
1956: Deleuze and Foucault in the Archives, or, What Happened to the *A Priori*?

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Abstract

When Gilles Deleuze, in his book on Michel Foucault, asks, ‘who would think of looking for life among the archives?’, he uncovers something particular to Foucault’s philosophy, but also to his own: a commitment to the question of what it means to think, and think politically. Although Foucault and Deleuze, who first met in 1952, immediately felt fondness for each other, a growing animosity had settled into the friendship by the end of the 1970s—a rift deepened by theoretical differences. Notwithstanding these difficulties, Foucault and Deleuze shared a love for Nietzsche, as well as a curious fascination with Kant. Kant’s influence, which was met with more opposition, is precisely the tension I tease out in this article, showing how Foucault critiques Kant’s *a priori* through his own concept of the historical *a priori*, along with regularity and resistance, while Deleuze and Guattari, if more obliquely, critique Kant’s *a priori* by further developing Foucault’s notion of the historical *a priori* through their own method of pragmatics, particularly in three chapters of *A Thousand Plateaus*, namely ‘The Geology of Morals’, ‘Postulates of Linguistics’ and ‘On Several Regimes of Signs’. What I am interested in, then, is Deleuze and Guattari’s treatment of *redundancy*, a concept mentioned seventy times in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Although not one of their main or most developed concepts, redundancy is a thread that can be traced back to Deleuze’s first book, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*. Moreover, their more developed concepts, for example

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the diagram, the abstract machine, becoming, micro-politics and the ritornello, as well as their political philosophy, are grounded in their understanding of redundancy, which moves their philosophy beyond mapping out the conditions of possibility (Kant) and demonstrating that the historical *a priori* emerges as a contingent function of its own expression (Foucault) to the genesis of thought.

Keywords: *a priori*, generalised chromaticism, historical *a priori*, pragmatism, redundancy, regularity

I. Life Among the Archives: An Introduction

A new form of redundancy. AND ... AND ... AND ...
(Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987: 22)

When Gilles Deleuze, in his book on Michel Foucault, asks, ‘who would think of looking for life among the archives?’, he uncovers something particular to Foucault’s philosophy, but also to his own: a commitment to the question of what it means to think, and think politically (1988: 9, 121, 116). Deleuze first met Foucault in October 1952 when he attended one of his lectures. They would only meet again ten years later, in 1962. ‘At that point, Foucault was a professor at Clermont-Ferrand and was finishing his *Raymond Roussel* and *The Birth of the Clinic*’, while ‘Deleuze had just published *Nietzsche*, which Foucault had liked very much’ (Dosse 2016: 12). In the early 1970s, Foucault founded the Prison Information Group (GIP) in protest of the repressive policies of the then ruling party and invited Deleuze to be part of it. Alongside several other prominent intellectuals of the time, including Jean-Paul Sartre, Jean Genet and Simone Signoret, they would go on to participate in local protests and other agitating experiments. Towards the end of the 1970s, however, a growing animosity had settled into the friendship. On Foucault’s part, this was motivated by ‘a certain rivalry as to who [had] incarnated the authority of critical thinking’ (11), whereas Deleuze had begun to believe that Foucault ‘desired a deeper solitude, for his life, for his thought, and that he had need of this solitude, maintaining relationships only with his closest friends’ (Deleuze, quoted in Miller 1993: 298). The rift was further deepened by theoretical differences, such as their notorious disagreement on desire and pleasure (Deleuze 2016a: 223–31; for a more thorough exposition on desire and pleasure, see Grace 2009 and Beckman 2013). As Judith

Revel puts it, 'Foucault took experience and practices as his point of departure and conceptualised from there. Deleuze and Guattari invented war-machines and then tried them out' (Revel quoted in Dosse 2016: 17). In any event, they discontinued seeing each other. It seems doubly sorrowful that they never reunited when we learn that Foucault, close to death, expressed a sincere regret over never having mended ties with Deleuze. For his part, Deleuze was so moved by Foucault's death that he devoted a series of seminars to his thought which he presented 'every Tuesday, at the University of Paris VIII', from 1985 to 1986 (Morar, Nail and Smith 2016: 2), the sum of which was converted into a book titled, simply, *Foucault*. Before that, Deleuze, who had never ceased to follow Foucault's career closely despite the mounting enmity, wrote a number of pieces on his work, including 'A Portrait of Foucault', 'Breaking Things Open, Breaking Words Open' and 'Life as a Work of Art' (in *Negotiations*), in addition to 'What is a Dispositif', 'Michel Foucault's Main Concepts' and 'Foucault and Prison' (in *Two Regimes of Madness*).

Notwithstanding their philosophical differences and personal difficulties, Deleuze and Foucault shared a commitment to 'creating and cultivating possibilities for alternative modes of thought and existence' (Taylor 2014: 119). In 'Theatrum Philosophicum', Foucault's commentary on *Difference and Repetition* and the *Logic of Sense*, he concludes that it is Deleuze who makes new thought possible again (Foucault 2016: 57). Deleuze remarks in a similar vein that, for Foucault, 'thought is what sees and can be described visibly' ([1986] 1988: 59). And again: 'one thing haunts Foucault—thought ... He writes a history, but a history of thought as such' (116). In their philosophical expositions of thought, Foucault and Deleuze share a Nietzschean impulse. In fact, Nietzsche was pivotal to Deleuze and Foucault's early philosophical friendship, so much so that, together with Pierre Klossowski, they became instrumental in revitalising Nietzsche as an important philosophical figure in France. It was also vis-à-vis Klossowski's work that Foucault and Deleuze would consolidate 'their Nietzscheanism—or anti-Hegelianism—using the simulacrum as a war machine against thought based on identity and representation' (Dosse 2016: 13). Deeply interested in how reality is produced and, with it, thinking the conditions by which life is arrested or recovered and set free, both Deleuze and Foucault developed their Nietzschean inclinations along the lines of symptomatology, for it was Nietzsche who first thought of philosophers and artists as 'physiologists or symptomatologists, "physicians of culture" ... for whom all phenomena

are signs or symptoms that reflect a certain state of forces' (Smith 2005: 204). Remarking on Foucault as diagnostician, Deleuze writes:

What Foucault saw as the current or the new was what Nietzsche called the untimely, the 'non-current', the becoming that splits away from history, the diagnosis that relays analysis on different paths. Not predicting, but being attentive to the unknown knocking at the door. ([2001] 2007a: 346)

Deleuze's sometimes co-author, Félix Guattari, would further hone this diagnostic energy—this *being attentive to the unknown knocking at the door*—in his and Deleuze's joint work, informed by his clinical background in psychoanalysis, of which the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* are exemplary. But while these philosophers shared a love of Nietzsche, his legacy would manifest in distinctly different ways in their work: for Foucault as archaeology and genealogy; and for Deleuze and Guattari as schizoanalysis and pragmatism.

Another key touchstone for both Deleuze and Foucault is Kant, particularly his method of critique. Deleuze first brings together the 'clinical' (diagnostic, symptomatology) with the 'critical' in his book on Sacher-Masoch ([1967] 1989). Critical, here, refers both to literary criticism and Kantian critique, or philosophical questions concerning the 'genetic elements that condition' thought (Smith 2012a: 199). We find a similar trend in Foucault's work, though he draws on a second tradition in Kant too, stemming from Kant's conceptualisation of enlightenment, which is concerned with questions regarding the present field of possible experiences; how 'prevailing modes of thought and existence come to be established'; and what these prevailing norms effectuate historically (Taylor 2014: 123; see also Foucault 1984: 32–50). What both Foucault and Deleuze take from Kant is an 'inquiry into the conditions of possibility of judgment such that the work of a critique of judgment must itself rigorously refrain from judging' (Koopman 2016: 90–1). The promise of such a critique, for Foucault, lies in transforming the practice thereof from a 'search for formal structures with universal value' into a 'historical investigation' that accounts for 'the events that have led us to constitute ourselves and to recognize ourselves as subjects of what we are doing' (92). For Deleuze, and later Deleuze with Guattari, critique lies in adhering to three demands of Kant's own method: 'adherence to the position of immanence; the posing of the problem of the genetic method', and observing 'the principle of difference' (Smith 2012c: 69). It was Salomon Maimon, a contemporary of Kant's, who first pursued the 'immanent claims of Kant's philosophy to their logical conclusion', without recourse to a transcendental method (67). Moreover, it was

Maimon who showed that Kant does not fulfil his own demands for a genetic method by assuming that there are ‘*a priori* “facts” of reason’ and, following from this, simply seeks the condition of possibility ‘of these facts in the transcendental’, creating ‘a vicious circle’ between the condition and conditioned (67). In thinking difference, Deleuze will theorise the unconditioned—the ungrounded ground—and, in so doing, remain committed to immanence and a genetic model of thought.

Despite the fact that Kant does not meet the criteria he sets out for himself, Deleuze, in one of his lectures, nevertheless holds that Kant creates the concepts *a priori* and *transcendental*, because even though these concepts had been in use, Kant attributes to each of them a ‘very special sense’ (Deleuze 2007b). In what follows, then, I briefly trace Kant’s understanding and uses of the concepts *a priori* and *transcendental*, after which I show how Foucault critiques Kant’s *a priori* through his own concept of the historical *a priori*, employing a topological method. In Foucault’s development of the historical *a priori*, an important concept emerges, namely *regularity*, which allows Foucault not only to map ‘out the conditions of possibility’, but also to demonstrate that the ‘historical *a priori* is contemporaneous to the reality that it detects and describes’; that is, it emerges not as a transcendental universal but as a contingent function of its own expression (Basso 2012: 175). In the final section, I turn to Deleuze and Guattari, drawing particularly, though not exclusively, on four chapters of *A Thousand Plateaus*, namely ‘The Geology of Morals’, ‘Postulates of Linguistics’, ‘On Several Regimes of Signs’ and ‘Of the Refrain’. My argument is that although Deleuze and Guattari refer to Foucault mostly in an oblique manner in the first three chapters mentioned here—they reference him five times explicitly and twice indirectly—they in fact provide an incisive critique of Kant’s *a priori* here, while also further developing Foucault’s notion of the historical *a priori* through their own method of pragmatics, specifically through their theorisation of *redundancy*, a concept mentioned seventy times in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Redundancy, it is true, is not one of Deleuze and Guattari’s main or most developed concepts, although it is a thread that can be traced back to Deleuze’s first book on David Hume, *Empiricism and Subjectivity* (1991). Moreover, their more developed concepts, for example rhizomatics, the diagram, the abstract machine, faciality, becoming, micro-politics, the ritornello, and even life, as well as their political philosophy, are grounded in their understanding of redundancy, which moves their philosophy beyond mapping out the conditions of possibility (Kant) and demonstrating that the historical *a priori* emerges

as a contingent function of its own expression (Foucault) to the genesis of thought.

II. From Kant's *A Priori* to Foucault's Historical *A Priori*

So much for getting even, for epistemology is not innocent.
(Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 47)

In *Critique of Pure Reason* ([1781] 1998), Kant sets out to critique the limitations of scepticism and metaphysics, though he aims *not* to resort to a purely empiricist account of knowledge—as Hume did—but, instead, to lay claim to the possibility of a universal and necessary form of knowledge in general (B21–B23). What Kant wants to show is that ‘possibility in general is correspondence with the conditions of all experience known to us *a priori*’, where possible objects of experience are represented to us through ‘our faculty of representation’ which ‘is that of intuitive, complete, empirical representations’ (Schopenhauer [1813] 2012: §17). Kant’s investigation thus centres on the question of whether there is a faculty of knowledge higher than a purely empirical one; that is, he wants to discover a form that ‘finds *in itself* the law of its own exercise (even if this law gives rise to a necessary relationship with one of the other faculties)’ (Deleuze [1983] 2008: 3). In order to do this Kant will, through his method of critique, create two concepts, the *a priori* and the *transcendental*. On Kant’s view, the *a priori* can be defined as that which does not depend on experience and, because it is not given in experience, we can infer that it is neither particular nor contingent. As such, the *a priori* has the characteristics of being universal and necessary. Although the *a priori* does not derive from experience, it can be applied to experience. To show what he means, Kant identifies two kinds of *a priori*: presentations and representations. He argues that all phenomena appear to us in space and time; hence, space and time exist *before* objects present themselves to us as representations and are, therefore, the *pure* forms of intuition or sensibility—*presentations*. In Kant’s words, space expresses ‘*a priori* the relations of the perceptions in every experience’ (A222/B269) and is ‘the pure form of all outer appearances’ (A34/B51), whereas time ‘is the formal *a priori* condition of all appearances generally’ (A34/B51). Accordingly, the phenomena that appear in space and time are *representations*, which ‘implies an active taking up of that which is presented’ (Deleuze 2008: 7). Representations can be both *a priori* and *a posteriori*; the former, as implied, does not derive from experience whereas the latter implies empirical concepts.

Kant uses the transcendental method to answer the question of whether there is a higher faculty of knowledge—and transcendental, here, thus refers to ‘all cognition that deals not so much with objects as rather with our way of cognizing objects in general insofar as that way of cognizing is to be possible *a priori*’ (A12). In other words, Kant uses the transcendental dialectic to ascertain whether the ‘synthesis of appearances’ and even ‘the thinking of things as such’ extends ‘up to the unconditioned’ (A309/B366). It therefore provides Kant with a system for both explaining and justifying *a priori* knowledge (A87). In short, the transcendental method sets out to determine ‘the true nature of reason’s interests or ends’ and ‘the means of realizing these interests’ (Deleuze 2008: 3). Kant’s *a priori* and transcendental method, moreover, reflect the sciences of his time, specifically ‘Newtonian mechanics and Euclidean geometry’ (Mormann 2012: 113), which had a far-reaching impact on philosophy, including, but not limited to, the modern philosophy of science (Friedman and Nordmann 2006); the philosophy of ethics as found, for example, in the work of Martin Heidegger and Emmanuel Levinas (Cohen 2010; Serafini 2017); aesthetics (McMahon 2014); and even poststructuralism, for example the philosophies of Jacques Derrida, Quentin Meillassoux, Foucault and Deleuze (Han 2002; Legrand 2009; Smith 2012b; Gironi 2018).

During the 1960s, an important methodological shift took place, characterised by topological analyses, as developed by a number of philosophers, including Maurice Merleau-Ponty, Jacques Lacan, Deleuze, Foucault and Derrida (Duportail 2010: 47). This ‘turn’ was influenced by the work of several mathematicians, among whom Bernard Riemann was an important figure, especially in his study of *n*-dimensional surfaces; that is, surfaces that are themselves spaces. What Riemann proposes is a general theory of manifold spaces in which he separates ‘the conceptual from the empirical elements of the foundations of geometry’ (Hammond 2016: 454). In other words, he grounds his theory in conceptual mathematics, a ‘form of mathematics that gives primacy to thinking in mathematical concepts and their properties and structure, rather than to thinking primarily in terms of (by manipulating) formulas’ (Plotnitsky 2009: 107). According to Riemann’s theory, space can be defined as ‘a conglomerate of local spaces and networks of relationships among them, rather than as merely a conglomerate (set) of points, as it would be from the set-theoretical perspective’ (108). Each of these local spaces can, furthermore, be mapped without privileging Euclidean space. One of the decisive aspects of Riemann’s geometry is, then, that it has ‘an intrinsic differential geometry’ so that space, as a

manifold, ‘and its properties (curvature, for instance) are defined without any reference to an external ambient space, as Newton’s absolute space’ (Calamari 2015: 74). This new way of thinking about space had specific and important implications for Foucault and Deleuze which radically diverged from Kant’s understanding of space and time as *a priori*.

Although Foucault’s scholarship was greatly influenced by Kant, he departs from Kant in a number of ways. Whereas Kant’s starting point is to show that possibility in general is correspondence with the conditions of all *a priori* experience, Foucault refuses the idea that the causes or determinations (essences) of phenomena lie externally to them and, following from this, assumes ‘that the essence or “a priori” of experience’ must be immanent to experience itself (Basso 2012: 157). To explicate his position, Foucault creates the concept of the historical *a priori*. It is true that Edmund Husserl first used this term in his own philosophical historiography, but whereas Husserl wants to render explicit ‘the *a priori* structure contained in historicity’ to discover a ‘universal teleology of reason’ (Husserl [1936] 1970: 369), Foucault is too acutely aware that archaeology, and later genealogy, is ‘subordinated to the discourse one is analysing’ (Foucault [1969] 2002: 159) to see its task as gnoseological. Instead, he sees the task of archaeology as mapping certain historical regularities and showing how these regularities can assume a very specific function over time. We see this argument most sustained in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, arguably Foucault’s first explicitly topological analysis for its study on how the ‘formations and transformations of’ statements as ‘particular elements distributed in a corresponding space’ pose topological problems ‘that cannot adequately be described in terms of creation, beginning or foundation’ (Deleuze 1988: 3). In the text, Foucault argues that historical *a priori* is opposed to formal *a priori* because it is ‘not a condition of validity for judgements’ as in Kant and Husserl, but ‘a condition of reality for statements’ ([1969] 2002: 143). In other words, it is a ‘temporal system of dispersion’, characterised by a number of types of positivities (144) that must take account of *regularities*—be that statements, discipline, medicine, or biopower—in ‘their dispersion’, in their ‘non-coherence’, in their ‘simultaneity, which is not unifiable, and in their succession, which is not deductible’ (143). The historical *a priori* can thus be said to be a topological concept because it deals with multiplicities—Riemann’s manifold—that ‘emerge as regular events’ (146). We see here that an important concept develops alongside the historical *a priori*, namely *regularity*. Foucault’s understanding of regularity can be traced to Charles Sanders Peirce’s concepts of

continuity and discontinuity ‘as mutually involved ingredients of time’ that bring to light how habits ‘tend to regularize behavior and thereby render it stable’ (Cardoso 2016: 29). However, this stability is not as rigid as it may first appear, because ‘habits in the world of history require ongoing enactment in an ever-changing world’ and thus ‘contain within themselves the instability of becoming’ (29). Importantly, Foucault emphasises that regularity should not be confused with frequency or probability, nor should it be opposed to irregularity (2002: 161). Rather, regularity is the condition of conditions of the historical *a priori* that specify every enunciative field, every field of appearance and every distribution of power, the ‘whole set of rules in accordance with which its object, its modality, the concepts that it employs, and the strategy of which it is a part of, are formed’ (163).

Whereas Foucault, in his earlier works, such as *The Birth of the Clinic* ([1963] 1994), *The Order of Things* ([1966] 2005) and *The Archaeology of Knowledge* ([1969] 2002), is concerned with studying various regulatory mechanisms, a shift can be detected in *Discipline and Punish* ([1975] 1977). Thus, where Foucault’s archaeological concept of the historical *a priori* initially is a diagnostic tool for determining prior conditions that prefigure the establishment of certain practices over others, which then become habituated through external regulating mechanisms, there now is a concern with internal self-regulation (Foucault 1977: 25). Hence, a new type of regularity – and thus historical *a priori* – appears, or, as Deleuze says, Foucault ‘throws up a new topology’ (1988: 26), expounded through the figure of the Panopticon which ensures a generalisability of functions through regularised rules. The Panopticon’s temporal system of dispersion is very different to that found in *Archaeology*; that is, it diffuses power in an entirely new way: by distributing bodies in space and extracting time from them but, more importantly, by ‘composing [external and internalised surveilling] forces in order to obtain an efficient machine’ (1977: 165). What Foucault brings to light here is how power exists as relations between forces that are distributed in space and ordered in time. In other words, he describes a new regularity – the carceral – ‘with its many diffuse or compact forms, its institutions of supervision or constraint, of discreet surveillance and insistent coercion’, which assures the *generalisability* of punishments (299), and it is precisely this generalisability that characterises Foucault’s understanding of the diagram. In his words, the Panopticon ‘must be understood as a generalizable model of functioning; a way of defining power relations in terms of the everyday life of men’ (205). What is generalised is, of course, a specific series of regularities,

of which space, time and force are but three elements (148, 150, 164). What is regularised, on the other hand, are the 'relations between singular points' (Deleuze 1985) so that disciplining oneself becomes a regulatory condition, just as governing oneself does, as is discussed later by Foucault in the three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* (1976, 1984a, 1984b). Moreover, if there is any *a priori* to be found in these conceptions of space, time and force, it is not in a formal sense, but in the historical sense which takes account of the prior conditions that prefigure the establishment of the penitentiary system as a diagram of the new social state—a diagrammatic function that exercises power not through external apparatuses, but through a variable internalised mechanism.

Continuing his work on power and governmentality, Foucault displays, in the volumes on sexuality and in his initial work on biopolitics, a similar 'epochal' tone that has come to signify his earlier works. In the later lectures on biopolitics, however, he throws up yet another new topology that analyses not so much regularities in themselves, but 'patterns of correlation' between regularities in which 'heterogeneous elements—techniques, material forms, institutional structures and technologies of power—are configured, as well as the redeployments through which these patterns are transformed' (Collier 2009: 78). Foucault thus raises regularity to the level of art in his study of the 'government's consciousness of itself' (Foucault [2004] 2008: 2). No longer using a historical method to question universals in opposition to Kant, Foucault now starts from the assumption that 'universals do not exist' (3). In other words, he discards universals 'as an obligatory grid of intelligibility for certain concrete practices' in favour of 'concrete practices' through which universals might pass (3). Whereas regularity initially expressed, rather abstractly, the condition of conditions in the historical *a priori*, it now expresses, more concretely, the ways in which governmentality 'conducts the conduct of men [*sic*]', (186) and, in so doing, opens up new opportunities for thinking *resistance*. 'If resistance becomes a question for Foucault', writes Daniel Smith, 'it is because he begins with the question of knowledge (what is articulable and what is visible), finds the conditions of knowledge in power, but then has to ask about the ways one can resist power, even if resistance is primary in relation to power' (2016: 278). Foucault's conception of resistance has, however, been criticised for its lack of normative constraints; that is, because it celebrates 'any form of resistance', it thereby sanctions 'the worst forms of engagement' (Pickett 1996: 447). He did, for example, support Jean Genet's ideas 'in defense of Palestinian terrorists'; thought

that ‘experiments with drugs, sex, and communes might supply the outlines of a future society’; and even sided ‘to the political left of a bloody-minded Maoist with the *nom du guerre* Pierre Victor’ (451). Be this as it may, it would be a mistake, as Brent Pickett argues, to dismiss Foucault’s theorisation of resistance ‘because of this posturing’ (451). Instead, we might view Foucault’s elaboration of resistance as his Nietzscheanism coming full circle: ‘What resistance extracts from this revered old man, as Nietzsche put it, is the forces of a life that is larger, more active, more affirmative and richer in possibilities’ (Deleuze 1988: 92). I want to suggest here that instead of thinking of Foucault’s conception of resistance as lacking normativity, we see it as willing the dice throw. As such, resistance is in defiance of all *a priori*—be it formal or historical—because, like thought, it ‘always comes from the outside’ (117). From this point of view, it is entirely ineffectual to prescribe norms to resistance because it cannot be thought in advance: it always emerges from experimentation. ‘Resistance really always relies upon the situation against which it struggles’ (Foucault in Rabinow 1997: 168). Resistance, then, is Foucault’s ultimate response to Kant’s *a priori*, and even to his own historical *a priori*: resistance as an immanent empiricism, resistance as the conditions of thought. But how do we prevent thought as resistance and resistance in thought from becoming reterritorialised or recuperated by capitalism?

To address this question I bring together, in the following section, Deleuze’s understanding of Hume, and his development of a transcendental empiricism, with Nietzsche’s eternal return and the dice throw. It is this combination—transcendental empiricism and eternal return—I argue, that brings Deleuze and Guattari’s Nietzscheanism full circle in the elaboration of the concept that Deleuze says is truly his and Guattari’s invention: the ritornello (Deleuze [2001] 2007c: 385). Taken to its logical conclusion, the ritornello culminates in a generalised chromaticism or pragmatism, and it is precisely this that can help us think revolutionary politics.

III. Thinking a Generalised Chromaticism: From Regularity to Redundancy

This is what we are getting at: a generalized chromaticism. Placing elements of any nature in continuous variation is an operation that will perhaps give rise to new distinctions, but takes none as final and has none in advance.

(Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 97)

Deleuze, from the very beginning, was concerned with thinking the virtual or, to be more precise, thinking extensity *with* the virtual. It is only in his later work, and especially in his work with Guattari, that he ‘accords a growing interest to the phenomena of stratification, to history, and to the empirical arrangement of assemblages that actualize a diagram of forces’ (Sauvagnargues 2016: 176). This change in direction is in no small way due to Foucault’s influential body of work on historical stratifications, although Deleuze and Guattari will continue to think life in terms not only of actualised strata, but as virtual-intensive-actual assemblages, for the very reason that *becoming* ‘begins in history and returns to it, but it is not of history’ (Deleuze 2007c: 381). In their development of the virtual in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari rename it the Planomenon. On one side of the continuum, then, we have the Planomenon: the virtual, the BwO, the plane of consistency, matter. On the other side, we have the Ecumenon: extensity, strata, formed matters. They posit abstract machines as that which forms a kind of relay between the Planomenon and the Ecumenon, emitting and combining particles from these two different modes of existence (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 56). Deleuze and Guattari describe abstract machines as not being ‘physical or corporeal’, nor ‘semiotic’, but *diagrammatic*—a term they take from Foucault, but further develop (141). According to Foucault, the diagram is ‘a mechanism of power reduced to its ideal form’ so that its functioning is ‘abstracted from any obstacle, resistance or friction’; that is, it is ‘a figure of political technology that may and must be detached from any specific use (Foucault 1977: 205). Foucault’s diagram, as we see here, is irreducible to its extensive form precisely because it is detached from any actualised specificity. Its functions—as they pertain to regularities themselves, to patterns of correlation between regularities, and to the redistributions through which these patterns are transformed—thus exceed the actual because the diagram, far from being a mere blueprint of something else, such as the Panopticon, can be applied to terms that go *beyond* that which it initially defines. Recall here that, in Kant, mathematical knowledge is ‘determined by the construction of concepts, which implicates geometrical diagrams in a very specific way’, namely as non-empirical or *a priori* intuitions (Duffy 2013: 48; Kant 1998, A717/B745). Kant uses this line of reasoning to justify his argument for the synthetic unity of apperception; that is, *a priori* knowledge as such. In freeing themselves of this Kantian schematism of Reason, it will be important for Deleuze and Guattari, like Foucault, not to conflate the diagram with the transcendental.

The concept ‘transcendental’ is used in a number of ways by Kant but, important here, as argued in the previous section, is to know that, for the ‘epistemological aspect of his critique’, Kant requires, first of all, ‘a non-empirical, objective principle to be able to ground the factual regularities of association’ and, second of all, argues that ‘empiricists give up the phenomenological objectivity of experience whenever they rely rigorously on their theory of perception’ (Rölli 2016: 9). Kant’s transcendental method is thus a critique of empiricism because, for Kant, there is an *a priori*, a ‘productive imagination and a transcendental activity’ according to which ‘the given is not a thing in itself, but rather a set of phenomena, a set that can be presented as a nature only by means of an *a priori* synthesis’ (Deleuze 1991: 111). Deleuze, however, insists on an empirical method—even for thinking the virtual, and perhaps especially for thinking the virtual—because, for him, ‘nothing in the mind transcends human nature’; ‘nothing is ever transcendental’ (24). The objection that Deleuze has to Kant’s transcendental method—and which Hume ‘anticipates’ in Kant—is related to the *problematique* of the inquiry for, as Deleuze says, it is ‘a matter of knowing whether the question’ raised is ‘the most rigorous possible’ (107). The question for Hume, then, as for Deleuze, must be correctly raised ‘*at the level of practice*’ (16, emphasis added). Accordingly, the problem becomes: How can a subject, who transcends the given, also be constituted in the given?

The problematic, as we see, lies in the conception of the subject and what we conceive of as subjectivity, but also in an understanding of the given. Starting with the given, Deleuze, in his summation of Hume, explains it as ‘the flux of the sensible, a collection of impressions and images, or set of perceptions’ (87). It is thus the totality of that which appears in the mind or imagination. Once given, the impressions are taken up again, this time by a movement ‘that transcends’ or goes beyond it, and it is in this transcending movement that the subject emerges (92). The subject, therefore, is constituted as a ‘habit which presents itself as a synthesis’ of time (94), as Deleuze also discusses in *Difference and Repetition* (1994: 70–9). Habit, for its part, allows the subject to anticipate and what is anticipated, I want to suggest, is that which is redundant in repetition. ‘*Repetition*’, writes Deleuze, ‘*changes nothing in the object repeated, but does change something in the mind which contemplates it*’ (1994: 70). Thus, once a sequence is repeated, the subject comes to anticipate that which usually follows. Redundancy is therefore the condition which makes possible the anticipation of sequences—it is precisely that which we *do not* recognise in ‘what is “habitually” called habit’ (73). At the same time, redundancy is

also the condition for drawing something new from repetition, namely difference; that is, once we have eliminated that which is redundant in thought, we are in a position to produce something new. This is why Deleuze says that ‘Difference *inhabits* repetition’ (76).

This account of the given and of the subject is empirical because, instead of ‘using the abstract to explain a state of affairs’, it begins with the assumption that the abstract must itself be elaborated in such a way that it can account for the conditions of the production of the new (Bell 2009: 19). But why does Deleuze insist on using the term *transcendental* empiricism if he claims that nothing is ever transcendental? The reason is because ‘the ultimate products of the principles of association’ are beliefs which ‘constitute claims about the world that the world itself’ – as given to us as impressions – ‘does not license’; in other words, beliefs transcend or go beyond the given (Roffe 2016: 26). The term ‘transcendence’ is thus not used here in an ontological sense, but only in reference to the organisation of ideas, because being ‘is never what is at stake in Hume, since the entirety of our encounter with being is located at the limits of the mind, and its origin can only be traced back to the original fact of sensible impressions’ (26). Here, however, we encounter a new problem. In giving an account of the given, as well as the subject, Deleuze shows that Hume establishes that relations are always external to their terms, meaning the relations established between impressions ‘always presuppose a synthesis’ that neither ‘the idea nor the mind’ – and, hence, the subject – can account for (Deleuze 1991: 100). So, if relations are always external to their terms, how, Deleuze asks, ‘would relations be able to determine the priority of one term over the other, or the subordination of one to another?’ (123). Put differently, if relations are external to their terms, how can they account for an action such as a moral judgement? Deleuze’s answer, in short, is that they cannot. As such, Deleuze holds that we have to ‘recognize a radical difference between morality and reason’ (124) because, in order to account for *interest* and that which moves our interest into *action* and, even more importantly, how such action can reach a certain amount of *consistency*, we need to consider what the mind does after it becomes subject.

According to Deleuze, on his reading of Hume, the mind reflects and advances certain ideas above others; that is, it transcends the given by moving ‘from the known [the redundant] to the unknown’ (127). We find that an ‘entire polemic’ is carried out between the subject and ‘the fancy’ inside the self (129) which causes a reaction that is productive and inventive (130). The given – or the totality of that which appears as a collection of impressions – thus undergoes a double movement;

first, when the impressions, through movement, come to constitute the subject as a synthesis of time and, second, when those ideas that are not rendered redundant to our interests are made to resonate with ‘intentional purposiveness’ (132). Hume’s moral problem—and what we might think of more generally as a political problem—is thus a ‘problem of schematism, that is, the act by means of which we refer the natural interests to the political category of the whole or to the totality which is not given in nature’ (40–1). This, for Deleuze, is where politics begins: after the mind becomes subject. Subjectivity in itself thus becomes a redundancy because what is important for Deleuze, and Deleuze and Guattari, is not the constitution of subjectivity or what *is*, but *what is done* after subjectivity is established, and it is here that I turn to their development of redundancy in *A Thousand Plateaus*.

We find the first mention of redundancy in the opening chapter on rhizomes, where Deleuze and Guattari argue for maps as being different to tracings, because tracings inject and propagate redundancies; that is, tracings reproduce ‘points of structuration’ (1987: 13). Accordingly, redundancies have the function of *striating* and, as such, are topological rather than axiomatic. Later, in the geology chapter, Deleuze and Guattari reiterate that redundancy is a function of strata and stratification—Foucault’s visible and utterable—which ‘consist of giving form to matters, of imprisoning intensities or locking singularities into systems of resonance and redundancy’ (40). We notice here that where Foucault sees regularities, Deleuze and Guattari see regularities as *redundancies*, especially as relates to the signifier. It is, in fact, in terms of the signifier—particularly the order-word and regimes of signs—that Deleuze and Guattari most fully develop the notion of redundancy:

Signifier enthusiasts take an oversimplified situation as their implicit model: word and thing. From the word they extract the signifier, and from the thing a signified in conformity with the word, and therefore subjugated to the signifier. They operate in a sphere interior to and homogeneous with language. Let us follow Foucault in his exemplary analysis, which, though it seems not to be, is eminently concerned with linguistics. (1987: 66)

The reason Deleuze and Guattari argue here that Foucault is ultimately concerned with linguistics has to do with the functions of the diagram in stratification; that is, the diagram as a ‘form of content on a stratum’ which, in turn, refers back ‘to other forms of content’ (66). This is why Foucault can argue that the prison-form diagrams the school-form, the hospital-form, the factory-form, and so on. To put it differently, a regularity is injected and propagated in the entire social field. This

regularity, over time, becomes a redundancy because it tells us ‘what we “must” think, retain, expect, etc.’, so that both ‘significance and subjectification’ can be said to be ‘subordinate to redundancy’ (79). The implication here is that the associations between impressions, as formed in the mind, presuppose these redundancies which also effectuate incorporeal transformations – a ‘properly ideal or ghostly capacity’ of the diagram (84). This is important for thinking politics, because how can we account for politics as an action that is productive and inventive if our interests are informed by redundancies in the social field? We might ask: ‘Are there not diagrammatic redundancies distinct from both signifying redundancies and subjective redundancies? Redundancies that would no longer be knots of arborescence but resummptions and upsurges in a rhizome?’ (134). In part answer to this question, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish three types of deterritorialisation: (1) relative, negative deterritorialisation which is ‘proper to the strata, and culminates in significance’; (2) absolute, negative and stratic deterritorialisation which relates to subjectification; and (3) absolute, positive deterritorialisation ‘on the plane of consistency or the body without organs’ (134). It is this latter form of deterritorialisation that places the lines or parameters of diagrams in continuous variation (100, 109), effectuating a generalised chromaticism so that there is no longer a centre of resonance but, instead, ‘a highly complex and elaborate material making audible nonsonorous forces’ (95). To better understand how a generalised chromaticism is a critique of Kant’s *a priori* and can help us think the genesis of political thought, I briefly turn to the chapter on the ritornello or refrain in *A Thousand Plateaus*, and trace both Hume and Nietzsche’s influence on Deleuze and Guattari’s conception thereof.

In this plateau, Deleuze and Guattari explain that the Classical artist ‘codes’ music by structuring form–matter relations, whereas the Romantic artist uses the voice as driving force, mobilising a whole range of affective functions. What we see here, then, is a relative movement from function to expression so that the consistency of the territory attained in Classicism is deterritorialised in the Romantic period – but only relatively as there remains a tendency here to move along ‘the passage from noise to voice’ towards stabilisation (194). With Modernism, we see a movement towards more absolute deterritorialisation so that what was once known and understood is rendered strange again. This absolute movement from function to expression means that we are no longer dealing primarily with the capture, harnessing or mobilisation of forces, but have created an opening to the Cosmos. Sonic forces are thus potentiated through

a generalised chromaticism to be modulated (in terms of pitch or frequency, timbre, note quality, waveform and so on) according to non-pulsed temporalities rather than pulsed time (metre signatures). ‘The essential relation is no longer matters-forms (or substances-attributes)’, write Deleuze and Guattari, and ‘neither is it the continuous development of form and the continuous variation of matter. It is now a direct relation material-forces’ – an immanent process-event (342). My question here is: How does thinking a generalised chromaticism aid us in terms of thinking the genesis of politics, as well as the ways in which political action might reach a reasonable amount of consistency so as to render it more than a revolutionary moment?

We should be reminded here that, for Deleuze and Guattari, thinking anything, including politics, means thinking extensity *with* the virtual. Moreover, it includes thinking the empirical *with* the conceptual. Thus, in giving an account of the given, of subjectivity, and of how interest is moved to action where it may reach a certain amount of consistency, it is my argument that we need to use a transcendental empiricism that thinks at the level of practice, but takes into account that which exceeds or transcends what is immediately given to experience. In other words, we need to account not only for that which is redundant (the actual), but for that which exceeds subjectification and signification (the virtual). This, in fact, is why using the ritornello to think the genesis of politics is useful. It is the becoming-sonorous of Nietzsche’s eternal return. On Deleuze and Guattari’s view, a generalised chromaticism takes ‘the place of the old “*a priori* synthetic judgment”’ because the diagrammatic functions have changed to no longer capture and distribute regularities and redundancies, but instead to place ‘all its components in continuous variation’, including ‘holes, silences, ruptures, and breaks’ (95). This, for Deleuze, is the logic of AND:

The AND is not even a specific relation or conjunction, it is that which subtends all relations, the path of all relations, which makes relations shoot outside their terms and outside the set of their terms, and outside everything which could be determined as Being, One, or Whole. The AND as extra-being, inter-being . . . Thinking with AND, instead of thinking IS, instead of thinking for IS: empiricism has never had another secret. (Deleuze and Parnet 2002: 57)

What Deleuze is arguing here is that while relations are always external to their terms, the AND, as a function of a generalised chromaticism or pragmatism, subtends these relations and has a positive power that can put the terms to flight because, between

the identifiable terms, 'is a multiplicity' (Bell 2009: 2) and it is this multiplicity—rather than Foucault's generalisability—that characterises Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of the diagram. Furthermore, the diagram can effectuate all three kinds of deterritorialisation and, as such, can account for absolute, positive deterritorialisation on the plane of consistency—that which goes beyond the subject. That is, absolute positive deterritorialisation, on the one side of the movement, renders the subject redundant while, on the other side, determines the *real* conditions under which the new is produced. This is the double movement of the dice throw, 'the dice that are thrown and the dice that fall back' (Deleuze [1962] 2006: 23). It is a single dice throw which affirms chance at the outset, without anticipating a result or relying on many dice throws—'causality and probability' (25). In its first moment, the dice throw affirms chance; in its second moment it affirms the eternal return. Importantly, it is not a cycle: neither Nietzsche's eternal return, nor Deleuze and Guattari's ritornello 'presuppose the One, the Same, the Equal or equilibrium' (Deleuze [2002] 2004a: 124), Rather, the eternal return/ritornello is selective and affirmative: it selects only difference and affirms all of chance by raising that which is selected to its n^{th} power.

In this selection, we find a very Humean conception of politics, as has been shown, but in order for politics to exceed individual *sentiments*, it has to attain the rhythm of the eternal return—a rhythm which is untimely and cannot be reduced to the political-historical because, when 'people struggle for their liberation, there is always a coincidence of poetic acts and historical events or political actions, the glorious incarnation of something sublime or untimely' (Deleuze [2002] 2004b: 130). The becoming-rhythmic of politics in order to incarnate the untimely means, first of all, becoming artist and symptomatologist. 'The world is treated as a symptom and searched for signs of disease, signs of life, signs of a cure, signs of health' (Deleuze [2002] 2004c: 140). Second, the artist, who is never outside the symptoms, must have a 'zone of presence' and be 'in contact with the "dramas"' in order to 'resolve a local situation' (141). Moreover, artists must 'exhibit a certain coherence'—attain a certain amount of consistency—but must get this 'somewhere else' (141). This is an exercise in transcendental empiricism: 'the creation of concepts in the wild, speaking in the name of a coherence which is not their own, nor that of God, nor that of the self, but a coherence always on the way, always in disequilibrium with itself' (141–2). In *always being on the way*, this coherence eliminates redundancies, rendering even the subject redundant, making the assignable self a little more fluid, a little more rhythmic, so that 'there

is no longer any person on whom God can exercise his power or by whom He can be replaced' (138). Here we find a resonance between Hume and Nietzsche in their 'concerted destruction of the three great limit-ideas in metaphysics: the Self, the World, and God' (Deleuze [2002] 2004d: 164). In thinking revolutionary politics, then, we have to become artists, we have to read the world as symptom, we have to select and affirm impersonal individuations and pre-individual singularities. We have to become rhythmic rather than reactive. This involves not only diagnosing the forces knocking at the door, but also chasing them away 'by erecting the last Power capable of doing battle with them, against them, and rooting out the reactive forces within us and outside us (Deleuze [2001] 2007d: 208). There *must* be a transmutation of the reactive into the active.

It is easy to see how this speaks to Deleuze and Guattari's insistence on experimentation and fabulation but, in order for revolutionary politics to have effects beyond a moment, it also needs to attain a certain amount of consistency – and this is much harder to address, as it speaks to the problem of resistance becoming reterritorialised on old patterns or habits. It may be argued that this is the very problem of a generalised chromaticism. The problem of consistency is addressed throughout *A Thousand Plateaus*, though I want to concentrate here on the refrain chapter where Deleuze and Guattari write:

The problem of consistency concerns the manner in which the components of a territorial assemblage hold together. But it also concerns the manner in which different assemblages hold together, with components of passage and relay. It may even be the case that consistency finds the totality of its conditions only on a properly cosmic plane, where all the disparate and heterogeneous elements are convoked ... Even in a territorial assemblage, it may be the most deterritorialized component, the deterritorializing vector, in other words, the refrain, that assures the consistency of the territory. (1987: 327)


As we see here, it is the *consistency of the refrain* which provides *consistency to the whole*: the tune sung by the child in the dark as a kind of 'mnemonic melody that has no need to be inscribed locally in a center, or in the form of a vague motif with no need to be pulsed or stimulated' (332). There is no centre, and no *a priori* synthetic judgement to fall back on, but there is a rhythm, made up of heterogeneous elements – practices that 'provide a method to analyse, on a case-by-case basis, how living beings as a subset among assemblages, are situated in and dependent on the machinic patchwork of reality' (Kleinherenbrink 2015: 210).

Instead of getting attached to these practices—as if politics were a historical enactment club—only that which affirms political vitality is selected ‘so that it can harness unthinkable, invisible, nonsonorous forces’ (343)—the untimely. This is precisely what Deleuze and Guattari mean by a generalised chromaticism: an agitation of the political (State politics) by wresting consistency from chaos; fabulating new modalities by amalgamating the major and the minor, ‘and in each instance conquer[ing] realms of continuous variation for this variable or that’; a ‘grain of absolute Intensity’ (96) which places the various elements of political experimentation ‘in continuous variation’, thus giving rise ‘to new distinctions’, but taking ‘none as final and has none in advance’ (97). This is the creative stammering, the dramatisation of a revolutionary politics: a ‘brand of Nietzschean pragmatism and empiricism which has been turned against common sense’ (Deleuze 2007d: 203), which kills its darlings (redundancies, dogmatic images of thought) in order that it may enter ‘the service of a virtual cosmic continuum’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 95). From Chaos to Earth to Cosmos, the Cosmos ‘as an abstract machine, and each world as an assemblage effectuating it’ (280).

IV. Conclusion

Like Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari have no normative politics as such, but this does not mean that ‘anything goes’, nor does it mean that we need to fall back on a transcendent position. Rather, what they advocate is a selection process—the throw of the dice—which involves real experimentation and the affirmation of that which effectuates change. In positing a generalised chromaticism as that which replaces Kant’s *a priori* synthetic judgement, Deleuze and Guattari argue for practices, or a pragmatics, aimed at eliminating redundancies in thought and action—eradicating what Deleuze calls dogmatic images of thought, be it the *a priori* or the historical *a priori*—and *this* is what makes their politics a truly immanent critique (of representation) and a transcendental empiricism: *revolutionary* rather than normative, because normativity *is* redundancy.

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