

A LIFE OF PURE IMMANENCE

DELEUZE'S "CRITIQUE ET CLINIQUE" PROJECT

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The critical (in the literary sense) and the clinical (in the medical sense) may be destined to enter into a new relationship of mutual learning.¹

Although *Essays Critical and Clinical* is the only book written by Gilles Deleuze that is devoted primarily to literature, literary references are present everywhere in his work, running parallel, almost, to the philosophical references. These include the books on Proust, Masoch, and Kafka; the long essays on Bene and Beckett and Bene; the chapter in *Dialogues* "On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature"; and the profuse literary references in *The Logic of Sense* and *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

What role do these literary analyses play in Deleuze's philosophical oeuvre? In *What is Philosophy*, Deleuze and Guattari define philosophy as an activity that consists in the creation of concepts. But philosophy, they add, necessarily enters into variable relations with other domains such as science, medicine, and art. For art is an equally creative enterprise of thought, but one whose object is to create sensible aggregates rather than concepts. Great artists and authors are also great thinkers, but they think in terms of percepts and affects rather than concepts: painters think in terms of lines and colors, musicians think in sounds, film-makers think in images, writers think in words, and so on. Neither activity has any privilege over the other: creating a concept is neither more difficult nor more abstract than creating new visual, sonorous, or verbal combinations; and conversely, it is no easier to read an image, painting, or novel than it is to comprehend a concept. Philosophy, Deleuze insists, cannot be undertaken independently of science and art; it always enters into relations of mutual resonance and exchange with these other domains, though for reasons that are always internal to philosophy itself.²

Deleuze therefore writes on the arts not as a critic but as a philosopher, and his books and es-

says on the various arts, and on various artists and authors, must be read, as he himself says, as works of "philosophy, nothing but philosophy, in the traditional sense of the word."³ The cinema, for instance, produces images that move, and that move in time, and it is these two aspects of film that Deleuze set out to analyze in *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image*: "What exactly does the cinema show us about space and time that the other arts don't show?"⁴ Deleuze describes his two-volume study of the cinema as "a book of logic, a logic of the cinema" that sets out "to isolate certain cinematographic concepts," concepts that are specific to the cinema, but that can only be formed philosophically.⁵ *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation* likewise creates a series of philosophical concepts, each of which relates to a particular aspect of Bacon's paintings, but which also finds a place in "a general logic of sensation."⁶ *Essays Critical and Clinical* must therefore be evaluated in the same manner, that is, in terms of the concepts Deleuze extracts from the literary works he examines. But if the *Cinema* volumes deal primarily with space and time, and *Francis Bacon* with the nature of sensation, Deleuze's writings on literature, it seems to me, are primarily linked with the problematic of *Life*. "You have seen what is essential for me," Deleuze wrote to one of his commentators, "this 'vitalism' or a conception of life as a non-organic power."⁷

For Deleuze, *Life* is an impersonal power that goes beyond one's personal life or lived experience, and writing itself, he says, is "a passage of *Life* that traverses both the livable and the lived."⁸ In one of the last essays he published before his suicide in November 1995, entitled "Immanence: A Life . . .", Deleuze wrote of a scene from Charles Dickens *Our Mutual Friend*. A rogue despised by everyone is brought in on the verge of death, and the people tending to him suddenly manifest a kind of respect and love for the least sign of life in the dying Dickens writes: "No one has the least regard for the man; with them all, he has been an object of avoidance, suspicion, and aversion; but the

spark of life within him is curiously separate from himself now, and they have a deep interest in it, probably because it *is* life, and they are living and must die.”⁹ As the man revives, his saviors become colder, and he recovers all his crudeness and maliciousness. Yet “between his life and his death,” comments Deleuze, “there is a moment that is no longer anything but *a* life playing with death. The life of an individual has given way to an impersonal and yet singular life that disengages a pure event freed from the accidents of the inner and outer life, that is, from the subjectivity and objectivity of what happens. A *homo tantum* with whom everyone sympathizes, and who attains a kind of beatitude. This is an haecceity, which is no longer an individuation but a singularization: *a life of pure immanence*, neutral, beyond good and evil.”¹⁰

This latter phrase leads us to the second point, namely, that the notion of an impersonal Life also functions as an ethical principle in Deleuze’s thought. Throughout his works, Deleuze has drawn a sharp distinction between ethics and morality.¹¹ He uses the term “morality” to define, in general terms, any set of “constraining” rules, such as a moral code, that consists in judging actions and intentions by relating them to transcendent or universal values (“this is good, that is evil”). What he calls “ethics” is, on the contrary, a set of “facilitative” [*facultative*] rules that evaluates what we do, say, and think according to the immanent mode of existence it implies. One says or does this, thinks or feels that: what mode of existence does it imply?¹² As both Spinoza and Nietzsche argued, each in their own manner, there are things one cannot do or think except on the condition of being weak, base, or enslaved; and there are other things one cannot do or say except on the condition of being strong, noble, or free. The transcendent moral opposition between “Good and Evil” is in this way replaced by an immanent ethical distinction between “good and bad.” “*Beyond Good and Evil*,” wrote Nietzsche, “at least that does *not* mean ‘Beyond Good and Bad.’”¹³ The “Bad” or sickly life is an exhausted and degenerating mode of existence, one that judges life from the perspective of its sickness, that devaluates life in the name of “higher” values. The “Good” or healthy life, by contrast, is an overflowing and ascending form of existence, a mode of life that is able to transform itself depending on the forces it encounters, always in-

creasing the power to live, always opening up new possibilities of life. For Deleuze, every work of art implies a way of living, a mode of life, and must not only be evaluated critically but also clinically. “Style, in a great writer,” he writes, “is always a style of life too, not anything at all personal, but inventing a possibility of life, a way of existing.”¹⁴

It was in his 1967 essay *Coldness and Cruelty* that Deleuze first posited this link between literature and life, that is, between the critical and the clinical, and he did so in the context of a concrete problem: Why were the names of two literary figures, Sade and Masoch, used by nineteenth-century clinicians to denote two fundamental “perversions” in psychiatry? This encounter between literature and medicine was made possible, Deleuze argues, by the peculiar nature of the symptomatological method in medicine. Medicine can be said to be made up of at least three different activities: symptomatology, or the study of signs; etiology, or the search for causes; and therapy, or the development and application of a treatment. While etiology and therapeutics are integral parts of medicine, Deleuze suggests that symptomatology appeals to a kind of limit-point that belongs as much to art as to medicine.¹⁵ In medicine, illnesses are usually named after doctors rather than patients (Parkinson’s disease, Alzheimer’s disease, and so on). The principles behind this labeling process deserve close analysis. The doctor obviously does not “invent” the disease, but rather is said to have “isolated” it: he or she distinguishes cases that had hitherto been confused by dissociating symptoms that were previously grouped together, and by juxtaposing them with others that were previously dissociated. In this way, the doctor constructs an original clinical concept for the disease: the components of the concept are the symptoms, the signs of the illness, and the concept becomes the name of a syndrome, which marks the meeting place of these symptoms, their point of coincidence or convergence. When a doctor gives his or her name to an illness, it constitutes an important advance in medicine, insofar as a proper name is linked to a given group of symptoms or signs.

The fundamental idea behind Deleuze’s “critique et clinique” project is that authors and artists, like doctors and clinicians, can themselves be seen as symptomatologists. If Krafft-Ebing, in 1869, was able to use Masoch’s name to desig-

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nate a perversion, it was not because Masoch "suffered" from it as a patient, but rather because his literary works isolated a particular way of existing and set forth a novel symptomatology of it. Freud made use of Sophocles in much the same way when he created the concept of the "Oedipal complex," or of Shakespeare when he wrote of Hamlet.¹⁶ "Authors, if they are great, are more like doctors than patients," writes Deleuze, "We mean that they are themselves astonishing diagnosticians or symptomatologists. There is always a great deal of art involved in the grouping of symptoms in the organization of a *table* [tableau] which a particular symptom is dissociated from another, juxtaposed to a third, and forms the new figure of a disorder or illness. Clinicians who are able to renew a symptomatological picture produce a work of art; conversely, artists are clinicians, not with respect to their own case, nor even with respect to a case in general; rather, they are clinicians of civilization."¹⁷ It was Nietzsche who first put forward the idea that artists and philosophers are physiologists or "physicians of culture."¹⁸ And indeed, Deleuze strongly suggests that artists and authors can go farther in symptomatology than doctors and clinicians, precisely "because the work of art gives them new means, perhaps also because they are less concerned about causes."

This point of view is very different from many "psychoanalytic" interpretations of writers and artists, which tend to treat authors, through their work, as possible or real patients, even if they are accorded the benefit of "sublimation." Artists are treated as clinical cases, as if they were ill, however sublimely, and the critic seeks a sign of neurosis like a secret in their work, its hidden code. The work of art then seems to be inscribed between two poles: a regressive pole, where the work hashes out the unresolved conflicts of childhood, and a progressive pole, by which the work invents paths leading to a new solution concerning the future of humanity, converting itself into a "cultural object." From both these points of view, there is no need to "apply" psychoanalysis to the work of art, since the work itself is seen to constitute a successful psychoanalysis, either as a resolution or a sublimation. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that this infantile or "egoistic" conception of literature, with its imposition of the "Oedipal form" on the work of art, has been an important factor in the reduction of literature to an

object of consumption subject to the demands of the literary market.²⁰

In 1967, Deleuze saw *Coldness and Cruelty* as the first installment of a series of literary-clinical studies: "What I would like to study," he said in an interview, "[and] (this book would merely be a first example) is a articulable relationship between literature and clinical psychiatry."²¹ The idea was not to apply psychiatric concepts to literature, but on the contrary to extract non-preexistent concepts from the works themselves. Ten years later, Deleuze would ask, if we can speak of "Sadism" and "Masochism," why can we not also speak of "Kafkaism," "Proustism," "Beckettism" or even "Spinozism" and "Nietzscheism" along the lines of a generalized clinic? From this point of view, almost all of Deleuze books, whether they deal with philosophers or writers, can be read as installments in the "critique et clinique" project. *Proust and Signs* explicitly interprets *The Remembrance of Things Past* as a symptomatology; Deleuze and Guattari's book on Kafka shows how Kafka's work provided a diagnosis of the "diabolical powers" of the future that were knocking at the door (capitalism, bureaucracy, fascism, Stalinism). *Nietzsche and Philosophy* shows how Nietzsche diagnosed a disease (nihilism) by isolating its symptoms (*ressentiment*, the bad conscience, the ascetic ideal), by tracing its etiology back to a certain relation of active and reactive forces (the genealogical method), and by setting forth both a prognosis (nihilism defeated by itself) and a treatment (the revaluation of values). In all these works, what Foucault called the "author function" has all but disappeared; the proper name does not refer to a particular person as an author but to a regime of signs or concepts. Deleuze speaks of Nietzsche's philosophy or Proust's novel in much the same way as one speaks of Alzheimer's disease, the Doppler effect, the Hamiltonian number, the Pythagorean theorem, or the Mandelbrot set, that is, as a non-personal mode of individuation. These then are the two fundamental aspects of Deleuze's symptomatological method: the function of the proper name, and the assemblage or multiplicity designated by the name.

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With the publication in 1972 of *Anti-Oedipus*, however, the "critique et clinique" project took a new turn. The critique of psychoanalysis Deleuze

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and Guattari offer in *Anti-Oedipus* is primarily symptomatological: psychoanalysis, they contend, fundamentally misunderstands signs and symptoms.²³ Given the subtitle, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, one might expect Deleuze and Guattari to provide a symptomatological analysis of schizophrenia that would correct the errors and abuses of psychoanalysis. But in fact this is not the case. Schizophrenia is an acute phenomenon that poses numerous problems to the clinical method: not only is there no agreement as to the etiology of schizophrenia, but even its symptomatology remains uncertain. In most psychiatric accounts of schizophrenia, the diagnostic criteria are given in purely negative terms, that is, in terms of the destructions the disorder engenders in the subject: dissociation, autism, detachment from reality.²⁴ The problem is that these negative symptoms appear as dispersed and scattered, and are difficult to totalize or unify in a coherent clinical entity, or even a localizable "mode of existence": "schizophrenia is a discordant syndrome," writes Deleuze, "always in flight from itself."²⁴

Anti-Oedipus therefore takes the "critique et clinique" project to a properly transcendental level. From the clinical viewpoint, one of its aims is to describe schizophrenia in its positivity, no longer as actualized in a particular mode of life, but as the very process of Life itself. Deleuze and Guattari draw a sharp distinction between schizophrenia as a process and schizophrenia as a clinical entity, although their use of the same term to describe both phenomena has led to numerous misunderstandings.²⁵ For schizophrenia as a process is nothing other than the concept of Life as a nonorganic and impersonal power. "The problem of schizophrenization as a cure," they write, "consists in this: how can schizophrenia be disengaged as a power of humanity and of Nature without a schizophrenic thereby being produced? A problem analogous to that of [William] Burroughs (How to incarnate the power of drugs without being an addict?) or [Henry] Miller (How to get drunk on pure water?)"²⁶ From the critical side, Deleuze and Guattari once again appeal to the work of literary figures, especially a number of Anglo-American writers, whose work here comes to the fore for the first time. "We have been criticized for overquoting literary authors," they would later comment, "But is it our fault that Lawrence, Miller, Kerouac, Burroughs, Artaud,

and Beckett know more about schizophrenia than psychiatrists and psychoanalysts?"²⁷ If literature here takes on a schizophrenic vocation, it is because the works of these writers no longer simply present the symptomatology of a mode of life, but trace the virtual power of the nonorganic Life itself.

How are we to conceive of this schizophrenic vocation? In 1970, Deleuze wrote a new essay on Proust entitled "The Literary Machine," where he argued that the work of art can be viewed as a "machine" capable of producing certain effects, or generating signs of different orders.²⁸ Proust suggested that his book be used as an optical instrument, "a kind of magnifying glass" that would provide his readers with "the means of reading within themselves," in much the same way that Joyce described his works as machines for producing "epiphanies."²⁹ There is thus a "literary effect" produced by literature, much as we speak of optical or electromagnetic effects; and the "literary machine" is an apparatus capable of functioning effectively. The question Deleuze here poses to the literary work is not "What does it mean?" (interpretation) but rather "How does it function?" (experimentation). "The modern work of art has no problem of meaning," he writes, "it has only a problem of use."³⁰ But the claim that meaning is use is valid only if one begins with elements that, in themselves, and apart from their use, are devoid of any signification. It is only when objective contents and subjective forms have collapsed and given way to a world of fragments, to a chaotic and multiple impersonal reality, that the work of art assumes its full meaning—"that is, exactly all the meanings one wants it to have according to its functioning; the essential point being that it functions, that the machine works."³¹ The elements or parts of the literary machine, he argues, must therefore be defined by their mutual independence, pure singularities, "a dispersed anarchic multiplicity, without unity or totality, whose elements are welded and pasted together by the real distinction or the very absence of a link."³² "Dissociation" here ceases to be the negative trait of the schizophrenic and becomes a positive and productive principle of both Life and Literature.

The problem of the work of art, then, is to establish a system of communication among parts or elements that are in themselves noncommunicating. The literary work, Deleuze argues, must

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be seen as the unity of its parts, even though it does not unify them; the whole produced by the work is rather a “peripheral” totality that is added alongside its parts as a new part that is fabricated separately. Proust described *In Search of Lost Time* as a literary apparatus that brought together heterogeneous elements and made them function together; the work thus constitutes a whole, but this whole is itself a part that exists alongside the other parts, which it neither unifies nor totalizes. Yet it has an effect on these parts, since it is able to create nonpreexistent relations between elements that in themselves remain disconnected.³³ This is the empiricist principle that pervades Deleuze’s entire philosophy: relations are external to their terms, and the whole is never a principle but rather is derived from these external relations as their effect, and constantly varies with them. Deleuze thus describes his philosophy as “a logic of multiplicities,” but he also insists that “the multiple *must be made*,” and that it is never given in itself.³⁴ This production of multiple has two aspects: obtain pure singularities, and then establish relations or syntheses between them. These are precisely the two paradoxical features of Life as a nonorganic and impersonal power: it is a power of abstraction capable of extracting or producing singularities and placing them in continuous variation, and a power of creation capable of inventing ever-new relations and conjugations between these singularities. The former defines the vitality of life; the latter, its power of innovation.

Now in accomplishing these two tasks, or fulfilling these two powers, modern literature, according to Deleuze, can be said to have had five interrelated effects: the destruction of the world, the dissolution of the person, the disintegration of the body, the minorization of politics, and what he calls the “stuttering” of language. Deleuze has undertaken a formidable conceptual creation in each of these domains, and which I can not do justice to here. Taken together, however, these five themes, I believe, constitute the broad outlines of Deleuze’s “theory of literature” (if indeed it is legitimate to speak of a theory of literature in Deleuze), and I would like to examine each of them briefly in turn.

1. First theme: *the Destruction of the World* in favor of a “chaosmos” of pure events or singularities. Ontologically and logically, Deleuze locates the philosophical basis for modern literature in Leibniz. Leibniz conceived of the world, pre-

cisely, as a “pure emission of singularities,” and defined individuals (or monads) by the convergence and actualization of a certain number of these singularities, which become its “primary predicates.” Here, for instance, are four singularities of the life of Adam: “to be the first man,” “to live in a garden of paradise,” “to have a woman emerge from one’s rib,” “to sin.” In themselves, these singularities are not yet predicates, but what Deleuze calls pure “events.” Linguistically, they are like indeterminate infinitives that are not yet actualized in determinate modes, tenses, persons, and voices. The great originality of Deleuze’s reading of Leibniz, in both *The Fold* and *The Logic of Sense*, lies in his insistence on the anteriority of this domain of singularities (the virtual) in relation to predicates (the actual). “Being a sinner” is an analytic predicate of a constituted individual, but the infinitive “to sin” is a virtual event in the neighborhood of which the monad “Adam” will be constituted. Deleuze’s entire philosophy is concerned with the description of this virtual domain. For one can add to these four singularities a fifth one: “to resist temptation.” This singularity is not impossible in itself, but it is impossible with the world in which Adam sinned. There is here a divergence or bifurcation in the series that passes through the first three singularities, and this bifurcation marks a border between two impossible worlds. For Leibniz, the only thing that prevents all these impossible worlds from coexisting is the theological hypothesis of a God who calculates and chooses: among this infinity of possible worlds, God selects the “Best,” which is defined by the set of convergent series that constitute it. Each monad expresses this same world in the infinite series of its predicates (“the pre-established harmony”), each of them being a different point of view on the single world that God causes them to envelop (“perspectivism”).

Literature acceded to its modernity, Deleuze argues, not only when it turned to language as its condition, but when it freed the virtual from its actualizations and allowed it to assume a validity of its own. This is the world described by Borges in his famous story, “The Garden of the Forking Paths,” which Deleuze frequently cites throughout his work. In Borges’ labyrinth, God is no longer a Being who compares and chooses the richest compossible world, as in Leibniz’s *Theodicy*; he has now become a pure Process that makes all possibilities pass into existence, form-

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ing an infinite web of divergent and convergent series. Divergences, bifurcations, and impossibles now belong to the one and the same universe, a chaotic universe in which divergent series trace endlessly bifurcating paths: a "chaosmos."

This liberation of the virtual implies a fundamentally new type of narration, which Deleuze outlines in an important chapter of *The Time-Image* entitled "The Powers of the False."³⁵ Time ceases to be chronological, and starts to pose the simultaneity of impossible presents or the co-existence of not-necessarily-true pasts. Space becomes disconnected, its parts now capable of being linked in an infinite number of ways through non-localizable relations. Forces lose their centers of movement and fixed points of reference, and are now merely related to other forces. "Perspectivism" no longer implies a plurality of viewpoints on the same world or object; each viewpoint now opens on to another world that itself contains yet others. The "preestablished "harmony" give way to an emancipation of dissonance and unresolved chords that are never brought back into a tonality, a "polyphony of polyphonies," as Boulez put it. Most importantly, perhaps, the formal logic of actual predicates is replaced by a properly "transcendental" logic of virtual singularities. It is under these conditions that Deleuze and Guattari speak of a "rhizome," that is, a multiplicity in which any singularity can be connected to any other in an infinite number of ways, through various connective, conjunctive, and disjunctive syntheses. Many of Deleuze's analyses of literature in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* concern the various techniques by which disjunctive syntheses have been put to use by writers such as Lewis Carroll, Rousset, Gombrowicz, and Joyce.

Such a virtual universe, to be sure, goes beyond any lived or livable experience; it exists only in thought had has no other result than the work of art. But it is also, writes Deleuze, "that by which thought and art are real, and disturb the reality, morality, and economy of the world."³⁶

2. *The Dissolution of the Self* (in favor of pure affects and percepts, becomings). In such a chaotic and bifurcating world, the status of the individual changes as well: the monadology becomes a nomadology. Rather than being closed upon the compossible world they express from within (the monadic subject), beings are now torn open by

the divergent series that continually pull them outside themselves (the nomadic subject).³⁷ An individual is itself a multiplicity, the actualization of a set of virtual singularities that function together. But there is a great difference between the singularities that populate the virtual plane of immanence and the individuals that actualize them. The question Deleuze poses with regard to the self is: "How can the individual transcend its form and its syntactical link with a world in order to attain the universal communication of events?"³⁸ What he calls "schizophrenization" is a limit-process in which the identity of the individual is dissolved; and passes entirely into the virtual chaosmos of included disjunctions (this is precisely the status of the characters in Beckett's novels, which gives them their schizophrenic character).

Even without attaining this limit, however, the self is never defined by its identity but by a process of "becoming," a concept that Deleuze and Guattari analyze in a long and complex chapter of *A Thousand Plateaus*.³⁹ The notion of becoming does not simply refer to the fact that the self in constant flux; more precisely, it refers to an objective zone of indistinction or indiscernibility that always exists between any two multiplicities, a zone that immediately precedes their respective natural differentiation.⁴⁰ In a bifurcating world, a multiplicity is defined by the limits and borders where it enters into relations with other multiplicities and changes nature, transforms itself, follows a "line of flight" (even while remaining itself). Nowhere is this idea of becoming exemplified better than in Herman Melville's *Moby Dick*, which Deleuze considers to be "one of the greatest masterpieces of becoming."⁴¹ The relation between Captain Ahab and the White Whale is neither an imitation or mimesis, nor a lived sympathy, nor even an imaginary identification. Rather, Ahab becomes Moby Dick, he enters a zone of indiscernibility where he can no longer distinguished himself from Moby Dick, to the point where he strikes himself in striking the whale. And just as Ahab is engaged in an becoming-whale, so the animal simultaneously becomes something other: an unbearable whiteness, a shimmering pure wall. In *Moby Dick*, both Ahab and the Whale lose their texture as subjects in favor of "an infinitely proliferating patchwork" of what Deleuze calls pure affects and percepts that escape their form, like the pure white-

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ness of the wall, or “the furrows that twist from Ahab’s brow to that of the Whale.”⁴² (Likewise, in Emile Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine and Heathcliff are caught up in a double becoming that is deeper than love and higher than the “lived” [“I am Heathcliff,” says Catherine], a profound passion that traces a zone of indiscernibility between the two characters, and creates a block of becoming that passes through a entire series of pure affects.”)⁴³

Just as literature is capable of attaining virtual events freed from their actualization in a world, so it is capable of creating pure affects and percepts freed from the affections and perceptions of a subject. “A great novelist,” Deleuze writes, “is above all an artist who invents unknown or unrecognized affects and brings them to light as the becoming of his characters.”⁴⁴

3. *The Disintegration of the Body* (in favor of pure intensities). Thirdly, the dissolution of the logical identity of the self has as its correlate the physical disintegration of the organic body. Beneath the organic body, and as its condition, there lies what Artaud discovered and named: the body without organs. This is one of Deleuze’s most notorious and difficult concepts. The body without organs is itself the model of Life, insofar as it is a nonorganic and intensive vitality that traverses the organism; the organism, by contrast, is not life, but that which imprisons life. Deleuze often appeals to the model of the egg to describe the body without organs, but the body without organs is not something that exists “before” the organism; it is a milieu of intensity that is “beneath” or “adjacent” to the organism and continually in the process of constructing itself. It is what is “seen” in phenomena known as “autoscopia”: it is no longer my head, but I feel myself inside a head; or I do not see myself in the mirror, but I feel myself within the organism I see, and so on. Schizophrenics experience these naked intensities in a pure and almost unendurable state: beneath the hallucinations of the senses and the deliriums of thought, there is something more profound, a feeling of intensity, that is, a becoming or a transition. A gradient is crossed, a threshold is surpassed or retreated from, a migration is brought about: “I feel that I am becoming woman,” “I feel that I am becoming god, or pure matter, or Louis XIV. . . .”⁴⁵

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that delirium is the “general matrix” by which the intensities and becomings of the body without or-

gans directly invest the socio-political field.⁴⁶ Delirium does not consist in identifying one’s ego with various historical personages; it consists in identifying “the names of history” with the thresholds of intensity that are traversed on the body without organs.⁴⁷ Deliriums are never primarily familial or personal, but world-historical, filled with geographical, political, and above all racial references, and as such, Deleuze suggests, they constitute the “kernels of art.” Artaud’s “theater of cruelty,” for instance, cannot be separated from the confrontation of the religions and “races” of Mexico; and Rimbaud’s “season in hell” cannot be separated from a vast “displacement of races and continents,” a becoming-Mongol, the intensive feeling of being “a beast, a nigger.”

If literature has an essential link with delirium, and the experience of intensities, then the important thing to do is to ask what regions of History and the Universe are invested by a given work of art? One can make a map of the rhizome it creates, a cartography. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari suggest a cartography of American literature: in the East, the search for an American code and a recoding with Europe (Henry James, Eliot, Pound); in the South, an overcoding of the ruins of the slave system (Faulkner, Caldwell, O’Connor); in the North, a capitalist decoding (Dos Passos, Dreiser); but in the West, there was a profound line of flight, with its ever receding limits, its shifting and displaced frontier, its Indians and cultures, its madness (Kerouac, Kesey, the beats . . .). Yet is it not also the destiny of literature, American and otherwise, to fail to complete the process, such that the line of flight becomes blocked or reaches an impasse (as in Kerouac’s sad end, or Céline’s fascism), or even turns into a pure line of demolition (Woolf’s suicide, Fitzgerald’s crack-up, Nietzsche’s and Hölderlin’s madness)?⁴⁸ A “universal clinical theory” of literature as delirium would thus oscillate around two poles: literature is a disease when the intensities on the body without organs are invested in fascizing, moralizing, nationalist, and racist tendencies (this is the paranoid pole: “I am one of your kind, a superior race, an Aryan”); but literature is a measure of health when it pushes the process further, following the line of flight, invoking a bastard race that resists everything that crushes and imprisons life (this is the “schizophrenic” pole: “I am of an inferior race for all eternity” [Rimbaud]).

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4. *The Minorization of Politics.* It is here that we confront, fourthly, the political destiny of literature. Just as writers do not write with their egos, neither do they write “on behalf of” an already existing people, or “address” themselves to a class or nation. When great artists evoke a people, they find that “the people are missing” and they are missing, says Deleuze, precisely because they exist in the condition of a minority.⁴⁹ The difference between a majority and a minority, as Deleuze and Guattari have shown in several important texts, does not lie in their numbers. A majority is defined by a model to which one must conform (for instance, an average, white, male, heterosexual, city-dweller, speaking a standard language, and so on), whereas a minority has no model, but is a becoming or a process. This acknowledgment that the people are missing, Deleuze insists, is not a renunciation of political literature. When a colonizer proclaims, “There has never been a people here,” the people enter into the conditions of a becoming, they must invent themselves in new conditions of struggle, and the task of a political literature is to contribute to the invention of this unborn people who do not yet have a language.

How can literature contribute to the creation of a people? Deleuze frequently returns to the texts of Kafka and Melville that present literature as the collective utterance of a minor people who find their expression in and through the singularity of the writer.⁵⁰ In America, notably, both the people and the writer confront a double problem: a collection of fragments or immigrants, and a tissue of shifting relations between them that must constantly be created or acquired. In literature, Deleuze argues, this problem finds its solution in what Bergson calls “fabulation,” the story-telling or myth-making function, which brings real parties together to produce, not impersonal myths or personal fictions, but collective utterances as the prefiguration of a people who are missing (as Klee says, “we can do no more”).⁵¹ It is true that minorities must necessarily struggle to become a majority (to be recognized, to have rights, to achieve autonomy, etc.). But in itself, a minority is a political formation that fundamentally differs in nature from a State or nation; it is what Deleuze and Guattari call a “war machine.” Their famous essay, “What is a Minor Literature” must therefore be read in conjunction with the remarkable “Treatise on Noma-

dology—The War Machine,” which describes the organizational conditions of a social formation constructed along a line of flight.⁵²

5. *The Stuttering of Language.* Finally, for Deleuze, this “minorization” also describes the effect that literature has on language. As Proust says, great literature opens up a kind of foreign language within the language in which it is written, as if the writer were writing wrote as a foreigner or a minority within his own language.⁵³ Many of the essays collected in *Essays Critical and Clinical* analyze the specific procedures utilized by various authors to make language “stutter” in its syntax or grammar: the schizophrenic procedures of Roussel, Brisset, and Wolfson, which constitute the very process of their psychoses; the poetic procedures of Jarry and Heidegger, who transform and transmute a living language by reactivating a dead language inside it; e.e. cummings’s agrammaticalities (“he danced his did”), which stand at the limit of a series of ordinary grammatical variables; and the deviant syntax of Artaud’s *cris-souffles*, or breathscreams, which are pure intensities that mark a limit of language.⁵⁴ Such writers take the units or elements of language and submit them to a treatment of continuous variation, out of which they extract new linguistic possibilities; they invent a minor use of language, much as in music, where the minor mode is derived from dynamic combinations in perpetual disequilibrium. “That is what style is,” write Deleuze and Guattari, “or rather the absence of style—asyntactic, agrammatical: the moment when language is no longer defined by what it says . . . but by what causes it to move, to flow, to explode. . . . For literature is like schizophrenia: a process and not a goal . . . a pure process that fulfills itself, and that never ceases to reach fulfillment as it proceeds—art as ‘experimentation.’”⁵⁵

To sum up, these, to be sure, are very summary indications of these five themes, but they are enough to show that Deleuze’s “critique et clinique” project must finally be defined in terms of not two, but three fundamental components: the proper name; the nonpersonal multiplicity or “mode of life” designated by the name; and most importantly, the active “lines of flight” of which these multiplicities are constituted. It is the construction of such lines that constitutes the “activity” of a mode of existence (whereas a reactive

mode can only “judge” life from the viewpoint of its exhaustion). “The aim of writing is to carry life to the state of a non-personal power,”⁵⁶ and we have seen the two aspects of this power. On the one hand, it is a power of abstraction capable of producing elements that are acosmic, asubjective, asignifying, anorganic, agrammatical, and asyntactical—that is to say, events and singularities, affects and percepts, becomings and intensities—and placing them in a state of continuous variation. On the other hand, it is a power of invention capable of constructing new relations between these genetic elements—blocks of becomings, continuums of intensities, connections between singularities—and thereby creating

“new possibilities of life”: the constitution of a people, the formation of new subjectivities, new compositions in language. “Art is never an end in itself,” write Deleuze and Guattari, “it is only an instrument for tracing lines of lives, that is to say, all these real becomings that are not simply produced *in art*, all these active flights that do not consist in fleeing *into art* . . . but rather sweep it away with them toward the realms of the asignifying, the asubjective.”⁵⁷ This is the point at which “critique” and “clinique” become one and the same thing, when life ceases to be personal and the work ceases to be literary or textual—in short, a life of pure immanence.⁵⁸

ENDNOTES

1. Gilles Deleuze, “Coldness and Cruelty,” in *Masochism*, trans. Jean McNeil (New York: Zone Books, 1989), p. 14. This essay is an expansion of ideas first developed in “De Sacher-Masoch au masochisme,” in *Arguments* 5, No. 21 (January–April 1961) 40–46. See also the short but important interview with Madeleine Chapsal, “Mystique et masochisme,” in *La Quinzaine littéraire* 25 (1–15 April 1967): 12–13.
2. See Gilles Deleuze, “Preface to the English Edition,” in *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), p. xv: “A philosophical concept can never be confused with a scientific function or an artistic construction, but finds itself in *affinity* with these in this or that domain of science or style of art.” Deleuze and Guattari analyze the precise relations between philosophy, art, science, and logic in *What is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). On philosophy’s need for such “intercessors” or mediators, see *Negotiations*, pp. 123–26.
3. Gilles Deleuze, “8 ans après: Entretien 1980” (interview with Catherine Clément), in *L’Arc* 49 (rev. ed., 1980), special issue on Deleuze, p. 99. Deleuze was responding to a question concerning the “genre” of *A Thousand Plateaus*, but his response is equally applicable to all his books.
4. Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations*, trans. Martin Jonghin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), p. 58.
5. Gilles Deleuze, *The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), p. ix; and *Negotiations*, p. 47.
6. Gilles Deleuze, *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation*, 2 vols. (Paris: Editions de la différence, 1981), vol. 1, p. 7.
7. Deleuze, “Lettre-préface,” in Mireille Buydens, *Sahara: l’esthétique de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Vrin, 1990), p. 5. See also *Negotiations*, p. 143: “Everything I’ve written is vitalistic, as least I hope it is.” The term “non-organic life” is derived from Wilhelm Worringer, *Form in Gothic* (London: Putnam’s and Sons, 1927), pp. 41–42, who used it to describe the vitality of the abstract line in Gothic art (see *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 496–98).
8. Deleuze, “Literature and Life,” p. xx.
9. Charles Dickens, *Our Mutual Friend*, Book 3, Chapter 3, in *The Oxford Illustrated Dickens* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952), p. 443.
10. Gilles Deleuze, “L’immanence: une vie...” in *Philosophie* 47 (1 September 1995): 5.
11. See Gilles Deleuze, “On the Difference Between the *Ethics* and a *Morality*,” in *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), pp. 17–29.
12. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1981), p. 1: “We always have the beliefs, feelings, and thoughts we deserve, given our way of being or our style of life.” On the distinction between ethics and morality, see *Negotiations*, pp. 100, 14–115. *Règles facultatives* is a term Deleuze adopts from the sociolinguist William Labov to designate “functions of internal variation and no longer constants.” See Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988), pp. 146–47, note 18.

13. Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Essay 1, § 17, in *Basic Writings of Nietzsche*, trans. Walter Kaufman (New York: Modern Library, 1968), p. 491.
14. *Negotiations*, p. 100.
15. Deleuze, "Mystique et masochisme," p. 13: "I would never have permitted myself to write on psychoanalysis and psychiatry were I not dealing with a problem of symptomatology. Symptomatology is situated almost outside of medicine, at a neutral point, a zero point, where artists and philosophers and doctors and patients can encounter each other."
16. See *Logic of Sense*, p. 237: "From the perspective of Freud's genius, it is not the complex which provides us with information about Oedipus and Hamlet, but rather Oedipus and Hamlet who provide us with information about the complex."
17. *Logic of Sense*, p. 237, translation modified. See also *Masochism*, p. 14: "Symptomatology is always a question of art."
18. See, in particular, Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Philosopher as Cultural Physician" (1873), in *Philosophy and Truth*, ed. Daniel Brezale (Atlantic Highlands, N. J.: Humanities Press, 1979), pp. 67–76, though the idea of the philosopher as a physician of culture occurs throughout Nietzsche's writings. For Deleuze's analysis of the symptomatological method in Nietzsche, see *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, pp. x, 3, 75, 79, 157.
19. "Mystique et masochisme," p. 13.
20. On all these points, see the important passage in *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 132–36, especially on the status of psychosis in literature (Artaud). For Freud, "the libido does not invest the social field as such except on the condition that it be 'desexualized' and 'sublimated'; any sexual libidinal investment having a social dimension therefore seems to him to bear witness to a pathogenic state, either a "fixation" in narcissism or a "regression" to pre-Oedipal states (p. 352). For Deleuze's reflections on the present state of "the space of literature," and the fragile conditions for the literary production, see *Negotiations*, pp. 22–23, 128–31. On the effect of marketing on both literature and philosophy, see Deleuze's critique of the "new philosophers," "A propos des nouveaux philosophes et d'un problème plus général," in *Minuit* 4, supplement (5 June 1977), no pagination.
21. "Mystique et masochisme," pp. 12–13. When asked when he had only treated Sade and Masoch from this point of view, Deleuze replied: "There are others, in fact, but their work has not yet been recognized under the aspect of a creative symptomatology, as was the case with Masoch at the start. There is a prodigious table [*tableaux*] of symptoms corresponding to the work of Samuel Beckett: not that it is simply a question of identifying an illness, but the world as symptom, and the artist as symptomatologist" (p. 13).
22. See *Negotiations*, p. 143: "Psychoanalysis is so reductive in the secrets it pursues, so misunderstands signs and symptoms; everything comes down to what Freud called 'the dirty little secret.'"
23. Emile Kraepelin, for instance, formed his concept of *dementia praecox* ("premature senility") around the two principal poles of hebephrenia and catatonia, identifying dissociation as its specific dysfunction or primary disorder. For Eugen Bleuler, who invented the term schizophrenia ("split-brain") in 1908, these fragmented associations were the obverse side of a loss of reality that gives a preponderance to a rigid inner life closed in on itself (autism).
24. Gilles Deleuze, "Schizophrénie et positivité du désir," in *Encyclopédia Universalis* (Paris: Editions Encyclopédie Universalis France, 1972), vol. 14, pp. 735.
25. When Kraepelin tried to ground his concept of *dementia praecox*, he defined it neither by causes nor symptoms but by a process, by an evolution and a terminal state; but he conceived of this terminal state as a complete and total disintegration, which justified the confinement of the patient while awaiting his death. Deleuze and Guattari's instead follow Karl Jaspers and R. D. Laing, who formulated a rich notion of process as a rupture, an irruption, an opening [*percée*] that breaks the continuity of a personality, carrying it off in a kind of voyage through an intense and terrifying "more than reality," following lines of flight that engulf both nature and history, both the organism and the mind. See *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 24–25.
26. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "La synthèse disjonctive," in *L'Arc* 43, special issue on Pierre Klossowski (Aix-en-Provence: Duponchelle, 1970), p. 56.
27. A Thousand Plateaus, p. 4; *Negotiations*, p. 23. See also "Schizophrénie et positivité du désir," p. 735: "Let us resign ourselves to the idea that certain artists or writers have had more revelations concerning schizophrenia than the psychiatrists and psychoanalysts."
28. This text is included in the English translation under the title, "Antilogos, or the Literary Machine," in *Proust and Signs*, pp. 93–157.
29. *Ibid.*, pp. 128, 154; on Joyce's, see p. 138.

30. *Ibid.*, p. 129. The claim that “meaning is use,” Deleuze argues, requires a transcendental analysis. See *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 109: “No one has been able to pose the problem of language except to the extent that linguists and logicians have eliminated meaning; and the *highest* power of language was discovered only when the *work* was viewed as a machine, producing certain effects, amenable to a certain use. . . . The idea that meaning is nothing other than use becomes a principle only if we have at our disposal *immanent* criteria capable of determining legitimate uses, as opposed to illegitimate uses that would refer use to a supposed meaning and restore a kind of transcendence. Analysis termed transcendental is precisely the determination of these immanent criteria.” To my knowledge, Deleuze makes only two references to Wittgenstein in his work. In the first, he writes approvingly that “Wittgenstein and his disciples are right to define meaning by use” (*Logic of Sense*, p. 146); in the second, he writes that Whitehead “stands provisionally as the last great Anglo-American philosopher, just before Wittgenstein’s disciples spread their mists, their sufficiency, and their terror” (*The Fold*, p. 76). His disapproval perhaps stems from the reintroduction, by certain of Wittgenstein’s followers, of a form of “common sense” in the guise of a “grammar” that would be properly “philosophical” and a “form of life” that would be generically human.
31. *Proust and Signs*, p. 138. Modern literature has tended to pose this question in terms of the problem of a world in fragments, a world deprived of its unity, reduced to crumbs and chaos: we live in an age that no longer thinks in terms of a primordial Unity or Logos that we have lost (Platonism), or some future Totality that awaits us as the result of a dialectic or evolution (Hegelianism), or even a Subjectivity, whether universal or not, that could bestow a cohesion or unity upon the world (Kantianism).
32. Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 324. See also “Balance-Sheet Program for Desiring Machines,” in Félix Guattari, *Chaosology*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1995), p. 145: “How can elements be bound together by the absence of any link? In a certain sense, it can be said that Cartesianism, in Spinoza and Leibniz, has not ceased to reply to this question. It is the theory of the real distinction, insofar as it implies a specific logic. It is because they are really distinct, and completely independent of each other, that ultimate elements or simple forms belong to the same being or to the same substance.”
33. *Proust and Signs*, pp. 93–157. See also Thomas Wolfe, “The Story of a Novel,” p. 34: “It was as if I had discovered a whole new universe of chemical elements and had begun to see certain relations between some of them but had by no means begun to organize and arrange the whole series in such a way that they would crystallize into a harmonious and coherent union. From this time on, I think my effort might be described as the effort to complete that organization.”
34. *Negotiations*, p. 147; *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 6.
35. See *The Time-Image*, “The Powers of the False,” pp. 126–55. The following themes are summaries of this chapter.
36. Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, p. 60, translation modified.
37. See *ibid.*, p. 174: “Instead of a certain number of predicates being excluded by a thing by virtue of the identity of its concept, each ‘thing’ is open to the infinity of predicates through which it passes, and at the same time it loses its center, that is to say, its identity as a concept and as a self.”
38. *Ibid.*, p. 178.
39. Deleuze and Guattari, “1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible . . .,” in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 232–309.
40. *What is Philosophy?*, p. 173. Deleuze’s monographs in the history of philosophy all inhabit such a zone of indiscernibility, which accounts for the sense that they are fully “Deleuzian” despite the variety of figures he considers.
41. *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 243.
42. “Bartleby, or the Formula,” in Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), pp. 68–90.
43. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (New York: Norton, 1990), chapter 9, pp. 62–64.
44. *What is Philosophy?*, p. 174.
45. *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 18–19.
46. See *ibid.*, p. 277: “Delirium is the general matrix of every unconscious social investment.”
47. See Pierre Klossowski, “The Euphoria at Turin,” in *Nietzsche and the Vicious Circle* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, forthcoming). Nietzsche does not suddenly lose his reason and identify himself with strange personages; his delirium passes through a series of intensive states that each receive a proper name, some of which designate his allies, or rises in intensity (Prado, Lesseps, Chambige, “honest criminals”), others his enemies, or falls in intensity (Caiaphus, William, Bismark, the “antisemites”)—a chaos of pure oscillations invested by “all the names of history” and not, as psychoanalysis would have it, by the name of the father. On p. 353, Klossowski cites one of Nietzsche’s final fragments in which the two poles of delirium are

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- mixed: "I touch here the question of race. I am a Polish gentleman, *pure blood*, in whom not a drop of impure blood is mixed, not the slighted. If I seek my most profound opposite . . . —I always find my mother and my sister: to see myself allied with such German riff-raff was a blasphemy against my divinity. The ancestry on the side of my mother and sister to this very day (—) was a monstrosity."
48. For these examples, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 133, 277–78; and *Dialogues*, pp. 38–39, 140–41.
49. See, for example, Paul Klee, *On Modern Art*, trans. Paul Findlay (London: Faber, 1966), p. 55: "We have found parts, but not the whole. We still lack the ultimate power, for: the people are not with us. But we seek a people."
50. See Herman Melville's essay on American literature, "Hawthorne and his Mosses," in *The Portable Melville*, ed. Jay Leyda (New York: Viking Press, 1952), pp. 411–414; and Franz Kafka's diary entry (25 December 1911) on "the literature of small peoples," in *The Diaries of Franz Kafka: 1910–1913*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Joseph Kresh (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), pp. 191–98.
51. Henri Bergson, *Two Sources of Morality and Religion*, trans. T. Ashley Audra and Cloudesley Brereton with W. Horsfall Carter (New York: Henry Holt, 1935), chapter 2. Bergson sees fabulation as a visionary faculty that consists in creating gods and giants, "semi-personal powers or effective presences." Though first exercised in religions, it is, Deleuze claims, developed freely in art and literature.
52. See "What is a Minor Literature," in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, pp. 16–27; and "Treatise on Nomadology—The War Machine," in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 351–423, which should be read as an elaboration of the "active" mode of existence outlined in Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*.
53. Marcel Proust, *By Way of Sainte-Beuve*, trans. Sylvia Townsend Warner (London: Chatto & Eindus, 1958), pp. 194–95: "Great literature is written in a sort of foreign language. To each sentence we attach a meaning, or at any rate a mental image, which is often a mistranslation. But in great literature all our mistranslations result in beauty."
54. In addition to the essays collected in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, see Deleuze's essay, "Of the Schizophrenic and the Little Girl," in *Logic of Sense*, pp. 82–93, which compares the procedures of Carroll and Artaud (especially p. 83, where Deleuze notes that the comparison must take place at both a "clinical" and a "critical" level).
55. *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 133, 370–71. For this use of the term "experimentation," see John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 13: "The word *experimental* is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which is unknown."
56. Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 50.
57. *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 187, translation modified.
58. *Dialogues*, p. 141. See *Negotiations*, pp. 146–47: "This is what it's like on the plane of immanence: multiplicities fill it, singularities connect with one another, processes or becomings unfold, intensities rise and fall."

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