the ex-centric character of the libidinal object. The full phrase reads: “I love you, but, because inexplicably I love in you something more than you—the *objet petit a*—I mutilate you.”¹⁷ This is the Sadeian horizon of a love which seeks a fusional incorporation with what is most other in the other. But what if it was not an I who loves, but an it, so that the partners were both decentered

objects following their own separate circuits? *What is in me more than me loves what is in you more than you*—an awkward declaration, no doubt, but in this love what is at stake is precisely not a declaration, a symbolic pact or commitment, but rather the felicitous crossing of different symptomatic formations and partial objects, the subterranean communication of one unconscious with another.¹⁸

“Loving those who are like this: when they enter a room they are not persons, characters or subjects, but an atmospheric variation, a change of hue, an imperceptible molecule, a discrete population, a fog or a cloud of droplets.”¹⁹ This is Deleuze’s description of a depersonalized love, of a love that is not that of a “total ego” but one which takes place between “impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities.” “What does it mean to love somebody? It is always to seize that person in a mass, extract him or her from a group, however small, in which he or she participates, whether it be through the family only or through something else; then to find that person’s own packs, the multiplicities he or she encloses within himself or herself which may be of an entirely different nature. To join them to mine, to make them penetrate mine, and for me to penetrate the other person’s. Heavenly nuptials, multiplicities of multiplicities.”²⁰ To translate this back into a more Freudian parlance: we are dealing here with an id-love, or a love between mutually compatible symptoms. This can and does operate alongside other aspects of the love relation, the drama of narcissistic fulfillment and jealousy (here Sartre said it best: the joy of love consists in feeling justified in existence), and the symbolic framework of declarations and obligations. In fact, every love relation could be analyzed along these three vectors: imaginary completeness, symbolic fidelity, and real modes of enjoyment. While none of them is necessarily dominant, at any given time one is always playing a structuring role: from the perspective of the imaginary, spoken commitments and attractive styles are fuel for the ego’s self-estimation, part of what makes life “meaningful”; for the symbolic it is the given word that dominates over the fluctuating current of passions and emotions (this is the logic of marriage, whose purest declaration would be “I don’t want to be happy, I just want to be with you”); and as for the symptoms, it is the interobjective relation that subordinates everything else to its clandestine connections and libidinal sparks. In other words, the imaginary, symbolic, and real are not separate registers, but are always knotted together from the perspective of one of the three. Deleuze’s point is different, more strict. He presents id-love as a radical ascesis, where imaginary and symbolic identifications are stripped away in order to release the pre-personal particles and singularities otherwise trapped in the other. *Where the other was, there the object shall be.* True love means to encounter the other not in the depths of her personality, nor in the possible worlds she incarnates, but in her *jouissance*. And the wager is that this subjective destitution can be the basis for constructing a new kind of

relation, not a dehumanized one but what we might call a “nonhuman” one. Like a meteorological love: two storms crossing. Or, in Deleuze and Guattari’s more psychedelic language: “Only in the black hole of subjective consciousness and passion do you discover the transformed, heated, captured particles you must relaunch for a nonsubjective, living love in which each party connects with unknown tracts in the other without entering or conquering them, in which the lines composed are broken lines.”²¹ We should note, however, that Deleuze is not perfectly consistent on this score. In at least one later text he slips back to the old Freudian position that love is an affair of persons, the domain of the “total ego”: the better word to designate the tangled bond between impersonal singularities and mutually compatible symptoms is not love but “passion, pure passion.”²²

COURTLY LOVE, OR THE THING

It is another kind of love that for both Deleuze and Lacan illustrates the nature of desire through its very artificial and artistic character: courtly love. The philosopher most closely associated with this particular form of Eros is no doubt Friedrich Nietzsche, whose notion of philosophy as a “gay science” consciously echoes the poetic spirit of the twelfth-century troubadours. “This makes it clear without further ado why love as passion—it is our European specialty—absolutely must be of aristocratic origin: it was, as is well known, invented by the poet-knights of Provence, those splendid, inventive men of the ‘gai saber’ to whom Europe owes so much and, indeed, almost itself.”²³ For Nietzsche, courtly love is the expression par excellence of the aristocratic mode of valuation that knows how to esteem service and submission, as opposed to the gregarious will to universal equality, and delights in a useless passion against any idea of the utilitarian good. “The noble human being,” he writes, “enjoys practicing severity and harshness upon himself and feels reverence for all that is severe and harsh.”²⁴ And who could be a more cruel and exacting master than the Lady sung by the troubadours, “La belle dame sans merci”? Nietzsche’s lesson is that the invention of this idealized figure, with her torturous trials, arbitrary demands, and withheld satisfactions, was precisely a means to sharpen and vitalize the instincts. Courtly love consists in the cultivation and intensification of desire through a ritualized play of rules and service, and is not at all an anarchic joy or liberation from constraints. It is this notion of a self-imposed, active asceticism, a noble mode of cruelty as opposed to the merely passive suffering of punishments and frustrations—the torment of bad conscience—that is essential for Deleuze.

Deleuze’s reading of courtly love focuses on dispelling what he deems a fatal misinterpretation. Courtly love has nothing to do with the supposedly unattainable object of desire. The imposed tests and ordeals that postpone desire’s consummation are “not a method of deprivation” but “the

constitution of a field of immanence.”²⁵ “Ascesis,” Deleuze states, in line with Nietzsche, “has always been the condition of desire, not its disciplining or prohibition.”²⁶ The asceticism of courtly love, its severity and harshness, are means for provoking and intensifying desire—or, as Benjamin put it, “What is it that courtly Minne seeks ... if not to make chastity, too, a transport?”²⁷ Crucial here is the distinction Deleuze proposes between void and lack: “The plane of consistence or of immanence, the body without organs, includes voids and deserts. But these are ‘fully’ part of desire, far from accentuating some kind of lack in it. What a strange confusion—that of void with lack.”²⁸ If lack entails the transcendence of something missing, the void works rather as a kind of internal creative principle: not an absent or unreachable object, but the positive motor of desire. The sublime love object is the embodiment of this “full void.” In his late essay on masochism, Deleuze argues that the core of masochism consists in breaking the link between pleasure and desire: “pleasure interrupts desire, so that the constitution of desire as a process must ward off pleasure, repress it to infinity.”²⁹ Though the means and the historical context are different, this is equally the aim of courtly love: to produce a desire with no external goal, no end-pleasure. Or rather, it is not that pleasure needs to be “infinitely repressed,” but it must be made part of a wider movement.

“Joy” in courtly love, the exchange of hearts, the test or “assay”: everything is allowed, as long as it is not external to desire or transcendent to its plane, or else internal to persons. The slightest caress may be as strong as an orgasm; orgasm is a mere fact, a rather deplorable one, in relation to desire in pursuit of its principle. Everything is allowed: all that counts is for pleasure to be the flow of desire itself, Immanence, instead of a measure that interrupts it or delivers it to the three phantoms, namely, internal lack, higher transcendence, and apparent exteriority. If pleasure is not the norm of desire, it is not by virtue of a lack that is impossible to fill but, on the contrary, by virtue of its positivity, in other words, the plane of consistency it draws in the course of its process.³⁰

If courtly love, as we earlier described it, is the art of the amorous complaint, this should not be understood in the usual negative sense of the term. Far from being a ballad of eternal frustration, desire is positively assembled in and through the figure of the sovereign Lady.

This might seem like a clear case to draw the line between Deleuze and Lacan. For the one, courtly love provides an example of the immanent construction of desire; for the other, it is an illustration of desire’s infinite longing for an impossible *jouissance*—is not woman, for psychoanalysis, one of the names for the eternally lacking object? Yet on closer inspection, this neat opposition quickly falls apart. Lacan, too, emphasizes the positive pleasures of courtly love; its techniques, he writes, “belong to the sphere of foreplay,” the

enlivening tension of Freudian *Vorlust* that “persists in opposition to the purposes of the pleasure principle.”³¹ Freud once observed that “an obstacle is required in order to heighten libido; and where natural resistances to satisfaction have not been sufficient men have at all times erected conventional ones so as to be able to enjoy love.”³² Against the standard picture of the drives thwarted by prohibitions and frustrated by a recalcitrant reality, here Freud presents a more affirmative portrait of the libido as actively *creating* obstacles in order to enjoy its own power. There is no desire without resistance, no drive without an opposing force, no joy without pain—a fundamental Nietzschean insight that Lacan rephrases in a neatly paradoxical manner: “It is along the paths that appear to be contrary to enjoyment that enjoyment is obtained.”³³ Like Deleuze, Lacan maintains that courtly love consists in the creation of obstacles—“techniques of holding back, of suspension, of *amor interruptus*”³⁴—in order to vivify the drives. Moreover, Deleuze’s distinction between void and lack echoes Lacan’s own remark that there are “detours and obstacles which are organized so as to make the domain of the vacuole stand out as such.”³⁵ Lacan takes the term “vacuole” from biology, where it designates not a lack or deficiency but an enclosed emptiness, a bubble which is an integral part of the cell and its functioning. What Lacan calls the “domain of the vacuole” could easily be read as the Deleuzian void, positively productive of desire: if lack entails absence and loss, the void is fully part of the twists and turns that provoke and prolong desire. One of the meanings Lacan gives to the term sublimation is precisely that of providing the drive with a new enjoyment that breaks with the cycle of lack and fulfillment: the real aim of the drive is not the goal but the chase, and its putative “ends” are only pretexts for continuing and expanding its own movement.³⁶ Courtly love is a refined expression of this “pleasure of desiring.”³⁷

Despite this shared description of courtly love as a hymn to the difficult joy of desiring—Lacan cites Paul Éluard’s phrase *le dur désir de durer*—Lacan’s account differs from Deleuze’s in two significant respects. First, he argues that, unlike Eastern erotic practices, courtly love is not a “lived substance.”³⁸ Lacan would disagree with the comparison Deleuze makes between Taoist sex manuals and Languedoc love songs—while the latter are just as or even more explicit than the former (Lacan cites one particularly obscene poem), the difference is that whereas one is a practical erotic guide, the other is a story, a purely fictional creation.³⁹ Rather than being a bodily discipline or form of life, courtly love is a poetic artifice, a fiction composed and recited by players at least some of whom were, in the meanwhile, busy with more prosaic sexual affairs (Alexandra Kollontai put this very clearly: “The knight who would not be parted from the emblem of the lady of his heart, who composed poetry in her honor and risked his life to win her smile, would rape a girl of the urban classes without a second thought or order his steward

to bring him a beautiful peasant for his pleasure”).⁴⁰ What matters in courtly love is not sincerity but stylization, and its practitioners may be hypocritical in the extreme without diminishing the value or effectiveness of the poetry; it is the “idealizing cult of the feminine object” that has had a decisive impact on Western Eros.⁴¹ This brings us to the second point. Lacan’s attention to the fictive or symbolic character of courtly love leads him to concentrate on its portrayal of the Lady. Whereas Deleuze emphasizes the instinct, the craftiness of the drives to invent their own obstacles and resistances, Lacan focuses more on the object. If courtly love is a “paradigm of sublimation”⁴² for Lacan, this is due to the way it reveals something that is normally hidden or repressed about the object of desire. Lacan observes that in her hyperbolic elevation the Lady is emptied of individual qualities and characteristics, so that, oddly enough, all the lovers seem to be praising one and the same woman. She is an abstract, impersonal, and even “inhuman” figure, reigning over her partner’s desires in an imperious manner. Her lofty distance makes her insensitive and turned in on herself in spite of whatever favors she may grant. The Lady is an incarnation of what Lacan calls the “Thing.”

What is the Thing? Is it the lost object of desire? Is it the fullness of enjoyment that can never be reached? Another name for death? Though he does in another context identify the Thing with Freud’s lost object, the accent throughout this section is placed on the cold and unresponsive character of the Thing rather than its loss or absence. Lacan’s concept is highly evocative, and involves a number of philosophical associations: Kant’s *Ding an sich*; Heidegger’s meditations on the Thing; the monstrous Thing from cinema (Lacan refers to the beached sea creature in *La Dolce Vita*); the *Nebemensch Komplex*, or “neighbor complex,” which Freud outlines in his unpublished *Project for a Scientific Psychology*—this is the immediate source of the term; the perverse enjoyment of the neighbor in Christian theology; the Thing in Georg Simmel’s theory of value; as well as others. Without pretending to encompass all its various meanings, I wish to begin by linking the concept to our earlier discussion of narcissism. Lacan introduces in the ethics seminar an innovation in his theory of the mirror stage. The mirror is no longer described solely as a reflecting surface but also as “fulfill[ing] another role, a role as limit. It is that which cannot be crossed. And the only organization in which it participates is that of the inaccessibility of the object.”⁴³ Beyond what the mirror reflects lies something which cannot be captured in words or images. This something or “Thing” is characterized by three essential attributes. First, in contrast to the fullness of the mirror Gestalt, the Thing constitutes an “emptiness at the center of the real.”⁴⁴ This emptiness should not be thought of in terms of deprivation or loss. Rather, the Thing is like a blank space or void, and Lacan compares it to the empty space surrounded by a vase; in one of the cruder poems of the troubadours, cited by Lacan, this emptiness receives

a scatological representation as the Lady's "internal cesspit."⁴⁵ But the Thing has no proper representation; it is, rather, a hole in representation that can be suggested or evoked only through different positive figures of the void. Second, as opposed to the dialectics of recognition, with its logic of productive contradiction—there is no identity without alienation, no recognition that is not founded on misrecognition—the Thing is characterized by cold indifference. It does not call out or make an appeal to me: the Thing doesn't care. We are no longer dealing with the narcissism of self-reflection, but of self-enclosure. The manifestation of the Thing goes together with the experience of radical exclusion. The Thing does not answer to my needs, it does not recognize me as a partner in dialogue or exchange, it does not make a place for my existence, whether positively or negatively. "Cruelty we can forgive; those who hurt us must have still some faith in us; but indifference! Indifference is like polar snows, it extinguishes all life."⁴⁶ The impassive Thing is the inhuman side of the human world. In the poetic creation of the idealized Lady, the Thing is "unveiled with a cruel and insistent power."⁴⁷ Yet this power is also recaptured in an artistic presentation that separates us from the impersonal side of the Other and reinscribes it into an imaginary form. There is a beautiful passage in an essay by Osip Mandelstam where he describes what happens when the indifference of the Thing breaks out into the open and nakedly imposes itself.

I would like to know what it is about a madman which creates that most terrifying impression of madness. It must be his dilated pupils, because they are blank and stare at you so absently, focusing on nothing in particular. It must be his mad speech, because in speaking to you the madman never takes you into account, nor even recognizes your existence as if wishing to ignore your presence, to show absolutely no interest in you. What we fear most in a madman is that absolute and terrifying indifference which he displays toward us. Nothing strikes terror in a man more than another man who shows no concern for him whatsoever. Cultural pretense, the politeness by which we constantly affirm our interest in one another, thus contains a profound meaning for us all.⁴⁸

Madness is this brutal unconcern, the blank stare of dilated pupils, the rupture of reciprocal relations and the game of mutual (mis)recognition. What makes Mandelstam here close to psychoanalysis, and especially to Lacan, is his view that the "terrifying indifference" of the madman is essentially an exaggeration of the "normal indifference" which implicitly lurks in all social relations. Our need to affirm our interest in one another through social conventions and empty talk betrays the inherent fragility of the social bond. Instead of arising from a natural sympathy or fellow feeling that is then subject to pathological ruptures, behind our feelings of attachment lurks a greater

detachment (Lacanian psychoanalysis is a “detachment theory”). Cultural rituals of politeness and social exchange are ways of exorcizing the profound indifference that lurks in the other, and preventing it from rising to the surface. Lacan argues that the original aim of interpellation, like the simple call “You!,” is to humanize the other by pushing back that impersonal dimension that is no longer concerned with or implicated in the world of shared meanings. “‘You’ contains a form of defense, and I would say that at the moment when it is spoken, it is entirely in this ‘You,’ and nowhere else, that one finds what I have evoked today concerning *das Ding*.”⁴⁹ As long as we are operating within the universe of recognition, sometimes I am mistaken for someone else, and sometimes I am mistaken for myself—whether the call is true or false, there is always a kind of constitutive error in identity, since identity is not something that one gives oneself but can only be bestowed by the Other, hence a minimal alienation persists in any sense of mineness. But beyond the logic of recognition and its productive errors lies the abyssal disregard of the Thing, the unrecognizable Other for which I am nothing and no one.

Lacan provides another example of the Thing in his description of Harpo Marx, which brings us to its third attribute: arbitrariness and disorder.

It is enough to evoke a face which is familiar to every one of you, that of the terrible dumb brother of the four Marx brothers, Harpo. Is there anything that poses a question which is more present, more pressing, more absorbing, more disruptive, more nauseating, more calculated to thrust everything that takes place before us into the abyss or void than that face of Harpo Marx, that face with its smile which leaves us unclear as to whether it signifies the most extreme perversity or complete simplicity? This dumb man alone is sufficient to sustain the atmosphere of doubt and of radical annihilation which is the stuff of the Marx brothers’ extraordinary farce and the uninterrupted play of “jokes” that makes their activity so valuable.⁵⁰

Lacan’s comments echo those of Artaud, who similarly described the cruel edge of the Marx Brothers’ comedy as evoking “something disquieting and tragic, a fatality (neither happy nor unhappy, difficult to formulate) which would hover over it like the cast of an appalling malady upon an exquisitely beautiful profile.”⁵¹ For both Artaud and Lacan, the orchestrated anarchy of the Marx Brothers stages a traumatic universe that has been turned into burlesque through a stream of gags and slapstick humor. The genius of the Marx Brothers lies in this proximity of nightmare and farce. Harpo Marx gleefully sows confusion and discord while oscillating between innocence and guile, devilish perversity and childlike simplicity. It is this radical disorientation, not evil per se, that characterizes the appearance of the Thing.

Lastly, a better understanding of the concept may be gained by tracing its genesis in Lacan’s work. Though the Thing is first introduced in Seminar VII,

its roots lay in Lacan's earlier reflections on the role of the mother in the Oedipus complex in Seminars IV and V. There he describes the mother as the first, archaic Other on which the infant is totally dependent for its physical and emotional survival. Even at this primitive level, Lacan insists that the relation between mother and child is not purely a fog of confused affects and fragmented impulses. The behaviors and reactions of the mother already have a symbolic value, in the sense that they point to her as an agent with the power to respond or not to the infant's cries. Lacan names this "primordial symbolization" the "law of the mother," in order to convey her unlimited sway and power over the child. For the child, the mother is omnipotent.⁵² Her rule is not bound to or dependent upon anything; it is an "uncontrolled law" swaying this way and that without reason or cause, and to be a subject means in the first instance to be *subjected* to this "good or bad will" whose prerogatives cannot be reliably discerned or predicted.⁵³ What does the Other want? And how do I fit into the picture? What am I for the Other's desire? There is a side of the Other that is not concerned with me and does not in the least accommodate my existence. It is this passivity, disorientation, and even expulsion at the heart of the maternal relation that Lacan will later associate with the appearance of the Thing in general. In Seminar VII, he explicitly relates the Thing to Klein's pre-Oedipal mother: "Kleinian theory depends on its having situated the mythic body of the mother at the central place of *das Ding*."⁵⁴ What is notable here is the reversal of the standard Oedipal scheme: later incarnations of the Thing are not derived from the mother; rather, it is the mother who occupies the place of the Thing. Strictly speaking, the Thing has no original representation or prototype: it is a zone of emptiness, a hole in the center of the real. The mother is empirically the "first" to occupy this empty place, and Lacan modifies Klein's views according to this logic: the fantasies of bodily fragmentation and violence that she describes as characterizing early childhood, the "mythic body of the mother" split into loving and terrorizing pieces, are already ways of imagining and humanizing that radical symbolic negativity that marks the precarious beginnings of desire and life.

WE SHALL GIVE PRIORITY TO TRASH ...

How could Deleuze respond to all this? On one level, his analysis appears very close to Lacan's. Though Deleuze usually puts the emphasis on the immanent joy of desire in courtly love, does not the asymmetrical relation between the troubadour-knight and the sovereign Lady provide an excellent example of what, in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze calls "pure difference" as "unilateral distinction"? Deleuze makes a distinction between empirical difference and pure difference, or difference in-itself. While the first designates the difference between two given entities that can be described according to a network of oppositional determinations, the second cannot be placed within

such a relational framework. Pure difference is unhinged or unbalanced, a difference in which opposition and negation do not yet or no longer hold, where one thing differs, yet without the other differing in turn. “Instead of something distinguished from something else, imagine something which distinguishes itself—and yet that from which it distinguishes itself does not distinguish itself from it.”⁵⁵ Deleuze offers a striking image of this unilateral movement: the lightning bolt flashes against the night sky, but the night does not reach back, it recedes into the darkness. If the flash of lightning stands for the minimal emergence of difference in the form of the figure-ground distinction, the night is what is subtracted from this difference, what sinks away from it, what, despite the support it lends, remains in-different to it. Pure difference is nonreciprocal, intransitive, a one-way street where something relates to something that doesn’t relate to it, and Deleuze does not hesitate to underscore the violence of this “non-relation”: “Lightning, for example, distinguishes itself from the black sky but must also trail it behind, as though it were distinguishing itself from that which does not distinguish itself from it. It is as if the ground rose to the surface, without ceasing to be ground. There is cruelty, even monstrosity, on both sides of this struggle against an elusive adversary, in which the distinguished opposes something which cannot distinguish itself from it but continues to espouse that which divorces it.”⁵⁶ Is not the Lady another of these elusive adversaries, a figure of this indifferent night, the “groundless ground” which “is there, staring at us, but without eyes”⁵⁷ (think of the dilated pupils of Mandelstam’s madman), and the intensities and desires so many scattered fragments agitating upon this desolate ground? The Deleuzian universe is fundamentally one of solitude.⁵⁸ Far from amounting to a celebration of diversity, multiplicity, pluralism, and so on, the real differences Deleuze is concerned with are asymmetrical and nonreciprocal, and in this sense *Difference and Repetition* could be renamed *Indifference and Repetition*. (This calls for a short digression: even though Deleuze specifically argues against indifference at a number of points in his book, still the term can help to convey the discomfort, shock, and violence which Deleuze intends with the concept of pure difference against his more liberal defenders. And even further: just as Deleuze argues, in 1968, that the problem of difference and repetition is alive and “in the air,”⁵⁹ is not our “generational problem” much better captured by the term “indifference,” which expresses a generalized disorientation and malaise that is the flipside of the empty celebration of “differences”? Today indifference ought to become a matter of thought.) The terminology shifts in Deleuze’s later philosophy, but the general conceptual scheme remains the same. Courtly love, Deleuze and Guattari write, “is a question of making a body without organs upon which intensities pass.”⁶⁰ Again we have the distinction between two poles: the body without organs, on the one hand, and intensities or partial drives—the organs

without bodies, if you will—on the other. This may be compared to Lacan's distinction between the Thing and the partial drives. As Lacan specifies: "What one finds at the level of *das Ding* once it is revealed is the place of the Triebe, the drives."⁶¹ In the case of courtly love, we could say that the inaccessible Lady is the "empty place" where the masochistic impulses are awakened and cultivated, the void around which desire turns. The twofold structure of the drives is the same.

And yet—despite this theoretical proximity, their interpretations are ultimately not reconcilable. For Lacan, courtly love, in its cultivation of desire, evokes the drama of a senseless universe and the subject's radical exclusion in the face of an inhuman partner that remains silent and unmoved. For Deleuze, it is about hollowing out a space of desire by stripping away personal characteristics and identifications (creating a body without organs: the sublime Lady), then populating it with intensities and partial drives. From a Lacanian perspective, the Deleuzian void is too full: the night is always sparkling with heated particles, the Sahara crisscrossed by solitary travelers, the world teeming with sense. It has conjured away the emptiness and dumbness of the Thing in favor of an enchanted vision of cosmic creation, however goalless and anarchic ("chaosmic") it may be. From a Deleuzian standpoint, on the other hand, Lacan's thought still remains too caught up in a humanist framework, albeit a negative or accursed (an "inhumanist") one. It is too attached to a particular existential drama, the shock of being thrown out of or excluded from the world, of being annihilated by that "indifference which extinguishes all life" (Balzac), of being reduced to an excremental remainder—"You are that waste matter which falls into the world from the devil's anus," as Lacan approvingly quotes Luther.⁶² (The formal expression of this is found in Lacan's definition of the subject as that which is represented by one signifier for another: the subject is what falls out of the signifying chain, it has no proper place in it.) Lacan finds the same scatological theme in courtly love, in the poem we mentioned earlier: "I am, [the Lady] tells him, nothing more than the emptiness to be found in my own internal cesspit. . . . Just blow in that for a while and see if your sublimation holds up."⁶³ As this citation suggests, the experience of symbolic nihilation need not necessarily take on a tragic cast, but can sometimes be quite comical. Nothingness can be ridiculous. Other examples in Lacan's work point in this direction. He recounts a personal story from his youth of being out on a fishing trip when his companion points out a bit of trash floating on the sea and says, "You see that can? Well, it doesn't see you!"⁶⁴ This amusing witticism immediately cuts through the young intellectual's narcissistic pretensions (his identification with the rugged life of a fisherman) and reveals to him the destiny of his being: he is nothing other than the stain in the picture, a piece of glittering garbage which effectively does "see" right through him. Likewise with

the case of Professor D.'s shoes: while staying as a guest at a cultural institution in London, Lacan's wife remarks to him that his esteemed friend, Professor D., is also there; asked how she knows this, she replies that she saw his shoes sitting outside the door. In a kind of absurdist "Thou art that," Lacan is surprised to find the great man suddenly reduced to a stupid pair of shoes. It is the opposite of what Heidegger says of Van Gogh's boots: the professor's shoes don't open a world by setting it back into the musty earth; rather, they embody the traumatic shock of being thrown out of the world, the precarious transition between the living and the inert, meaning and meaninglessness—but this time, at least, in a funny, clumsy-graceful way.⁶⁵

Shit, the bung hole, a shiny can, a pair of shoes, the madman's dilated pupils: such is the detritus of the Lacanian universe, but Deleuze's philosophy, too, is an ontology of trash ("We shall give priority to trash . . ." as Bruno Schulz said). The difference is that trash no longer has the significance of *vanitas*, it is not the counterpart of the subject's radical alienation or exclusion from the symbolic order. Instead it is building supplies, bric-à-brac, reusable fragments, an art of junk—tenuous constructions that can produce novelties as well as suffer breakdowns. It is tempting to characterize this difference in terms of the cultural cliché: do we not see here a knowing European alienation versus American ingenuity and know-how (recall Deleuze's preference for Anglo-American literature)? On a more conceptual level, the problem may be rephrased in terms of Lacan's late thesis that there is no sexual relation (*il n'y a pas de rapport sexuel*).⁶⁶ This is how Lacan describes courtly love when he returns to it in his twentieth seminar, as "a highly refined way of making up for the absence of the sexual relationship, by feigning that we are the ones who erect an obstacle thereto."⁶⁷ In other words, the manufactured trials and hardships of courtly love are an elegant way of veiling, in the double sense of covering over and obliquely revealing, the inherent negativity of sexuality, the nonrelation against whose abyssal backdrop any possible relation must be constructed. It is not only that human beings screw things up—in the poetry of courtly love, in a particularly cultivated manner—but there is something screwed up about sexuality as such, insofar as there is nothing that would provide a formula for the sexual relation (like the great metaphysical couples thinking/feeling, active/passive, yin and yang, etc.). Sexuality circles around an impasse, a point of impossibility, a failure of symbolization. And from this perspective, the crucial question becomes: Does the love between mutually compatible symptoms—my Freudian way of rewriting Deleuze and Guattari's definition of love as "heavenly nuptials, multiplicities of multiplicities"—amount, in the end, to a reassertion of the sexual relation, to a kind of sexual ratio inscribed in Being, a libidinal reenchantment of the world, albeit a strangely dispersed, dehumanized, and "unrecognizable" one? Of course there is no question here of a spiritual harmony or complementarity, but

rather, as the oddball idea of “compatible symptoms” implies, a kind of wayward or screwy harmony that can be quite horrible for the persons who happen to be caught up in it. A passion sweeps away the persons and follows its own path, creating a virtual life of isolated particles and elements, the vibrations and resonances between different singularities and symptomatic formations. And in order to conceptualize this aberrant passion, Deleuze and Guattari argue that we need a new metaphysics of the body: this monstrous or meteorological sexuality attests to the unknown powers of the body and a clamor inherent in being. Lacan’s position entails a different kind of real. In order to summarize this disagreement, we could say that it all depends on where the negative falls. This will be the difference between a thought that maintains that there is no sexual relation and one that, on the contrary, asserts the full existence of the nonhuman sex: “Desiring-machines or the nonhuman sex: not one or even two sexes, but *n* sexes.”⁶⁸ Either a lack of being, a nonrelation, induced by the “disorder” that is the symbolic universe, or else an ontological schizophrenization of sex.

BETWEEN INSTINCTS AND INSTITUTIONS

In fact, Deleuze’s criticism of the negative conception of desire applies much more to Sartre than to Lacan, whom we may surmise to be its real philosophical target. It is Sartre who developed an ontology that turns failure into the very hallmark of Being, where “the for-itself is effectively a perpetual project of founding itself qua being and a perpetual failure of this project.”⁶⁹ The for-itself fails to be the in-itself, that being which is stripped of all negativity and failure. The for-itself is an ontological underachiever. If Deleuzian philosophy aims at a realized schizophrenic ontology, then the Sartrean for-itself is that neurotic being which never manages to realize itself, and exists precisely in and through this repeated failure. Note that it is not that the for-itself tries to disappear into the pure plenitude of Being, but is somehow impeded by an external obstacle or contingent deficiency. The problem is inherent, it stems from the contradictory nature of the “desire for being” itself: what the for-itself wants is to unite with the in-itself, but without sacrificing its own perspective, it wants to satisfy its desire without that desire being extinguished in its very satisfaction. The for-itself aims at an impossible conjugation of self-consciousness and inertness, emptiness and fullness, being and nonbeing—in other words, the for-itself wants to have its lack and fill it too. This profound failure undergirds all specific and concrete desires, such that even the most elementary privations, like hunger and thirst, presuppose the for-itself’s synthetic and totalizing aspirations. As a pure physiological phenomenon, thirst implies no transcendence and does not seek its attenuation. Desire, on the other hand, is transcendence toward the object desired (e.g., a glass of water), but what it aims at is not the suppression of the lacking state per se

but to unite that lack with the desired object; it seeks to quench the thirst without the thirst disappearing qua desire. Even in the simple act of drinking a glass of water, there is an echo of the impossible desire for being. The different shapes of desire that Sartre analyzes—love, sexual desire (the caress), masochism and sadism, hate—are so many instance of this same fundamental deadlock. And is this not also manifest at the formal level of Sartre’s philosophical projects, which tend to follow a similar pattern? *Being and Nothingness*, despite its tremendous sweep, is an incomplete work, missing that ethics which would provide its crowning achievement—Sartre pursued just such an ethics for many years, but was not satisfied and never published it; the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* is a failed attempt at a grand synthesis of existentialism and Marxism; Sartre’s mammoth study of Gustave Flaubert, *The Family Idiot*, at five volumes and over 3,000 pages in the English translation, does not even manage to make it to *Madame Bovary*. They are all “noble failures,” the very image of desire striving after a goal it cannot reach, yet accomplishing something incredible in and through this failure—as the saying goes, better a noble failure than a mediocre success. Compare this to the rhizomatic structure of Deleuze and Guattari’s theoretical productions. Their texts are a veritable war machine expanding its reach into ever more domains, tirelessly experimenting and tinkering with concepts in a curious mixture of monotony and creativity. The philosophical machine is not missing anything, but nevertheless keeps expanding—geography, geology, botany, ethology, psychiatry, linguistics, textiles, mathematics, seafaring—multiplying new links and connections, piling up one plateau after another.

But is the case so simple with Sartre? Deleuze himself, in his tribute to the philosopher whom he called “his teacher” (the French term is stronger, *maître*), speaks with admiration for Sartre’s negativist conception of human beings as holes in the world, little lakes of nothingness. As opposed to Merleau-Ponty’s “tender and reserved” vision of an enveloping flesh with its multiple folds and pleats, Sartre’s insistence on the hard reality of lack offers “a tough, penetrating existentialism.”⁷⁰ Even if Deleuze seriously disagrees with this ontology, he recognizes it as something to be taken seriously. Later he and Guattari will also praise Sartre as one of the great philosophers of immanence, referring to his early work on the impersonal transcendental field of consciousness in which the ego is but another object distinguished only by its proximity. However, there is little of this admiration in their anti-Oedipal polemics, where Sartre is not mentioned, yet the notions of lack and negativity are pilloried in the feud with psychoanalysis (Lacan could almost be seen as a proxy for Sartre here). Lack is equated with impotence, pessimism, sadness, depression, bad conscience, and so forth, a malediction wrought on desire by a reactionary and guilt-ridden theoretical edifice. The key point of the critique comes down to this: lack is the wrong notion for understanding

desire because it separates desire from what it can do, spoiling it from the start by placing a priori limits on its power. Crucial here is the Spinozistic idea that “we don’t know what the body can do,” that its capabilities and affections are still unknown and yet to be invented. Lack is only a secondary and derivative interpretation of desire; active beneath it are the speeds and intensities of the partial drives. But before giving up too quickly on lack, we should recall the positive ends to which this doctrine is put. For Sartre, the constitutive failure of the for-itself to achieve its being coincides with its very freedom: the fact that consciousness is shot through with lack, that it is doomed to-be-what-it-is-not and not-to-be-what-it-is, means that there is nothing that can limit it or vouch for its existence. Consciousness is radically and irremediably free. In his early work, Lacan explicitly draws on this Sartrean conception of nothingness in order to oppose psychoanalysis to any normative scheme or developmental psychology. Instead of realizing a preestablished set of goals and ideals, Lacan insists that desire is riven by lack, the “lack of being whereby being exists.”⁷¹ What is lacking, in this sense, is not so much the object that would satisfy desire (Being, the synthesis of the for-itself and the in-itself, *jouissance*, etc.) but any substantial framework that would purport to predetermine and guide it. In other words, the notion of lack is meant to do away with precisely those a priori limits which Deleuze condemns it for installing. Even further, in the same way that Deleuze writes of a “thought without image,” so too for Lacan is desire “without image”: such is the emptiness, indifference, and disorder of the Thing. In order to avoid confusion here, it is necessary to distinguish between the *terminus ad quem* of desire, the goal at which it aims, and the *terminus a quo*, the ground from which it springs. Apart from the question of whether desire strives after an impossible fulfillment—and Deleuze’s point is that this is only a particular neurotic organization of desire, and should not be universalized—the real debate has to do with different conceptions of the base, the “abyssal ground” out of which desire emerges.⁷² Again, the question is: how is this negative instance to be conceived?

We can make a perhaps surprising Sartrean contribution to this problem, which is especially interesting due to its links with Lacan; this time, instead of Lacan following Sartre, the situation is more the reverse. I am referring to a relatively unknown passage from *The Family Idiot*. It concerns the life of a pet dog.

“Pure ennui de vivre” is a pearl of culture. It seems clear that household animals are bored; they are homunculae, the dismal reflections of their masters. Culture has penetrated them, destroying nature in them without replacing it. Language is their major frustration: they have a crude understanding of its function but cannot use it; it is enough for them to be the objects of speech—they are spoken to, they are spoken about, they know it. This manifest verbal power which is denied to them cuts through them,

settles within them as the limit of their powers, it is a disturbing privation which they forget in solitude and which deprecates their very natures when they are with men. I have seen fear and rage grow in a dog. We were talking about him, he knew it instantly because our faces were turned toward him as he lay dozing on the carpet and because the sounds struck him with full force as if we were addressing him. Nevertheless we were speaking to each other. He felt it; our words seemed to designate him as our interlocutor and yet reached him blocked. He did not quite understand either the act itself or this exchange of speech, which concerned him far more than the usual hum of our voices—that lively and meaningless noise with which men surround themselves—and far less than an order given by his master or a call supported by a look or gesture. Or rather—for the intelligence of these humanized beasts is always beyond itself, lost in the imbroglio of its presence and its impossibilities—he was bewildered at not understanding what he understood. He began by waking up, bounding toward us, but stopped short, then whined with an uncoordinated agitation and finished by barking angrily. This dog passed from discomfort to rage, feeling at his expense the strange reciprocal mystification which is the relationship between man and animal.⁷³

Does not Sartre's description of a dog's blocked world merit a place alongside his other great philosophical characters like the man looking through the keyhole, or the café waiter, or the friend Pierre who-is-never-there? This digression on "pet existentialism" calls for a close examination. First of all, what is striking about the household animal is its peculiar intermediary status. The pet is a kind of displaced creature, no longer fully animal yet not a human being; it is, as Sartre writes, a "humanized beast" caught in a precarious middle zone between nature and culture. The philosopher's dog has lost the sure-footedness of its instincts—it has been penetrated by culture and devalued—yet without these instincts being replaced or reshaped by a new cultural framework. Its training and domestication have removed it from nature, at least in part, but without compensating this lack by a full immersion in language and symbolic structures. Now comes the strange speculation: Sartre imagines that the dog is dimly conscious of its situation. He is aware that he is missing something, even though he is not able to articulate what it is he is missing. The dog has a certain comprehension of language precisely in its confusion and lack of understanding. It is a proto-symbolic animal.⁷⁴ The dog is smart enough to know that he's being talked about, and not simply ordered around, but is so confused by what he hears that, as Sartre beautifully puts it, he is "bewildered at not understanding what he understood." The pet dog is in exactly the same position as the child described by Laplanche. He, too, is in the throes of a kind of primal seduction. He is spoken about in a language that he cannot grasp, bombarded by enigmatic signifiers to which he cannot adequately respond. Language is exterior to him.

As Lacan would say, Sartre's dog is the object of the discourse of the Other, caught inside of yet excluded from the symbolic order. And it is as if the beast were frozen there, stuck in that object-position, unable to do anything but growl and whimper. While the human has a mastery of language that the dog can never possess, it too bears within itself the echo of this same existential malaise. There is no fully cultural being, no human that is not a "humanized beast": the gap between nature and culture is never completely bridged, the human remains a creature of this unstable transition, always in a process of becoming. And to connect this idea of a gap with our previous discussion: in Lacanian terms, Sartre's pet dog is confronted by the Thing, a zone of confusion and disorientation which is covered neither by nature (the compass of pleasure and unpleasure) nor by culture (institutional laws and norms). The dog is caught in the empty transition or caesura between instincts and institutions, and it is this gap that is the cause of the "reciprocal mystification" between humans and animals—a mystification that the human animal has internalized, and which constitutes its blurry and unstable difference.

Normally we understand the relation between instincts and institutions either in terms of repression (the standard Freudian account, which makes prohibition the core of civilization) or in terms of extension and positive formation (this is the Deleuzian line in his early essay "Instincts and Institutions" and in his work on Hume: "the urgency of hunger becomes in humanity the demand for bread").⁷⁵ According to the first, desire originates in a reaction against the imposition of a limit, a prohibition (the prohibition against incest) coming from the outside. The child is compelled to give up something and to search for it again through a series of ersatz objects and replacements; this endless search for the "lost object" is the very essence of desire. And in a more sophisticated way, one can argue that the thing that must be given up is something that was never possessed, an illusory wholeness that is but the retrospective effect of the symbolic structure of desire. (Artaud formulated the best joke about this: when asked if there was one true Woman for him, he replied "Yes," but added that he will probably never meet this woman, at least not in this life, and that he also has a very low opinion of her.)⁷⁶ The second offers an alternative approach: in this case, it is not the negative but the enabling power of institutions that is emphasized. Desire begins not with loss and sacrifice, but with a positive formation. The symbolic forms of culture provide means for the satisfaction for instincts, and even shape and create the very tendencies that they satisfy; institutions expand the scope of the body's capacities, down to its tiniest expression, and open up new possibilities of action. "Every institution imposes a series of models on our bodies, even in its involuntary structures, and offers our intelligence a sort of knowledge, a possibility of foresight as project."⁷⁷ And again, in a more sophisticated way, one can argue that cultural forms not only shape and create new instincts,

they also canalize the body's forces, which inevitably react against being organized this way or that, and perhaps in the end do not want to be organized at all. Yet whatever conflicts there may be, there is an essential continuity between bodily drives and symbolic forms. What Sartre delineates in his last great philosophical study of Flaubert is rather an uncanny in-between space, where the instincts are weak and disoriented yet the dimension of the symbolic, the order of language, is experienced as alien and external; instincts don't spontaneously function, but neither do institutions rule. (Flaubert, of whom Sartre makes the remarkable diagnosis of a hysterical imitation of psychosis,⁷⁸ was particularly sensitive to the externality of language, its inherent "stupidity"—as Sartre writes, he was "poorly anchored in language"⁷⁹—and this outsider status expressed itself in his great fascination and respect for animality.) With regard to Sartrean ontology, the category of the humanized beast introduces an important innovation: we are dealing neither with an inert and undialectical nature nor with the full negating power of the for-itself, but rather with an intermediary or extimate moment in the constitution of the for-itself where the "itself" is no longer in- but not yet really for- anything. In his analysis of Flaubert, Sartre hits upon the central Lacanian problem: that of the very entrance into language, the installation of the subject within the symbolic order of which it is not, as a certain formula would have it, always-already inside. Entering into culture means confronting it as an alien, external order—a Thing—and undergoing the shock of exclusion: the drama of subjectivity is that of constructing the minimal coordinates, an unconscious fantasy space, *in order to be able to live and desire*. And for this to take place, one must be able to psychically integrate this moment of exclusion inside oneself—one must exclude oneself into the picture, or include oneself out—to subjectivize one's own erasure, so as not to drown in it. The problem is not that desire is condemned to dissatisfaction and melancholy, that is it fated to search for an unattainable enjoyment or impossible synthesis. The problem is more fundamental: How to start desiring in the first place? How is it possible to leap out of the object-position, how does the humanized beast enter into the symbolic-cultural universe? As Nietzsche said, human culture is a long history of self-domestication, but this never goes off without a hitch; and this sticking point or discontent—this undomesticated remainder—is precisely the void of subjectivity. For Deleuze, the dog's bow-wow is the stupidest cry of the animal kingdom. But maybe its dumb cries are not simply those of training and obedience, but express a more uncanny becoming that got stuck halfway. "Thus childhood is no longer an age but an animal category: there are monkeys, there are dogs, there are children. Perhaps, if carefully inspected, the child is merely a dog who is unaware of itself."⁸⁰

We began with Kafka's panther, we can end with Sartre's dog. The cat and the dog, this classic "impossible couple" of the animal kingdom, can provide

a different take on one of Deleuze's most famous concepts, becoming-animal, which here could be rewritten as the trouble of becoming-human. Our figure of becoming is one that is split from within, pulling in two opposite directions at once, not unlike the mad becoming of Plato. On the one hand, there is the pet canine, this pathetic beast oscillating between rage and fear, bewilderment and lethargy. The dog stands at the threshold between the instinctual surefootedness of nature and the symbolic forms of culture, yet it remains caught there, in a confused transition, stuck, quite literally, in an empty no-man's-land. The jungle cat, on the other hand, is the embodiment of an irrepressible "joy of life," an insular drive and ardent passion that cannot be captured or put in its place: the untamable factor within a rule-bound world. To put this once again in Deleuzian terms: in *Difference and Repetition* there are the two poles of the eraser and the stain, or in *Logic of Sense* a place without an occupant and an occupant without a place, or in *Anti-Oedipus* a body without organs and an autonomous partial object, an organ without a body. On the one side a figure of disorientation and devitalization; on the other the élan of a "profound and almost unlivable power."

CHAPTER 5

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SCHIZOPHRENIA

SCHIZOPHRENIA AS A PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM

1972 witnessed the publication of two great philosophical works on schizophrenia, both deeply influenced by Lacan. The first is a turgid academic study, full of Byzantine distinctions and tripartite divisions, borne by a totalizing theoretical ambition, where “schizophrenia” is promoted as the new master signifier for an all-encompassing metaphysical-historical system. The second is a rare daring attempt to bring together the disparate fields of philosophy and psychiatry in order to rethink the fundamental structures of subjectivity in light of madness, that is, to understand psychosis not as the radical other of selfhood, reason, and embodiment, but as their ineluctable other side. I am referring to Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* and to Belgian philosopher Alphonse De Waele’s *Psychosis: Attempt at an Analytic and Existential Interpretation*. Of course, my characterization of the former will sound more than a little facetious, but there is a serious point to be made. Despite its appearance as a delirious hodgepodge of concepts and references, *Anti-Oedipus* has in fact a classical philosophical structure, in which dualisms and triadic schemes proliferate (e.g., there are three syntheses of the unconscious: connective, disjunctive, and conjunctive; three social-historical formations: savage territorial, barbarian despotic, and civilized capitalist; three elements that compose repression: the repressed representative, the repressing representation, and the displaced represented; three kinds of machines: paranoid, miraculating, and celibate; three forms of energy: Libido, Numen, Voluptas; and so on, not to mention all the binary oppositions which organize the text and give it a rather Manichean appearance, like production versus representation, molecular versus molar, desiring machines versus Oedipus, schizophrenia versus paranoia, etc., as well as the five different paralogisms or illegitimate uses of the unconscious, modeled after Kantian critique—*Anti-Oedipus* is to psychoanalysis what the *Critique of Pure Reason* is to metaphysics).

Guattari complained about not being able to recognize himself in *Anti-Oedipus* because of its “polishedness” and “perfection”¹—indeed, for the prospective reader *Anti-Oedipus* is a nightmare not of chaos but of order. And while Foucault pointedly warns us in his introduction not to mistake *Anti-Oedipus* for a “flashy Hegel,” is this not arguably its best one-line description (knowing Foucault’s actual dislike for the book, which was far too aligned with psychoanalytic categories for his taste, perhaps this was an ironic joke on his part)?² There is even something mock-Kojévian in the book’s theoretical program, which advances a clinical version of the end-of-history thesis: after Hegel’s Philosopher, Schelling’s Artist, Nietzsche’s Prophet, and Kojève’s Dictator, Deleuze and Guattari present the Schizo as the avatar of pure desire bringing to a close the history of representation. “Schizophrenia is our very own ‘malady,’ modern man’s sickness. The end of history has no other meaning.”³ *Anti-Oedipus* might well be considered Deleuze’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*, the trajectory of his thought mirroring that of Hegel, but in reverse: first there is the logical presentation of his system in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*; then, in *Anti-Oedipus*, a setting of the notion into history, an account of the development of Schizo-Spirit or the “schizophrenic process” through its various concrete shapes. For sure, this is a “history of contingencies, and not the history of necessity,” constituted by “great accidents” and “amazing encounters”⁴—yet is this not the case with Hegel as well? What if Spirit were the name of a fundamental “schiz”? As for De Waehlens’s book, of course it is far less experimental and ambitious than Deleuze and Guattari’s, yet we should not be misled by its relatively staid appearance. The project it undertakes was, and still is, an adventurous one: that of breaking down the boundaries between normality and pathology by offering an account of the genesis of subjectivity that situates madness at its very core. De Waehlens’s study was the first to attempt to systematize Lacan’s theory of psychosis by bringing it into dialogue with Hegelian dialectics and existential-phenomenological philosophy, in order to advance a philosophical anthropology inspired and informed by the study of psychopathology. Deleuze and Guattari fully agree with De Waehlens’s central thesis that “madness is an intrinsic possibility of human existence,”⁵ not merely an accidental deviation from a normal or natural development, yet the whole question is how this intrinsic possibility is to be conceived. As we shall see, many of the theses De Waehlens defends will be the object of criticism for Deleuze and Guattari: the primacy of (a certain conception of) language, the theory of foreclosure as the defining mechanism of psychosis, and the structuring role of the Oedipus complex. For them the classical Lacanian account, despite the important advance it accomplishes, still remains too structural and too negative, and even threatens to reintroduce the kind of normative developmental scheme that it explicitly opposes. Does not neurosis become the name of the new “normal,” and psychosis the

failure to properly effectuate the distinction between consciousness and the unconscious, to affirm the bodily drives as (troublesome) sources of pleasure, and to enter into the ambivalent realm of the Law? Instead of conceptualizing schizophrenia as the result of a primordial crisis in the formation of the bodily ego or the radical failure to be inscribed into the symbolic order, the thesis of Deleuze and Guattari is that schizophrenia and schizophrenic delirium testify to the production of life and desire at its rawest and most intense, even to the point where these productions threaten to become purely terrifying and destructive forces.

Anti-Oedipus is a rich and ambitious text, with a very broad scope. It combines at least five major aspects: (1) a positive theory of schizophrenia, that is, a theory that makes of schizophrenia not the result of a developmental failure or constitutional defect but an expression of the powers of the body; (2) a critique of mainstream or institutional psychoanalysis, and especially its conception of the Oedipus complex as formative of subjectivity; (3) a philosophy of history, consisting of three main stages culminating in capitalist civilization, where schizophrenia is simultaneously produced, (retroactively) revealed, and repressed as the hardcore of desiring-production, the motor of universal history; (4) a new process-oriented or machinic philosophy of nature, meant to overcome the classical divisions between mechanism and vitalism, nature and culture; and (5) a theory of revolutionary politics, whose possibility stems from the unruly and creative essence of desire, even though this desire is all too often made to desire its own repression, so that—to cite Spinoza and Wilhelm Reich—men “fight for their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation.”⁶ One could add other key elements as well, such as a nonstructuralist theory of language, an intervention in Marxist theory regarding the nature and role of the state, an engagement with anthropological literature concerning the origin of exchange and forms of debt and indebtedness. Moreover, a proper appreciation of the book should not forget its general context and cultural impact, the contribution it made to “schizo-culture,” to cite the name of the famous conference organized by Semiotext(e) in New York in 1975,⁷ a short-lived but intensive crossing of poststructuralist philosophy, anti-psychiatry, radical politics, and artistic avant-gardes; insofar as this might be said to constitute a movement (it doesn’t), *Anti-Oedipus* would be one of its signature texts.

Given this enormous breadth, my own approach to the book will be quite limited: I shall focus on the clinical dimension, taking Deleuze and Guattari’s claims about schizophrenia not merely as a metaphor for fragmentation, dissolution, and generalized boundary-breaking, but as a serious attempt at founding a new clinical anthropology. *Anti-Oedipus* should be read as a kind of *Psychopathia Metaphysica*. This aspect of the book has been largely neglected, a lacuna that is especially surprising considering Guattari’s extensive clinical

experience. It is impossible to understand this “metaphysical psychopathology” without Lacan, and the wager of my reading is that by disentangling the relation to Lacanian psychoanalysis we can also gain insight into the wider conceptual architecture of the book. There is a complex and ambiguous relationship to Lacan that runs throughout the pages of *Anti-Oedipus*, which is easy to miss through the din of its antistructuralist and antinegativist polemics. Yet if anything, Deleuze and Guattari see themselves as faithful *because* iconoclastic adherents to Lacan’s subversive program against the sloganeering and moralism of his disciples. As Deleuze explains, “Lacan himself says ‘I’m not getting much help.’ We thought we’d give him some schizophrenic help. And there’s no question that we’re all the more indebted to Lacan, once we’ve dropped notions like structure, the symbolic, or the signifier, which are so thoroughly misguided, and which Lacan himself has always managed to turn on their head to bring out their limitations.”⁸ To employ what has perhaps become an overused metaphor, *Anti-Oedipus* could well be viewed as a monstrous offspring of Lacanian psychoanalysis, in the sense that Deleuze conceived his philosophical enterprise as creative buggery, producing “children” of great thinkers that were misshapen and improbable but nevertheless their own.⁹ Jacques-Alain Miller has claimed that *Anti-Oedipus*, with its critique of naive Oedipalism and its humor-laden praise of madness, was indeed recognized by Lacan as a delirious progeny.¹⁰

THE SCHIZOPHRENIC PROCESS

How does *Anti-Oedipus* define schizophrenia? First, schizophrenia should not be conceived in terms of lack, failure, or deficiency. It does not originally refer to any autistic withdrawal, or loss of vitality, or alienation from society and reality. “Far from having lost who knows what contact with life, the schizophrenic is closest to the beating heart of reality, to an intense point identical with the production of the real.”¹¹ Deleuze and Guattari are in part attacking the abuses of institutional psychiatry, which is blamed for turning its patients into autistic rags,¹² but beyond this there is another more theoretical target, or rather, two targets. The first is represented by the legacy of Eugen Bleuler, the Swiss psychiatrist who originally coined the term schizophrenia to replace Emil Kraepelin’s “dementia praecox,” the “early” onset of dementia that inexorably led to mental deterioration. For Bleuler, schizophrenia (literally “split mind”) consists of a set of mental illnesses characterized mainly by the dissociation of the contents of consciousness together with a detachment from reality and retreat into a fantasy world (autism). The other more difficult point of attack is the orthodox Lacanian theory of psychosis, which comprehends it according to the defense mechanism of foreclosure, as opposed to repression in neurosis and disavowal in perversion. According to this theory, psychosis is the expression of a profound disturbance in the

subject's relationship to language, its failure to psychically integrate the signifier of the paternal law, the "name-of-the-father," which serves as the linchpin of the symbolic order. This failure leaves a hole in the psyche which, when triggered by an event that evokes this missing symbolic dimension, becomes filled with delusional thoughts and apparitions, according to the logic that what is foreclosed from the symbolic returns in the real. If this theory is problematic for Deleuze and Guattari, it is because of the way it supposes that there is a proper access to language, a right way of being installed within the symbolic order, that is, of being "Oedipalized." In his seminar of May 27, 1980 dedicated to *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze refers to these as the personological and structural theories; for the one, schizophrenia is fundamentally a matter of the disintegration of the ego and its ties to reality; for the other, of a faulty element or hole in an a priori structure.¹³ In contrast to these approaches, Deleuze and Guattari adopt the notions of "process" (which they take from Karl Jaspers's study of Strindberg, Van Gogh, Swedenborg, and Hölderlin) and "voyage" (from the later writings of R. D. Laing), in order to express the dynamic nature of schizophrenic experience: schizophrenia is a positive form of psychic life, not a deficient but an altered mode of experience. If there is hope for schizophrenics, it comes not from trying to integrate them into reality, repairing their damaged egos, or reinserting them into the symbolic order, but from developing the powers and capacities that they already possess—or rather, that possess them.

Cornelius Castoriadis once had a patient who recounted the story of being in a hotel room with her boyfriend so that they could have sex. But this proved frightening and impossible for the woman "because," as she explained, "the sheets were so sweet they were on fire."¹⁴ When confronted by the perplexity of her analyst ("how can sheets be sweet and what made them burn?"), the woman replied, "quite rightly," adds Castoriadis, "and with the tone of a great philosopher reprimanding a dull pupil: Mr. Castoriadis, if you never had dreamed, would I be able to explain to you what a dream is and what it is like to dream?" Likewise with Deleuze and Guattari's examples of Lenz's terrifying and fantastic walk or Dr. Schreber's bodily metamorphoses. These singular experiences are not defects, debilities, or errors but different modes of thought and perception, which should lead us to problematize so-called normal experience ruled by a supposedly continuous self. Even further: schizophrenic experience not only possesses its own consistency and validity but is more true or more real than mundane experience, taking us to the "beating heart of reality." In Guattari's words, there is a "schizo reduction"¹⁵ akin to Husserl's phenomenological reduction, suspending the natural evidence of the normal-neurotic world in order to reveal a more chaotic, intensive, and delusional real. *Anti-Oedipus* thus turns around the standard doxa: what is disturbing about madness is not that it is alien but that it is too close; it is not

that schizophrenics have failed to integrate into reality, it is rather so-called sane reality which is but a filtered and domesticated form of madness. This is “the glaring, sober truth that resides in delirium.”¹⁶

To articulate this, Deleuze and Guattari borrow from the schizophrenics themselves. One class of delusions that particularly interest them are those involving machines: from artistic works like Lindner’s painting “Boy and Machine” and the fantastical contraptions of Duchamp, Kafka, and Jarry, to clinical literature including Bruno Bettelheim’s case of Joey “the mechanical boy” and Victor Tausk’s groundbreaking work on paranoiac “influencing machines,” the machine is a massive clinical and aesthetic theme of modernity. For Deleuze and Guattari these delusions touch on an essential truth: all desire, and indeed all productive processes, is a matter of machines. What are these desiring machines? Raw reality is a continuous material flow (“hyle” or matter is pure continuity) that is interrupted by cuts; the combination of a flow with a cut is the minimal definition of a machine. “The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth a machine coupled to it.”¹⁷ This connection constitutes a veritable invention: it is a further complexification of the body’s potentials, of “what it can do,” and not simply the means for the satisfaction of a pre-given need. This calls for two comments. First, rather than an internal unfolding, desiring machines involve the construction of new capacities and powers through their very functioning and use. Although Deleuze and Guattari do not use this vocabulary, one could say that bodily powers are determined only retroactively. The mouth is revealed to be part of a breast-sucking machine, whose workings may be subsequently displaced or cut off (weaning); moreover, this same mouth is also a breathing machine (interrupted air currents), a biting machine (grinding teeth, chopping food), an anal machine (regurgitation), and a speaking machine (flows of words). What is an organ for? The body does not “know” this in advance, and the elaboration of desiring machines involves a decentralized process of syntheses and ruptures, in which the body discovers its capacities as it goes along. The schizophrenic stroll is exemplary for Deleuze and Guattari precisely because of its drifting and errant character. Deleuze will later write of desire as a movement whose trajectory does not preexist the voyage,¹⁸ echoing Bergson’s idea that “action on the move creates its own route, creates to a very great extent the conditions under which it is to be fulfilled, and thus baffles all calculation.”¹⁹ There is an element of surprise and novelty in desire, in the strong sense of not knowing what is possible until it actually takes place. Second, the breast should not be considered a representative of the mother or a piece detached from her. It is in the first place a pumping machine providing a flow of milk, “be it copious or scanty.”²⁰ Self and other, child and mother, and other global or molar forms are overcodings or representational mappings of processes that are not fundamentally representational in nature.

“We” are not persons but machinic concatenations, an egg crisscrossed by gradients and potentials. Rather than the machines belonging to persons, we must shift perspectives and examine how persons fit within the workings of the machines; only then are we thinking “schizophrenically.” One of the key figures that Deleuze and Guattari use to describe these machinations is that of tinkering or bricolage. They cite Claude Lévi-Strauss’s famous discussion of the bricoleur who concocts “devious” solutions for local problems by utilizing whatever materials are at hand; mythical thought is an “intellectual bricolage.”²¹ (The anthropologist Els van Dongen has more recently written of the universe of psychotics precisely as a world of bricolage, remixing the debris of culture and history in order to construct a new world to inhabit, against the backdrop of an existential exile and misery.)²² It is in this broad sense that the schizophrenic is the “universal producer,” and the production of the reality can be said to be schizophrenic. The real is cobbled together in a provisional and precarious manner, and it coheres not because it is well designed or optimally constructed but precisely through its odd patchwork and haphazard “kludges.”²³ “Desiring-machines work only when they break down, and by continually breaking down.”²⁴ This “functional dysfunctionality” or “dysfunctional functionality” was beautifully expressed in a short essay by Alfred Sohn-Rethel, “The Ideal of the Broken-Down.” Sohn-Rethel’s reflections were occasioned by his stay in the 1920s in Naples, where (one can imagine, as a German) he was deeply impressed by the peculiar Neapolitan attitude toward technology, which seemed to contain a whole life-philosophy: “although things never go as might be expected, somehow they always go well.” Everything in Naples is kaput in one way or another—door-knobs, Sohn-Rethel notes, are purely ornamental, as doors never shut properly—but far from this being a deplorable state, it serves as the starting point for the Neapolitan’s daring and ingenious technical improvisations: a small piece of wood found in the street is used to improbably hold together an old car engine, the gas can is refilled on a motorboat in high seas without cutting out the rickety engine on which is brewed a fresh pot of coffee, the motor of a smashed motorbike is used by a *latteria* to whip cream, a burning light bulb becomes the illuminating glow of the Madonna. “In his talent for tinkering, always characterized by great presence of mind, and thanks to which, in the face of danger, he can often, and with ridiculous ease, turn the very defect with which he is confronted into the advantage that saves the hour, he does indeed have something in common with the American. His inventiveness is like that of children, and, just as with children, he always has luck on his side, and, again like children, chance tends to come to the rescue at just the right moment.”²⁵

This notion of chance—or, better still, the childlike luck to always have chance on one’s side—is more important than it may first appear, and, to

shift gears, can help us to sketch an outline of the Deleuzo-Guattarian clinic. From the psychoanalytic perspective, it would appear that the human being is a hopelessly unlucky creature. The sick animal is sick not by chance but because of the conflicts and impasses that inevitably afflict its existence: pathologies are exaggerated expressions of crises that are, for the most part, unsolvable and unavoidable. Now on this point the authors of *Anti-Oedipus* would disagree: while the human capacity for self-imposed misery and mental derangement is indeed astounding, there is nothing inherently wrong with the psyche; the torments of mental life are misfortunes, the product of bad encounters (as Spinoza would say), of the desiring machines getting stuck or falling into a rut, rather than the expression of structural failures or conflicts. Contra Freud, “our possibilities of happiness are” not “already restricted by our constitution”;²⁶ rather, they depend on what happens to us, and how we live or transform these events. If for Freud the game is rigged from the start, for Deleuze and Guattari it is wide open and unpredictable; the tragic portrait of the discontent inherent to the human condition is replaced by the image of a cosmic lottery or, as Deleuze writes in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, the “ideal game” of the child player without preexisting rules or goals, whose only winner is the throw of the dice.²⁷ What is opposed here is the idea that happiness is a kind of transcendental illusion, that human beings are pushed by their very constitution to search for a satisfaction that is impossible to attain, and even dreaded. Psychoanalysis could be seen as one long meditation on this “transcendental unhappiness” and its various sources, which could be summarized as follows: organic repression (a biological factor, which Freud linked to the human being’s upright posture and repression of sniffing pleasure); or a conflict between culture and the drives (the imposition of the Law, the prohibition against incest); or a conflict between the drives themselves (self-preservation versus sexuality, life versus death instincts); or else, in a more Lacanian way, a conflict internal to each drive so that it aims at a total enjoyment that would at the same time spell its doom (*jouissance* as the self-destructive horizon of desire). If psychoanalysis affirms a classical vision in which psychic life is rent by a fundamental discord, and psychopathologies are conceived as different structural solutions to a universal impasse, Deleuze and Guattari defend the romantic idea of a robust and florid nature that nonetheless tends to become alienated from its own creativity and power—here the problem of pathology becomes that of the interruption or derailment of an affirmative process, the incapacity to follow it through to its end: sickness is what happens when you can’t handle the trip. This opposition, however, is too simple as it stands. For the unlucky Freudian subject turns out to be graced (or, rather, burdened) by a surprising “luck” (which creates further problems ...). This is the meaning of the speculative sense of Lust: desire may be doomed, but satisfaction finds its way, and never

shall the two precisely meet. The rigged game turns out to have a surprising opening, a tiny crack, which complicates its pre-given rules and transcendental discontent. The seemingly fixed structure has a catch, a fault line, an exception that does not prove the rule but undoes it from within, the object of the drive or *objet a*. (This should be distinguished from the exception that does prove the rule, the fantasm of the uncastrated “Father of the horde,” the sovereign who is not bound by the law he promulgates, and whose fascinating outlaw enjoyment enforces adhesion to his order.) For Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, the difficulty will be the reverse: showing not the point of breakdown in the structure, but how and in what ways the schizophrenic process—which is nothing other than a series of felicitous breakdowns—can itself go awry. Hence the questions they ask themselves: “What brings about our sickness?” “Is it the process, or is it rather the interruption of the process, its aggravation, its continuation in the void?”²⁸

DRIVE AND DESIRE

It should be emphasized that Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of psychoanalysis is an immanent one. *Anti-Oedipus* is no “Black Book.” Their goal is not to tear down psychoanalysis (“Freud is dead!”) but to recover its properly subversive core, a rescue operation that takes aim not only at later orthodoxies but, more fundamentally, at the reactionary tendencies of Freud himself. Deleuze and Guattari actually poke fun of themselves here, comparing their difficulty to that of the Marxist trying to separate the communist wheat from the Stalinist chaff. “Psychoanalysis is like the Russian Revolution; we don’t know when it started going bad.”²⁹ (One thinks equally of Heidegger’s quest to uncover the precise moment when authentic Greek thought was corrupted by metaphysics.) So, when did psychoanalysis go off the rails? “Oedipus is the idealist turning point.”³⁰ On the one hand, “what Freud and the first analysts discover is the domain of free syntheses where everything is possible: endless connections, nonexclusive disjunctions, nonspecific conjunctions, partial objects and flows.”³¹ This is the revolutionary Freud who denied the psychiatric distinction between normality and pathology and demolished the teleological conception of sexuality, the theorist of the psyche’s polymorphous perversity as a riot of partial drives ruled not by self-preservation, or any egoistic striving, but by the blind imperative of pleasure. There is, however, another Freud, the Freud who reinscribes his subversive insights back into a normative scheme, turning the drives into quasi-developmental stages and superimposing on the dispersed domain of infantile sexuality an adult drama of love and hatred, transgression and guilt, sacrifice and discontent. To recover the early subversive Freud against the later gentrifying one is the goal of Deleuze and Guattari’s critique. In a word, what *Anti-Oedipus* aims to salvage is the Freudian notion of *Trieb* from its Oedipal domestication.³²

The same logic of immanent critique guides Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Lacan. Broadly speaking, *Anti-Oedipus* engages Lacan in a double manner, vehemently rejecting the so-called orthodox aspects of his theory (the bad "Lacanist" of lack and the signifier), while elaborating what Deleuze and Guattari take to be his most original and productive concepts (notably, the *objet a*). "Lacan's admirable theory of desire appears to us to have two poles: one related to 'the object small a' as a desiring-machine, which defines desire in terms of real production, thus going beyond any idea of need and any idea of fantasy; and the other related to the 'great Other' as a signifier, which reintroduces a certain notion of lack."³³ This brief statement sums up the essentials of Deleuze and Guattari's approach. Lacanian theory is effectively split into two: the imaginary and the symbolic (along with the concept of fantasy) are denigrated, and the real is developed in a new (delirious, machinic, broken-down) direction. For Deleuze and Guattari, the real is the only "real" domain; the imaginary and the symbolic are realms of illusion and alienation, falsifying the chaotic dynamics of real experience, the machinic productions of the unconscious. As they unequivocally state: "For the unconscious itself is no more structural than personal, it does not symbolize any more than it imagines or represents; it engineers, it is machinic. Neither imaginary nor symbolic, it is the Real in itself, the 'impossible real' and its production."³⁴ Correcting Lacan on this last point, Deleuze and Guattari explain that the real is the domain where "everything becomes possible" since it is a "sub-representative field": only in the symbolic "the fusion of desire with the impossible is performed, with lack defined as castration."³⁵ We are thus left with the (libidinal) object without the (symbolic) Other—which could well serve as a motto for Deleuze and Guattari's selective appropriation of Lacan: a theory of desiring machines in opposition to the subject split by language, the order of signifiers (the big Other) in which it finds its identity as barred, inconsistent, lacking. In other words, *Anti-Oedipus* is, in Lacanian terms, a theory of the drive against desire. To avoid possible terminological confusion: what Deleuze and Guattari call *desire* is referred to by Freud and Lacan as *drive*; Deleuze and Guattari very clearly state at one point that "drives are simply the desiring-machines themselves."³⁶ Such is the "reverse side of the structure"³⁷ uncovered by *Anti-Oedipus*—a move that, as we have previously seen, is already prepared in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, with their relative demotion of the Other-structure in favor of a highly original philosophy of the partial object.

Does not Lacan's own theory develop in the same direction, with the *sinthome* replacing the symptom, knots taking the place of structures, *linguistique* and *lalangue* superseding the signifier, and *jouissance* and the real taking over from the imaginary and the symbolic as the focus of his thought? Crucial in this regard is Lacan's often-cited reappraisal in Seminar XI of the drive,

which is advanced as one of the four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis. There he characterizes the drive as a montage of heterogeneous elements, a kind of “surrealist collage”: “If we bring together the paradoxes that we just defined at the level of *Drang*, at that of the object, at that of the aim of the drive, I think that the resulting image would show the workings of a dynamo connected up to a gas-tap, a peacock’s feather emerges, and tickles the belly of a pretty woman, who is just lying there looking beautiful.”³⁸ This portrait of the drive as a sort of libidinal slapstick, a wonky Rube Goldberg contraption or Dalíesque tableau, seems to anticipate Deleuze and Guattari’s own functionally dysfunctional universe of desiring machines, and parts of *Anti-Oedipus* could be read as an extended riff on this passage. As Lacan elaborates in that seminar, the drive should be conceived as a headless (acephalous) circuit turning around a partial object, a “radical structure in which the subject is not yet placed.”³⁹ But here we confront a crucial ambiguity in Lacan’s thought. Is the drive as neatly detachable from desire, the libidinal base from the symbolic superstructure, as *Anti-Oedipus* would have it? Prior to Seminar XI, Lacan’s most exhaustive treatment of the drive can be found in his discussion of Freud’s *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality* which occupies a major portion of Seminar VIII, *Transference*, and there it is clear that the object of the drive is closely bound up with the dialectic of demand and desire. Without exaggeration, one could argue that the whole problem of that seminar is how the drive-object (*objet a*) comes to be situated in the place of the Other’s lack, and in this way takes on its uniquely libidinous or “driven” character. To give one concrete example of this, we can turn to Lacan’s analysis of oral sexuality. In order for the breast—or, more precisely, the nipple—to become “the support of pleasure, of voluptuous nibbling”—a pleasure “in which there is perpetuated,” Lacan remarks, “what we can truly call a sublimated voracity”—the Eros that animates this “precious object” or *agalma* must derive from somewhere other than the purely machinic coupling of bodies. “If the demand with the beyond of love that it projects did not exist, there would not be this place beneath, of desire, which constitutes itself around a privileged object. The oral phase of sexual libido requires this place hollowed out by demand.”⁴⁰ In other words, enjoyment is framed and supported by the demand for love, and the desire that insinuates itself in this demand and escapes from it. The libidinal base is “overdetermined” by the symbolic superstructure, and without the negativity that is thereby introduced—the enigma of the Other’s desire and the place (or rather, lack of place) of the subject within it—the drives would lose their charge and sexuality its sexiness.

Some years later, in Seminar XIII, *The Object of Psychoanalysis*, Lacan provides a more elaborate schematization of the relationship between drive and desire. There he offers an account of the relation between the paradigmatic forms

of the *objet a* (breast, shit, gaze, and voice) and the dialectic of demand and desire, in which each partial object embodies a unique balance or valence of the dialectic.⁴¹ We can start by returning to the oral drive: the breast is related above all to the subject's demand to the Other; it is the exemplary form of something that is called for, commanded, the precious object one wishes to have at one's disposal and whose seemingly whimsical comings and goings are a source of great frustration. Shit, on the other hand, is correlated with the demand from the Other; everything shitty belongs to the world of the Other's rules and the imperative of self-control, first and foremost concerning waste management—and insofar as shit is the primitive form of the child's gift, ultimately it is the subject itself that gets flushed down the toilet. Desire is what subsists and insists in the margins of demand, and its dynamic is more explicitly thematized in the subsequent two objects. The gaze is the primary model of the subject's desire—not the prize one is looking for, but the look by which one seeks it. To desire means to look for something. Yet the field in which this search takes place is never a neutral one but is distorted by the very perspective that opens it up. This is the loop of the scopic drive: the gaze, as the source and limit of the visible, is itself inscribed into the picture as a stain, a blur, an anamorphic blot. Finally, the voice is the objective correlate of the desire of the Other. Among the various libidinal objects it is the one closest to language and the chain of signifiers that shape the subject's desire, yet as an object it never fully merges with that chain which it transmits and supports. The voice announces both the subject's alienation in the symbolic order and its separation from this alienation; it is the "bone in the throat" that prevents the subject from disappearing into the signifiers that preside over it. Without the voice, the chain of signifiers would be empty and powerless, yet as the very vehicle that transmits this chain and renders it operative the voice also occludes its smooth functioning, staining its order with an unruly and unmasterable enjoyment. Now, Lacan is quick to specify that the whole dialectic is contained in each of its moments, but that nevertheless the balance shifts from one drive to the next. Each drive entails an entire mode of being in the world, precisely by embodying that which falls out of this world. In this system of (not libidinal economy but) libidinal dialectics, the object figures as the "inassimilable remainder" or "irreducible residue" (to recall the term from "Coldness and Cruelty") of the symbolic order; it emerges at the point of the Other's inconsistency and collapse. If shit stands for the universal form of the partial object, precisely as leftover or waste, it is the voice which most fully incarnates the antisynthetic character of the dialectic. On the other hand, from the standpoint of the subject it is the breast and the gaze which present themselves, respectively, as paradigms of demand and desire.

How, then, to relate drive and desire? When Lacan names the drive as one of the four fundamental concepts of psychoanalysis (along with the

unconscious, repetition, and transference), this might at first appear surprising. Is not the dialectic of desire Lacan's signature conceptual invention, the guiding thread with which he rereads Freudian metapsychology and clinical practice? In announcing the drive as a fundamental concept, Lacan accomplishes another "return to Freud," favoring the Freudian *Trieb* (*pulsion*) over the more Hegelian *Begierde* (*désir*). But that does not mean that the dialectic of desire has been abandoned or its importance diminished. It is true that there is an increasing focus on the object in Lacan's thought (this is especially evident in Seminars VIII and X, although a more detailed study would have to trace back the genesis of the *objet a* to Lacan's engagement with object relations theory in Seminars IV and V, and his reading of *Hamlet* in Seminar VI). Yet the invention of the *objet a* cannot be grasped outside of the theory of desire. To understand this better, we can recall our earlier discussion of the logic of the signifier and the problem of questions that characterizes it. If the subject (of desire) is a question without an answer, the object (of the drive) is an answer without a question: the two never quite meet, they intersect only at the impossible point of their missing synthesis. Desire does not find what it is looking for, but instead encounters an unwanted, wayward object that gives satisfaction anyway. If there is a lesson of psychoanalysis, it is that the only way to respond to a question without an answer is with an answer without a question. Returning to Seminar XI, Lacan emphasizes how psychoanalysis "touches on sexuality only in as much as, in the form of the drive, it manifests itself in the defile of the signifier, in which is constituted the dialectic of the subject."⁴² The way it manifests itself there is as an interloper, an uninvited guest, the "odd one in." The sexual drives must be situated in an in-between: they are located between the primal repression that constitutes the unconscious, the lack of being instigated by language (the "disorder" that is the symbolic order), and the interminable interpretation of the signifiers coming from the Other that form the subject's desire.⁴³ The drive insinuates itself in the interval between the question and the search for an answer. Could we say that the body comes between the mind and thought? Or if the soul is a body, it is that which trips up the circuit of thought, that which cannot be thought and which forces one to think? On the one hand, the drive is a deflection of desire; it does not fill the subject's lack of being but supplements it with something else, a fragment of enjoyment. On the other, desire starts with a symbolization of the "headless" pre-subjective drive, and functions as a defense against it, so that the symbolic order appears as a secondary domestication of *jouissance*. It is difficult to describe a genesis from one to the other: the drive interrupts desire, it emerges in the "defiles" or "narrows" of the network of signifiers, it cannot be placed within it; but these react against the drive and endeavor to reinscribe it into the structure it eludes. There is a circularity that prevents a straightforward genetic account from one to the other.

What happens, then, when one formulates a theory of the drives which does not involve the dialectic of desire and its barred subject? How do Deleuze and Guattari conceive of their desiring machines as entirely removed from the field of the Other, as productive of the real itself?

OBLOMOV AND STAKHANOV

At this point, it is necessary to go into greater detail about the system of Anti-Oedipus, and especially the place of negativity within it. In an interview from 1980, Deleuze describes Anti-Oedipus as a kind of Russian Constructivism of the unconscious.⁴⁴ In this spirit, we could designate the two fundamental tendencies at work in Deleuze and Guattari's machinic unconscious with the names of *Oblomov* (the lazy bedridden aristocrat of Ivan Goncharov's eponymous novel) and *Stakhanov* (the mythical hero of Soviet socialist productivity). In its Stakhanovist mode, the unconscious is endlessly productive and creative, forging new connections and proliferating flows. This overwhelming output, however, is opposed by the Oblomovist tendency to absolute indolence, which brings all the feverish activity to a crashing halt. It does not eat, breathe, shit, and fuck; it stays in bed. Or, to quote Deleuze and Guattari:

From a certain point of view it would be much better if nothing worked, if nothing functioned. *Never being born*, escaping the wheel of continual birth and rebirth, no mouth to suck with, no anus to shit through. Will the machines run so badly, their component pieces fall apart to such a point that they will return to nothingness and thus allow us to return to nothingness? It would seem, however, that the flows of energy are still too closely connected, the partial objects still too organic, for this to happen. What would be required is a pure fluid in a free state, flowing without interruption, streaming over the surface of a full body.⁴⁵

We return here to the "Critique of Pure Complaint." *Mē phunai*, never to be born: thus Deleuze and Guattari transpose the Oedipal malediction to the heart of the desiring machines, whose felicitous breakdowns and haphazard fixes are menaced from within by the prospect of an infelicitous breakdown, a catastrophic malfunctioning which, if not exactly a return to nothingness, entails the liquidation of their parts and polymorphous connections in an amorphous "full body." In the reception of Anti-Oedipus relatively little attention has been paid to "antiproduction," even though it is here that we find the Deleuzo-Guattarian version of the death drive.⁴⁶

This is more clearly spelled out when we follow their account of the genesis of the unconscious. Here we can observe a basic continuity with Deleuze's previous works, despite his own statements to the contrary.⁴⁷ In Anti-Oedipus, elements from the accounts of the dynamic genesis in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* are redistributed and remixed, but the underlying tripartite

structure remains the same. What has changed is the greatly expanded role of the body without organs. To give a summary of the operations of the unconscious, and how they build upon one another: The first *connective* synthesis involves the proliferation of partial objects and their multiple connections, and how their frenzy is countered by the body with organs. The body without organs repels the partial objects, setting up a “counter flow of amorphous and undifferentiated fluid.”⁴⁸ Here we see the great duality of lava and water, Heraclitus and Thales, Deleuze’s pre-Socratic recasting of Klein’s paranoid-schizoid position. The negative unification accomplished by the body without organs is the first step in the psyche’s liberation from the obscure and suffocating corporeal depths: the “paranoiac machine.” In the second *disjunctive* synthesis, the body without organs appropriates the partial objects as its own, recording their connections on its smooth surface. The “associative flow” of partial objects is thereby turned into “signifying chains,” yet these elements are “not themselves signifying. The code resembles not so much a language as a jargon, an open-ended, polyvocal formation.”⁴⁹ This “writing flush with the real”⁵⁰ could be compared with what Lacan calls *lalangue*, signifiers coagulated with enjoyment, and what Žižek designates, via Schelling, as the interstitial domain of “spiritual corporeality,” material fragments no longer purely bodily but not yet fully meaningful.⁵¹ At this point the body without organs undergoes an important transformation: it becomes a “miraculating machine,” “arrogating to itself both the whole and the parts, which now seem to emanate from it as a quasi-cause.”⁵² Deleuze and Guattari recycle the concept of quasi-cause from *Logic of Sense*, as the corporeal element responsible for opening and maintaining the relative autonomy of the symbolic surface, but here it is reassigned from the phallus as trace of castration to the body without organs itself.⁵³ *Anti-Oedipus* abandons the theory of castration; the symbolic no longer needs the support of a single privileged element. But this does not mean that Deleuze’s earlier psychoanalytically inspired theory of sense is entirely left behind: the problem of the passage between body and mind persists, but in a different form. The paradoxical signifier of the symbolic as such is now the whole body in its negative unity: it is the body without organs that is tasked with bringing together “the emergence of the signifier and the bizarreness of *jouissance*.” This is what takes place in the second *passive* synthesis, which effects a liberation from sheer material causality, thereby inaugurating the domain of psychic production as an independent sphere. In the third and final synthesis of *consumption* and *consummation*, the body is submitted to a further development, becoming a field of intensities. These intensities are based on gradients of attraction and repulsion produced by the prior two syntheses, the repulsion of the partial objects in the first synthesis, and their attraction onto the recording surface in the second. An intensity is something that is pushed away from and foreign to the body,

and yet produced by and recorded on it. It both belongs and does not belong to the body: intensity is this tension, whose strength is measured against the limit case of a purely tension-free body. “The forces of attraction and repulsion, of soaring ascents and plunging falls, produce a series of intensive states based on the intensity = 0 that designates the body without organs.”⁵⁴ On this field there is also produced “something of the order of a subject”⁵⁵ who enjoys or “consumes” these intensive states: the combination of an intensity with its consuming subject makes up the “celibate machine.” The notion of celibacy underlines the solitary nature of the primitive unconscious elements, their separation from the big Other, their narcissistic withdrawal. It is important that this celibate subject not be confused with Lacan’s split subject of the signifier. It is, rather, the *autos* of autoerotism, the headless subject of the drive, or—in the Neoplatonic terms favored in *Difference and Repetition*—the self-contemplation of a little ego or a mini-philosopher.⁵⁶ To sum up this process, one can say that in their account of the genesis of the unconscious as a field of solitary intensities Deleuze and Guattari formulate a transcendental hypochondriasis: the partial drives are generated out of a dynamic of repulsion and attraction in relation to the zero-degree intensity that is the body without organs, the absolute limit of desire and life.

What about the Oedipal lament, *mē phunai*, never being born? This is the key point from which to measure the distance that separates Lacanian psychoanalysis from Deleuze and Guattari’s metaphysical psychopathology: the death drive. Although both Deleuze and Guattari and Lacan cite the great malediction of *Oedipus at Colonus*, they give to this “pure and empty form of complaint” very different interpretations, which correspond to two ultimately incompatible conceptions of negativity. For Deleuze and Guattari, the negative is the power of mobility and displacement. “Never being born” means not to be this way or that, but to exist in a state of amorphous dissolution: a liquid being without parts or distinctions, a bodiless embodiment. But even this radically indeterminate state is still part of the desiring machines; it is produced alongside them, and also becomes with them. Antiproduction is an integral part of production. The negative is immanent to the positive field it affects, and does not imply a break or rupture within it, for this field is nothing but a series of ruptures and ad hoc connections, endlessly creating and re-creating themselves. Deleuze and Guattari propose a tripartite division between the body without organs, partial objects, and the organism. The desiring machines produce a structured organism capable of sustaining itself and relating to other organized beings; but they also turn on the organism that contains them, and rupture the limits in which they are confined. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, the body without organs and the partial objects are not so much opposed to each other as to the organism that they compose; while they create an organism, they also break through and escape the organization

they elsewhere submit to, and, at some primitive level, do not want to be organized at all. “Desiring-machines make us an organism; but at the very heart of production, within the very production of this production, the body suffers from being organized in this way, from not having some other sort of organization, or no organization at all.”⁵⁷ If Oedipus at Colonus is significant for Deleuze and Guattari, it is precisely because of this theme of evasion and flight: the great secret of Oedipus is the disgraced King’s wanderings in the wilderness, his reduction to a nomadic remainder. In the “crowned anarchy” that is Deleuzian ontology, the only true sovereign is the drifting partial object: “We remember Oedipus’ dirty little secret, not the Oedipus of Colonus, on his line of flight, who has become imperceptible, identical to the great living secret.”⁵⁸ For Lacan, on the other hand, the negative cannot be immediately identified with movement. It is not a matter of speed and slowness, acceleration and deceleration, attraction and repulsion, drift and flight. The unconscious is not directly definable in terms of the drives. Lacan also speaks of Oedipus at Colonus as the “beyond of Oedipus,” but for him “never being born” is not a dissolutive power that disrupts the organism’s stable forms, but a hole that can never be reconciled with the metamorphoses of life and the clamor of being. There is, at it were, an additional beat, a rupture within the continuous flow of changes and transformations, and the cuts and ruptures internal to them, a point of (logical) impossibility—which Freud detected in his interpretation of the Sophoclean lament as faulty reasoning (how could one survive one’s own nonbeing in order to proclaim it “best”?) and Lacan identified with the Sadeian fantasm of universal annihilation, the “second death” which, contra Sade, precedes the first: the void of subjectivity. Immanence is not able to close up on itself, even while there is nothing else “beyond” it. To reduce this difference to a minimal formula: either the void is the motor of the object, or else the object comes in the place of, and gives body to, the void. Either there is a direct production of the real, with its two poles of emptiness and surplus, the body without organs and the organs without bodies, or else the movement of the drives must be conceived in an oblique or twisted way, as a separation from alienation, a “failure not to be.”⁵⁹

FROM DEATH DRIVE TO DEBT DRIVE

We need to pursue Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of Oedipus a bit further. Whereas *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic and Sense* both reconceive the Oedipus complex in terms of the dynamic genesis of the unconscious, *Anti-Oedipus* situates it at a later point. The two earlier books offer highly inventive Hölderlinian and Stoic reconstructions of Freud’s original version of the complex, which already effectively “schizophrenize” the neurotic Oedipus (kill the father, sleep with the mother), so that the drama of law and transgression no longer occupies center stage. Hölderlin practically ignores incest and

parricide in his reading of the tragedy, which instead tells the story of “the mind of man going on its way under the unthinkable.” Hölderlin’s Oedipus suffers a speculative crack-up: in his sick quest for consciousness he ventures to the far reaches of Kantian subjectivity, where he discovers nothing but a pure and empty *caesura*, the impossibility of making himself rhyme. Seneca takes the place of Hölderlin in *Logic of Sense*, but the outcome is essentially the same. Hercules is a Stoic hero who seeks to vanquish the monsters of the depths and ally himself with the gods on high, yet his good intentions are ultimately rewarded by intrigue and betrayal: he too must pay the price of madness. Yet (and this is crucial) from out of this madness something new emerges. The fractured I does not splinter into chaos but is the harbinger of a self dissolved into “impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities”; the narcissistic wound is the purveyor of a more profound impersonal life. In short, the Oedipus complex is the rite of transcendental empiricism. With *Anti-Oedipus* the significance of the complex completely changes. Oedipus no longer has any part to play in the dynamic genesis, which is now entirely a matter of partial objects and the body without organs, but is equivalent to what Deleuze earlier referred to as the “Other-structure,” responsible for organizing the world of representation and assuring the identities of subjects and objects that appear within it.

Oedipus is the name of the Other; it pertains not to the realm of desiring production but social production. And indeed, one of the major accomplishments of *Anti-Oedipus* is to give new meaning to what was previously a rather abstract and thinly defined concept, fleshing out the social dimensions of the Other-structure and providing an account of its historical genesis. More precisely, Oedipus is the mode of social production in the era of capitalism; it creates subjects adequate to a world ruled by money and labor. It is important here to underline that Deleuze and Guattari do not think that psychoanalysis invented Oedipus and castration; for them the “repressive hypothesis” is not a myth. It accurately describes our historical situation, the momentous libidinal consequences of the passage from the “closed” Barbarian Empire to the “infinite” universe of Capitalist Civilization, in which the traditional figure of the master is undermined by the abstract reign (axiomatic) of Capital: “‘I too am a slave’—these are the new words spoken by the master.”⁶⁰ Deleuze and Guattari’s social-historical analysis falls outside of the scope of the present book; it deserves a close study on its own, and ought to be brought into dialogue with Lacan’s formalization of the different kinds of social links, the theory of the four discourses (five including the capitalist discourse), which also attempts to account for mutations in how authority is exercised in society and its effects on subjectivity. Without pretending to encapsulate these complex theories, I will offer just a few remarks in order to better situate Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of psychoanalysis. “Capitalism and schizophrenia” can

be understood only from the perspective of the despotic mode of social organization that it both fatally destabilizes and cynically revives. In despotism, social production is ordered by one privileged element that remains exterior to the field it governs (God, the leader, the father, the phallus, the nation, etc.). By virtue of this exceptional element, a system of relations is established in which each part has a meaning and its proper place, save for the one part that transcends this system and guarantees its consistency. In capitalism, these codes are reduced to nothing. Money subordinates everything to its flux. Capitalism provokes a generalized dissolution of social bonds, or, in Deleuze and Guattari's language, it produces a universal schizophrenia (the defining pathology at the "end of history"); but at the same time it turns against and represses its own product. While volatilizing identities and social relations, capitalism leans on and fosters a substitute pastiche order: it "re-territorializes" what was "de-territorialized," for it requires a subject sufficiently stable in order to further its flux, a "good enough" ego invested in its reproduction and devoted to a life of work and consumption. Now, according to Deleuze and Guattari, psychoanalysis is the best tool we have for understanding this contradictory situation: the libidinal dynamics, the dreams and desires, of the modern capitalist subject. Yet it is also guilty of becoming the accomplice of the historical transformation which it so penetratingly diagnoses, of sanctioning the fantasies of its patients by sublimating them into a universal structure instead of truly analyzing them, i.e., tracing these fantasies back to the partial drives that create and sustain them. Psychoanalysis "transcendentalizes" the symptom to which it ministers; it sees in the neurotic's complaint not a contingent formation but the inescapable fate of the human condition. Deleuze and Guattari's response to this is not to present a more "positive" picture of desire; rather, what they propose can be best understood as a meta-critique of psychoanalysis: there are other, more compelling things to suffer from than the family and (neurotic) lack. But one can also turn around this critique: far from confining desire within the limits of Oedipus, it is psychoanalysis that explodes the seeming necessity and naturalness of the family structure, grasping it in the light of a more general problem. The Lacanian theory of the Oedipus complex is a theory of the crisis of sovereignty, of the disordered symbolic order. Indeed, both Lacan and Deleuze and Guattari will propose a new thought of solitude or singularity against the reterritorializations and recodings of capitalist civilization—that is, instead of seeking to "humanize" or soften a world dominated by the capitalist money-drive, as so many moral philosophies do, they advance an even more "non-human" (Deleuze) or "inhuman" (Lacan) kind of drive.⁶¹

Here I wish to focus on just one critical issue, namely how Deleuze and Guattari theorize the articulation of Oedipus and desiring machines, or the joint between social production and desiring production, the molar and

the molecular. What links together these two dimensions? Oedipus is identified as the hegemonic form of social control: it blocks, distorts, and redirects the functionally dysfunctional universe of desiring machines in order to assure a more or less stable consensual reality under the ambivalent rule of the paternal law. But this repression is not simply imposed from without. On the contrary, on a deeper level it is welcomed and even positively desired by the body that is forced to submit to it. Why should this be the case? To pose the Reichian (and Spinozistic) question that Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly ask themselves: Why does desire desire its own repression? The answer is quickly forthcoming: because of the violence of the pre-Oedipal body. The turbulence and fragmentation of the body is such that it is able to gain a grip on itself only by attacking and repressing its own rebel organs. "What is ordinarily referred to as 'primary repression' means precisely that: ... this repulsion of desiring-machines by the body without organs."⁶² Desire desires its own repression because it *already* represses itself. Such is the "paranoiac" core of desiring production, wherein the body defends itself against its own forces, which are experienced as violent attacks and disorienting fragments. Far from being a natural given, embodiment is an ongoing and insoluble problem. Psychic life is caught in a tension between Stakhanovist productivity and Oblomovist antiproduction. The primary repression that the body operates on itself serves as the entry point for secondary or social repression, and explains the latter's deep-seated psychic purchase. Social production hijacks the inherent paranoia of the body and diverts it for its own purposes; it exploits this fear and feeds it in order to instigate a system of controls and corporeally anchor them. Mechanisms of social control attach themselves to and exploit the weak points of psychic life, where the body is struggling with itself and confused or frightened by the pressures exerted within and upon it. What Oedipus offers is an interpretation of these forces, an escape from the cruelty of the body into the more "civilized" suffering defined by the guilt-debt complex. In a word, death drive becomes debt drive, and the "socius" is in essence a megamachine for translating the former into the latter, thus inscribing the subject whom it "saves" ever more deeply into its debt (neoliberalism can be seen as the perfection of this development). Rather than simply preaching an affirmation of Life against its capture by externally imposed norms and ideals, the situation described in *Anti-Oedipus* is more ambiguous. The Oedipal overcoding of the body is not only repressive but also liberating, in a topsy-turvy way: it provides a false but nonetheless efficacious solution to the "explosions, rotations, vibrations"⁶³ of the partial drives, a way of mastering, at least to a certain degree, the body's machinations. Neurosis is freedom unto illness. In line with this, one could rewrite Freud's famously pessimistic formulation about the end of psychoanalysis: the point is not to turn neurotic suffering into everyday unhappiness, but to transform everyday

neurotic guilt into “innocent” schizophrenic cruelty. The psychic repression that results from the violence of the partial drives is thus the linchpin of Oedipal repression, and accounts for its “intractable”⁶⁴ character.

Primal repression, as exerted by the body without organs at the moment of repulsion, is at the heart of molecular desiring-production. Without this primal repression psychic repression in the proper sense of the word could not be delegated in the unconscious by the molar forces and thus crush desiring-production. Repression properly speaking profits from an occasion without which it could not interfere in the machinery of desire.⁶⁵

If the family is able in this manner to slip into the recording of desire, it is because the body without organs on which this recording is accomplished already exercises on its own account, as we have seen, a *primal repression* of desiring-production. It falls to the family to profit from this, and to superimpose the repression that is properly termed *secondary*.⁶⁶

It should come as no surprise that on this point Lacan and the authors of *Anti-Oedipus* are in perfect agreement. In “Television,” Lacan distinguishes between suppression and repression in a way which jibes with Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between secondary and primary repression (or social and psychic repression), while making Freud sound as if he were the first anti-Oedipalist. “Freud didn’t say that repression *comes from* suppression: that (to paint a picture) castration is due to what Daddy brandished over his brat playing with his wee-wee: ‘We’ll cut it off, no kidding, if you do it again.’”⁶⁷ So much for the supposed primacy of mommy-daddy-me: for Lacan, the image of the castrating father, along with all other forms of suppression emanating from the family and the wider social sphere, is founded on a more primordial instance of psychic repression which has nothing to do with the family per se. “Why couldn’t the family, society itself, be creations built from repression? They’re nothing less.”⁶⁸ Although he attributes this insight to Freud, it should be seen as Lacan’s major innovation with respect to the theory of Oedipus: it is not the complex which is responsible for introducing repression, but the broken Oedipal family is itself a symptom of repression; it is not fear of punishment and transgressive desire that provides the key to the complex, but rather a longing for authority that would set clear limits to *jouissance* and give desire its bearing in the world.

A PHILOSOPHICAL CLINIC

In *Cinema 2*, Deleuze writes: “Whether we are Christians or atheists, in our universal schizophrenia, we need reasons to believe in this world.”⁶⁹ This recalls a passage from Géza Róheim’s *Magic and Schizophrenia*, where he reports on the case of one of his American schizophrenic patients who thought that reality

was “like a diluted reel of film in my brain.”⁷⁰ The world is a bad movie playing in your head—who could disagree with that? Or else, the problem is not a lack of reality, the uncanny sense that the world is a poorly staged fake, but rather an excess of reality bursting out all over: “What distinguishes schizophrenic existence from that which the rest of us like to imagine we enjoy is the element of time. The schizophrenic is having it all now, whether he wants it or not; the whole can of film has descended on him, whereas we watch it progress frame by frame.”⁷¹

If we need reasons to believe in the world, presumably it is because our fundamental condition is to be thrown out of it. How to accede to the world, how to create a viable reality to live in and desire, or—to cite the title of a lecture by Philip K. Dick, himself no stranger to schizophrenia—“How to Build a Universe That Doesn’t Fall Apart Two Days Later”? On the basis of our preceding study, we can propose a kind of wild analysis of contemporary philosophy, in line with the psychoanalytic ménage à trois of desire, love, and enjoyment. Each of these possesses its own logic and, as it were, its own “reason for believing in the world.” As I discussed in the Introduction, Freud held that the human mind breaks down according to certain key fault lines, the so-called crystal principle. In a similar way, it is as if different theoretical orientations revealed an ontological decomposition according to a philosophical crystal principle: philosophy itself breaks down along different fracture lines, each of which furnishes a unique vantage point for thinking the broken totality—and the point is not to put things together into some kind of balanced whole but, rather, to pursue each “crack-up” to its logical conclusion. For Lacan there is a primacy of *desire*, and therefore of lack. To quote Deleuze again: “Western philosophy has always consisted of saying . . . desire is desire for what one does not have; that begins with Plato, it continues with Lacan.”⁷² However, the lack that is at stake here is not, at least not primarily, lack in the sense of the missing object. It is not that desire is doomed to strive after an impossible fulfillment, or fated to a transcendental gloom. Rather, what lack designates is the missing place from which the subject desires: a place or, better, “non-place” of emptiness, indifference, and disorder. To desire is to desire with this lack, whose psychic inscription and *mise en scène* is accomplished in fantasy; fantasy at its most fundamental is the fantasy of the subject’s erasure or disappearance, or rather, of the void that is the subject, a void that takes on a corporeal dimension via the partial object, the *objet a*. For Lacan, drive and desire are inextricably bound together. If I have chosen the term desire to designate his position, it is in order to put emphasis on the category of the subject and its lack of being. The crucial question for Lacan is: What will bind this lack? What will give the subject the necessary consistency in order to live and desire? How can it desire with this lack? Even though we have not engaged with the philosophy of Badiou in this study, it is not difficult to recognize in his system the

elevation of love to a position of the highest order. For Badiou, love is one of the four conditions of philosophy (together with science, art, and politics), and it is arguably love that provides the very model of the event—the surprising and disconcerting *coup de foudre*—and of fidelity to the truth procedure which investigates its consequences. Love, for Badiou, is not about a complementary or harmonious relation, but neither is it about veiling a fundamental impossibility or nonrelation. Rather, it consists in the construction of a new world on the basis of the couple, and an exploration of all that their novel encounter entails. The amorous event forever alters the situation in which it occurs, a break whose significance is revealed through the faithful pursuit of its consequences. If love is raised to the highest level, it is because the core of Badiou's thought is found in commitment and fidelity, the subject emerging only in and through the truth procedure by which the consequences of the event are unfolded. Finally, Deleuzian philosophy may be regarded as an elaborate—indeed, the most elaborate—philosophy of enjoyment. Desiring machines work and break down, they proliferate and sever connections, they polymorphously spread across a flat plane or an organless body. The dynamism proper to them is that of hypochondria, with its two poles of exhaustion and exuberance, hyposensitivity and hypersensitivity, death as the zero-degree intensity of life and life as an almost uncontainable and unlivable force. Hypochondria is the saintly form of complaint. To grasp the world *sub specie delectationis*, from the perspective of this impersonal enjoyment, is the realized ontology, and no one has gone further in conceiving the world as a ragtag collection of drifting partial objects, an id-language, an id-love, an id-freedom, and an id-life. Yet this requires an ascesis, a creative effort, a discipline, for—and this is exactly Deleuze's point—it is not easy to enjoy, it takes a lot of ingenuity, desire is not a natural or spontaneous reality, its plane has to be constructed, and it is all too easily botched up. One must have the wisdom of the Spinozistic sage, the pragmatic know-how of the American handyman, plus the guile and, more importantly, childlike luck of the Neapolitan tinkerer.

Let us examine more closely the clinical anthropology proposed in *Anti-Oedipus*. *Anti-Oedipus* retains from psychoanalysis the standard diagnostic grid of neurosis, perversion, and psychosis, but it refigures them according to a dynamic continuum rather than a fixed structural logic. The major premise of Deleuze and Guattari's clinical anthropology is that “there is no difference in nature between neuroses and psychoses,”⁷³ no chasm between madness and its more spectacular manifestations and the rituals and vacillations of neurotics, not to mention the more or less trivial slips, bungled actions, and assorted psychopathologies of everyday life. All are fundamentally patchwork machines, creations of the partial drives. What differentiates the clinical types is the manner in which the “functionally dysfunctional” process itself becomes blocked, inhibited, or otherwise derailed. Pathologies

do not correspond to the drives per se, but rather to the way the drives are encoded, the manner in which their disjointed field becomes mapped or “territorialized.” “There is no doubt that at this point in history the neurotic, the pervert, and the psychotic cannot be adequately defined in terms of drives, for drives are simply the desiring-machines themselves. They must be defined in terms of modern territorialities”⁷⁴ This is the modernity of mental illness, which belongs not only to the world of the will but also, and especially, of representation. These territorialities or representational mappings constitute, in effect, so many defensive postures vis-à-vis the “process” (in Lacanian terms, desire is a defense against *jouissance*), and Deleuze and Guattari offer a schematic account of how each pathological type relates to the body of the drives. First, neurosis is characterized by the “premature interruption of the process.” The neurotic subject halts at a certain limit, it protects itself from being swept away by something it cannot master, even as it dreams about overwhelming these limits and being overcome by desire. The neurotic retreats into a family world whose conflicts are endlessly fascinating and interpretable, so that the interminable work of analysis replaces the real construction of desire, or rather, this work itself becomes the neurotic’s plaintive joy. Criticism and critique, with their self-reflexive acumen and ever more refined schemes for posing the problem of limits and their beyond, are sublime expressions of this neurotic complaint. In perversion, on the other hand, there is a “confusion of process and goal.” The pervert creates an artificial paradise, an erotic bubble removed from everyday life whose staging and enactment becomes a goal unto itself. In this way the production of desire is transformed into erotic theater. Neurotic dialectics may be contrasted with perverse aestheticism, which can attain a high degree of artistry and sophistication, especially in its masochistic variant (sadism, on the other hand, consists in an aestheticization of reason run terrifyingly amuck). Finally, the risk of schizophrenia is that it leads to a “self-perpetuation of the process in the void.”⁷⁵ The body without organs becomes a cadaverous body whose pathways circle back to the same emptiness and the same unspeakable despair. Unable to live in this world, the psychotic, seemingly full of possibility to begin afresh, remains stuck in his own incomprehensible exile and worldlessness. Madness is an infinitely open dead end.

Despite these diagnostic differences, “each of these forms has schizophrenia as a foundation; schizophrenia as a process is the only universal.”⁷⁶ Everything is shades and variations along a single schizophrenic becoming, everything partakes in one universal process of production. Deleuze and Guattari even describe the different pathologies converting with each other in a stream of continuous metamorphoses: “After all, Oedipus was already an artificial sphere, O family! And the resistance to Oedipus, the return to the body without organs was still an artificial sphere, O asylum! So that everything is

perversion. But everything is psychosis and paranoia as well, since everything is set in motion by the counterinvestment of the social field that produces the psychotic. Again, everything is neurosis, since it is an outcome of the neuroticization that runs counter to the process. Finally, everything is process, schizophrenia as process, since it is against schizophrenia that everything is measured; its peculiar trajectory, its neurotic arrests, its perverse continuations in the void, its psychotic finalizations.”⁷⁷ Does not each of these pathologies possess its own particular greatness, its sublime dimension—even poor neurosis, which gave us the Oedipalized critic? How much more do we learn from the subtleties of interpretation, which, if it succeeds, brings us to that limit where interpretation itself stumbles, breaks down, traces its own impossibility, compared with all the repetitive talk of affects and intensities and drives? (And if this praise of neurosis sounds a little doubtful, maybe even a touch half-hearted, well . . .) The philosophy of psychopathology is like the philosophy of art, which cannot help but start with particular artworks and remake the field in their image, that is, to discover in their particularity a universal dimension. In *Logic of Sense*, it is the greatness of perversion that is at stake, whose splitting of the ego allows the pervert to live on two planes at once, the corporeal and the incorporeal, the physical and the metaphysical, the sexual and the cerebral. And for Deleuze and Guattari it is schizophrenia which is truly creative, or at least contains “the potential for revolution,”⁷⁸ because it is closest to the intensive real. In schizophrenia the narcissistic image of human being is most thoroughly demolished, thus opening new possibilities of perceiving, feeling, thinking, and living: the nonhuman sex.

The shifts and transformations Deleuze and Guattari describe, with one pathology becoming a perspective on another and then transmuting into something else, ultimately refer back to the One universal process, the omnipossible real. And on this point Deleuze and Guattari are at once very close to and very distant from Lacan. For the Lacanian clinic is also unified by a common factor, which goes by different names, the lack of being or lack in the Other or sexual nonrelation, a point of impossibility that is refracted by different defense mechanisms, according to the structure of different psychopathologies. As we already noted, here there appears a crucial difference: while Lacan’s is a structural clinic, based on rather rigid distinctions between clinical types (one is neurotic, or perverse, or psychotic, etc.), Deleuze and Guattari’s processual clinic entails a much greater degree of fluidity between different pathologies and symptomatic forms. To elucidate this further would require an examination of how Lacan takes up the Freudian notion of “choice of neurosis” (*Neurosenwahl*). Related to this is another question: should the “real” of Deleuze and Guattari, the schizophrenic process without lack or castration, be considered in contradistinction to Lacan’s “impossible real” as expressing the nonpathological or healthy (in the Nietzschean sense of great Health) core

of the drives? Are all these mutations and transformations possible because they draw on the inherent power and fecundity of the body? As Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly warn, echoing the vocabulary of R. D. Laing, the “breakthrough” and the “breakdown” are never so far apart. To cite a few telling passages: “Schizophrenia is at once the wall, the breaking through this wall, and the failure of this breakthrough.”⁷⁹ The schizophrenic process is “a kind of intrusion, the arrival of something for which there is no possible expression, something wonderful, so wonderful in fact ... that it runs the risk of coinciding with collapse.”⁸⁰ “We make a distinction between schizophrenia as a process and the way schizophrenics are produced in clinical cases that need hospitalizing. ... The schizophrenics in hospitals are people who’ve tried to do something and failed, cracked up.”⁸¹ At the beginning of his seminar of May 27, 1980, a key moment of self-assessment regarding the project of *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze acknowledges that one of the criticisms to have touched him was that of the romanticization of madness. In this seminar (but already in the book itself) Deleuze emphasizes the dangers inherent in schizophrenia as a process or journey. A process, he explains, is a movement without a preexisting destination, a voyage that creates its own path, reconfiguring the field of possibilities as it goes along: a “line of flight.” He goes on to specify that a “line of flight” is normally (I underline) a “line of life” (*ligne de vie*), an affirmative creative power, yet it also contains within itself the danger of becoming a pathway of pure destruction (*ligne de mort*): “The danger which is proper to lines of flight, and it is fundamental, the most terrible of dangers, is that the line of flight turns into a line of abolition, of destruction. That the line of flight which is normally, and insofar as it is a process, a line of life and thus should trace new paths for life, turns into a pure line of death.”⁸² Contrary to the standard affirmationist portrait of Deleuze, one should avow that his work provides a whole catalog of these dangers, whether it is, in *Difference and Repetition*, the “Sabbath of stupidity and malevolence”⁸³ that results when the “groundless ground” breaks through and directly imposes itself without the psyche being able to give it form; or, in *Logic of Sense*, the spiraling violence of the paranoid-schizoid position, the depressive longing for the lost object, and the generous desire for wholeness and reparation that must all be overcome if a phantasm is to be created; or finally, in *Anti-Oedipus*, the interruptions, artificial paradises, and empty infernos that menace the felicitous breakdowns of the desiring machines. Given these perils, one can ask the question: What will stop the process from turning out badly? To successfully construct a phantasm or to pursue a line of flight, does this require the existence of a residual ego that will guide the process from without and provide some measure of stability (this seems to me the weakest point of Deleuzian ethics)? Or will it be the process itself that decides? Is a certain discipline or even training, a dedicated practice, necessary for the process to run successfully on its own? The danger

of the line of life turning into a line of death is still a secondary derailment or blockage with respect to its creative power, a reaction against its rotations and vibrations, whirlings and explosions, dances and leaps. How can we better understand this? From a psychoanalytic perspective, Deleuzian philosophy may be regarded as one vast and highly elaborate theory of sublimation, a concept that is notoriously underdeveloped in psychoanalytic theory. Sublimation for Deleuze always begins with necessity, with something that seizes the individual and holds it in its grip. Everything starts with a compulsion, a passion, a “dark precursor,” an involuntary drive. Sublimation involves a nondestructive elaboration of this drive, in a way that is balanced on the edge of a psychic splintering yet without falling apart. In successful sublimation a secret coherence is produced that is something other than the socially sanctioned coherence of the ego: a phantasm, one’s own private chaosmos, a new delirium. The name for this process varies in Deleuze’s work: in *Difference and Repetition* it corresponds to the three-stage structure of repetition, culminating with the act which does away with the actor; in *Logic of Sense* it is the sequence castration-sublimation-symbolization-formation of a phantasm; and in *Anti-Oedipus* it is the schizophrenic process itself. This novel stance leads to a reverse perspective on the nature of psychopathology: pathologies are to be regarded not as failures of normalization (Oedipalization) but as failures of sublimation. Creativity is the new “abnormal norm.” The sick person is a failed artist, someone who attempted to do something but did not manage, whose sublimation, for whatever reason, got stuck in a rut or cracked up along the way, and the task of schizoanalysis is to take up this line anew and cast it further; that is, to crack up again, crack up better. One should accordingly modify Joseph Beuys’s famous phrase: it is not that “Everyone is an artist,” but “Everyone is a bad artist,” and instead of liberating the subject from the unconscious and its troublesome distortions, the point of analysis is to learn to make a more daring, productive, and artful use of them. It is not so much that, in his later work with Guattari, Deleuze takes the plunge from the icy perversion of the surface into the fiery schizophrenic depths, but rather, in *Anti-Oedipus*, schizophrenia becomes a sublimation of itself.

Lacan presents the problem in a different light, according to a different conception of the negative. Let us turn back to the earlier work, the Lacan of the groundbreaking Seminar III whose orthodox interpretation is one of the targets of *Anti-Oedipus*’s critique. “The notion of ‘foreclosure,’ for example, seems to indicate a specifically structural deficiency, by means of which the schizophrenic is of course repositioned on the Oedipal axis.”⁸⁴ It is no doubt true that, in one sense, Lacan equates Oedipalization with normalization. As he plainly puts it, “In order for reality not to be what it is in psychosis, the Oedipus complex has to have been lived through.”⁸⁵ Yet the Oedipus complex, while preventing the falling apart of reality in psychosis precisely

by mapping it through the family triangle and the notion of lack, is far from being a happy solution. It introduces a host of other problems—how to reconcile oneself to the “transcendental” nature of lack without falling prey to aggressive rivalry and frustration, how to situate oneself with respect to a necessarily deficient and humiliated authority, what enjoyment is there to be had “between the lines” of an unforgiving law and a disembodied symbolic? Oedipus is a failure, a highly captivating and seductive failure. And a failure made even crazier because we should be grateful for it, forever in its “debt.” As Lacan later views it, the complex itself is a symptom, an ad hoc if socially prevalent solution to the greater problem of how to bind together the different aspects of psychic reality. His search for other non-Oedipal—one could say more schizophrenic—alternatives to “the paradoxical grounding point of the Symbolic,”⁸⁶ his turn to the binding force of certain idiosyncratic formations of enjoyment or *sinthomes*, comes close to Deleuze and Guattari’s desiring machines. And in this development we can see a paradoxical affirmation of the “hedontological” identity of being and enjoyment. It is *jouissance* that grounds our groundless being. We get hooked on certain things, impressions, patterns, rhythms, words that give a warped consistency to our world, the grain of madness that provides us with our style and character, our secret coherence—whether this saves us or drives us to our doom. Yet even in the early work, one should turn around the claim that the Lacanian theory of foreclosure surreptitiously introduces a normal-neurotic standard for psychic development. It is not so much that psychosis is characterized by a defective relation to language, a faulty insertion within the symbolic order, presupposing that there is therefore a “good” one; rather, the psychotic realizes all too well and defenselessly what the true nature of this order is: a disorder in which the subject has no place, except as excluded. Perhaps the best formulation for this subject was provided by a clinical vignette: “A patient I encountered many years ago told me his identity was ‘not-Hamlet,’ and he wanted his file changed to that effect. We can see that he tried to explain that he was a Hamlet who had decided the question (to be or not to be) in favor of not-being.”⁸⁷ One cannot but admire the wit and logical finesse of this patient, whose bureaucratic demand, “File me under not-Hamlet!,” would be a stroke of comic genius if did not, in all probability, express a profound suffering and existential despair. It also makes one wonder, was not Hamlet himself already not-Hamlet, a Hamlet who had chosen not to be, which is why he could never fulfill his appointed task and act according to his mandate—for how can one ask a nonbeing to take up arms? Only a ghost could do so. And is this not the moment of falsity in the famous monologue: to pose “the question of being” as an actual choice, with arguments for and against, when in fact this existential question has always-already been decided in favor of the negative? But to be “not-Hamlet” does not exactly mean “not to be.” For to

be the Hamlet who has chosen not to be does not mean “not to be,” but to be “not-Hamlet.” Nonbeing gains a certain traction and consistency within being through the mediation of the signifier, and in particular the signifier of negation. The paradox is that what we end up with is not pure nothingness but a nothing so poor that it cannot even disappear into itself, and so persists in its very nothingness, a “full void” about which, as Kharms said, it would probably be better to stop talking. But the next best thing would be to tell again the old Jewish joke: “Never to be born would be the best thing for mortal men. Unfortunately, this happens to scarcely one person in a hundred thousand.” It is as if the psychotic were the “lucky” one in a hundred thousand who fulfilled this ancient wisdom and succeeded in not being born—not actually, of course, but virtually. For the psychotic subject (and by this I mean the subject *tout court*) still exists, or, as Lacan would say, it *ex-ists*, but in the negative mode of exile and erasure, of being thrown out of Being. “Not to be born” is lived as a strange kind of nonlife, a virtual extinction, situated both before the dawn of the world and after its end. This is the second death that precedes the first, the vanishing point of the world in which one can turn around and endlessly languish, but also that impossible point from which one speaks and something new is born.

NOTES

PREFACE

1. Michael Wex, *Born to Kvetch: Yiddish Language and Culture in All Its Moods* (New York: St. Martin's, 2005), 2–3.
2. Nancy Ries, *Russian Talk: Culture and Conversation during Perestroika* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 42.
3. *Ibid.*, 87.
4. *Ibid.*, 83.
5. *Ibid.*, 112–113.
6. “Rien ne prouve que le plaisir soit un phénomène heureux.” Georges Perros, *Papiers collés 1* (Paris: L'Imaginaire/Gallimard, 1960), 207.
7. Pedro Calderón de la Barca, *Life Is a Dream*, trans. John Clifford (London: Nick Hern, 1998), 4.
8. Wex, *Born to Kvetch*, 2.
9. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Vintage, 1993), 3.
10. Sigmund Freud, “A Difficulty in the Path of Psycho-Analysis,” in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, trans. James Strachey (London: Hogarth, 1955), 17: 142. Hereafter SE.
11. “Il est certain que les hommes se donnent beaucoup de mal pour être malheureux. Mais le sont-ils?” Perros, *Papiers collés 1*, 142.
12. I am inspired here by Mladen Dolar's recent work on negation; see “Hegel and Freud,” *e-flux journal*, no. 34 (April 2012). Available at <<http://www.e-flux.com/journal/hegel-and-freud/>>.
13. “L'humanité tient à la vie, ce qui prouve que la vie est bonne.” Henri Bergson, *Cours I Leçons de psychologie et de métaphysique* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1990), 384.

14. Philip Roth, *Portnoy's Complaint* (London: Vintage, 2005 [1969]), 94.
15. *Ibid.*
16. Jacques Lacan, Seminar XXI, *Les non-dupes errent*, session of April 23, 1974 (unpublished). A note on the unpublished seminars: I am using the texts established by the Association Freudienne Internationale. Unofficial English translations of the seminars, made by Cormac Gallagher, are available at <<http://www.lacaninireland.com/web/published-works/seminars/>>. I've consulted the original texts and the Gallagher translations.
17. Maurice Blanchot expresses this idea in a beautiful passage: "Of what do you complain, silence without origin? Why come here to haunt a language that cannot recognize you? What draws you among us, into this space where the brazen law has forever asserted itself? Is it you, that plaint not yet heard?" *The Infinite Conversation*, trans. Susan Hanson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993 [1969]), xxv.
18. Jane Wagner, *The Search for Signs of Intelligent Life in the Universe* (New York: HarperCollins, 1986), 133. There is a Montenegrin joke that plays on this idea of speech originating in complaint: "A boy was born to a Montenegrin family. As usual, all the aunts and grandmothers and cousins doted on the child and pampered him. The boy grew up, but it turned out that he didn't talk. He never uttered a single word. Time passed. One day, at a family lunch, when the boy was around twelve years old, the mother and grandmothers and aunts prepared the food, and served it to the boy first, as was their custom. The boy suddenly spoke: 'This soup is not salty enough.' And the whole family, especially the mother, grandmothers, and aunts, started to rejoice. 'Oh, you speak, my sunshine!' With tears of relief they asked him, 'But why didn't you speak before?' And the boy answered: 'Because there was nothing to complain about before.'"
19. I am alluding to a short poem by Ruth Krauss, "Complaint / Ah me! / I am the sea."
20. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book III. The Psychoses, 1955–1956*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 1993), 243.
21. Jacques Lacan, "Remarks on Daniel Lagache's Presentation: 'Psychoanalysis and Personality Structure,'" in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2006 [1960]), 552.
22. Wex, *Born to Kvetch*, 23.
23. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book II. The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis, 1954–1955*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Sylvana Tomaselli (New York: Norton, 1988), 229.
24. Sophocles, *Theban Plays*, trans. Ruth Fainlight and Robert J. Littman (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 117.
25. Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, SE 8: 57.
26. I have been unable to locate Freud's original reference to the joke in the Munich-based comic weekly *Fliegende Blätter*, but Leo Rosten recounts the Yiddish version in his classic *The Joys of Yiddish*: "Two shlemiels were discussing the meaning of life and death. Finally one sighed: 'Considering how many heartaches life holds, death is really no

misfortune. In fact, I think sometimes it's better for a man not to have been born at all! 'True.' The other nodded. 'But how many men are that lucky? Maybe one in ten thousand!'" (New York: Washington Square, 1968), 268.

27. Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, SE 8: 57.

28. We find a highly compressed formulation of this idea in Seminar XIV, *The Logic of Fantasy*: "The signifier does not designate what is not there, it engenders it. What is not there at the origin is the subject itself. In other words: at the origin there is no *Dasein* except in the *objet a*." Session of November 16, 1966 (unpublished).

29. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII. The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992), 305. I owe this reference to Alenka Zupančič.

30. See Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990), 103.

31. Julio Cortázar, *Cronopios and Famas*, trans. Paul Blackburn (New York: New Directions, 1969), 49–54.

32. Charles Muscatine, *Chaucer and the French Tradition: A Study in Style and Meaning* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1969), 26–27.

33. Jay Ruud, *Encyclopedia of Medieval Literature* (New York: Facts on File, 2006), 150.

34. See John Peter, *Complaint and Satire in Early English Literature* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1956). For the complaint tradition in Islam, see Franz Rosenthal, "Sweeter Than Hope": *Complaint and Hope in Medieval Islam* (Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1983).

35. *The Portable Chaucer*, ed. Theodore Morrison (New York: Penguin, 1977), 608.

36. *Le dur désir de durer* is the title of a collection of poems by Paul Éluard, published in 1946 (Paris: Éditions Arnold-Bordas). Lacan cites this phrase in *Seminar VII*, 309.

37. The popular Portuguese tradition of *fado* provides an interesting case. As Amalia Rodrigues, the most celebrated of *fado* singers, explained in an interview from 1994: "The Portuguese invented *fado* because we have a lot to complain about; on one side we have Spain with their swords, on the other side there's the sea, which was unknown and fearful. When people set sail, we were waiting and suffering, so *fado* is a complaint."

38. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 8.

39. Gilles Deleuze, "Bartleby; or the Formula," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 79.

40. See Gilles Deleuze, "Cinema and Thought" (1984–1985), session of January 8, 1985. Available at <<http://www.webdeleuze.com>>.

41. *Ibid.*

42. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, trans. Daniel W. Smith (London: Continuum, 2003), 49.

43. Gilles Deleuze, "The Complaint and the Body," in *Two Regimes of Madness*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007 [1978]), 165.
44. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35; French, 52.
45. "Clamour," *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd edn. [CD ROM] (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1992).
46. "Clameur," *Dictionnaire Historique de la langue française*, 4th edn., ed. Alain Rey (Paris: Les Dictionnaires Le Robert, 2011).
47. Antonin Artaud, *Van Gogh, the Man Suicided by Society*, in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976 [1947]), 489.

INTRODUCTION

1. Alain Badiou, "The Adventure of French Philosophy," *New Left Review* 35 (September/October 2005), 67–77.
2. To list my sources: for the first, see Peter Hallward, "You Can't Have it Both Ways: Deleuze or Lacan," in *Deleuze and Psychoanalysis: Philosophical Essays on Deleuze's Debate with Psychoanalysis*, ed. Leen De Bolle (Leuven: Leuven University, 2010), 33–50, and Christian Kerslake, *Deleuze and the Unconscious* (London: Continuum, 2007); the second is articulated in two articles by Sophie Mendelsohn, "Jacques Lacan—Gilles Deleuze. Itinéraire d'une rencontre sans lendemain," *Évolution psychiatrique* 69, no. 2 (2004), 364–371, and "Père, impair et passe," in *Fresh Théorie*, ed. Mark Alizart and Christophe Kim (Paris: Éditions Léo Scheer, 2005), 455–466; for the third, see Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004); and for the fourth, Daniel W. Smith, "The Inverse Side of the Structure: Žižek on Deleuze on Lacan," *Criticism* 46, no. 4 (Fall 2004), 635–650. My own approach is closest to that of Philippe Mengue; see in particular Proust-Joyce, *Deleuze-Lacan: lectures croisées* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2010).
3. Freud, "The Dissection of the Psychical Personality," SE 22: 58–59.
4. Freud, "Psycho-analytic Notes on an Autobiographical Case of Paranoia (Dementia Paranoides)," SE 12: 79.
5. Lacan, *Seminar III*, 132.
6. See Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty," in *Masochism*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone, 1991), 112–113.
7. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18: 39.
8. Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*, trans. H. T. Lowe-Porter (New York: Vintage, 1999), 284.
9. *Ibid.*
10. Italo Svevo, *Confessions of Zeno*, trans. Beryl de Zoete (New York: Vintage, 1989), 383.
11. *Ibid.*, 416.

12. Blaise Cendrars, *Moravagine*, trans. Alan Brown (New York: New York Review of Books, 2004), 23.
13. *Ibid.*, 17.
14. *Ibid.*, 16.
15. *Ibid.*, 155.
16. *Ibid.*, 68.
17. *Ibid.*, 17, 44, 184, 24.
18. *Ibid.*, 97.
19. Norbert Wiener, *Cybernetics: or Control and Communication in the Animal and the Machine* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1948), 151; emphasis added. Wiener continues: “the superiority of the human brain to others in the length of the neuron chains it employs is a reason why mental disorders are certainly more conspicuous and probably most common in man.”
20. *Ibid.*, 154.
21. Andrei Platonov, *Happy Moscow*, trans. Robert and Elizabeth Chandler (New York: New York Review of Books, 2012), 66.
22. Freud, “Thoughts for the Times on War and Death,” SE 14: 299.
23. Marquis de Sade, *Juliette*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove Press, 1968), 966.
24. *Ibid.*
25. I draw here on Deleuze’s account of negation and the two natures in Sade, in “Coldness and Cruelty,” 26–28.
26. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XVII. The Other Side of Psychoanalysis, 1969–1970*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Russell Grigg (New York: Norton, 2007), 67. See also Lacan’s commentary on Sade in *Seminar VII*, 210–214.
27. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18: 36; original emphasis.
28. Sade, *Juliette*, 981.
29. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 212. I return to this question of chance and the lucky or unlucky character of the Lacanian subject in chapter 5.
30. Alasdair MacIntyre, *The Unconscious: A Conceptual Analysis* (New York: Routledge, 2004; revised edition), 31.
31. *Ibid.*, 34, 32.
32. Lacan, *Seminar IX, L’identification*, session of June 13, 1962 (unpublished).
33. Lacan, *Seminar III*, 243.
34. Lacan, *Seminar XIX, Le savoir du psychanalyste*, session of December 2, 1971 (unpublished).
35. Lacan, *Seminar XIII, L’objet de la psychanalyse*, session of June 8, 1966 (unpublished).

36. I borrow the term “affirmationist” from Benjamin Noys, *The Persistence of the Negative: A Critique of Contemporary Continental Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).

CHAPTER 1

1. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 144.
2. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 213.
3. Jacques Lacan, “The Function and Field of Speech and Language in Psychoanalysis,” in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2006 [1960]), 206; Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 11.
4. Such a simplistic periodization is, of course, problematic. Lacan himself explicitly rejects this account in Seminar X: “I don’t believe there have ever been two phases to what I’ve taught, one phase that would supposedly be focused on the mirror stage and the imaginary, and then afterwards, at that moment of our history that is marked by the Rome Report, my supposedly sudden discovery of the signifier” (*The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book X. Anxiety, 1962–1963*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. A. R. Price [Cambridge: Polity, 2014], 30). However, in a later seminar Lacan does confirm the basic sequence: “I began with the Imaginary and, then after that, I had to chew on the story of the Symbolic, with this whole reference, this linguistic reference in which I effectively did not find everything that would have suited me, and then, this famous Real that I end up by presenting to you in the very form of the knot” (Seminar XXII, R. S. I., session of January 14, 1975 [unpublished]).
5. Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XI. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1981), 181; translation modified.
6. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 277.
7. Lacan, *Seminar XI*, 270.
8. Gilles Deleuze, “Coldness and Cruelty,” in *Masochism*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone, 1991), 111.
9. *Ibid.*, 112.
10. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18: 34–35.
11. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 150.
12. “The fact that the cortical layer which receives stimuli is without any protective shield against excitations from within must have as its result that these latter transmissions of stimulus have a preponderance in economic importance and often occasion economic disturbances comparable with traumatic neuroses.” Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18: 34.
13. Deleuze, “Coldness and Cruelty,” 115.
14. Gilles Deleuze, “Hume,” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, trans. Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 163.

15. Samuel Butler, *Life and Habit* (London: A. C. Fifield, 1910), 110.
16. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 96.
17. *Ibid.*, 97.
18. *Ibid.*, 74.
19. *Ibid.*, 97.
20. *Ibid.*, 76.
21. *Ibid.*, 78.
22. *Ibid.*, 77.
23. *Ibid.*, 74.
24. *Ibid.*, 108.
25. *Ibid.*, 75.
26. Lacan, *Seminar XVII*, 77. Lest we think that this passage is a *hapax*, it is instructive to note that Lacan repeats the same point in the following seminar: “[The pleasure principle] can only have one meaning, not too much enjoyment. Because the stuff of every enjoyment is close to suffering, that is even how we recognize its finery. If the plant was not manifestly suffering, we would not know that it was alive.” Seminar XVIII, *D’un discours qui ne serait pas du semblant*, session of March 17, 1971 (unpublished).
27. Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The German Ideology*, in *Collected Works, Volume 5 1845–1847* (New York: International Publishers, 1976), 472.
28. Giacomo Leopardi, *Zibaldone*, trans. Kathleen Baldwin, ed. Michael Caesar and Franco D’Intino (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2013), 1823.
29. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 109.
30. *Ibid.*, 82.
31. *Ibid.*, 100.
32. *Ibid.*, 84.
33. *Ibid.*, 85.
34. Marcel Proust, *Swann’s Way*, trans. C. K. Scott Moncrieff and Terence Kilmartin (New York: Random House, 1992), 65–66.
35. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 122.
36. Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 153, 154. These quotations are taken from a brilliant analysis of the scene near the beginning of Hitchcock’s *Vertigo* where Madeleine first appears to Scottie. As Žižek argues, what is fascinating about this shot is that while it is sandwiched between two subjective views it is filmed objectively, with a unrealistic aura, as if from nowhere, so that the image of Madeleine appears “in-itself”—and for that reason is all the more profoundly subjectivized. This description fits perfectly well Deleuze’s analysis of memory as partial object.

37. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 110.
38. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 101.
39. *Ibid.*, 120.
40. *Ibid.*, 101.
41. Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, 113.
42. Alain Badiou, *Deleuze: The Clamor of Being*, trans. Louise Burchill (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 63.
43. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 109.
44. *Ibid.*, 111.
45. *Ibid.*, 90.
46. The best sustained analysis of Lacan's different readings of Descartes is provided by Mladen Dolar, "Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious," in *Cogito and the Unconscious*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (Durham: Duke University Press, 1998), 11–40. Alberto Toscano goes a long way toward clarifying Deleuze's different and not quite compatible approaches to Cartesian philosophy in "Everybody Thinks: Deleuze, Descartes and Rationalism," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 162 (July/August 2010), 8–17.
47. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 75.
48. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 3.
49. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 284.
50. Dolar, "Cogito as the Subject of the Unconscious," 15.
51. It is important to observe that while both Deleuze and Lacan distinguish between the *moi* (me) and the *je* (I), they do so in different ways. For Lacan, the "me" refers to the imaginary structure of the ego, which is bound up with yet distinguishable from the symbolic character of the subject, the "I." For Deleuze, on the other hand, the "me" refers to what in Lacan is the field of the drives, while the "I" retains its position as the subject of the symbolic—although in Deleuze's case, as will become clearer through a reading of *Logic of Sense*, the symbolic is conceived quite differently than in Lacan.
52. Session of March 21, 1978. Available at <<http://www.webdeleuze.com>>.
53. *Ibid.*
54. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 86.
55. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Paul Guyer and Allen W. Wood (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 414.
56. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 87.
57. Deleuze draws on Jean Beaufret's *Hölderlin et Sophocle* (Paris: Union Générale d'Éditions, 1965), which underlines the relation between Hölderlin and Kant.

58. Friedrich Hölderlin, *Hölderlin's Sophocles*, trans. David Constance (Highgreen Manor, Hexham, UK: Bloodaxe, 2001), 64.
59. *Ibid.*, 65.
60. *Ibid.*, 68.
61. *Ibid.*, 66.
62. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 110.
63. On this philosophical Oedipus and its long history, see Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, "Oedipus as Figure," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 118 (March/April 2003), 7–17; and Jean-Joseph Goux, *Oedipus, Philosopher*, trans. Catherine Porter (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1993).
64. See Beaufret, *Hölderlin et Sophocle*, 16.
65. Hölderlin, *Hölderlin's Sophocles*, 114.
66. *Ibid.*, 68.
67. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 58.
68. *Ibid.*, 18, repeated at 105.
69. Freud, "Repression," SE 14: 148.
70. See Freud, *Inhibitions, Symptoms and Anxiety*, SE 20: 94.
71. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 18; original emphasis.
72. Joe Hughes provides a very lucid account of the three syntheses and their relation, emphasizing their Kantian, Husserlian, and Heideggerian background, in *Deleuze's Difference and Repetition* (London: Continuum, 2009).
73. Walter Benjamin, *The Arcades Project*, trans. Howard Eiland and Kevin McLaughlin (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 463.
74. Serge Leclair, "La réalité du désir," in *Écrits pour la psychanalyse, tome 1: Demeures de l'ailleurs, 1954–1993* (Paris: Seuil, 1996), 149.
75. *Ibid.*, 150.
76. *Ibid.*
77. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 358.
78. Leclair, "La réalité du désir," 146.
79. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 94.
80. Amélie Nothomb, *The Character of Rain*, trans. Timothy Brent (New York: St. Martin's, 2000), 7–8.
81. Could we not also reread *Antigone* in this light? If *Antigone* had had a third brother, there would have been no need for the calamitous burial of Polynices—recall the passage that scandalized Goethe where *Antigone* justifies her actions by saying that since her parents are dead there is no possibility of having another brother.
82. Gilles Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Zone, 1990), 237; original emphasis. One of Deleuze's *tours de force* in *Difference and*

Repetition is the way he reconciles Freud and Spinoza, precisely on the point they would seem most opposed: conatus and death drive. “Freud and Spinoza are both right: one with regard to the instinct, the other with regard to the event” (*Difference and Repetition*, 259). Freud is right about the instinct, if interpreted correctly: the Freudian death instinct is not about a return to the inorganic or the dissipation of psychic tensions (the Nirvana principle), but rather serves as the transcendental principle of repetition. “Eros and Thanatos are distinguished in that Eros must be repeated, can be lived only through repetition, whereas Thanatos (as transcendental principle) is that which gives repetition to Eros, that which submits Eros to repetition” (18). Conversely, Spinoza is right in the sense that the empirical event of death, in the prosaic sense of terminus or end point, is something that always befalls the drives from the outside. Since the drive contains nothing to imply its coming to an end—no drive seeks to extinguish itself, for its essential nature is to repeat—every ending is at least minimally violent and premature.

83. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone, 1989), 141.

84. On this point see Georges Canguilhem, *Knowledge of Life*, trans. Stefanos Geroulanos and Daniela Ginsburg, ed. Paola Marrati and Todd Meyers (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 132.

85. Deleuze, *Cinema 2*, 142.

86. Orson Welles Interviews, ed. Mark W. Estrin (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2002), 72.

87. Lacan also refers to the “dignity” of the Thing, in his definition of sublimation in Seminar VII, playing on the homophony of *dignité* and *dingité* (thingness, in a Frenchified German): “Thus, the most general formula that I can give you of sublimation is the following: it raises an object—and I don’t mind the suggestion of a play on words in the term I use—to the dignity of the Thing” (112). On this notion of dignity, see Paul Moyaert, “Moral life in times of loneliness. Does the notion of double conscience illuminate Lacan’s understanding of moral sensibility?,” in *Life, Subjectivity, and Art: Essays in Honor of Rudolf Bernet*, ed. Roland Breeur and Ullrich Melle (Dordrecht: Springer, 2012), 509–511.

88. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 37. Welles continues: “It is a question of dignity, of stature, of attractiveness, of breadth of personality, but that doesn’t justify him. In other words, this story ought to be understood as part of a drama, not as a justification of Arkadin or of murder in general. And it’s not puritanism that makes me against crime. Don’t forget I’m against the police too. As I see them, my ideas are more anarchic and aristocratic. Whatever judgment you may pass on the morality of my position, you should see its anarchic and aristocratic sides” (72–73).

89. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 19.

CHAPTER 2

1. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990), 232.

2. On this point, see Tomas Geyskens and Philippe Van Haute, *From Death Instinct to Attachment Theory: The Primacy of the Child in Freud, Klein, and Hermann* (New York: Other, 2007), 58 fn.
3. Two excellent sources for Lacan's reading of Klein are: Darian Leader, "The Depressive Position for Klein and Lacan," in *Freud's Footnotes* (London: Faber & Faber, 2000); and Marie-Claude Thomas, *Lacan, lecteur de Melanie Klein* (Toulouse: Éditions Érès, 2012).
4. If *Difference and Repetition* takes up the first determination of the death drive, telling us that "the death instinct is discovered, not in connection with the destructive tendencies, not in connection with aggressivity, but as a result of a direct consideration of repetition phenomena" (16), *Logic of Sense* starts with the more Kleinian second.
5. Edward Glover, *On the Early Development of the Mind* (New York: International University Press, 1956), 222; cited in Leader, "The Depressive Position for Klein and Lacan," 189.
6. Jacques Lacan, "Psychoanalysis and Its Teaching," in *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2006 [1960]), 374.
7. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 187.
8. *Ibid.*, 188.
9. Antonin Artaud, "To Have Done with the Judgment of God," in *Antonin Artaud: Selected Writings*, ed. Susan Sontag (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976 [1947]), 570, 571.
10. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 188.
11. *Ibid.*, 188–189.
12. *Ibid.*, 188.
13. *Ibid.*, 199.
14. *Ibid.*, 90.
15. See Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre X. L'angoisse*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 2004), 42.
16. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 203.
17. Daniil Kharmis, *Today I Wrote Nothing*, trans. Matvei Yankelevich (New York: Ardis, 2009), 45.
18. I borrow here from Emmanuel Levinas: "We want to call attention to the existential density of the void itself, devoid of all being, empty even of void, whatever be the power of negation applied to itself." *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1978), 64.
19. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 190.
20. *Ibid.*, 191.
21. *Ibid.*, 229.
22. *Ibid.*, 191.
23. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 85.

24. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 197.
25. *Ibid.*
26. *Ibid.*, 200; original emphasis.
27. *Ibid.*, 205.
28. *Ibid.*, 204.
29. *Ibid.*
30. *Ibid.*, 205.
31. *Ibid.*, 201.
32. *Ibid.*, 205.
33. *Ibid.*, 206.
34. “Why is every event a kind of plague, war, wound, or death?” Deleuze asks. “Is this simply to say that there are more unfortunate than fortunate events?” (*ibid.*, 151). Deleuze will turn around this question by arguing that it is not the content of the event that makes it catastrophic or “deadly” but, rather, its double structure (virtual/actual): in order to be equal to it, every event requires the person to undergo an impersonal death, the dissolution of the ego.
35. *Ibid.*, 238.
36. G. W. F. Hegel, *Lectures on the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975), 75.
37. A note about terminology: Deleuze’s use of the term “phantasm” (*phantasme*) follows that of Melanie Klein, who speaks of “phantasy” in her work. A 1948 paper by Susan Isaacs, “The Nature and Function of Phantasy,” generally considered definitive of the Kleinian position, distinguishes between “fantasy,” which designates conscious daydreams and the productions of the imagination, and “phantasy,” which is reserved for unconscious processes relating to part objects. Deleuze gives the term an original meaning, according to the topological scheme of depths, heights, and surface. Lacan, on the other hand, prefers the spelling *fantasme*, usually translated as “fantasy”; Deleuze’s use of “phantasm” can be seen as a way of developing Kleinian theory, while distancing himself from Lacanians (especially Laplanche and Pontalis, whose paper “*Fantasme originaire, fantasmes des origines, origines du fantasme*,” translated as “*Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality*,” he spends some time discussing). Later, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze abandons the concept of phantasm; the word does not appear in the book. Instead there is a return to the term *fantasy* (*fantasme*), but it is employed in a critical sense: desiring machines, Deleuze and Guattari tell us, are not fantasy machines; *fantasy* is a secondary organization of desire and does not belong to the molecular, intensive real. However, this does not mean that the older concept and the theoretical work it performed has disappeared entirely. It has, rather, been (schizophrenically) modified and replaced by another concept: delirium (*délire*).
38. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 220.
39. Lacan, Seminar XIV, *La logique du fantasme*, session of May 31, 1967 (unpublished).

40. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Baudelaire*, trans. Martin Turnell (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1949), 76. I draw here also on Sartre's analysis of masochism, sadism, sexual desire, and the caress in *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square, 1956), 378–408.
41. Lacan, Seminar IX, *L'identification*, session of March 14, 1962 (unpublished).
42. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 157–158.
43. *Ibid.*, 161; also 315, 319.
44. *Ibid.*, 160.
45. See, for example, these crucial lines on prudence in *A Thousand Plateaus*: “Caution is the art common to all three [dismantling the organism, significance, and subjectification—AS]; if in dismantling the organism there are times one courts death, in slipping away from significance and subjection one courts falsehood, illusion and hallucination and psychic death. . . . You have to keep enough of the organism for it to reform each dawn; and you have to keep small supplies of significance and subjectification, if only to turn them against their own systems when the circumstances demand it, when things, persons, even situations, force you to; and you have to keep small rations of subjectivity in sufficient quantity to enable you to respond to the dominant reality” (Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987], 159–160).
46. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 176. Already used in *Difference and Repetition*, the Joycean “chaosmos” is also a crucial term in Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative works *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?*. The title of Guattari's last book is *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995 [1992]). Lacan repeatedly criticizes the idea of the cosmos as a premodern notion, and argues that the psychoanalytic conception of desire can only be understood as “a-cosmic.” A deeper examination of the notion of chaosmos would be another way into the problematic relation between Lacan and Deleuze.
47. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 148.
48. Lewis Carroll, *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland and Through the Looking-Glass* (London: Penguin, 1998), 59.
49. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 212.
50. *Ibid.*, 238.
51. *Ibid.*, 211.
52. *Ibid.*, 320.
53. Pierre Klossowski, *Sade My Neighbor*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (London: Quartet Encounters, 1991), 22.
54. Freud, “The Development of the Libido and the Sexual Organization,” SE 16: 321.
55. See Sophie Mendelsohn, “Jacques Lacan—Gilles Deleuze. Itinéraire d'une rencontre sans lendemain,” *Évolution psychiatrique* 69, no. 2 (2004), 364–371; Slavoj Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 27 and *passim*.

56. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre XVI. D'un Autre à l'autre 1968–69*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 2006), 218–219. Lacan goes on to claim that Deleuze even got the reference to Stoic logic from him.
57. Lacan first presented this homage on December 31, 1966, on France Culture, under the title “A psychoanalyst comments.” I quote here from Russell Grigg’s unpublished translation, “Homage to Lewis Carroll.”
58. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 281–282; original emphasis.
59. *Ibid.*, 282. Joe Hughes has shown how much the Deleuzian conception of the Other owes to Husserl’s analysis of the structure of the perceptual world. See *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition: A Reader’s Guide* (London: Continuum, 2009), 12–14.
60. I draw here on Dominiek Hoens’s insightful paper “The Logic of Sense or the Logic of the Signifier? On Deleuze’s Interpretation of Structuralism” (unpublished).
61. Émile Bréhier, *La Théorie des incorporels dans l’Ancien Stoïcisme* (Paris: Vrin, 1928), 12–13.
62. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, 221.
63. *Ibid.*
64. *Ibid.*, 37–38.
65. Lacan, “Instance of the Letter in the Unconscious, or Reason Since Freud,” in *Écrits*, 420–421; original emphasis. “Tree,” the famous example of the sign in Saussure, is the subject of an elaborate, virtuoso reading by Lacan.
66. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre VIII. Le transfert*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 2001), 286.
67. *Ibid.*
68. From *One Night Stand* (HBO, 2005).
69. Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX. Encore 1972–73*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 1998), 31, 32.
70. Lacan, “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious,” in *Écrits*, 682.
71. *Ibid.*, 688.
72. See Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre VIII*, 286. Lacan turns around a certain romantic cliché: there is nothing, he says, that cannot be expressed in language, language has no limits; the only thing that cannot be spoken is the subject of language itself. In chapter 5 I will return to the way that Lacan, in Seminar VIII, poses the problem of the relation between language and the sexual drives.
73. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 121.

CHAPTER 3

1. "The idea of pleasure is a completely rotten (*pourrie*) idea." Gilles Deleuze, "Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities (Desire-Pleasure-Jouissance)," seminar of March 26, 1973, trans. Daniel W. Smith, *Contretemps* 2 (May 2001), 96.
2. Gilles Deleuze, "Desire and Pleasure," trans. Daniel W. Smith, in *Foucault and His Interlocutors*, ed. Arnold Davidson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 189.
3. Michel Foucault, "The Culture of the Self," lecture at the University of California Berkeley on April 12, 1983. Available at <<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/VideoTest/foucault-cult3.ram>>.
4. "There is, in fact, a joy that is immanent to desire as though desire were filled by itself and its contemplations, a joy that implies no lack or impossibility and is not measured by pleasure since it is what distributes intensities of pleasure and prevents them from being suffused by anxiety, shame, and guilt." Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 155.
5. Freud, *The Ego and the Id*, SE 19: 22.
6. Lacan, *Seminar II*, 84.
7. Deleuze, seminar of March 26, 1973, 101.
8. *Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society Volume I: 1906–1908*, ed. Herman Nunberg and Ernst Federn, trans. M. Nunberg (New York: International University Press, 1962), 239.
9. G. W. F. Hegel, *Science of Logic*, trans. A. V. Miller (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, 1969), 107.
10. I draw here on Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Speculative Remark (One of Hegel's Bons Mots)*, trans. Céline Surprenant (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 63–64.
11. Freud, *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*, SE 7: 212 fn. 1.
12. "The only appropriate word in the German language, 'Lust,' is unfortunately ambiguous, and is used to denote the experience both of a need and of gratification." *Three Essays*, SE 8: 135 fn. 2. Freud appears to have missed the opportunity here to follow his own lead as set forth in his essay "The Antithetical Meaning of Primal Words" (SE 11), and view the ambiguity of Lust as a telling instance of dream-work within language, instead of just an unfortunate conceptual confusion.
13. Deleuze, Seminar of March 26, 1973, 101.
14. I take this formulation of "two paradigms" from Gerd Van Riel, *Pleasure and the Good Life: Plato, Aristotle, and the Neoplatonists* (Leiden: Brill, 2000). My approach in what follows owes a lot to Paul Moyaert; see "What Is Frightening about Sexual Pleasure?—Introducing Lacan's *Jouissance* into Freudian Psychoanalysis via Plato and Aristotle," in *Sexuality and Psychoanalysis: Philosophical Criticisms*, ed. Jens de Vleminck and Eran Dorfman (Leuven: Leuven University, 2010).
15. Significant discussions of pleasure are found in the *Protagoras*, *Phaedo*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, *Timaeus*, and *Laws*. The *Philebus* presents Plato's most extensive and nuanced

treatment of the topic. References to Plato are to *Plato Complete Works*, ed. John M. Cooper (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1997); translation of *Philebus* by Dorothea Frede; *Laws* by Trevor J. Saunders; *Theaetetus* by M. J. Levett, rev. Myles Burnyeat; *Parmenides* by Mary Louise Gill and Paul Ryan.

16. William S. Burroughs, *Junky* (London: Penguin, 1977), xvi.

17. References to Aristotle are to *Introduction to Aristotle*, ed. Richard McKeon (New York: Modern Library, 1992); translation of the *Nicomachean Ethics* by W. D. Ross.

18. Théodule Ribot, “Sur la nature de plaisir,” *Revue Philosophique* 68 (1909), 180; my translation.

19. Alexander Lowen, *Pleasure: A Creative Approach to Life* (Alachua, FL: Bioenergetics Press, 1970), 3.

20. I am paraphrasing here Rémi Brague’s short essay, “Notes sur le concept d’ἡδουή chez Aristote,” *Les études philosophiques*, no. 1 (1976), 49–55, which effectively does provide a Heideggerian reading of Aristotle’s theory of pleasure.

21. Martin Heidegger, “Anaximander’s Saying,” in *Off the Beaten Track*, trans. Julian Young and Kenneth Haynes (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 277.

22. Lacan, *Seminar III*, 235.

23. Lacan, *Seminar XIV, La logique du fantasme 1966–67*, session of June 7, 1967 (unpublished).

24. Lacan, *Seminar XX*, 70.

25. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre XVI*, 45.

26. “I oppose to the concept of being ... the notion that we are duped by *jouissance*.” Lacan, *Seminar XX*, 70.

27. *Ibid.*

28. The usual answer would be that in modern times it is pain, not pleasure, that is associated with the “disclosure of Being”; hence Heidegger’s choice of anxiety as the fundamental mood of *Dasein*, or his later poetic meditations on Pain, and Lacan’s emphasis on symbolic castration and primary masochism. This is not incorrect, but, as I hope to make clear, it does not tell the whole story.

29. Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *The Visible and the Invisible*, ed. Claude Lefort, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1968), 151; emphasis added.

30. Brague, “Notes sur le concept d’ἡδουή chez Aristote,” 52.

31. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18: 72. No doubt the most famous example of such “unfelt pleasure” is Freud’s description of the Rat Man’s demeanor as he recounted the story of the rat torture: “At all the more important moments while he was telling his story his face took on a very strange, composite expression. I could only interpret it as one of horror at pleasure of his own of which he himself was unaware.” Freud, “Notes Upon a Case of Obsessional Neurosis,” SE 10: 166–167; original emphasis.

32. Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness*, trans. F. L. Pogson (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1971), 38.

33. Jacques Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre XXIII. Le sinthome 1975–76*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 2005), 125. See also “The Subversion of the Subject and the Dialectic of Desire in the Freudian Unconscious,” in Jacques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2006 [1960]), 680.
34. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 209.
35. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18: 7.
36. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 210–211.
37. *Ibid.*, 210, 149.
38. *Ibid.*, 149.
39. See Andrei Platonov, “The Anti-Sexus,” trans. Anne O. Fisher, *Cabinet*, no. 51 (Fall 2013), 48–53.
40. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 8: 63.
41. William Burroughs, *Naked Lunch* (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1959), 35, xvii–xviii.
42. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 182.
43. *Ibid.*, 180.
44. *Ibid.*, 179.
45. *Ibid.*, 182.
46. Is organ-pleasure necessarily accompanied by fantasy or not? According to the argument of Jean Laplanche and Jean-Bertrand Pontalis (in their essay “Fantasy and the Origins of Sexuality,” later elaborated in Laplanche’s *Life and Death in Psychoanalysis*), the specificity of human sexuality lies in the co-emergence of autoerotism and fantasy: in the turning away from functional instinct and the object of vital need there is equally a turning toward a fantasmatic universe that has its own specific structure and psychic reality. The disconnection of organ-pleasure from the satisfaction of needs, or drive from instinct, goes together with the constitution of subjectivity in fantasy. Freud’s position on this matter, however, is ambiguous. Certain passages in the *Three Essays* support their view: “[T]he behavior of a child who indulges in thumb-sucking is determined by a search for some pleasure which has already been experienced and is now remembered” (181). However, Freud also states that autoerotism in the strict sense is without any external object. In his correspondence with Jung he writes: “By definition, the libido is not autoerotic as long as it has an object, real or imagined.” *The Freud/Jung Letters*, ed. William McGuire, trans. Ralph Mannheim and R. F. C. Hull (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974), 46. Elsewhere we read: “Freud states that as a rule we characterize as ‘autoerotic’ only the first two years of life; the masturbation of the subsequent period, with its fantasies about other persons, is no longer purely autoerotic, but constitutes an intermediate stage between autoerotism and object love.” *Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society Volume IV: 1912–1918*, ed. Herman Nunberg and Ernst Federn, trans. M. Nunberg (New York: International University Press, 1962), 25. This supports the position of Deleuze and Guattari, that “desiring-machines are not fantasy-machines or dream-machines.”

Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 43. I shall return to this problem in chapter 5.

47. Freud, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, SE 18: 52.

48. “The processes that restore us to our natural state are only incidentally pleasant; for that matter the activity at work in the appetites for them is the activity of so much of our state and nature as has remained unimpaired.” *Nichomachean Ethics* 1152b34–39; emphasis added. See on this point Van Riel, *Pleasure and the Good Life*, 66.

49. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 209.

50. Apart from the *Three Essays*, on this point see “Anxiety and Instinctual Life,” SE 22: 98; and *An Outline of Psychoanalysis*, SE 23: 155.

51. Freud, *Three Essays*, 210.

52. *Ibid.*, 211.

53. *Ibid.*, 149–150. *Vorlust* thus has an impulsive character, which is why Freud deems it to be more intense than its infantile equivalent: the stimulation of the erogenous zones “demands an increase of pleasure” (210), which can be satisfied only with genital orgasm.

54. Freud, *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, SE 8: 137.

55. *Ibid.*, 125.

56. *Ibid.*, 131.

57. “If we do not require our mental apparatus at the moment for supplying one of our indispensable satisfactions, we allow it itself to work in the direction of pleasure and we seek to derive pleasure from its own activity. I suspect that this is in general the condition that governs all aesthetic ideation, but I understand too little of aesthetics to try to enlarge on this statement.” *Ibid.*, 95–96.

58. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 210.

59. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Latin Text and English Translation*, vol. 20, *Pleasure* (Ia2ae. 31–39) (London: Eyre, 1975), 55.

60. *Ibid.*

61. *Ibid.*, 59.

62. This accords with Freud’s view that “pleasure and sexual tension can only be connected in an indirect manner.” *Three Essays*, 212.

63. Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae: Pleasure*, 57.

64. *Ibid.*

65. Freud, *Three Essays*, 181 fn. 1.

66. *Ibid.*, 151 fn. 1.

67. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks*, ed. Rüdiger Bittner, trans. Kate Sturge (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), May–July 1885, §35 [15], 18.

68. *Ibid.*, 1888, §14 [174], 264; original emphasis.

69. Well before the Nietzschean will to power, another candidate suggests itself as a philosophical precursor of what Freud calls primary masochism: curiosity. Not curiosity in the limited intellectual sense but in the broad sense of the term employed in Christian philosophy, as an unbounded inquisitiveness for thoughts, impressions, sensations, and experiences. As Saint Augustine writes in Book X of the *Confessions*, curiosity suspends the pleasure principle understood as the soul's spontaneous tendency to seek pleasure and avoid pain: "We can easily distinguish between the motives of pleasure and curiosity. When the senses demand pleasure, they look for object of visual beauty, harmonious sounds, fragrant perfumes, and things that are pleasant to the taste or soft to the touch. But when their motive is curiosity, they may look for just the reverse of these things, simply to put it to the proof, not for the sake of an unpleasant experience, but from a relish for investigation and discovery." *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (London: Penguin, 1961), 242.
70. Freud, "The Economic Problem of Masochism," SE 19: 159.
71. A more detailed investigation of the reality principle would be another way into the complex problem of pleasure in Freud. Usually the reality principle is understood in terms of the psyche's adjustment to external reality, but its significance cannot be limited to a simple adaptive function. The real impact of the reality principle is to modify the action of the pleasure principle by retarding its movement. If the pleasure principle stands for the frenzy of immediate satisfaction, the reality principle introduces a new reality to the psyche, the pleasure of delay. This slowed-down, lingering pleasure is what medieval philosophers called *delectatio morosa*.
72. See Jacques Lacan, "Of Structure as an Inmixing of an Otherness Prerequisite to Any Subject Whatever," in *The Structuralist Controversy*, ed. Richard Macksey and Eugenie Donato (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1970), 194–195.
73. Lacan, *Seminar XIV, La Logique du Fantôme*, session of June 14, 1967 (unpublished).
74. See Moyaert, "What Is Frightening about Sexual Pleasure?," 30–32.
75. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2002), 99–100.
76. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 139.
77. *Ibid.*, 388.
78. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 202. In *Jokes and Their Relation to the Unconscious*, Freud similarly writes of the child's "joy in movement" (*Bewegungsfreudigkeit*), SE 8: 226.
79. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 201, 202.
80. *Ibid.*, 204.
81. *Ibid.*, 203, 204–205.
82. William James, *Principles of Psychology Volume I* (New York: Dover, 1950), 457–458. Subsequent quotations are from 458.
83. See Freud, *Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood*, SE 11: 78–81.
84. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21: 79; emphasis added.

85. *Ibid.*, 79–80.

86. To refer back to my analysis of children's questions in chapter 2: if the question without an answer is what characterizes the logic of the signifier, the answer without a question defines the object in the real, the *objet petit a*. I will return to this in chapter 5.

87. Following the Freud-Hegelian inspiration, we can trace a rough historical development of the relationship between desire and satisfaction as follows. The external contradiction between desire and satisfaction is what characterizes Greek hedonism, whose most striking image is provided by Plato in the leaky pitcher of Danaïdes. The overcoming of this contradiction in an immanent relation is accomplished by the Christian cultivation of *desire*, with its two exemplary figures of mystical contemplation (the perfect marriage of desire and satisfaction) and adulterous passion (the joy of the impossibility of enjoyment, dying from not dying of desire). Finally, it is with Psychoanalysis that the essential disjunction between the two terms is rendered explicit, through the concept of the *symptom* which brings together unfulfilled or frustrated desire with unwanted and unenjoyable satisfaction.

88. My interpretation of Plato's notion of true pleasure is another way of developing Alenka Zupančič's comparison of a love encounter with the structure of jokes; see *The Odd One In: On Comedy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 133–135.

89. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Notes from Underground*, trans. Richard Pevear and Larissa Volokhonsky (London: Vintage, 1993), 17.

90. Lacan, *Seminar II*, 233.

91. Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity: An Essay on Hume's Theory of Human Nature*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), x.

92. On the concept of normative pressure, the work of Eric Santner is decisive; see most recently *The Royal Remains: The People's Two Bodies and the Endgames of Sovereignty* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), xx–xxii, and *passim*.

CHAPTER 4

1. Franz Kafka, "A Hunger Artist," in *The Complete Stories*, ed. Nahum N. Glatzer, trans. Willa and Edwin Muir (New York: Schocken, 1971), 277.

2. Lacan, *Seminar XI*, 180; translation modified.

3. Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990), 39.

4. Freud, "On Narcissism: An Introduction," SE 14: 89.

5. Pierre Klossowski, *The Revocation of the Edict of Nantes*, trans. Austryn Wainhouse (New York: Grove, 1969), 175.

6. Lacan provides a simple example of this structure: the ideal ego is the privileged son at the wheel of a sports car, playing the part of the reckless daredevil, while the ego ideal is the pretty girl for whom this display of bravado is staged. The gaze of the big Other, Lacan states, is always virtually present as mediating the "pathetic

oscillation” between the ego and the image with which it identifies. See *Le Séminaire*, livre VIII, 397–398, 412.

7. Gilles Deleuze, “To Have Done with Judgment,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 133.

8. Could we not, after all, include the hunger artist in this list of examples? Even though he says that he could find no food to his liking, the hunger artist’s fasting might be understood not so much as a matter of lack as an astonishing and almost inhuman power, the force of starvation that knows no bounds or limits, not even those of the physical body. I examine the problem of fasting in Kafka in greater depth in *How to Research Like a Dog: Kafka’s New Science*, forthcoming.

9. Stephen P. L. Clark, *Aristotle’s Man: Speculations upon Aristotelian Anthropology* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1975), 178. For a list of modern critics of the narcissistic interpretation of Aristotle’s God (many of them Catholics), see W. K. C. Guthrie, *A History of Greek Philosophy*, vol. 6, *Aristotle: An Encounter* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 261 fn. 2.

10. See Rémi Brague’s informative essay “Le destin de la ‘Pensée de la Pensée’ des origines au début du Moyen Âge,” in *La Question de Dieu selon Aristote et Hegel*, ed. Thomas de Koninck and Guy Planty-Bonjour (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1991), 153–186.

11. Freud, *Three Essays*, SE 7: 182.

12. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 126.

13. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 57, 87.

14. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 377.

15. Freud, “Instincts and Their Vicissitudes,” SE 14: 137.

16. In fact we should add one further dimension to this list, revealed most radically in melancholia: the mystery of “love and attachment.”

17. Lacan, *Seminar XI*, 268.

18. Deleuze refers to the “communication of unconscious” at a few points in *Anti-Oedipus*; in a footnote he claims the problem was first posed in Letter 17 of Spinoza to Balling; see 276.

19. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2002), 66.

20. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 35.

21. *Ibid.*, 189.

22. “Love’s a state of, and a relation between, persons, subjects. But passion is a subpersonal event that may last as long as a lifetime (‘I’ve been living for eighteen years in a state of passion about someone, for someone’), a field of intensities that

individuates independently of any subject. Tristan and Isolde, that may be love. But someone, referring to this Foucault text, said to me: Catherine and Heathcliff, in *Wuthering Heights*, is passion, pure passion, not love. A fearsome kinship of souls, in fact, something not altogether human (who is he? A wolf ...). It's very difficult to express, to convey—a new distinction between affective states.” “A Portrait of Foucault,” in *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 116. In *Logic of Sense* Deleuze argues, in a Kleinian way, that love and hate “do not refer to partial objects, but express the unity of the good and whole object” (191).

23. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (London: Penguin, 1990), §260.

24. *Ibid.*

25. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 100.

26. *Ibid.*, 100–101.

27. Walter Benjamin, “Surrealism,” in *Reflections*, trans. Edmund Jephcott (New York: Schocken, 1978), 181.

28. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues II*, 90.

29. Gilles Deleuze, “Re-presentation of Masoch,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998), 53.

30. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 156–157.

31. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 152.

32. Freud, “On the Universal Tendency to Debasement in the Sphere of Love,” SE 11: 187.

33. Lacan, *Seminar IX, L'identification*, session of March 14, 1962 (unpublished).

34. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 152.

35. *Ibid.*

36. *Ibid.*, 111; see also *Seminar XI*, 179, where Lacan distinguishes between the aim of the drive (“the way taken”) and its goal.

37. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 152.

38. *Ibid.*, 153.

39. For this comparison, see Gilles Deleuze, “Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities (Desire-Pleasure-Jouissance),” seminar of March 26, 1973, trans. Daniel W. Smith, *Contretemps 2* (May 2001), 97–98; Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 157; and Gilles Deleuze, *Seminar* of May 27, 1980, “Anti-Ce'dipe et autres réflexions.” A transcript of this seminar is available at <<http://www.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/>>.

40. Alexandra Kollontai, “Make Way for Winged Eros: A Letter to Working Youth,” in *Selected Writings*, trans. Alix Holt (New York: Norton, 1977), 282.

41. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 153.

42. *Ibid.*, 128.

43. *Ibid.*, 151.

44. *Ibid.*, 121.
45. *Ibid.*, 215.
46. Honoré de Balzac, *Lost Illusions*, trans. Ellen Marriage (Digireads.com, 2010), 232.
47. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 163.
48. Osip Mandelstam, "On the Addressee," in *Modern Russian Poets on Poetry*, ed. Carl R. Proffer, trans. Jane Gary Harris (New York: Ardis, 1976 [1913]), 52.
49. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 56.
50. *Ibid.*, 55.
51. Antonin Artaud, *The Theater and Its Double*, trans. Mary Caroline Richards (New York: Grove, 1958), 142–143.
52. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre IV. La relation d'objet*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1994), 69.
53. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre V. Les formations de l'inconscient*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller (Paris: Seuil, 1998), 188. On good and bad will, see Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 103–104.
54. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 106.
55. Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 28.
56. *Ibid.* Incidentally, Foucault uses the same imagery in his "A Preface to Transgression," published five years earlier: "Perhaps it is like a flash of lightning in the night which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies; which lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation, its harrowing and poised singularity. The flash loses itself in this space it marks with its sovereignty and becomes silent now that it has given a name to obscurity." "A Preface to Transgression," in *Aesthetics, Method, and Epistemology: Essential Works of Foucault 1954–1984*, vol. 2, ed. James D. Faubion (New York: The New Press, 1998 [1963]), 74. While Foucault's point is essentially the same as that of Deleuze, it is ironic that he derives it through an examination of the notion of transgression, a concept that Deleuze vigorously rejects.
57. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 152.
58. In the sense of Jean Genet: "Solitude, as I understand it, does not mean a miserable condition, but rather a secret royalty, a profound incommunicability, but a more or less obscure knowledge of an unassailable singularity." "The Studio of Alberto Giacometti," in *Fragments of the Artwork*, trans. Charlotte Mandell (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 51.
59. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, xix.
60. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 156.
61. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 110.
62. *Ibid.*, 93.
63. *Ibid.*, 215.

64. Lacan, *Seminar XI*, 95.
65. Lacan, *Seminar VII*, 296.
66. First articulated in *Seminar XVII*: “What the master’s discourse uncovers is that there is no sexual relation” (116).
67. Lacan, *Seminar XX*, 69.
68. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 336.
69. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square, 1956), 620; original emphasis.
70. Gilles Deleuze, “He Was My Teacher,” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, trans. Mike Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 77.
71. Lacan, *Seminar II*, 223; translation modified.
72. For the later Deleuze, both these poles are defined by the body without organs: “The BwO is desire; it is that which one desires and by which one desires” (*A Thousand Plateaus*, 165). I will further elaborate this point in chapter 5.
73. Jean-Paul Sartre, *The Family Idiot*, vol. 1, trans. Carol Cosman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), 137–138.
74. Friedrich Engels similarly argued that because of their habituation to human language, domestic pets do gain a certain ability to communicate, and even “feel their inability to speak as a defect.” *Dialectics of Nature*, in *Collected Works*, vol. 25 (London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1987), 455.
75. Deleuze, “Instincts and Institutions,” in *Desert Islands*, 21.
76. *Investigating Sex: Surrealist Research, 1928–1932*, ed. José Pierre, trans. Malcolm Imrie (London: Verso, 1992), 89. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze redubs the Freudian lost object the virtual object, while separating its genesis from any kind of prohibition. “The never-lived reality of the Virgin,” as he writes, is bathed in the pathos of neither the forbidden nor the impossible, but rather, as the virtual part subtracted from any actual woman, acts as a principle of desire’s mobility and displacement (84).
77. Deleuze, “Instincts and Institutions,” 21.
78. Sartre, *The Family Idiot*, vol. 5, trans. Carol Cosman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 21.
79. Sartre, *The Family Idiot*, vol. 2, trans. Carol Cosman (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987), 205.
80. Sartre, *The Family Idiot*, vol. 1, 346.

CHAPTER 5

1. Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, ed. Stéphane Nadaud, trans. Kéline Gotman (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 404.
2. See François Dosse, *Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives*, trans. Deborah Glassman (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 316.

3. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (London: Bloomsbury, 2013), 155. It was Vincent Descombes who remarked that “In the anti-Hegelian works of Deleuze, and the Kojévian works of Bataille and Blanchot, exactly the same diagnosis is to be found.” *Modern French Philosophy*, trans. L. Scott Fox and J. M. Harding (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1980), 175.
4. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 164.
5. Alphonse De Waehlens and Wilfried Ver Eecke, *Phenomenology and Lacan on Schizophrenia: After the Decade of the Brain* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 2001), 304; original emphasis. De Waehlens’s book was originally published under the title *La Psychose. Essai d’interprétation analytique et existentielle* (Louvain: Nauwelaerts, 1972).
6. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 42.
7. See David Morris, “This is the End of the Sixties!,” *Cabinet*, no. 44 (Winter 2011/2012), 24–27.
8. Gilles Deleuze, “On Anti-Oedipus,” in *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 14.
9. Deleuze, “Letter to a Harsh Critic,” *ibid.*, 6.
10. “L’Anti-Œdipe est une variation sur un thème de Lacan, la critique de l’oedipianisme naïf, enrichie d’un éloge, non sans humour, de la schizophrénie. C’est d’ailleurs une progéniture que Lacan a reconnue, tout en la taxant de délirante.” Interview with François Ewald, *Magazine Littéraire*, no. 271 (November 1989), 24.
11. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 107.
12. *Ibid.*, 15.
13. Gilles Deleuze, Seminar of May 27, 1980, “Anti-Œdipe et autres réflexions,” <<http://www.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/>>. It should be noted that as late as 1970, Deleuze believed his approach to be compatible with the Lacanian concept of foreclosure. The shift can be clearly traced in the two versions of Deleuze’s essay on Louis Wolfson. The first, published as a preface to Wolfson’s book *Le Schizo et les langues*, refers approvingly to the notion of the foreclosure of the name of the father as a key aspect of Wolfson’s psychosis; the second version, reworked for the collection *Critical and Clinical* and published some twenty-three years later, in 1993, eliminates this reference in favor of a Lucretian vision of the schizophrenic “continually rewriting *De natura rerum* [sic]” (“Louis Wolfson; or, The Procedure,” in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco [London: Verso, 1998], 17). For a detailed account of this, see Judith Revel, “Deleuze, lecteur de Wolfson: petites machines de guerre à l’usage des tribus à venir,” *Futur Antérieur* 25–26 (1995), 253–263.
14. Cornelius Castoriadis, “The Construction of the World in Psychosis,” in *World in Fragments: Writings on Politics, Society, Psychoanalysis, and the Imagination*, ed. and trans. David Ames Curtis (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1997), 209–210.
15. Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Baines and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 64.

16. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 14.
17. *Ibid.*, 11.
18. Deleuze, Seminar of May 27, 1980, "Anti-Œdipe et autres réflexions."
19. Henri Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. R. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton (London: Macmillan, 1935), 255–256.
20. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 62.
21. *Ibid.*, 17–18. See Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Savage Mind* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1966), 16–36.
22. Els van Dongen, *Worlds of Psychotic People: Wanderers, 'Bricoleurs' and Strategists* (London: Routledge, 2004), 25–25 and *passim*.
23. Kludge (or kluge) is a term that has become popular in evolutionary neuroscience to describe ad hoc fixes that are not the exception but the "unruly rule" of the development of complex living systems. See David J. Linden, *The Accidental Mind: How Brain Evolution Has Given Us Love, Memory, Dreams, and God* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007); and Gary Marcus, *Kluge: The Haphazard Construction of the Human Mind* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2008). For an earlier take on this, see François Jacob, "Evolution and Tinkering," *Science*, n.s. 196, no. 4295 (June 10, 1977), 1161–1166.
24. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 19.
25. Alfred Sohn-Rethel, "Das Ideal des Kaputten. Über neapolitanische Technik," in *Das Ideal des Kaputten* (Frickingen: Verlag Ulrich Seutter, 2009), 34.
26. Freud, *Civilization and Its Discontents*, SE 21: 25.
27. See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 198; Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (London: Athlone, 1990), 60.
28. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 85, 108.
29. *Ibid.*, 71.
30. *Ibid.*, 72.
31. *Ibid.*, 70.
32. Philippe Van Haute and Tomas Geyskens have pursued this same project, producing a more detailed reading of Freud and Lacan than that of Deleuze and Guattari. Van Haute shows how the introduction of the Oedipus complex occults Freud's earlier insights into infantile sexuality, and is responsible for a veritable "turn" in his work: "The Oedipus complex, as Freud defines it, undoes the radical opposition between infantile and adult sexuality, and as a result makes it possible to think in developmental terms. More specifically, the reintroduction of a normative and essentialist definition of 'normality' is the inevitable counterpart of this shift. It is therefore—at least this is my hypothesis—the introduction of the Oedipus complex in the 1920s which explains the *Kehre* in Freud's text." "The Introduction of the Oedipus Complex and the Reinvention of Instinct: Freud's *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*," *Radical Philosophy*, no. 115 (September–October 2002), 8. For a more exhaustive treatment of this

theme, see Van Haute and Geyskens, *A Non-Oedipal Psychoanalysis? A Clinical Anthropology of Hysteria in the Works of Freud and Lacan* (Leuven: KU Leuven, 2012).

33. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 39 fn.

34. *Ibid.*, 69.

35. *Ibid.*, 40, 342, 349.

36. *Ibid.*, 49.

37. *Ibid.*, 352.

38. Lacan, *Seminar XI*, 169.

39. *Ibid.*, 181–182.

40. Lacan, *Le Séminaire, livre VIII*, 253, 254.

41. See Lacan, *Seminar XIII, L'objet de la psychanalyse*, session of April 27, 1966 (unpublished). “We have situated the topological place of desire sufficiently with respect to demand for you to conceive of what I mean when I say, I am speaking about another aspect, in connection with the function of two other objets *a*, namely, the gaze and the voice. In these two couples an opposition is made which, from the subject to the Other, can be situated as follows: the demand of the Other, is the objet *a* feces; the demand to the Other, is the objet *a* breast. Now, the same opposition exists, even though it cannot fail to appear more obscure to you, since I have not explained it. There are also some forms, such that the obscurity is not about the desire of the Other, which you will already immediately sense is supported by the voice, as about this desire to the Other which represents a dimension that I hope to be able to open to you, in connection with the gaze.”

42. Lacan, *Seminar XI*, 266.

43. *Ibid.*, 176–177.

44. Gilles Deleuze, “Eight Years Later: 1980 Interview,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Ames Hodges and Mike Taormina (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2007), 175.

45. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 18–19; emphasis added.

46. An important exception to this neglect is Jean-François Lyotard’s essay “Energumen Capitalism,” trans. James Leigh, *Semiotext(e)* 2, no. 3 (1977), 25–26.

47. In his later comments on *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze distances himself from the way he distinguished surface and depth in his prior work. “*Anti-Oedipus* no longer has height or depth, nor surface. In this book everything happens, is done, the intensities, the events, upon a sort of spherical body or scroll painting: *The Organless Body*” (“Author’s Note for the Italian Edition of *Logic of Sense*,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 65–66; original emphasis). “I’ve undergone a change. The surface-depth opposition no longer concerns me. What interests me now is the relationship between a full body, a body without organs, and flows that migrate” (“*Nomadic Thought*,” in *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974*, trans. Mike Taormina [New York: Semiotext(e), 2004], 261).

48. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 20.

49. *Ibid.*, 53.
50. *Ibid.*, 107.
51. Slavoj Žižek, *The Abyss of Freedom/Ages of the World* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 47.
52. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 21.
53. This was pointed out by Steven Shaviro, in *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009), 125–126, fn. 14.
54. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 33.
55. *Ibid.*, 28.
56. The Lacanian category of the subject is missing from Deleuze’s universe; or rather, it is explicitly rejected. Even the fractured I, the closest analogue in his work to Lacan’s subject, is not really equivalent to the subject divided by language. It is rather the transcendental principle of the dispersion of the self, the relation between the fractured I (*le Je fêlé*) and the dissolved self (*le moi dissous*) mirroring that between the “death instinct” and the multiplicity of partial drives—or, in the terminology of *Anti-Oedipus*, the body without organs and the desiring machines. As Deleuze writes elsewhere: “We believe that the notion of the subject has lost much of its interest in favor of pre-individual singularities and non-personal individuations” (“Response to a Question on the Subject,” in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 351; original emphasis).
57. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 19.
58. Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2002), 46. See also Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 290.
59. Here I am in agreement with Philippe Mengue, when he distinguishes Lacan’s real as the gap in the symbolic, the lack of being instigated by language, from the virtual intensities and pure becomings that compose the Deleuzian real. See Proust-Joyce, *Deleuze-Lacan: lectures croisées* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2010), 87–94. Catharine Diehl also makes an incisive observation regarding Deleuze’s structuralism, showing how Deleuze shifts the meaning of Lacan’s lack from a hole in being to a principle of mobility and displacement. See “The Empty Space in Structure: Theories of the Zero from Gauthiot to Deleuze,” *diacritics*, Volume 38, Number 3, Fall 2008, 112–114.
60. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 292.
61. One can isolate a number of key moments in Lacan’s engagement with the question of the Oedipus complex: his commentary on *Oedipus at Colonus* in Seminar II; his detailed structural interpretation of the complex in Seminars IV and V; his reading of Paul Claudel’s *Coüfontaine Trilogy* in Seminar VIII, in which he discusses the modernity of the Oedipus complex in relation to the theme of humiliated authority, and the emergence of the partial object at the place of the Other’s lack; his criticism of Oedipus as Freud’s myth, and his replacement of this mythology by a new theory of discourse, in which the function of the father is analyzed in terms of the discourse of the master, in Seminar XVII; and finally Lacan’s work on Joyce and the alternate model of symbolic nomination, the *sinthome*, in Seminar XXIII. One might say that

just as there is Deleuze and Guattari's anti-Oedipus, so there is an anti-Oedipus of Lacan. But their deconstructions of the complex lead to different results.

62. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 20.
63. *Ibid.*, 59.
64. *Ibid.*, 25.
65. *Ibid.*, 386.
66. *Ibid.*, 144; original emphasis.
67. Jacques Lacan, "Television," trans. Denis Hollier, Rosalind Krauss, and Annette Michelson, *October*, no. 40 (Spring 1987), 31–32; original emphasis.
68. *Ibid.*, 32.
69. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 2: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Robert Galeta (London: Athlone, 1989), 172; original emphasis.
70. Géza Róheim, *Magic and Schizophrenia*, ed. Warner Muensterberger (New York: International Universities Press, 1955), 165.
71. Philip K. Dick, "Schizophrenia and the Book of Changes," in *The Shifting Realities of Philip K. Dick: Selected Literary and Philosophical Writings*, ed. Lawrence Sutin (New York: Vintage, 1995), 176; original emphasis.
72. Gilles Deleuze, "Dualism, Monism and Multiplicities (Desire-Pleasure-Jouissance)," Seminar of March 26, 1973, trans. Daniel W. Smith, *Contretemps* 2 (May 2001), 101.
73. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 151.
74. *Ibid.*, 49.
75. *Ibid.*, 85.
76. *Ibid.*, 162.
77. *Ibid.*, 414.
78. *Ibid.*, 388.
79. *Ibid.*, 162.
80. Gilles Deleuze, "Capitalism and Schizophrenia," in *Desert Islands*, 240.
81. Deleuze, "On Anti-Oedipus," 23.
82. Deleuze, Seminar of May 27, 1980, "Anti-Œdipe et autres réflexions."
83. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 152.
84. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, 68.
85. Lacan, *Seminar III*, 198.
86. Dominiek Hoens and Ed Pluth, "The sinthome: A New Way of Writing an Old Problem?," in *Reinventing the Symptom: Essays on the Final Lacan*, ed. Luke Thurston (New York: Other Press, 2002), 12.
87. R. D. Hinshelwood, *Suffering Insanity: Psychoanalytic Essays on Psychosis* (East Sussex: Brunner-Routledge, 2004), 73–74.

INDEX

NAMES

- Allen, Woody, 48, 110
Aquinas, Thomas, 115–116
Aristotle, 4, 5, 42, 87, 93, 98, 101–109, 111–113, 115, 118, 124, 126, 130–131
Artaud, Antonin, 23, 24, 75–76, 86, 141, 150
Augustine, Saint, 201fn
- Bacon, Francis, 23
Badiou, Alain, 23, 27, 174–175
Balzac, Honoré de, 129, 140, 144
Baudelaire, Charles, 85, 118
Beckett, Samuel, 20, 30
Benjamin, Walter, 67, 137
Bergson, Henri, 7, 28, 34, 52, 57–58, 59, 60, 62, 98, 107, 158
Blanchot, Maurice, 122, 184fn
Bleuler, Eugen, 146
Bousquet, Joe, 86, 87
Brague, Rémi, 198fn, 203fn
Bréhier, Émile, 92
Burroughs, William, 23, 102
Butler, Samuel, 52, 53, 55
- Calderón de la Barca, Pedro, 3–4
Carroll, Lewis, 90
Castoriadis, Cornelius, 157
Cendrars, Blaise, 34, 36–37, 45, 70
Chaucer, Geoffrey, 19–20
C.K., Louis, 94–95
Cortázar, Julio, 18

- David, Larry, 3, 124
 Descartes, René, 52, 61–64, 190fn
 De Waehlens, Alphonse, 153, 154
 Dick, Philip K., 174
 Diderot, Denis, 65
 Dolar, Mladen, 183fn, 190fn
 Dostoevsky, Fyodor, 4, 123
- Éluard, Paul, 20, 138, 185fn
 Engels, Friedrich, 56, 206fn
- Ferlinghetti, Lawrence, 17
 Fitzgerald, F. Scott, 86, 97
 Foucault, Michel, 97, 98, 154, 205fn
- Genet, Jean, 205fn
 Geyskens, Thomas, 193fn, 208–209fn
 Guattari, Félix, 28, 29, 154, 155–156, 157, 195fn
- Hegel, G. W. F., 63, 83, 85, 98, 100–101, 131, 154, 165, 202fn, 207fn
 Heidegger, Martin, 103–104, 145, 174, 181
 Hoens, Dominiek, 196fn, 211fn
 Hölderlin, Friedrich, 52, 63–65
 Hughes, Joe, 191fn, 196fn
 Hume, David, 52, 150
 Husserl, Edmund, 8, 157
- James, William, 119–120
 Jaspers, Karl, 31, 157
- Kafka, Franz, 127, 129, 151, 203fn
 Kant, Immanuel, 4, 32, 50, 52, 54, 61, 62–63, 65, 89, 132, 139, 153–154, 170, 191fn
 Keaton, Buster, 23
 Kharms, Daniil, 77, 181
 Klein, Melanie, 28, 59, 73–74, 75–76, 78–79, 80, 84, 90–91, 142, 167, 193fn, 194fn, 204fn
 Klossowski, Pierre, 129
 Kojève, Alexandre, 2, 154, 207fn
 Kollontai, Alexandra, 138–139
 Kraepelin, Emil, 146
 Krauss, Ruth, 10
- Laing, R. D., 23, 28, 157, 178
 Laplanche, Jean, 84, 90, 149, 194fn, 199fn
 Leclair, Serge, 68–69, 71, 133
 Leibniz, Gottfried Wilhelm, 24, 121
 Leopardi, Giacomo, 56
 Levinas, Emmanuel, 193fn

Lowen, Alexander, 103
Lubitsch, Ernst, 11
Luther, Martin, 144

MacIntyre, Alasdair, 42
Mandelstam, Osip, 140
Mann, Thomas, 34–35
Marx, Groucho, 132
Marx, Harpo, 141
Marx, Karl, 6, 56
Mendelsohn, Sophie, 186fn, 195fn
Mengue, Philippe, 186fn, 210fn
Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, 106, 147
Miller, Jacques-Alain, 105, 156
Moyaert, Paul, 192fn, 197fn, 201fn

Nietzsche, Friedrich, 12, 17, 29, 36, 37, 70, 71, 85, 86, 98, 108, 116–117, 124, 136, 137, 138,
151, 154, 177, 201fn
Nothomb, Amélie, 191fn

Perros, Georges, 3, 5, 107
Pessoa, Fernando, 6, 88
Plato, 79, 93, 97–98, 101–109, 110–111, 115, 118, 120–123, 152
Platonov, Andrei, 38–39, 110
Pontalis, Jean-Bertrand, 84, 90, 194fn, 199fn
Proust, Marcel, 52, 58–59

Ribot, Théodule, 103
Ries, Nancy, 2
Roth, Philip, 7, 9, 21
Różewicz, Tadeusz, 118

Sade, D. A. F., marquis de, 39–42, 56, 134, 169
Sartre, Jean-Paul, 85, 87, 102, 135, 146–152
Schopenhauer, Arthur, 30, 38, 102, 111
Seneca, Lucius Annaeus, 81, 170
Sohn-Rethel, Alfred, 159
Sophocles, 13, 65
Spinoza, Baruch, 11–12, 23, 70, 91, 98, 155, 160, 191–192fn, 203fn
Svevo, Italo, 35–36

Tolstoy, Leo, 81

Valéry, Paul, 103
Van Haute, Philippe, 193fn, 208–209fn
Van Riel, Gerd, 197fn, 200fn

- Wagner, Jane, 9
 Welles, Orson, 69–71, 129, 192fn
 Wex, Michael, 1, 12
 Wiener, Norbert, 37–38
 Wilde, Oscar, 101
 Žižek, Slavoj, 83, 87, 167, 186fn, 189fn, 195fn
 Zupančič, Alenka, 185fn, 202fn

SUBJECTS

Animals

- beast, humanized, 149–151
- cat, 127–130, 151–152
- dog, 130, 151–152
- domestic, 148–150, 151–152
- fish, 10
- frog, 69–70
- lions' mouths, 10
- scorpion, 69–71
- sick, 15, 37–38, 160
- unstable difference with humans, 150

Answers. *See also* Questions

- the only thing that makes a philosopher sad, 122
- without questions, 122, 165, 201fn

Art

- of complaining, 11, 17
- of fasting, 127, 202–203fn
- nonrelational aesthetics, 129
- painting in the Louvre, 129, 131, 132
- as sublimation, 120

Attachment theory. *See* Detachment theory

Autoerotism, 74, 80, 84, 112–113, 114, 123, 124, 131, 168, 199fn

Being

- thrown out of, 144, 145, 174, 181

Body

- embodiment as a problem, 43, 172
- inherent power of, 90–91, 146, 155, 178
- and mind, 48, 82, 84, 91, 165, 167
- no one knows what it can do, 23, 125, 146, 148, 158
- primacy of sensibility, 48–49

Body without organs. *See also* Organs without bodies

- and Artaud, 75–76
- compared to the Thing, 143–144
- greatly expanded role of, 96, 167–168
- as quasi-cause, 167

- seat of the primitive ego, 77, 78, 80, 90
 as a whole less than the subtraction of its parts, 77–78, 90
- Capitalism, 170–171
- Chaosmos, 87, 144, 179, 195fn
- Clinical anthropology, 33–34, 42–45, 74, 85–86, 87, 89, 132, 155–156, 160–161, 173–181
- Complaining, 1–25. *See also* Kvetching; Never being born
 clamor of being as, 24
 criticism and critique as sublime expressions of, 176
 Greeks and Jews, 14
 about love, 19–20, 137
 pure and empty form of, 12–13, 24, 168
 what is happening is too much for me, 16–18, 21, 23, 25
- Counter-actualization, 88. *See also* Freedom
- Courtly love, 19–20, 21, 136–141, 142–146. *See also* Thing
 amatory complaint, 19–20, 137
 parody of, 20
 psychoanalysis compared to, 21
- Crystal principle, 30–31, 39, 43, 174
- Culture. *See also* Symbolic order
 education, discipline, and resuscitation as three concepts of, 124–126
 the problem of entering into, 150, 151
 relation to nature, 149–150, 152
- Curiosity, 64, 120, 200–201fn
- Death drive, 32–37, 38–42, 63, 70, 75, 110–111, 125, 172, 193fn. *See also* Never being born; Second death
 contra Bergson, 7, 34
 death instinct (Deleuze), 52, 61, 63, 67–68, 74, 84, 90, 107, 125, 191–192fn
 literature of, 34–37, 41
 Sadeian, 39–42
 as stuckness, 70–72
 two conceptions, contrasted, 168–169
- Debt drive, 172, 180
- Desire
 desires its own repression, 155, 172–173, 176
 dialectic of, 1, 113, 163–166
le dur désir de durer, 20, 138
 Freudo-Hegelian matrix, 100–101, 121–123, 202fn
 and lack, 1–3, 12, 16–17, 21, 42, 45, 49, 51, 55, 60, 78, 81, 91, 93, 96, 97–98, 101, 111,
 122–123, 127, 137–138, 146–148, 151, 160, 162, 174
 the lava and the water, 79, 167
 normal, 42–43
 of the Other, 43, 82, 90–91, 129, 142, 163–166
 positive concept of, 16–17, 22, 45, 97–98, 127, 136–138, 142–144, 150, 155, 171, 175
 relation to drive (Lacan), 99, 163–166

- for reparation, 81, 83, 178
 - as revolutionary, 118, 125, 177
 - same as Lacan's enjoyment, 44, 118
- Desiring machines, 32, 68–69, 158–159
 - celibate machine, 28, 69, 113, 168
 - equivalent to drives, 162
 - miraculating machine, 167
 - paranoiac machine, 167, 172
 - work by breaking down, 159, 161, 163, 166, 172, 175
- Detachment theory, Lacanian psychoanalysis as, 141
- Difference, 25, 37, 50, 51, 54, 59, 61, 64–66, 83, 84, 91, 142–143
- Drive, 2–3, 9, 10, 12, 17, 22–23, 33, 37, 39, 44, 47–48, 52, 54–56, 57–60, 61–62, 66–68, 69–72, 73–74, 76, 78, 79–87, 89, 91, 93, 98–99, 111–120, 124–126, 127, 133, 138, 139, 143–144, 148, 152, 155, 160–166, 168–169, 171, 172–180. *See also* Death drive; *Energiea*; Partial object
 - key concept in Deleuze-Lacan debate, 49–50, 162–163
 - noetic, 132
 - philosophy as, 107–109, 131
 - relation to desire (Lacan), 163–166
 - as wonky Rube Goldberg contraption, 163
- Ego, 4–5, 16–17, 51, 106–107, 118–119, 124, 126, 127–130, 132, 133, 134–136, 147, 157, 171, 178, 179. *See also* Narcissism
 - global ego, 54, 56–57, 61, 68, 80, 158
 - mini-ego (micro-ego, component soul, larval self, mini-philosopher), 53–57, 61, 62, 67, 68, 80, 125, 168
 - primitive bodily, 77, 78, 80, 90
 - three kinds, compared, 80
- Energiea*, 39, 103, 104, 107, 124, 125, 130
- Enjoyment (*jouissance*). *See also* Pleasure and anxiety, 85–86, 118
 - bizarreness of, 43–44, 50–51, 73, 91, 167
 - Deleuze and, 44, 118, 175
 - distinguished from pleasure (*plaisir*), 117–118
 - doesn't respect limits, 109
 - forgetting of, 104
 - naturalization of, 126
 - no golden mean, 3, 87, 109, 117–118
 - relation to different psychopathologies, 85–86, 176
 - as self-loss, 3–4, 85–86, 106–107
 - in terms of Plato and Aristotle, 109, 118
- Enjoy your symptom, 87–88, 91
 - Heideggerian version of, 104
- Event, 18, 73, 79, 82, 88, 89, 92–93, 96, 160, 175
 - of the birth of thought, 73, 82–83
 - catastrophe as model for, 82, 91, 194fn

Exception

- Kantian joke about, 132
- real, 129, 132, 161
- that proves the rule, 132, 161

Fantasy, 41, 44, 55, 61, 85, 113, 122, 128, 156, 162, 194fn, 199–200fn. *See also* Phantasm
fundamental, 15, 91, 151, 174

Freedom, 51, 65, 75, 88–89, 172, 175

God(s)

- compared with a junky, 111
- feel neither pleasure nor pain, 105, 121
- intellectual complaint of, 11–12
- as self-thinking thought, 105, 130–131

Habit, 52–56, 57, 58, 61, 62, 67, 68, 74, 80, 97, 125

- fatigue as limit of, 55, 125
- as a poor form of life, 125

Hamlet. *See* Not-Hamlet

Health, 17, 30, 34, 35, 42, 72, 87, 103

- great, 45, 86, 177
- as normalized form of sickness, 36–37

Hedontology, 105, 132, 180

Hypochondria, 22–23, 24, 93, 168, 175

- Deleuze's missing lecture course on, 23

Imaginary, 9, 11, 15, 17, 43, 49, 61, 72, 74, 77, 90, 129, 135, 140, 162, 188fn, 190fn

- mirror Gestalt/stage, 54, 61, 77–78, 80, 90, 129, 139

Incest, 13, 64, 169

- prohibition against, 150, 160
- restoration, 81–82

Indifference and Repetition, 143

Interobjectivity, 132–133

Kvetching, 4. *See also* Complaining

- Deleuze's philosophy and, 15–16
- etymology of, 17
- in a single voice, 25
- and truth, 7

Lack. *See* Desire; Drive; Neurosis; Thing

Lalangue, 162, 167

Language, 7–10, 21–22, 32, 33, 43–44, 45, 48–50, 61, 73–74, 78–79, 84, 88, 89–96, 148–
151, 154, 155, 157, 162, 164–165, 167, 175, 180–181. *See also* Lalanque; Sense; Signifier

Law, 12, 21, 23, 39–42, 43, 65, 75, 89, 96, 123–124, 129, 132, 150, 155, 157, 160, 161, 169,
172, 180. *See also* Transgression
of the mother, 142

Lethargy, 38–39, 123–126

Life

as disease, 32–37

as duty, 39, 124, 125–126

sustained by pleasure, 55, 102–103, 104, 113–114, 124–125

virtual, 45, 146

Line of flight, 158, 169, 178

Love. *See also* Courtly love

according to Badiou, 175

from the Freudian perspective, 133–134, 203fn

between mutually compatible symptoms, 134–136, 145–146

as passion, 136, 146

Lust. *See also* Pleasure; *Vom Wesen der Lust*

Freud's trouble theorizing, 99–101, 109–110, 114, 117, 121, 122

speculative sense of, 100–101, 116, 122–123, 160–161

Mala stabilizacija, 118

Masochism, 28, 32, 117–118, 133, 137, 147, 198fn, 200–201fn

Masturbation. *See also* Autoerotism

accompanied by fantasy or not, 113, 199fn

intellectual, 131

machine for, 110

Memory, 52, 55, 57–61, 67, 68, 74, 97, 189fn

as autonomous temporal organs, 60

and forgetting, 61

Mē phunai. *See* Never being born

Mr. Arkadin, 69, 192fn

Mojo, 128

Narcissism

of the drive, 54, 56–57, 80, 127–128, 129–131, 132, 134, 139, 140, 168

of the ego, 61, 80, 83, 84, 127–128, 129, 130, 134, 135, 139, 144, 170, 177

Nature

in pain, 10, 34–35, 56

relation to culture, 149–150, 152

Neurosis, 4–5, 6, 21, 22, 23, 31, 34, 36, 42, 43, 45, 51, 65, 81, 85–86, 87, 89, 116, 120,

126, 128–129, 131, 132, 133, 146, 148, 154–155, 156, 157, 169, 171, 172–173, 175–177, 180

greatness of, 22, 177

neurotic complaint, 4–5, 171

Never being born, as the best thing, 12–15, 40, 56, 166, 168–169, 181

Normality

everyone is following a normal and natural development, 43

as regulated madness, 30, 158

three types of normal desire, 42–43

Not-Hamlet, 180–181

Objet *a*, 44, 91, 161, 162–165, 174, 185fn, 209fn. *See also* Organs without bodies; Partial object

Oblomov, 124, 126, 166, 172. *See also* Stakhanov

Oedipus, 13, 15, 35–36, 63–65, 81, 168–169, 170
 beyond Oedipus, 13, 169

Oedipus complex, 16, 74, 80–84, 86, 91, 95, 142, 154, 161, 169–170, 171, 172–173, 179–180, 208–209fn, 210fn
 and capitalist subjectivity, 170–171
 as the rite of transcendental empiricism, 170

Optimism, 6–7, 9, 15. *See also* Pessimism

Organs without bodies, 143–144, 152, 169. *See also* Body without organs; *Objet a*; Partial object

Other-structure, 91–92, 162, 170, 196fn

Pain, 7, 10, 13, 32, 33, 86, 99, 198fn
 of being, 13
 of the lily in the field, 56

Partial object, 15, 49, 59–60, 73, 75–76, 78, 84, 87–88, 90–91, 132–133, 134–135, 152, 161–164, 166–170, 175, 189fn, 210fn. *See also* *Objet a*; Organs without bodies
 many names for, in Deleuze, 91
 memory as, 59–60
 paradigmatic forms of, 59, 164
 phallus as, 83

Perversion, 4, 28, 34, 42–43, 44, 45, 74, 85–89, 113, 124, 133, 156, 161, 175–177, 179
 Lacan's definition of, 89

Pessimism, 6–7, 9, 147. *See also* Never being born

Pet existentialism, 149

Phallus, 43, 59, 80–84, 91, 167, 171
 the most sophisticated phallogocentrism, 82

Phantasm, 74, 83–84, 86, 91, 178, 179, 194fn. *See also* Fantasy

Philosophy
 as best pleasure, 98–99, 107–109, 130–132
 breaks down according to desire, love, and enjoyment, 174
 history of ancient, as stages of child development, 79, 93
 oldest joke about, 108–109
 relation to psychoanalysis, 27–28

Pleasure. *See also* Enjoyment; Hedontology; Lust; Sublimation; Theory of pleasure
 Aristotle on, 98, 101–109, 111–114, 115, 118, 124, 130–131
 that cannot be felt as such (neurotic unpleasure), 5, 106–107, 198fn
 can't be trusted, 102, 109, 118–119
 end-pleasure, 110–111, 115, 125, 137
 forepleasure, 114–119, 125, 137–138
 history of, 98–99, 101–109
 of the lily in the field, 55–56
 ontological versus ontic, 104
 organ-pleasure, 48, 111–114, 118, 125, 199fn

- Plato on, 101–109, 110–111, 115, 118, 121–123
 pleasure-in-movement, 119–120
 as rotten idea, 97
 true, 102, 121–123
 why so much trouble with, 3, 42–45, 50–51, 68, 85–86, 100–101, 105, 106–109, 117–118, 122–123, 125, 132, 138, 160–161, 175
- Pleasure principle, 32, 33, 50–52, 53–55, 56, 68, 97, 99, 110–111, 114–115, 117–118, 123, 125, 138, 201fn
 forepleasure principle, 114–115
 relation to reality principle, 56, 68, 117, 201fn
 as unpleasure principle, 99, 123
- Psychoanalysis
 compared to courtly love, 21
 as monologue for two, 21
 relation to philosophy, 27–28
- Psychopathia Metaphysica*, 155
- Psychopathology, 22, 30, 34, 37, 42–43, 66, 85, 154–156, 160, 168, 177, 179
- Quasi-cause, 83, 91, 96, 167
- Questions. *See also* Answers
 without answers, 94, 96, 122, 165, 201fn
 children's, 93–96
- Real, 7, 9, 10–11, 17, 22, 30, 43, 49, 51, 68–69, 125, 135, 139, 142, 143, 146, 156, 162, 166, 167, 169, 177, 188fn, 194fn, 202fn, 210fn
 delirious realism, 32, 156–159
 exception, 129, 132, 161
- Recognition
 dialectics of, 2–4, 21, 128, 133, 140–141
- Repetition, 11, 32, 33, 51–52, 54, 57–58, 65–68, 72, 75, 84, 125, 179, 191–192fn
- Repression, 6, 111–112, 115, 124, 126, 129, 150, 155, 156, 160, 172–173
 primal or primary, 65–68, 165, 172–173
 as tragedy and farce, 6
- Schizophrenia, 22, 23, 31–32, 63, 65, 76, 79, 81, 132, 146, 153–181
 infinitely open dead end, 176
 as a sublimation of itself, 157, 179
 theory of foreclosure, 154, 156–157, 179–180
- Schizophrenic process, 154, 156–161, 177–179
- Second death, 40, 42, 43, 169, 181
- Secret coherence, 51, 87, 179
- Self-thinking thought, 131, 132
- Sense, 44, 73–74, 76, 78–79, 83, 90, 92–93, 96, 167
 Deleuzian universe full of, 96, 144
 Freudian nonsense, 11
 Leclairean nonsense, 69

- pleasure in nonsense, 114–115
- pre-sense, 79
- speculative (*see* Lust)
- under-sense, 76, 79, 90
- Sexuality, 23, 43, 47, 57, 59, 60, 79–80, 82–85, 88, 89, 100, 107, 110, 112–113, 114–120, 124, 133–134, 138, 145–146, 161, 163, 165, 177, 199fn, 208fn
 - adult sexuality as Thomistic, 115
 - Anti-Sexus, 110
 - infantile, 114–115, 117, 119–120, 161
 - the nonhuman sex, 146, 177
 - sources of, 112, 119
 - there is no sexual relation, 145, 146, 206fn
- Signifier, 8–10, 11, 32, 43–44, 48–49, 69, 73, 82, 84, 91–96, 125, 144, 149, 156, 157, 162, 164–165, 167–168, 181
 - emergence, and the bizarreness of enjoyment, 43–44, 73, 91, 167
- Solitude, 133, 134, 143, 171, 205fn
- Soul, 131, 165
- Stakhanov, 166, 172. *See also* Oblomov
- Stoics, 79, 81, 87, 92–93, 169–170, 196fn
- Subject
 - divided, split, barred (Lacan), 7–9, 10, 15, 22, 32, 41–42, 43–44, 49, 62, 96, 131, 165–166, 180–181, 185fn, 190fn, 196fn, 210fn
 - fractured I and dissolved self (Deleuze), 62, 64–65, 73, 80, 170, 190fn, 210fn
 - headless, of the drive, 49, 59, 62, 163, 165, 168
- Sublimation, 74, 84, 86–87, 90, 99, 120, 138, 144, 163, 192fn
 - courtly love as, 139, 144
 - Deleuzian philosophy as extended theory of, 179
 - and pleasure, 86–87, 120–123, 163
- Superego
 - vitalism of, 39, 124, 125–126
- Symbolic order. *See also* Culture; Language
 - as disorder, 11, 44, 96, 146, 165, 171, 180
 - imperative nature of, 48, 95–96, 125–126
 - primacy of, 10, 48–49
- Symptoms, 5–6, 22, 31, 76, 87–88, 105, 120, 123, 162, 171, 173, 180. *See also* Enjoy your symptom
 - mutually compatible, 134–136, 145–146
- Theory of pleasure, as the pleasure of theory, 99, 132
- Thing
 - compared to the body without organs, 143–144
 - as emptiness, indifference, and disorder, 139–142, 148, 150, 151, 174
 - Lady as, 139–140, 144
- Time, 6, 38, 41–42, 52, 60, 61, 66, 74, 79, 122
 - autonomous temporal organs, 60
 - future, 52, 68

- past, 57–58, 60
- present, 52, 55, 57
- retroactive, 67, 122, 150, 158
- Tinkering, 113, 159
- To be or not to be, 13, 125–126, 180
- Transcendental empiricism, 50, 67, 170
- Transgression, 12, 50, 65, 89, 97, 109, 129, 161, 169, 205fn. *See also* Law
- Truth, structured like a complaint, 7–9

- Virtual
 - extinction, 41, 45, 181
 - life, 45, 146
 - objects, 52, 57, 60, 91, 206fn
- Vitalism
 - of the superego, 39, 124, 125–126
- Vom Wesen der Lust, 103–104