A user's guide to Capitalism Deviations and from Deleuze and Schizophrenia

Brian Massumi
"A phenomenon is not an appearance, or even an apparition, but a sign, a symptom which finds its meaning in an existing force."¹

Take wood.² A woodworker who sets out to make a table does not pick just any piece of wood. She chooses the right piece for the application. When she works it, she does not indiscriminately plow into it with the plane. She is conscious of the grain and is directed by it. She reads it and interprets it. What she reads are signs. Signs are qualities³ (color, texture, durability, and so on). And qualities are much more than simply logical properties or sense perceptions. They envelop a potential—the capacity to be affected, or to submit to a force (the action of the plane; later, the pressure of salt shakers and discourteous elbows), and the capacity to affect, or to release a force (resistance to gravity; or in a nontable application, releasing heat when burned). The presence of the sign is a contraction of time. It is simultaneously an indicator of a future potential and a symptom of a past. It envelops material processes pointing forward (planing; being a table) and backward (the evolution of the tree's species; the natural conditions governing its individual growth; the cultural actions that brought that particular wood to the workshop for that particular purpose). Envelopment is not a metaphor. The wood’s individual and phylogenetic past exists as traces in the grain, and its future as qualities to be exploited. On a first, tentative level, meaning is precisely that: a network of enveloped material processes.

"A thing has as many meanings as there are forces capable of seizing it."⁴ The presence of the sign is not an identity but an envelopment of difference, of a multiplicity of actions, materials, and levels. In a

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broader sense, meaning even includes the paths not taken. It is also all the forces that could have seized the thing but did not. It is an infinity of processes.

Interpretation consists in developing what is enveloped in the sign. The woodworker brings the qualities of the wood to a certain expression. His interpretation is a creation, not just of a physical object, but of a use-value, a cultural object, a table for steak and potatoes. Although the activity of the woodworker may seem to occur on a conscious level as a "will" or "intention" translated into action, it is no more subjective than the sign was merely objective. Only a Horatio Alger would say that it was by free choice alone that the woodworker-to-be became a manual laborer. The training he received is a particular institutionalization of craftsmanship formalizing knowledge accumulated over centuries by countless people. What product he makes from the wood is defined by the cultural needs and fashions of countless others. Interpretation is force, and an application of force is the outcome of an endless interplay of processes natural and historical, individual and institutional.

This gives us a second approximation of what meaning is: more a meeting between forces than simply the forces behind the signs. Force against force, action upon action, the development of an envelopment: meaning is the encounter of lines of force, each of which is actually a complex of other forces. The processes taking place actually or potentially on all sides could be analyzed indefinitely in any direction. There is no end, no unity in the sense of a totality that would tie it all together in a logical knot. No unity, but a region of clarity: tool meets wood. The meaning of an event can be rigorously analyzed, but never exhaustively, because it is the effect of an infinitely long process of selection determining that these two things, of all things, meet in this way at this place and time, in this world out of all possible worlds.

At first glance, this example might seem to reinforce traditional philosophical dualities: nature on the side of the sign, culture on the side of the interpreter; objective on one side, subjective on the other; matter, mind; raw material, production. None of these distinctions hold. The forces that brought the wood to the worker and the worker to the wood are a mixture of the cultural and the natural. A human body is a natural object with its own phylogenesis; from the point of view of the social forces that seize it, it is as much a raw material to be molded as is the wood from another perspective.
There is, however, a duality in play. The signs in the wood are not passive ("the thing itself is not neutral, and has more or less affinity with the force whose grasp it is currently in"). But they are less active than the tool. Their action is slower, their force weaker. They have an encounter with interpretation, and are overpowered. This is not to say that they are an amorphous substance given form by expression. Expression has no more a monopoly on form than content does on substance. There is substance on both sides: wood; woodworking body and tools. And there is form on both sides: both raw material and object produced have determinate forms, as do the body and tools.

The encounter is between two substance/form complexes, one of which overpowers the other. The forces of one are captured by the forces of the other and are subsumed by them, contained by them. "The value of something is the hierarchy of forces which are expressed in it as a complex phenomenon." One side of the encounter has the value of a content, the other of an expression. But content and expression are distinguished only functionally, as the overpowered and the overpowering. Content is not the sign, and it is not a referent or signified. It is what the sign envelops, a whole world of forces. Content is formed substance considered as a dominated force-field.

The distinction between content and expression is not only functional, it is relative and reversible. Seen from the perspective of the dominating tool, the wood is a content. But from the perspective of the forces that went into it, it is an expression, of the water, sunlight, and carbon dioxide it captured and contains, of the genetic potential it did or did not pass on. The craftsman with hand to tool is an agent of expression, but from another angle he is the content of an institution, of the apprenticeship system or technical school that trained him. A content in one situation is an expression in another. The same thing can be both at different times or simultaneously, depending on which encounter is in question and from what angle.

The fact that the distinction between content and expression is relative and reversible does not mean that it is merely subjective, that we can have it any way we like it. Content and expression are indeed reversible, but the "perspective" according to which one becomes the other is not fundamentally the point of view of an outside observer. It is the angle of application of an actual force. Content and expression are reversible only in action. A power relation determines which is
which. Since each power relation is in turn a complex of power relations, since each thing is taken up in a web of forces, the distinction may seem untenable. Complicated it is, but not untenable. The strands of the web can be unwound. We can follow the trajectory of a force across its entanglements with other forces (planing applied to a succession of woods, to different effect depending on the woods' qualities), and we can follow the trajectory of a thing as it passes from one knot of forces to the next (human body from technical school to workshop). Content and expression are in a state of what Deleuze and Guattari call "reciprocal presupposition." One does not exist without the other. They are mutually determining. And although they are always mixed in fact, they are distinct in nature. Characterizing this distinction as "functional" might be misleading. The model is not one of utility but of struggle—a "hand-to-hand combat of energies." The fact that armies always come in twos at least and soldiers by the brigade does not mean that a battle is unanalyzable. It may not be possible to know at every moment who has the upper hand, but the dust will settle. The distinction between victor and vanquished is real.

It is possible to make a further distinction by isolating the formal aspects of content and expression from their substance. The procedures of the woodworker have a method. This formal organization of functions could be called a "form of expression." Similarly, the qualities of the wood as raw material, the states they pass through as they become a table, and their condition as end product have an order and organization that could be called the "form of content." The form of an expression or a content can be separated from its substance, but unlike the distinction between expression and content as a whole, the separation is only possible in thought. A form—an organization of functions or qualities—is not materially separate from its substance. It is that substance, seen from the point of view of the actions to which it submits and the changes of state through which it passes. This time, the perspective is imposed from outside. The distinction, however, is a useful one. Dominating action (function) and change of state (change in quality) are two poles of the same process—the encounter between expression and content, in which each receives a determination in its struggle with the other. Distinguishing a form of expression from a form of content permits us to isolate that dynamic aspect of both formations at their determining point of impact. Thinking in terms of
function and quality and bracketing the substances of expression and content is a way of evacuating the poles of dualistic processes. Rather than two irreducible formations, we have two edges of an interface. If we take the abstraction one step further and look at the interface itself—what happens between the form of expression and the form of content—we get a set of abstract relations between abstract points, the "diagram" of a vectorial field: point (tool) bearing down at such and such an angle with so much pressure on point (wood) that yields to it to such and such a degree. . . . Form of expression and form of content fuse into the form of the encounter itself. We have extracted a unity from a duality. More precisely, we have created a unity that did not exist in actuality. That unity does not suppress the actual duality between content and expression, but exists alongside it, in thought. In fact, far from suppressing the duality, it replicates it. Our unity-in-thought is an expression enveloping the (double-edged) encounter as its content: a new content-expression duality, on a different, this time conceptual, level.

The form of the encounter we extract is not a "form" as we normally think of one. It is not static. It is a dynamism, composed of a number of interacting vectors. The kind of "unity" it has in no way vitiates that multiplicity—it is precisely an interaction between a multiplicity of terms, an interrelation of relations, an integration of disparate elements. It is a diagram of a process of becoming. Bracketing substance is a heuristic device that enables a real "translation" to take place (in the etymological sense of a "carrying across"): the interrelation of relations crosses from one substance (the thingness of tools and wood) to another (the ideality of thought). The dynamism is lifted out of one substance and incarnated in another. Thought repeats the interrelation in its own substance; it mimics the encounter, establishing a parallel network of vectors, but between different points (concepts instead of tools and wood). The dynamism can be rethingified, reactualized, by a further translation, into written or oral language (phonemes or written characters in their syntactical interrelation).

Meaning for Deleuze and Guattari is this process of translation. It involves a fundamental redundancy: what occurred once in wood is repeated in thought. What occurred once as thought is repeated in written or spoken words. What occurred once as genesis (of a table) comes back inert (the flash of a thought, words that evaporate into the air, letters drying on a page).
**Round Two**

Meaning is not in the genesis of the thing, nor in the thought of that genesis, nor in the words written or spoken of it. It is in the process leading from one to the other. If meaning is as it has been described here—an interface between at least two force fields, or more specifically, between a form of content (an order and organization of qualities) and a form of expression (an order and organization of functions)—it stands to reason that there can be no direct causal relation between content and expression. An order of qualities (treeness, various stages of woodness, tableness) and an order of functions (being a person, being an apprentice, being a woodworker, making a table) have such different regimes of organization and lines of causality, and pertain to such different levels of reality, that on close inspection we see that between them there can be no actual "conformity, common form, nor even correspondence."\(^\text{15}\) If we try to pinpoint the encounter, it slips from our grasp. The "hand-to-hand combat of energies" comes to a head when the plane shaves the wood. But many things intervene between what has been defined as the form of expression and the edge of the blade: a boss, a body, hands, technique, intentions, the handle of the tool. And between the blade and the form of content: a piece of wood, a customer order, rain, trucks, delivery, a tree. As we have seen, each of these elements is itself an encounter between force fields of content and force fields of expression, each with its own substance and form. Our original duality has fractured into countless new dualities proliferating in every direction, each encompassing clouds of heterogeneous elements without number. Expression can only cut through the fog and affect content by ceasing to be itself. It must become the content-tool in the dominating hand of the worker. It must surrender itself to the cut of the blade.

If this is true of the wood-tool encounter, it is also true of that encounter's encounter with the words we apply to it. Another infinite fracturing. Another interstitial void, sundering with brain waves and fingers and word processor keys and paper pulp and consonants. The expressiveness of thought getting packed into letters and phonemes, into forms of content which enter other causal circuits: speech, print, and electronic media. Thought surrendering itself to pen and pixel.

If meaning is a process of translation from one substance to another of a different order and back again, what it moves across is an
unbridgeable abyss of fracturing. If meaning is the in-between of content and expression, it is nothing more (nor less) than the being of their "nonrelation."  

The non of the relation means that everything said earlier to support the fidelity of the diagram of meaning can be turned against it. If the diagram is indeed an integration of disparate elements which nevertheless retain their distinctness, and if it is struck with the same redundancy as the meaning-process it diagrams, but does not explicitly acknowledge that fact, then it is in a sense a sleight of hand. The only way out is to say that the diagram's deceptiveness is precisely what makes it faithful (and vice versa).

Replay: What the diagram diagrams is a dynamic interrelation of relations. The dynamism occurs twice: once as genesis in a state of things (tool to wood), and again in ideality (concept to concept). The diagram combines a past (the working of the wood) and the future of that past (the thought of the woodworking), but it skips over its own genesis—the present of the content—expression encounter constitutive of thought (the unthought of thought). Actually, the dynamism occurs twice twice: after being translated into ideality (concept to concept) it is reexternalized in words (phoneme to phoneme; letter to letter) to resume its life among things in a new capacity. The diagram again combines a past (the thought of the woodworking) and the future of that past (pronunciation, publication), skipping over its own genesis, in this case the present of the content—expression encounter constitutive of speaking or writing (the unsaid of communication: afterthought). In each instance, the elided present, like the in-between of tool and wood, is at any rate a void. In skipping it, the diagram reduplicates the process it diagrams. The diagram is false, in that it contracts a multiplicity of levels and matters into its own homogeneous substance. But it is true, in that it envelops in that substance the same affect, and because it reproduces the in-betweenness of the affect in the fracturing of its own genesis. The expression of meaning is true in its falseness to itself, and false in its trueness to its content. Translation is repetition with a difference. If meaning is becoming, it is a becoming-other. It is the alienation of the same in the different, and the sameness of the different in its alienation from itself. The (non)relation is a separation-connection.

One more time: It is stretching things to say that the same affect is reproduced on both sides of the abyss of translation. The interrelation
of relations between the wood and the tool bears no resemblance to that between concepts, which bears no relation to that between phonemes or letters: "no conformity or common form, nor even correspondence." The system of woodworking techniques is nevertheless unquestionably connected to changes in the wood's quality, and the words that envelop both are unquestionably connected to the bipolar process of woodworking, even if they are separated from it by an abyss or two. It is tempting to call these separation-connections parallelisms. They are not: wood and tool are caught in their own circuits of causality and no sooner meet than are separated, one destined to be reimplanted in a kitchen, the other to gouge another wood; and no sooner do the words encounter that incision than they are swept away from both wood and tool, bound for circulation in a book. The separation-connection of translation is more an asymptotic relation than a parallelism. But it is a relation nonetheless. Meaning is the "relation of a nonrelation," the meeting, across a bottomless pit, of formations with skew trajectories.

If meaning is a meeting between asymptotic lines of causality which have no common form or correspondence, who or what introduces them to each other? No one person or thing, but the infinity of forces, some willed, most fortuitous, that made that tree, brought it to that workshop, made that worker, brought her to that tool, made these words, brought them to these pages, made you, and — perhaps most mysterious of all — induced you to keep reading this interminably drawn-out example. What brings these formations together is the "abstract machine." The abstract machine is interpretation. It is the meaning process, from the point of view of a given expression. Any sign, quality, or statement, as the trace of a process of becoming, can be considered a de facto diagram from which a formal diagram of the operative abstract machine could be developed. In the case of "meaning" as commonly understood (that is, as restricted to the conceptual or linguistic planes) the abstract machine is the subject of meaning (in the sense of the agency responsible for its unfolding), and the "meaning" is the formal diagram of forces extracted from the encounter in question. A diagram is a contraction of the abstract machine, which it envelops from a particular angle, recapitulates on a given level.

Deleuze and Guattari occasionally call meaning "essence" (Deleuze particularly, in such works as Proust and Signs and The Logic of Sense). It is called that because as the point of intersection between formations,
it constitutes a point of contraction enveloping the entirety of their processes. The word "essence" should not be taken in any Platonic sense. The essence is always of an encounter; it is an event; it is neither stable nor transcendental nor eternal; it is immanent to the dynamic process it expresses and has only an abyssal present infinitely fractured into past and future. The essence can be condensed into an integrated graphic representation of a vectorial field—a literal diagram, directional arrows between points (a favorite method in A Thousand Plateaus). Or, as in The Logic of Sense, it can be stated as an infinitive: to-make-wood-into-table. Or, it can be spun out as the words of an expository analysis. Whatever form its diagram takes, the unity of the essence is always self-undermining. In the infinitive, the essence is resolvable into the verbal phrase "to make," and the noun phrase "wood-into-table." Even in its most deceptively homogeneous expression, the essence faithfully marks its own bipolar nature as a fragile integration of two "forms" separated by a hyphenated gulf. It is two-faced, suspended in the abyss looking to both edges at once. From the point of view of the form of content, this two-sidedness appears as an "attribute" (the tableness attributed to the wood). From the point of view of the form of expression, it is an "expressed" (the becoming table of the wood). The attribute is not fundamentally a logical property assigned by an individual mind to a state of things. It is a real quality "attributed" to (produced in) the wood by the abstract machine, as enveloped in the infinitive. The expressed is not fundamentally a signified caught in an interplay of signifiers. It is a function involving a real transformation.

The envelopment in thought and language of a qualitative transformation in a state of things translates a dynamism onto a level at which different materials are in play and different modes of interrelation obtain. It adds and subtracts qualities, reattributing the attribution. The real transformation it effects is of a special kind. A conceptualization of woodworking makes it possible for the process to carry over into a set of verbal or written instructions. These in turn permit the process to carry over into an institutional framework. Institutionalization makes woodworking reproducible (through the training of woodworkers; through their insertion into a system of work in which they can be ordered to repeat the process as needed) and perfectible (through the accumulation and dissemination of technique). The
infinitive is an especially apt form in which to express an essence: translation on the level of thought and language catapults the inexhaustible complexity of each unique encounter's conditions of emergence into an indefinite circuit of reproduction and systematic variation. Translation adds another level of definition (de-finition) to an event's dynamism. It repotentializes it, makes it repeatable, multiplies it. But the multiplication of the event is also its domestication. Its dynamic potential is simultaneously carried to a higher power and dulled, diffracted, captured in a regularizing network of forces. Since the action of this reproductive network of forces is qualitatively different from that of the productive network of forces from which the event arose in all its sharpness, it deserves another name: "power." Force culminates a boundless potential. It takes the uniqueness of the event to its limit. Power delimits and distributes the potential thus released.23

The institutional dimension of reproducibility does not imply a firmness under foot or fixity of connection. Since every repetition of a process repotentializes it, adding and subtracting qualities, there is always the possibility that the event will be carried far enough afield that it will fall from its accustomed framework. The event remains on uncertain ground. A diagram gives us a handle on it by expressing it as a bipolar integration. Still, if we move out from cutting edge of any particular occurrence of an encounter forward or backward in time or in any direction in space, the formations in interaction—from one point of view so unified in their effect (a table is born)—crumble beneath us. As we have seen, the content was, is, and will be many things. The expression was, is, and will be many functions. The things were, are, and will be many functions. The functions were, are, and will be many things. Fractured, all. Every step falls in a void. No sooner do we have a unity than it becomes a duality. No sooner do we have a duality than it becomes a multiplicity. No sooner do we have a multiplicity than it becomes a proliferation of fissures converging in a void. The fact that an event can be reproduced (the fact that the dynamism is connectable, can be reinserted into states of things) does not belie its utter uniqueness (its separation or difference from all other events; the absolute singularity of the conditions of occurrence of any given reinsertion). For re-production is translation, a transformational carrying-over to another site or substance. In itself, the event has only extinction. Its accomplishment is its evaporation in the infinite inter-
play of its seething components. The uniqueness of the event means that its happening is always also its undoing. Its reproducibility means that it will nevertheless come again to be undone: to each event, many happening returns.

Meaning is the contraction of difference and repetition in a self-expiring expression. Power is the resuscitation of meaning.

In the separation-connection of the act of meaning, the separation runs deeper than the connection. For Deleuze, the essence of meaning, the essence of essence, is best expressed by two infinitives: "to cut," "to die." A person is either still alive or already dead. The moment of death is ungraspable. When sword sears flesh—on second thought, let’s stick with our example—when plane gouges wood, you cannot pinpoint any contact. Zeno’s paradox. Halve the distance between the blade and the surface, halve it again, and again... the blade will never reach its goal. Yet it cuts. The event of the gouging is empty, instantaneous, insubstantial. The wood is always about to be cut, or has just been cut. The cutting has no present, only the scintillating abyss of a future-past. It is a meaning, but a meaning without depth, only multiplying surface (the surface of blade and the surface of the wood; the surface of the blade and the two surfaces of the wood after incision). It is an event, but in the infinitive, with no recognizable tense. It can be enveloped in words, but that doesn’t make it any safer. Words can cut, in a manner of speaking—someone told the woodworker to make that table. The boss’s words did not physically gouge, but gouge they did, like an incorporeal blade crossing the void between the inertness of sounds evaporating into the workshop air and the formative action of a tool in all its material density. The same words and tool may have combined in the past, and may combine again. Has cut, will cut. Definite tenses keeping company in time. In the slash between their future and their past: "to cut," as always timeless and alone.

The complexity of the event leads inevitably to the kind of paradoxical formulations in which Deleuze delights in *The Logic of Sense*: essence as instantaneous and eternal, different and the same, unique and repetitious, chance and destiny, active and extinct ("sterile," evaporative), surface and depth, absolutely particular and superhumanly abstract, empty and overfull, sense and nonsense, the unity of a multiplicity, and so on. The paradoxes should not be taken as mere frivolities. They are serious attempts to pack meaning into the smallest
possible space without betraying it with simplification. The meaning can always be unpacked, in precise and useful ways. A paradox is not a contradiction. A paradox abolishes contradiction. It does not negate, it compounds. The unity, duality, and multiplicity of meaning are not mutually contradictory. They are moments or aspects of a process. They are mutually determining, in reciprocal presupposition. But they can be unraveled. Each has its expository efficacy, as *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* set out to show. They may be thought of as levels, or "plateaus." We can operate on whichever level seems adequate to the problem we are dealing with, and can choose to emphasize that level's connection to or separation from the others (the relation or the *non*). We must remember, however, that the ground is ultimately unstable, and should be prepared to jump at any moment.

Each of these levels is real. The multiplicity is a real heterogeneity of sites and substances. The duality is a real distinction between the overpowered and overpowering formations those materials are taken up in. The unity is a real "diagram" enveloping the real dynamism of a duality and depositing it, perchance, on a page. The unity is something else again: the real monism of matter. For there is only one world, one nature, and—below the quantum level of matter and beyond the synapses of our brains—one unified field. Which never ceases to divide into a multiplicity of singular elements and composite materials, into dualities of content and expression, into unifying conceptual and linguistic contractions. The unity is before, as "cause," lost in the gritty "depths" of the genesis of matter, and it is after, as "effect," evaporating in the "sterile" atmosphere of thought and language. It is twice. In between: the future-past event of meaning.

Meaning as local fissure and cosmic contraction. Paradox and the laughter of the gods.

**Round Three**

Being is fractal. In non-Euclidean geometry, a fractal is a figure with a fractional number of dimensions; for example, something between a point and a line, a line and a plane, or a plane and a volume. The easiest fractal to understand is one between a line and a plane. Start with a straight line, measure it into thirds, build an equilateral triangle with the middle segment as its base, remove the base segment, repeat the
process on the resulting four segments, repeat the process on the resulting sixteen segments, and so on to infinity. Now start with an equilateral triangle and perform the same operation on all three sides simultaneously. What you end up with looks like a snowflake. But the apparent interiority of the figure is misleading. The outline is endlessly dividing and is therefore infinitely riddled with proliferating fissures. The figure can nevertheless be assigned a precise value: it has $1.261859$ dimensions. It is a specific figure that can be accurately described, and even has a name (the Koch curve). In spite of its infinite fissuring, it looks like and can function as a unified figure if we adopt a certain ontological posture toward it: monism as produced meaning, optical effect. On close inspection, it is seen to be a network of bifurcation: duality. On still closer inspection, it becomes a web of proliferating fissures in infinite regress toward the void. Such a figure can be expressed as an equation (paradox with precision). Like the directions above, the equation does not strictly speaking describe the figure, as one would describe the contours of a static form. Instead, it maps a procedure (the equation is an "abstract machine" as the principle of a becoming). The equation is a set of potential operations (affects; vectorial relations between points; abstract dynamism) that comes "before," as "cause," but is not a sufficient cause, since it needs someone or something (another abstract machine) functioning on a different level of reality to actualize it by writing it down or working it out in a diagram (expression jumping the abyss and moving into content through the intervention of an asymptotic line of causality). The diagram is drawable, but only if the fissuring is arbitrarily stopped at a certain level (produced meaning as evaporative end effect; monism as the redundancy of the inert double; momentary suspension of becoming). We can operate on any of these levels, depending on our purpose. Monism (contraction-integration), duality (cut), and approach-to-the-void (the unreachable limit toward which the process tends; death) are in mutual presupposition but are really distinct, and are therefore capable of being unraveled and minutely analyzed (even death, as Blanchot has shown).

We skipped multiplicity. In one sense, it is the reproducibility of the fractal, the potential for generating from the same equation a variety of diagrams, each of which would be different depending on when the process was stopped. But as we have seen, there is a multiplicity
inherent to every meaning encounter taken separately, in that each diagram envelops a number of heterogeneous levels. This aspect is missing in this example because the fractal proliferates according to a principle of self-similarity. The transformations are identical, so any two segments on any level are symmetrical. What is missing is chance. If chance variations are thrown in (the "throw of the dice" in The Logic of Sense and Nietzsche), the endless snowflaking will deviate into a truly random figure in which no two segments are the same, but which is still mathematically describable. As it proliferates, it will snake in and out on itself, creating a formation resembling a shoreline with islands. If randomization is taken one step farther and the chance variations of line-draw and cut are freed from the constraint of a triangular starting point, the fracturing will fill more and more space, eventually producing a unified plane-effect. This is called a "random walk." The "plane" of Life itself (the "cosmos"); nature-culture; the abstract machine in its widest connotation; monism in its other aspect, as generative matter-energy, an abstract dynamism at a level at which it is a sufficient cause) is a "space-filling fractal" of infinite dimension. Computer graphics employs fractals generated by controlled stochastic procedures (programmed deviations) to simulate natural formations. But nature is never effectively controlled (causing but uncaused; founding but unfounded). Every moment in life is a step in a random walk. Uncannily familiar as the shore may seem, looking back reveals no Eden of interiority and self-similarity, no snowflake state to regain. Ahead lies nothing with the plane reliability of solid ground. You can never predict where the subatomic particle will appear, or what will flash across the synapse (pure instantaneous event). Once thrown, however, the dice are destiny.

God as a drunken gambler. Dionysus snickering at fate as he steals an extra turn.

Pause

What do we have so far? A slew of slippery concepts. They seem to congregate into two groupings. One set is best suited to a semiotic analysis of local encounters: affect, quality, function, form and substance of content, form and substance of expression, reciprocal presupposition, redundancy, contraction-integration, asymptotic causality,
The other to far-reaching speculation: meaning, nonsense, chance, destiny, being, becoming, immanence, cosmos, void. Putting the two together is the most fun.

Neither set, taken alone or together, is meant to add up to a system or a universally applicable model. In fact, they are specifically designed to make that impossible. On the speculative level, they self-combust in playful paradox. Since no two people’s sense of play is alike, no two people will find a given formulation satisfying. Pick any local encounter and apply the semiotic set to it. You will find that you cannot use the concepts without changing them or the way they interrelate. Every situation is unique and requires a specially tailored repertory of concepts. The concepts were formulated to help meet the challenge of thinking the unique. That is, to meet the challenge of thinking—for there is nothing in this world but uniqueness. They are less slippery than supple. They should under no circumstances be crystallized into a methodology. Like all of Deleuze and Guattari’s concepts, they are logical operators or heuristic devices to be adapted as the situation requires. Deleuze and Guattari themselves cannot be accused of making a method of them. No two books muster the same array. In Prust and Signs, for example, Deleuze describes four Proustian “worlds” with very different semiotic organizations. In Cinema I, he describes no less than sixteen different categories of cinematic signs, none of which would be especially welcome in any world of Proust’s. When Deleuze writes solo he tends to use different kinds of conceptual mixes and concentrates on different aspects of problems than Guattari. Everything is up for continual reinvention.

Focusing in on another localized encounter will illustrate this conceptual variability, and lead us by a different route back to broader questions of language and meaning.

Round Four

Take a person in an institution, a high school for example. What is the content? It is not, as common sense might dictate, what is taught in the school. That, as any graduate knows, is largely irrelevant. The answer becomes obvious if the question is rephrased: What goes into a school? The content is the students. More precisely, it is human beings of a certain age and a certain level of ability. More precisely still, it is the
human potential of those beings, for as we have seen, content is ultimately a bundle of forces both actual and potential, and is not reducible to an object. Since content receives form only through its encounter with expression, and since the bundle of forces that is content is a dominated one, the most final formulation of school content would be: a selected set of humanoid bodies grasped as a biophysical matter to be molded. There are actually two levels of content in play here. Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between "substance of content" and "matter of content." A "substance" is a formed matter (the thing understood as an object with determinate qualities), and a "matter" is a substance abstracted from its form, in other words isolated from any particular encounter between content and expression (the thing as all the forces it could embody in all the encounters it could have, either as content or expression). Thus "human beings of a certain age and a certain level of ability" (the entering students as formed by primary school) is the substance of content, and "humanoid bodies grasped as a biophysical matter to be molded" (the students' human potential) is the matter of content.

What every student body as substance of content enters is a school. Thus the form of content is the architecture of the school itself. What is the form of expression? If a form of expression is an order and organization of functions, then in this case it is the complex of administrative rules, laws, and traditions that determine how a school is laid out and what it does; the substance of expression is the phonemes and letters embodying those functions. What a school does as an overall process is its "essence." What might that be? Ask any politician what a school is for, and the answer will be: To build good citizens. The essence, therefore, is "to-make-young-body-docile." We saw, before that the infinitive expressing an essence can be split in two. This time we will make them gerundives: from the angle of expression, the essence is "the making of a docile worker" (future aspect); from the angle of content, it is "the making docile of an adolescent" (past aspect). The changing placement of the "of" takes us from the pole of expression to the pole of content by switching the emphasis from the function, "the making," to the quality, "docile," from action to passion.

The interrelation between these terms is quite different than in the woodworking example. Content and expression are relatively disengaged. The school board's rulings are not literally hammered into the
students. Substance of content and substance of expression do not come to a head in the way they did when tool met wood. The substance of content is not embedded in the form of content, but walks the halls and even out the door. The gulf between content and expression is wider, making the fractal bifurcations of the process more immediately visible. A student, for example, has a form to walk around in, so there are in fact two forms of content, each relating to the matter of content in different ways. The definition given earlier of the form of content as an order and organization of qualities applies to the student form, but not to the school, for which another definition would have to be invented. Student and school join in the same content formation, but belong to very different lines of causality, having been determined as content by different forms of expression for different lengths of time (a school never graduates). This example has more levels or "strata" and more causal lines directly involved in the actual encounter. The terms of the analysis have to be multiplied and modified accordingly.\footnote{36}

We need to ask one final question: What is the subject of the expressive process of schooling? Out of all possible contents, something selected human beings of a certain age and ability. Out of all the potential in the human body, something selected its capacity to be a docile worker. Out of all the ways a body can be docile, something selected the particular kinds of docility our schools develop. This selective agency is the subject. The subject is not psychological, it is not contained in any one mind. It is in the interactions between people. Which is not to say that it is simply interpersonal: it is also in the technology that defined the kinds of productive work our docility serves. Which is not to say that it is simply socioeconomic: it is also in the raw materials at the basis of that technology and in the genes that define the physical and intellectual potential of the human body. Which is not to say that it is material in any deterministic way: genes result from chance mutation. The subject is a transpersonal abstract machine, a set of strategies operating in nature and spread throughout the social field. It is a whole world composed of an infinity of causal lines on countless levels, all fractured by chance. Although it is a whole chaotic world, it is our world — and from the very precise angle of the very localized event of a high school graduation. That event lies in a region of relative stability and clarity. With the proper conceptual tools, we can unravel its several strands.
That the subject of meaning is transpersonal is perhaps easier to accept for an expression of woodiness or studendorh than for one, say, of commitment. Linguistic expression per se is psychological, yes? Meaning in the strictly linguistic sense is in the mind, no?

We must adapt our terms again. The form of expression on the most general level is composed of words and their combinations. The substance of expression is the phonemes of speech, or the letters on a printed page, or for that matter the electronic zeros and ones of machine language or the oscillations of radio waves—it is the materiality of the medium. The form of content is the state of things within which the words themselves are generated (the content-expression encounter enveloped "vertically" in the linguistic form of expression), and the more distant and autonomous state of things with which the words are coupled—if there is one (woodworking; schooling: the content-expression encounter enveloped "horizontally" in the words applied to it). Since words can and do couple with nonexistent things, or simply forgo any pretense of horizontal encounter, the "vertical" form of content is the crucial one. The substances of content are the respective states of things of the two forms of content considered in their materiality. The content as a whole is two forms-substances of content considered as force fields, and the relations of force obtaining between them.

The subject is the agency that selects which words are generated and coupled with which states of things. It is an abstract machine which, as always, is immediately bipolar: on one side it organizes a form-substance of content, and on the other a form-substance of expression. On the side of content it is called a "machinic assemblage"; on the side of expression it is called a "collective assemblage of enunciation." Both are abstract machines in their own right. The (non)relation by which the overall abstract machine brings the content formed by the machinic assemblage and the expression formed by the collective assemblage of enunciation into an asymptotic encounter is called a "double articulation." A subject which is bipolar, each pole of which is a subject in its own right, and so on—no psychological unity here. Even considered as a diagram enveloping the abstract machine(s), the linguistic expression has no subjective interiority, only a redundancy of outsides: the meaning-effect as evaporative double, and the dynamic in-between, or interrelation of relations, that it transformationally duplicates. Of
course, conscious thoughts and intentions play a part in the process, but only as one line of causality among the many proliferating in the fractal void.

A classic example: saying “I do” at a wedding ceremony. There is no horizontal content with which the words “I do” couple. The expression “I do” does not diagram a more or less distant encounter. It exists only in relation to its vertical content, to the dynamic state of things within which it is generated. Its relation to its vertical content is one of culmination: it is the end effect of an interrelation of relations that it envelops as its own genesis. Once spoken, the words “I do” evaporate irretrievably into the air. They have no afterlife; they are not written down; they are not retranslated into content to cut like a blade. They expire with the breath that speaks them. Yet in their very evanescence they have lasting repercussions. They do not couple with or insert themselves into another encounter: they couple bodies in their own encounter. They coincide with (double) and culminate (transform) the very state of things that generates them. Say “I do,” and your life will never be the same. Your legal, social, and familial status instantly changes, along with your entire sexual, psychological and financial economy. You have been pronounced man and wife. You may file a joint tax return.

“I do” is a connector: it binds two bodies. And it is a component of passage: it transfers those bodies into a new network of power relations, in a kind of leap in place. Before you open your mouth you are one thing. By the time you close it you have landed in another world. Nothing touched you, yet you have been transformed. “I do” effects an “incorporeal transformation” (another name for event).

A particular man and a particular woman say “I do.” Their words undoubtedly have personal meaning for them in their heart of hearts. But their personal intention is not in itself responsible for the magical transformation that has touched their lives. What has brought them to say those words and what makes those words effectively transformative is too big to fit into a single mind. It is a complex interplay of laws, customs, social pressure, and tax law. That is the subject of the enunciation: a transpersonal abstract machine contracting countless levels and enveloping many matters. The stereotypical nature of the expression is an indication that it is fundamentally impersonal. “I do” is not a particularly original thing to say at a wedding. If it expresses
an individual subjectivity, it is a remarkably dull one. The "I" is not a person. It is a social function.

"I do" as a form of expression can be reiterated in another wedding, in which case it repeats the incorporeal transformation. But there is one proviso: the words must be spoken by a different couple. Same event, different bodies. A variation on a theme. As real as the variations are, the overall diagram remains the same. Roughly the same interrelation of relations is actualized. Roughly the same social function is fulfilled. The same "I" speaks — only through a different body. Demonic possession would be a more fitting model for this process than personal expression. Ripe young bodies animated by secondhand words. People speaking without being fully conscious of the inhuman agency that speaks through them. Ghoulish indirect discourse. Glossolalia.

There are ghosts in the machine. In the abstract machine, as uncaused cause of expression: the abstract machine of marriage cannot make the essence without making it essentially redundant. It cannot say "I do" just once. Marriage would be meaningless if only one couple did it. The stereotypical nature of the culminating expression does not detract from the event. It is of its essence. The abstract machine must bring a parade of bodies to stand in the same enunciative position. Into the ears of each new bride and groom it whispers an incantation spoken through the ages by legions of our dead. Ancient words, lent new life, brush across poised lips. Bodies leap in place in ritualized dance.

Who has the salt? I do. The form of expression "I do" can be reiterated in a way that does not repeat the same incorporeal transformation. The same words, two entirely different meanings. Or, to use Foucault's terminology, two entirely different "statements." What makes them different is not of a grammatical or logical nature. On those levels they are identical. The determining factor is most immediately the state of things within which the words are spoken.

The "I do" of marriage is a prime example of what the linguist J. L. Austin calls a "performative" statement: words that directly accomplish an act and change a state of things merely by being said. The performative is often understood as a special category of statements. That is how Austin himself saw it when he began his investigations. In the end, however, he was led to conclude that the performative is less a special category than the most manifest instance of a transforma-
tional "dimension" within every statement. Every statement conveys, in addition to any meaning it may have in the narrow sense of semantic (in our vocabulary, "horizontal") content, a commanding "illocutionary" (nondiscursive) "force" responsible for its pragmatic success (or lack thereof, in the case of an "unhappy" outcome of language-culminated force). Deleuze and Guattari go even further. Following Oswald Ducrot, they question whether it is possible to separate semantic content from the nondiscursive force in any rigorous way.

A simple example illustrates the point: "Paul suspects John's arrival." The semantic content of the statement bears on a mental act of Paul's concerning John's location. In order to convey that meaning, the statement tacitly posits that John has in fact arrived or is arriving. In other words, it immediately conveys a presupposition without which the literal semantic content could not be expressed, but which is not itself manifestly stated. The literal meaning is simultaneous with and indissoluble from this "implicit presupposition"; both are couched in a single grammatical sequence. To emit an implicit presupposition, Ducrot says, is to say something in such a way that it need not be said. Every presupposition of this kind is also simultaneously and indissolubly an existential act: to say something in a way that makes it go without saying is to do something. Even if that something is only to direct or deflect a conversation, that in itself is a lot: to make things go without saying could stand as a definition of "ideology" as a motor of social relations. But that term obscures an essential point about incorporeal transformations: the doing of a saying is not determined by or primarily aimed at the level of ideas ("ideo-"). Which logical presupposition embedded in a particular grammatical sequence at any given moment is in no way determined by a "logos" ("-logy"), or unifying groundwork upon which an enduring referential truth may be asserted or a system of belief built. Every meaning encounter, as we have seen, is a groundless becoming, not an assertion of being. What becomes of a meaning encounter is attributable to its unique and contingent "context," the nondiscursive network of forces within which particular speaking bodies are positioned and which ordains what those bodies say-do and thus where-how they subsequently go. "Context" is an infinitely complex concertation of forces, the logical unity of which can only be conceived as one of movement: the direction in which a speech-driven body is impelled. Impulsion is a general function of language.
Unity-in-movement is the only unity language knows. Extralinguistic yet internal to language, it should rightfully be the object of linguistics. Language by essence includes extraverbal factors.

"Context" is what has been identified here as "vertical content": a dynamic formation whose encounter with expression effects a transformation guided by an abstract machine and culminating in a statement. It is imprecise to say that the unity-in-movement produced by the "context" and culminating by a statement is "internal" to language. If our description has been accurate, language has no inside. If it involves two basic formations (of content and expression), and if those formations are force fields, in other words sets of relations between points of pressure and resistance, and if the encounter between them is therefore an interrelation of relations, then what brings them together is best described as a field of exteriority: a relating of interrelations of relations (in a nonrelation). It is more accurate to say that context is "immanent" to rather than "internal" to language. As we saw earlier, the dynamism of a meaning encounter, the unity-in-movement produced by a context, may be captured and inducted into a network of repetition (variation) called "power." Context is the juncture at which force is translated into power, in a shared field of exteriority.

If context is immanent to language, language as a whole is nondiscursive. Meaning is only secondarily what the words say literally and logically. At bottom, it is what the circumstances say, in other words—and outside words. The head of the house says "Who has the salt?" (read: Don't just sit there, for Christ's sake, hand it to him). The minister says "I now pronounce you man and wife" (read: Be fruitful and multiply, for Christ's sake). The principal says "Here's your diploma" (read: Get a job, sucker). Every meaning encounter conveys an implicit presupposition which more or less directly takes the form of a parenthetical imperative. One whispered by an inhuman agency that borrows for a moment a pair of lips.

Deleuze and Guattari call the repetition-impulsion of this imperative function immanent to language the "order-word." Order should be taken in both senses: the statement gives an order (commands) and establishes an order (positions bodies in a force field). The order-word culminates transformations that place the concerned body or bodies in a position to carry out implicit obligations or follow a preset direction.
In everyday language, the French term for order-word, *mot d'ordre*, means "slogan." "I do" is the slogan for marriage and salt. Man and woman are transformed by "I do" into the sacred procreative partnership of husband and wife, in accordance with the laws of God and the State. Eater of food is transformed by "I do" into polite family member, in accordance with the laws of etiquette.

You do?—then do it—it's as good as done. Implicit presupposition / existential imperative / incorporeal transformation. The trinity formula for meaning in motion.

The ordering force of language is most readily apparent in conventional situations, especially explicit rituals marking a life transition. But as the John-Paul example indicates, not all words that accomplish an act by being said change a state of things so dramatically. Many statements require other words or physical actions to complete any transformation that might transpire. For example, one effectively asks a question by saying "Is . . . ?," but the change in a state of things induced by the question is only consummated after receiving (or failing to receive) an answer. The dinner-table "I do" effectively states a willingness to accept a responsibility, but actually only positions one to be polite, and fails in its mission if not followed by the salt shaker. The transformation into polite family member thus effected is of a different kind than the marriage transformation: it is repeatable for the same body and easily reversible, and in the history of a family most likely is repeated and reversed many times. It is less punctual, but no less an order-word for that. Earlier, we glossed over the status of what is taught in the schools. It is indeed irrelevant from the point of view of its intellectual content. But it does play a role. It conveys myriad mini-order-words, later summed up in the students' mute gesture of taking their diploma. Who has the answer? *I do*. I can make the required distinctions. I know what is masculine and feminine, in conduct as in grammar. I know who's boss, historically and in class. I know what "democracy" is. I'm ready to go out and exploit or be exploited. Although the teacher does not hammer, the content of school courses is indeed the analog of the woodworking tool. What is taught is a subsidiary form-substance of content in which the form of expression of schooling must necessarily alienate itself in order to effectively interface with the primary content of the students and do its job of making them mouth the endless incantation of social acceptabil-
ity. The principal’s graduation speech envelops this lengthy incorpo-
real brain-carving process in an implicit presupposition: the duty and
right to enter the wonderful world of work.⁴⁸

Language is an endless high school. Every utterance, innocuous as
it may seem, takes place in a social or institutional context that reflects
it with an imperative, however indirectly. Every utterance is struck,
however faintly, with the redundancy of an anonymous murmur.⁴⁹
Every society reproduces standardized contexts within which every
word spoken echoes those spoken in all the others. Every word is laden
with the implicit presupposition of what “one” says-thinks does in
such a circumstance. “I” is not an expressive subject, only a linguistic
marker indicating what body is addressed by the whispered imperative
immanent to that particular position within that particular state of
things.⁵⁰ What effectively speaks is the transpersonal agency that
creates the context by orchestrating a local encounter between content
and expression and by bringing that body to the “I” of that site. The “I”
does not inhabit the body, but is attached to the place of enunciation.
It insinuates itself into the body tapped for possession by the “one”
haunting the premises. I mouths one’s words. Every body has as many
“I”s as there are “ones” in the world it moves through. The first person
only repeats here and now what the anonymous third person of the
abstract machine has already said elsewhere in the mists of time, and
will undoubtedly say again. Free indirect discourse—reported speech
not attributable to an identified speaker—is the fundamental mode of
language.⁵¹

A summary: A meaning is an encounter between force fields. More
specifically, it is the “essence” (diagram, abstract machine) of that
encounter. Its own essence (the meaning of meaning) is the incorpo-
real transformation, which comes in many varieties. At its most
incisive, it is as instantaneous and as localized as the cut of the knife.
But it can also be spread out (across many a classroom) and drawn out
(over grades and years) without losing its character. Even at its most
diffuse it still participates in the mystery of death. Either you are or you
aren’t. (Even though you can never put your finger on the specific
answer that made a young body into a willing worker.)

The order-word as existential imperative (standardized function of
existence) is the motor of the incorporeal transformation. It is the
unsaid doing of a saying. As enveloped in an actual statement it—not
the phoneme, word, or proposition—is the elementary unit of language. At its most potent, it is a connector that couples bodies and at the same time a component of passage that instantly transfers them from one set of power relations to another (thus culminating the incorporeal transformation, of which it is the operator). It too comes in many varieties. It can be a connector but not a component of passage, or vice versa. It may be a summation of many a mini-order-word (correct answers). Even at its most cumulative, it does not lose its character as an implicit presupposition, or anonymous command immanent to a state of things: do it.

Pause

Before we do, we need to take a look at what is probably the most pivotal, and is certainly the least understood, concept in Deleuze and Guattari's philosophical vocabulary: virtuality. Its importance is rivaled only by the complete lack of interest in it thus far displayed by the (admittedly few) commentators who have written on their work.

At several turns in the preceding remarks we have observed phenomena of redundancy, and all along the way have been fighting an apparent ambiguity or doubleness in the terminology itself. "Order-word," for example, did double duty, designating both a given statement culminating an incorporeal transformation and a social function. An incorporeal transformation was a change in a state of things and the diagram of that change. The diagram was a literal drawing, verbal formulation, or equation, but also the essence enveloped in these. Essence was on paper and in thought, as well as being an abstract machine in the depths of matter. The "I" spoke, but only as spoken by a "one" splattered across the social field.

The distinction between the dual aspects of these concepts was expressed variously as the difference between an evaporative effect and a generative process marshaling cosmic energies. It was implied that the same distinction was also between the particular and the abstract. These formulations are of only limited usefulness: under certain conditions an evaporative effect can be reinserted into a state of things and convert into a cause, and a fully adequate abstract expression of any phenomenon must be tailored to its uniqueness and is thus absolutely particular to it.
Finally, the distinction was presented as the difference between something actually in existence and a potential for existence. This is getting closer to the mark, but only if it is borne in mind that “existence” is not a static presence (being is a fractalization, the present an abyss), and that a potential is not a possibility. The first point is a generally accepted premise of poststructuralist thought, but the second might still sound strange. Understanding how a potential differs from a possibility is the key to Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of the virtual, and a passport to the adroit use of Capitalism and Schizophrenia.53

Round Five

Back to the fractal. We have seen that a fractal has three levels or dimensions: the monism of its optical effect, the dualism of its mode of composition and the void of its infinitely proliferating division. These are strictly simultaneous and mutually determining. In other words, they are in reciprocal presupposition. In spite of their inseparability, the fractal as such can only exist on the second level, in the dualism of its composition. As a unity, it has ceased to be a fractal to become a snowflake or a plane. In the void, it is pure division, an insubstantial cutting function that does but does not be. A thing can exist only in relation to at least two dimensions that belong to it yet lie beyond its being. As a first approximation, and in affront to their simultaneity, those dimensions can be thought of as dimensions of time: the future of the fractal’s reception (it can effectively be a plane if observed from the proper perspective), and the abyssal past of its genesis.

An important aside: The future “perspective” in question is not reducible to a subjective point of view on an object. It is a perceptual event which, like every meaning encounter, is an interrelation of relations between two dynamic formations, one of which overpowers the other and adapts it to its own ends. The becoming-plane of the fractal is a potential for transformational capture inherent in its essence, and in that of the observer. It is a perspective in Nietzsche’s sense: an “objective perspective” that includes both observer and observed, but on their outside edges, in the actual interaction between their essences.54 A fractal “in itself” (that is, prior to a particular encounter) is never a plane, but it can “function as” a plane because the human visual apparatus will grasp it as such to certain effect at a certain
point in the fractal’s unfolding. The same corrective should be applied to the “outside perspective” discussed earlier in relation to the logical extraction of forms of content or expression from their substances. Logical analysis, like any thought or perception, grasps its “object” from a particular angle, and attributes it potentials that it did not previously have (being in a book; being part of a system of institutional inculcation and practice). The thing “in itself” is only the sum total of the grasping to which it lends itself, a set of angles of potential intervention by outside bodies. All thought and perception are therefore partial, in the double sense that they are never all-encompassing, and that they follow upon a constitutional affinity, or mutual openness, of two bodies for one another. Partiality does not preclude objectivity. Thought-perception is always real and always of the outside. The thinking-perceiving body moves out to its outermost edge, where it meets another body and draws it into an interaction in the course of which it locks onto that body’s affects (capacities for acting and being acted upon) and translates them into a form that is functional for it (qualities it can recall). A set of affects, a portion of the object’s essential dynamism, is drawn in, transferred into the substance of the thinking-perceiving body. From there, it enters new circuits of causality. Thought-perception is a foray by one body into another’s essence in such a way that the second is carried outside itself. Thought-perception reaches into things, launches them up through the atmosphere of language, and in the same motion returns them, altered, into the depths of matter.

To continue: future reception, past genesis. The fractal proper is in-between. To pass into its future as a plane it must cease to be itself. But to remain in its dynamic present it must continue to divide, rushing impossibly into the void of its own past. Two thresholds, two ways of passing: a relative limit above which a thing ceases to be itself but gets a new lease on life in a different mode; and an absolute limit below which no thing can go but upon which all things tread. A threshold leading across the synapses toward a new being, and a foundation of nonbeing. The dimension of the future mode and past genesis are absolutely real for the fractal but are not it; it cannot exist without them, but they do not exist with it. To avoid the paradoxical formulations the use of temporal expressions force upon us, Deleuze and Guattari say that these dimensions are “virtual.” The virtual is the
future-past of the present: a thing's destiny and condition of existence (as one—the second meaning of monism again). To avoid philosophical baggage, they are more likely to say that a thing is "actual" than that it "exists." To drive it home that actuality is dynamic they use the word "becoming" in place of "being." A thing's actuality is its duration as a process—of genesis and annihilation, of movement across thresholds and toward the limit. The virtual is real and in reciprocal presupposition with the actual, but does not exist even to the extent that the actual could be said to exist. It subsists in the actual or is immanent to it. The element of immanence—thought-matter—could be called eternal, but not without introducing an unwelcome religious or Platonic tinge. Nietzsche's term, "untimely," suits it best.57

There was one other way in which a fractal can cease to be, but this time without ceasing to be itself. It can come out the far side of thought and be diagrammed at a point before it becomes a plane. The resulting diagram is the outcome of a fractal process, but one that no longer moves. It is a fractal, but a dead one: before a fractal can be drawn and reinserted into a state of things, its infinite division must be stopped in thought. Actualization is always death: a becoming-other, or a staying the same but inert.

A fractal process can be stopped and diagrammed at any point in its dividing. Every stop will yield a different diagram, each of the same fractal. Since the process is infinite, the number of potential diagrams is also infinite. Even as itself, even between its two limits, the fractal is multiple and boundless. All the potential diagrams are immanent to the many levels of any one, as potential effects of the same process. The overall identity of the fractal is enveloped in each diagram, but is not manifestly present in it. It cannot be, since the fractal's identity (becoming) is one with the generative process that must end for a given diagram to be produced. A mathematical equation or verbal instructions on how to construct the fractal are "diagrams" that express its latent identity-in-process more adequately than a static representation. All of the diagrams derivable from the same equation (abstract machine) subsist in each actual diagram produced (repetition as an inherent dimension of difference).

Thus between the limits there subsists a multiplicity of potential fractals. This in-between constitutes a level of virtuality lower than that of new being or nonbeing: what could be called the fractal's realm
of “possibility.” Possibility is a restricted range of potential: what the thing can become without ceasing to be itself (how the process can end without ending up outside). In theory, the derivable equations could be actualized one after the other and laid out in a series moving from its beginning as a line toward the point where the fractal could be taken for and effectively function as a plane. The fractal proper can therefore be described, for convenience, as a continuum of variations leaving one relative limit (its birth as a line) and approaching another (its transformation into a plane) as well as simultaneously leaving and approaching a dual absolute limit (genesis-in-division/abyss). In reality the relative and absolute limits toward which it tends are one and the same: the further the generative dividing process is taken, the more the fractal snakes in on itself and begins to approximate a plane; but the same motion furthers its fissuring, bringing it all the closer to the void. The difference between the two kinds of limit is that one can be crossed (if the process is captured by outside forces and thereby saved from itself) and the other cannot. The way in which the equation as a process contracts the future and the past into itself is called “complication,” because of the paradoxical noncoincidence (discontinuity) of those two inseparable dimensions in reciprocal presupposition with the actual. The way in which a given diagram as evaporative effect contracts within itself all the other derivable diagrams is called “implication,” because the continuity of the series of variations is a diagram’s most accessible level of latency. Returning to the John-Paul example, the presupposition of John’s arrival is “implicit” in the statement; the existential act of deflecting a conversation is “complicit” in it (both can be said to be “immanent” to, or “enveloped” in, the statement). The implicit presupposition can engender a series of logical propositions in continuity with one another (for example, if the phrase is spoken by a spy, a number of clues as to John’s actual whereabouts and what the speaker is doing in implying his arrival could be derived from it). The existential act (a deception to lure the listener into a murderous trap?) is a singular and unreproducible movement in space-time (maybe even into the next world). What is implicit in a speech act can be made explicit. It can be unpacked, translated into a logical proposition (meaning as the “expressed” of the statement) engendering a series of other propositions constituting a chain of logical possibilities. What is complicit is a physical potential
that does or does not come to pass (meaning as "attribution"). It cannot be made any more explicit than the singular and unreproducible movement that it is. It can only be actualized, and if it is, its passing sweeps the body in question toward a limit at which it is transformed into something other than what it will have been. A statement's existential imperative is always a death sentence.59

Back to marriage. Every wedding is an actualization of the marriage process, its culmination in a statement as evaporative effect. "I do" holds all marriages past and future in implication; marriage in general subsists in it as the whispering "one" without which the wedding would have no meaning. That meaning, the essence of marriage, could be expressed as a continuum of variation: a series, in principle infinite, of all the ways different bodies can be joined in matrimony in different places by different authorities for different reasons to different effect (what the wedding could have been: its realm of possibility).60 The marrying "I," like every "I," is not sufficient unto itself. To wed, it needs to be possessed of the "one," to repeat a stereotypical incantation that makes the body to which it is attached coincide with a standardized function (social equation). Miss X becomes the Bride, Mister Y the Groom. The "I do" is a component of passage that transforms the engaged bodies into something other than what they have been, carrying them across one relative threshold (being single) toward another: the implicit presupposition (go forth and multiply) of the "I do" marks the Bride and Groom's departure on a journey leading inexorably toward the "do us part" of divorce—barring the intervention of an outside force strong enough to defy every wedding's statistical destiny (love? religion? boredom?). Thus in addition to implicating a continuum, an essence complicates a discontinuity: the outside limits of marriage, singedom and divorce, are an integral part of every wedding, the boundaries without which it would have no shape. They are also of its essence, but belong to a deeper level of virtuality than the potential marriages implicit in the slogan "I do." The absolute limit of marriage is even more profoundly virtual: it is literally death (unless of course the newlyweds are Mormon), an experience no one can ever have (an experience only "one" can have). The subject of the wedding is the social equation of which "I do" is the de facto diagram (the sign of the culmination of a process, an index from which a formal diagram, for example a discursive diagram consisting of a
series of logical propositions, could be developed). The subject of the wedding is the abstract machine of marriage in its linear functioning, expressible as a realm of possibility: the connecting in actuality of one body to another as part of a life progression; the serialization of wedding after wedding over an implicit time span subsisting in each present connection. More broadly, the subject is the abstract machine is the insubstantial process of division enveloped by the equation: the incorporeal cut between singledom and marriage and between marriage and death or divorce, the discontinuity haunting every connection, the inescapable complicating factor of the void. A void is inexpressible and has no particular shape, but since the linearity of expression springs from it (as enduring matter does from quantum energy) it is described as "superlinear." Superlinearity (complication; complete envelopment), linearity (implication; serialized development), and surface (explicitness; evaporative optical or auditory effect) are the three moments of the abstract machine. There are other designations for them: * untimely genesis-destiny / durational procedure/present diagram; * insistent nothingness / active becoming / inert being; * pure virtuality / virtuality in the process of being actualized / actualization arrested. A single philosophical term (essence; meaning; order-word) can be used to straddle all three moments or dimensions for the very good reason that in their multiplicity they are one.

This way of thinking about things might seem bleak. If the order-word as the basic unit of language is the culmination of a standardizing social function that makes a body do what "one" should do, then we ("I and I") are imprisoned by the impersonality of language. This imprisonment is less an immobilization than a stereotyped progression, since the order-word acts to carry a body from one predefined set of potential relations to another. Everyday language does not entirely straitjacket our potential, but it does restrict us to the lowest level of our virtuality. It limits the dynamism of our becoming to the stolid ways of being deemed productive by an exploitative society. It takes us from one bland realm of possibility to another. It delivers us to power.

Bleak it is at first glance. But it is ultimately joyous. For if Deleuze and Guattari are right, discontinuity has the final word. Every step in time is a fissure. Every step in the world of possibility skirts the impossibility of a generative void. Outside the limits of marriage: not the singles scene, not divorce, but as yet unimagined ways of bodies
moving together, beyond boredom, beyond religion and taxes, maybe even beyond "love" (that most potent of all Western order-words). Outside productive work: invention. Outside school: halls without walls, a universe free for the learning. In every order-word there is indeed an implicit presupposition of funereal normality, the echoed refrain of the walking dead. But perhaps lost in the zombied murmur of social acceptability there are presuppositions so implicit we don't know how to hear them, "one"'s so impersonal we don't know how to place them in our "I," deaths to breathe new life into our lungs. The order-word of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy is the anti-order-word of the call of the outside: listen closely for existential imperatives which, rather than limiting I and I's realm of virtuality, take it out of bounds. Don't toe the line — be superlinear. Don't plod the straight and narrow path down the aisle — marry the void. Rewrite the slogan of the United States Army: dare to become all that you cannot be. Complicate, and chortle.

Pause

Some ways in which Deleuze and Guattari's theories of language differ from more familiar linguistic and semiotic approaches:

1. Language is not a transparent medium of communication. If it is a medium in any essential way, it is in the occult sense. What language conveys are fundamentally redundant order-words, not clear and distinct messages. Information is vital to this function, but only as the minimum semantic content necessary for the transmission of an imperative (the difference between "hire" and "fire"). Language as storage and retrieval of pure information (the cybernetic model) is a recent invention paralleling the rise of the computer. No matter how cybernated society gets, information processing will always remain a derived, secondary function of language.

2. There are no constants of language. Language is no less fractalized than any other thing. It is forever fragmenting into dialects, idiolects, and jargons that often coexist in the same speaker. The Saussurian concept of "langue" and the Chomskian concept of "competence" petrify living language into a structure. These approaches are inherently prescriptive, for any departure from the rules laid down by the
linguist for a given dialect can only be conceived of as a deviation from a norm. This is an invitation for a dominant dialect imposed by one group of speakers on others to become the linguistic "standard" against which the others are measured. *Langue* and competence are bedfellows to linguistic terrorism in the cause of uniformity. For Deleuze and Guattari, change (incorporeal transformation), not petrification, is the essence of language. A linguistic expression implicitly presupposes a continuum of variation between and across thresholds of meaning that are simultaneously thresholds of social functioning. Any given language is a dialect among others, in a network of power relations marked by grammatical formations standing as signposts to a site of everyday conflict. Each dialect in the network varies at the same rate as the functions its order-words effectuate, in other words endlessly. Linguistics should be a *pragmatic* that opens language to the vagaries of "context," indexing grammar to relations of power and patterns of social change. Its tasks should be to lay out a continuum of variations of the acts of saying-doing immanent to grammatical forms of expression, to analyze the mechanisms determining which virtual variation is actualized where, and to describe the mechanisms of passage from one continuum of virtuality to the next. The operative concept is "continuous variation."

3. The Saussurian concepts of synchrony and diachrony are useless. The problems of periodization nagging structuralist-influenced disciplines testify to the constitutional inability of this framework to think in terms of becoming. At what point does one synchronous system end and another begin? Is the shift gradual or sudden? How does it occur? A synchronous structure is by definition a closed system of permutations, and is therefore logically inconsistent with the open-ended progress of diachrony. The terms of the problems forbid their solution. It gets us nowhere to say that synchrony is an instantaneous cross-section of diachrony. A cross-section of the present will not hit stable ground, but descend into levels of deepening complication forking infinitely into the future and the past. The concepts of virtuality and actualization allow us to think in the present and past-future tenses at the same time, to conceive of the same and the different together (continuous variation as the repetition of difference; the order-word as transformative redundancy). A synchronous structure defines the *logical conditions of possibility* of statements in general (What standard
permutations can the system produce? What can it do without ceasing to be itself?). The challenge is to conceptualize the real conditions of production of particular statements (How does the system move from one unique permutation to the next? How is it forever becoming other than itself?). In the first case, the assumption is stasis and movement is introduced as an afterthought, if at all. In the second, stasis exists only relatively (as a lower degree of difference: the repetition of different statements within the same relative limits of becoming), and the world is recognizable as the chaotic one in which we live. This does not mean that synchrony has simply disappeared in favor of diachrony. The untimeliness of the virtual in its reciprocal presupposition with the actual takes us entirely outside the false structure-history dilemma into a new dimension of fractal spatiotemporality. Deleuze and Guattari do not fault linguistics for being too abstract, but for not being abstract enough to account for change—and its conditions of emergence, in the same stroke. Linguistics would do well to follow physics into the twentieth century by venturing beyond the artificial calm of mere possibility, beyond the implicit, into the unstable realm of the virtual in all its immanence.

4. Virtual and actual do not correspond to langue/parole or competence/performance. First, because all enunciation is collective and there is no individual subject to do the speaking-performing; second, because the generative agency, the abstract machine behind the order-word, is itself a variable in continual variation, changing with each actualization. A language does not exist in some pure and eternal realm outside the speech acts it produces. It subsists locally but globally in each and every one.

5. The relation of the signifier to the signified is not constitutive of language. The essential relation is that of a statement to the generative process of “vertical content” (the statement as order-word). The term is a misnomer: the process is more multidimensional than “vertical,” enveloping many levels and lines of causality, in relation to which the statement stands less as a “content” than as a culmination, an evaporative end effect, a landmark pointing to a geologic past. Theories of the signifier replace this “complicated” asymptotic causality with an unabashedly perpendicular one according to which the statement lies at the intersection of two sets of rules, one governing a
"horizontal" axis of combination, the other a "vertical" axis of substitution. The "horizontal" combination of signs within a sentence and of sentences within a discourse does, of course, obey certain rules of formation. These syntagmatic rules are not, however, a given statement's efficient cause, even together with a set of paradigmatic rules. Paradigmatic rules define which "vertical" substitutions can be made at each point in the "horizontal" flow of signs across the page or of sentences through time, but they cannot explain why one substitution rather than another was effectively made or why the same statement is repeated in different instances (let alone how it varies functionally across those repetitions). Syntagmatic and paradigmatic rules describe how a statement is generated as a form of expression. In other words, they diagram its formal cause as an abstract linguistic or semiotic machine. By bracketing the statement's real conditions of social emergence, however, they cut it off from its efficient cause: the overall abstract machine that pragmatically determines the substance as well as the form of both content and expression in their double articulation. Theories of the signifier reduce language to expression and expression to its form. In so doing, they unmoor language from its "vertical content," from the realm of virtuality constituting its real becoming as a hand-to-hand combat of energies. The lurch of language, its "leaping" between dimensions and emplacements, appears as a tranquil metonymic progression along an unbroken horizontal. The infinite division separating every expression from the next and fissuring each internally is simply glossed over, transforming the surface level of actualized statements (effects) into a nice smooth linguistic line, purified of cut and struggle. Signs that have dropped below that horizontal axis supply a second smoothed-over dimension. The complicated existential potentials enveloped in unactualized statements are simplified into a pool of possible substitutions: metaphor as the latency of signifiers turned signified. A neat two-dimensional symbolic structure emerges. Its dual causality (syntagmatic/paradigmatic, horizontal/vertical) is logical and tidy. But it is also an illusion. A kind of optical illusion, or objective perspective like the fractal's afterlife as a plane. Signification is inscribed in the essence of language as one of its own potentials: the potential for becoming other than it is (flat). An outside force must intervene to extract that potential and actualize it. Theories of the signifier are useful to the extent that
certain societies, most notably "modern" ones, do indeed extract the symbolic potential of language. Baudrillardian "postmodernity" goes one step further and unmoors the "horizontal" line from the "vertical," creating an objective illusion of unanchored slippage from signifier to signifier, pure unmotivated metonymy in a one-dimensional world without metaphor. Both of these processes do indeed occur. It is crucial, however, to remember that their occurrence is caused: the detachment from the virtual is produced by determinable social functionings within a real network of power relations. In order to grasp the conditions of existence of these phenomena it is necessary to reattach them to their obscured "vertical content" in all its fractal glory. This is precisely what Lacanians omit to do in their treatment of the unconscious as a metonymic–metaphorical deep structure, and it is what Baudrillard refuses to understand in his celebration of late capitalism as shimmering metonymic surface. Both approaches reduce "vertical content" to a signified (which Baudrillard then claims has been abolished). What I have called "horizontal content" (a second state of things or force field with which certain classes of overpowering expressions are coupled) is either dismissed as a "referent" lying irrevocably outside language understood as a closed system or two-dimensional form of interiority (a typically modern move); or, once language comes to be seen as a senselessly replicating one-dimensional gene, it is discounted as nonexistent (a typically postmodern move). Deleuze and Guattari reinstate content. But for them content is neither a signified nor a referent—a possibility that does not seem to have occurred either to modernists or postmodernists. Deleuze and Guattari's reintroduction of content should in no way be interpreted as the addition of a third dimension of romantic "meaning." That time-worn strategy is simply a denial of "modern" society's inescapable two-dimensionality, a desperate humanist attempt to inject a comforting sense of significance into the seasonal reruns of our culture's stereotyped symbolism. What Deleuze and Guattari are after is a real perception of the superhuman becoming immanent to human being, a pragmatic embrace of meaning in its infinite but fractional dimensionality.

6. A corollary to this is that the binarism of the signifier/signified relation is a produced, secondary characteristic. Language necessarily presents many binarisms (content/expression being the primary one),
but they are produced by nonbinary mechanisms. Signifying structures arise from nonsignifying processes comprising a multiplicity of virtual spatiotemporal levels and actual materials in reciprocal presupposition. Language produces linear series of signs and statements, but is itself superlinear.

7. The virtual is not hidden in the sense of a repressed signified or lost referent. It is occulted, but as part of a necessary clearing. For a statement or thought to appear in all its apparent simplicity and clarity, its complicated genesis must recede into the abyssal shadows from which it came. The virtual is the unsaid of the statement, the unthought of thought. It is real and subsists in them, but must be forgotten at least momentarily for a clear statement to be produced as evaporative surface effect. “The statement is neither visible nor hidden.” The task of philosophy is to explore that inevitable forgetting, to reattach statements to their conditions of emergence. As Foucault repeatedly contends, a statement needs no interpretation, but a “stand” (socle) may be fashioned for it (its “archive” of implicit presuppositions may be recreated by “archaeology”) in order to bring back to light its realm of virtuality (the immanent “strategies” that produced it). Under certain conditions of signifying capture, the statement and its “vertical content” will in fact be doubled by a repressed signified. The forgetting will then be recast as a symbolic structural unconscious which will function in addition to (as a unity apart from and in reciprocal presupposition with) the primary causal strategies, into which it will be reinserted to serve as a new, secondary line of causality. It will function, but according to different rules and at a lower level of virtuality. That inferior degree of potential is not in this case the realm of logical possibility (although its mechanisms are logically describable) but—equally bland—an “imaginary.”

*As the frequent references to Foucault were meant to indicate, Deleuze and Guattari’s theories of language are closer to Foucault’s than to any other contemporary thinker’s. Reading Deleuze and Guattari in terms of semiotic frameworks they explicitly reject—in particular Saussurian-derived systems—is the most common source of the consistent unreadings that have plagued their work. The same is true of Foucault. To be read to best effect, they should be read together.*
FORCE

1. EXISTING FORCE: Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, p. 3 [3].

2. WOOD: This example is mentioned in passing by Deleuze in *Proust and Signs*, p. 4 [10], and again in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 409 [509].

3. On QUALITIES and SIGNS, see Deleuze, *Différence et répétition*, p. 314, and *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 317 [390].


8. HAND-TO-HAND COMBAT OF ENERGIES is a phrase from Proust ("un corps-à-corps d’énergies"). See *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 321 (and note 19), 338–39 [59–60, 181–82]. On the "battle" between form and content, see also Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 119.


10. On REAL versus LOGICAL ("modal") DISTINCTION, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 44, 57, 58, 64, 72 [59, 75, 76, 83, 92].


In the vocabulary of *The Logic of Sense* and *Foucault* (used sporadically in *Différence et répétition* and in all other works), the abstract points of the diagram are called SINGULARITIES. The term "diagram" is borrowed from C. S. Peirce; see Guattari, *Les années d’hiver. 1980–1985*, pp. 290–91.
12. Deleuze and Guattari do not themselves use the term TRANSLATION in this general sense. In their vocabulary, translation is a specific mode of dynamic transfer among others ("induction," "transduction," "transcoding"). See A Thousand Plateaus, pp. 60, 62 [78, 81]. For a Deleuzian usage of the concept of translation similar to the one developed here, see José Gil, Métamorphoses du corps, pp. 122–26. For thought reproducing the dynamism of the apprehended object (mimicking it), see Logic of Sense, pp. 147, 161, 282–87 [173, 188, 327–32]. On REDUNDANCY, see A Thouan2 Plateau, pp. 79, 84 [100, 106], and Logic of Sense, pp. 31–33, 125–26, 146–47 [44–47, 151, 172–73] (meaning as double; the word translated as "division" on page 31 of the English is "遭到doulement"). "It is not enough to say that consciousness is consciousness of something; it is the DOUBLE of something, and every thing is consciousness because it has a double, however far away and estranged from it" (Différence et répétition, p. 284).


15. DOUBLE DYNAMISM: "It is accurate to speak of a double series of events unfolding on two planes, echoing each other without resemblance, one series real ... the other ideal" (Différence et répétition, p. 244).


17. On the relation between words and states of things as a NONRELATION, see Foucault (1986), pp. 69–72, 86, 88, 119. On a similar nonrelation in perception between things and images, see Deleuze, Bergsonism, pp. 24, 25, 53, 107, 109–11 ("interval") [14, 16, 112, 114–17 ("écart")]; in behavior between action and reaction, Cinema I, pp. 61–66 ("interval") [90–97 ("intervalle")]; in human life between conscious thought and the real becoming at its basis (thought in the widest sense, as the abstract machine), Logic of Sense, pp. 321–33 ("crack") [373–86 ("fêlure")], and A Thousand Plateaus, pp. 198–200 ("crack") [242–45 ("fêlure")]. On the necessity for philosophical thought to "burst things asunder" ("fendre les choses") in order to see beyond their apparent unity and conformity to words and grasp their conditions of existence, Foucault (1986), pp. 59–60. This fissing in all its forms is the SCHIZ of "schizoanalysis" (the name Deleuze and Guattari give the form of philosophy advanced in
It is instructive to compare the various uses of the word "schiz" in Anti-Oedipus: see, for example, pp. 39–40, 131, 132, 230–31, 241, 244, 287, 315, 351, 378 [47, 55, 158, 273–74, 286, 290, 341, 376, 410, 453]. The "point aléatoire" discussed at length throughout Logic of Sense is another word for the cutting edge of fracturing. To the nonrelations listed above, Derrida would add another: between speech and writing.

18. The Logic of Sense is an extended meditation on the separation-connection of "being" (states of things), thought, and language. In it, Deleuze repeatedly expresses the autonomy of these "parallelisms" and their simultaneous imbrication. What was said previously of the relation between content and expression could be said of things, thought, and language (and will be said in what follows for other formations): they are really distinct but in reciprocal presupposition. As the following discussion will illustrate, they are overlapping moments of becoming that can be placed in continuity or disjunction, depending on the point of view. Meaning is the "articulation of their difference" (Logic of Sense, p. 24 [37]). The articulated differentiations constitutive of meaning can be multiplied indefinitely. "Language" is divisible into the autonomous planes of speech and writing, and each of these is divisible in turn into distinct modes of discourse. Conversely, the planes can be telescoped, for example by bringing words into collision with things and letting thought fall. In the present discussion, the important point is not the particular way in which any of these planes is defined, but rather the principle of their structuring as variations on one another and the pragmatic possibility of tailoring the analysis of their structuring to a concrete task at hand.


20. On anti-Platonic essence, see Proust and Signs, passim; Différence et répétition, p. 239; Logic of Sense, pp. 34–35, 214 [48, 250]; and Bergsonism, pp. 32–33, 34 [23–24, 27]. (In numerous passages in many of his works, Deleuze rejects the term "essence" because of its Platonic overtones, preferring such terms as "event," "problem," "Aion," or "Idea.") On the event, see Logic of Sense, pp. 148–53 [174–79] and passim. In A Thousand Plateaus, the event is called an "incorporeal transformation" (see note 40, below).

22. On the ATTRIBUTE and the EXPRESSED as the two faces of meaning, see *Logic of Sense*, pp. 20–21, 166, 182 [32–33, 195–96, 213], and *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 86–87 [110].

23. LANGUAGE, FORCE, POWER: "Language sets limits (for example, the point at which too much is reached), but it also goes beyond limits, restoring them to the infinite equivalence of an unlimited becoming": *Logic of Sense*, p. 2 [11] (translation modified).

24. TO CUT, TO DIE: *Logic of Sense*, pp. 5, 63, 151–54 [14, 80, 177–80].

25. On the FUTURE-PAST, see *Logic of Sense*, pp. 5, 77, 150 [14, 95, 176].

26. On the "sterility" of meaning, see *Logic of Sense*, pp. 31–32, 95 [44–45, 116] (in the present work "sterile" will usually be replaced by EVAPORATIVE to avoid any phallic connotations).

27. ONE UNIFIED FIELD: Chapter 3 of *A Thousand Plateaus*, "The Geology of Morals," charts the vicissitudes of content and expression on the physical, geological, biological and cultural "strata." On MONISM, see *Bergsonism*, pp. 92–93 [94–95], and passim; *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, pp. 92–93 [120–21] ("Nature"); *Logic of Sense*, pp. 103 ("the potential energy of the pure event"), 177–80 ("univocity") [125, 208–211]; and *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 20–21, 153 ("matter equals energy"), 254, 266, and passim (the "plane of consistency" or "plane of immanence") [31, 190–91, 311, 326].


29. José Gil, who bases his project of an "anthropology of force" on Deleuze and Guattari’s Nietzschean-derived theories of meaning, also emphasizes that the emergence of the sign or diagram corresponds to a MOMENTARY SUSPENSION OF BECOMING: "There is an entropy proper to sign systems that diminishes their capacity to signify. When two opposed forces enter into relation, the force that takes the upper hand in the combat leaves a remainder. This remainder, which measures the relation between the forces, or the gap between them, is also a measure of the power one force has over the other. However, the remainder is no longer a force signifying itself for another force, for the action of the operator [Gil’s term for the abstract machine] has ceased; part of the remainder may form a precipitate constituting a sign, in residual form."
Thus the sign emerges from the absence of the operator, as a distant residue of force; it is at once the memory of the operator’s activity and the result of its cessation. As long as the forces are at work, no sign emerges; there is but the pure activity of the operators, producing things (which of course become signs for other forces). We see that the meaning of the sign has to do with a differential gap resulting from the relation between forces” (Métamorphoses du corps, p. 20). The moment of suspension corresponds to the interruption of desire constitutive of the BODY WITHOUT ORGANS (defined in Habit, “Burp”) as described in Anti-Oedipus (see esp. pp. 1–16, 36–37 [1–22, 43–45]).

30. FRACTALS: For an illustration of the basic procedure behind the Koch curve, see A Thousand Plateaus, p. 487 [608]; for a full illustration of the snowflake effect, see Gleick, Chaos: Making a New Science, p. 99; on a randomized Koch curve forming a coastline with islands, see Mandelbrot, Fractals: Form, Chance, and Dimension, p. 85; on the “random walk” as a “space-filling” (or “plane-filling”) fractal, see Mandelbrot, Fractals, p. 92; also on “space-filling” fractals, see Orbach, “Dynamics of Fractal Networks,” pp. 814–19 (“The structure ceases to be fractal at very [large] scales, where it appears homogeneous or continuous,” p. 814); on the solidity of nature concealing fractal porosity, see Gleick, Chaos, pp. 105–106, and Stewart, Does God Play Dice?, p. 229 (the universe as a “multi-fractal”); on fractal geometry and computer graphics, see Jeffrey, “Mimicking Mountains,” pp. 337–344; on MEANING AS OPTICAL EFFECT, see Logic of Sense, pp. 7, 70 [17, 88], and Différence et répétition, p. 119. The concept of the fractal, explicitly mentioned only once in passing in A Thousand Plateaus, has become increasingly important in Guattari’s writing: a prime example is “Cracks in the Street,” trans. Anne Gibault and John Johnston, a paper on Balthus delivered at the Modern Language Association convention in New York, December 28, 1986 (as yet unpublished). [Since this writing, “Cracks in the Street” has appeared in French: Guattari, Cartographies schizooanalytiques (Paris: Galilée, 1989), pp. 319–31. The same book develops the philosophy of the fracture at great length, and in directions strikingly similar to those of the present exposition. The fracture at the basis of meaning is explicitly related the concept of the fractal (for example, pp. 142, 173, 218–24), which is in turn connected to the concept of the synapse (pp. 89–92, 199–205). Both are discussed as processes of “possibilization.”]
31. Dionysus was dismembered after his first birth. On the Laughter of Dionysus-Zarathustra, see Nietzsche and Philosophy, pp. 193–94 [222]; and the preceding pages on joy as the affirmation (willing) of the eternal return (repetition-translation) of difference (multiplicity and fissure). For more on the Eternal Return, see Différence et répétition, pp. 59–60, 311–14, 379–85; on the Affirmation of the eternal return as Mallarmé’s dice-throw, see Nietzsche and Philosophy, pp. 25–27, 197 [29–31, 225], and Logic of Sense, pp. 58–65 [74–82] (“Of the Ideal Game”); on the “cosmos” (or Chaosmos) as the unity of nature and culture, see A Thousand Plateaus, p. 337 [416] and the references for “monism” in note 27 above; on the uncaused cause (“Immanent Cause”), see Spinoza, pp. 53–54 [78–79], and Foucault (1986), p. 44. On the Foundationlessness of the foundation of be(com)ing, see Différence et répétition, pp. 123, 151, 164, 296, 352–53.


33. Deleuze versus Guattari: Guattari, for example, is fascinated with phenomena of subjective redundancy (resonance, refrain, black hole), whereas Deleuze prefers to emphasize “lines of escape” from subjectivity. Deleuze comments on this temperamental complementarity in Dialogues, pp. 17–18 [24]. As can be seen by the references above, many of the properly philosophical concepts were originated by Deleuze. On the other hand, many key semiotic concepts used in A Thousand Plateaus are of Guattari’s devising, and were first worked out in La Révolution moléculaire (1977), pp. 297–376 (some of these essays are translated in “Towards a New Vocabulary,” Molecular Revolution, pp. 111–72), and in L’Inconscient machinique, esp. ch. 3, pp. 43–73. Guattari also contributed some of the most effectively political concepts of Capitalism and Schizophrenia: territorialization-deterrioralization, transversality, group subjectivity, desiring-machine, war machine, molar-molecular, micropolitics (some are discussed below).

34. High School: Deleuze and Guattari, following Foucault, use the example of the prison; see A Thousand Plateaus, pp. 66–67 [86], and Foucault (1986), pp. 31–35.
35. On substance versus matter, see *L'Inconscient machinique*, p. 41, *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 43, 340 [58, 419], and Foucault (1986), pp. 41-42. Deleuze and Guattari depart from Spinoza's views on substance on one crucial point: for Spinoza, there is only one substance, and only two attributes of that substance are knowable to human beings (thought and extension). Deleuze and Guattari redefine attribute under the influence of the Stoics. For Deleuze and Guattari, each attribute coincides with a substance, and the number of both substances and knowable attributes is infinite. Substances can be organized into general types according to their mode of composition, the prime examples again being thought and extension. Compare Spinoza: *Practical Philosophy*, pp. 51-52, 108-109 [72-74, 147-48] with *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 86, 153, 157 [110, 190, 195]. Deleuze develops his reading of Spinoza at great length in *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza*.

36. A rule-of-thumb overview of the semiotic framework: content is what is overpowered, expression what overpowers. Both content and expression are substance-form complexes. Content considered outside its encounter with expression, therefore as having neither form nor substance, is matter of content (the overpowered thing as a bundle of potential affects, in other words, abilities to affect or be affected). Expression considered outside its encounter with content, as having therefore neither substance nor form, is matter of expression (the overpowering thing as a bundle of potential functions). The form of content, or content abstracted from its substance but in the context of its encounter with expression, is an order of qualities (a sequence of actualization of selected affects), or, at one remove from the substance of content, a literal form of containment (such as a school or prison) within which affects are actualized. The form of expression is an order of functions (a sequence of actualization of selected functions). A substance of content is an overpowered thing as a qualified object (that is, as exhibiting its assigned qualities). A substance of expression is what embodies an overpowering function. The interface between content and expression is meaning or interpretation as a process of becoming (essence), expressible as a dynamic diagram or infinitive. What places the two in relation is the abstract machine.
37. On the machinic assemblage and the collective assemblage of enunciation, see A Thousand Plateaus, p. 88 [112]; on the double articulation (a term borrowed from the linguist André Martinet), see ibid., pp. 40–41, 44, 57 [54–55, 58–59, 75].


39. On components of passage, see A Thousand Plateaus, pp. 312, 325 [384, 399] (the context is animal behavior: the component of passage, like content and expression, is a general semiotic concept applicable to nonlinguistic systems). I use connector in a different sense than Deleuze and Guattari in Kafka, pp. 63–71 [115–30]. A “connector” in Kafka is the same as a “component of passage” in A Thousand Plateaus.


42. The performativc: See J. L. Austin, How To Do Things with Words, pp. 133, 147. Austin comes close, in one footnote, to asserting a theory of incorporeal transformation the consequences of which, if fully elaborated, would have led him far from the analytical philosophy of his origins: “the sense in which saying something produces effects on other persons, or causes things, is a fundamentally different sense of cause from that used in physical causation by pressure, etc. . . . It is probably the original sense of ‘cause’” (p. 113n). On the same page, he states that the action of this nonphysical causality is marked by a “break in the chain” of statements: in other words, its line of causality is discontinuous. He omits that the line of causality of sayings is discontinuous because it is punctuated by doings. Change brought about through the nonphysical causality is attributed to things, even though it is enacted in words. It intervenes in the line of physical causality—which is therefore also discontinuous. The chain of body-to-body relations is broken by a break in statement-to-statement causality. One can easy read this in Deleuze–Guattarian terms as the mutual intervention (reciprocal presupposition) of asymptotic lines of causality: lines that follow different trajectories (body-to-body versus statement-to-statement) and even belong to different orders of reality (matter and ideality), but nevertheless meet at a given point—that point being the “break” (fractal abyss) marking the operation of the
abstract machine. Deleuze develops the notion of **double causality** at great length in *Logic of Sense* (see esp. pp. 23–27, 94–99 [36–40, 115–21]; for Deleuze and Guattari on Austin, the performative and the illocutionary, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 77–78 [98–99].

43. On **implicit presuppositions**, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 77 [98], and Oswald Ducrot, *Dire et ne pas dire*, passim (the example developed here is on pp. 22–24).

44. **Ideology**: "To presuppose a certain content is to make the acceptance of that content a precondition for further dialogue... This is not a causal transformation tied to the fact that any enunciation influences the beliefs, desires, and interests of the listener. On the contrary, it is a juridical or institutional transformation" (Ducrot, *Dire et ne pas dire*, p. 91).

45. **Ideology**: Deleuze and Guattari reject ideological conceptions of the link between power and language. They cite Bakhtin as saying that language is the form of ideology, but that the form of ideology is not itself ideological (*A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 525n21 [113n17]). This is a way of saying that language is the form of expression of power relations in society, but that as a form of expression it is nothing outside of the "forms of content" (vertical and horizontal) with which it is in reciprocal presupposition. Forms of content and forms of expression have substance, and they and their substances arise in a cocausal "combat of energies." Semiotic formations are awash in extralinguistic, pre-ideational — and therefore pre-ideological — fields of force. Power can be conceived as language-driven but not language-based. Its functioning cannot fully be explained by recourse to a concept of ideology as formative agent of speech and belief. Ideologies do exist, but their rules of formation are not coextensive with those of language or power: they are end results of processes at work on other levels, structures of meaning in the sense of evaporative end effect. An ideological statement is more a precipitate than a precipitator. What distinguishes an ideological meaning from any other evaporative effect is only the regularity with which a society produces it. That regularity is the work of a double-sided abstract machine — of power and of linguistic expression (simultaneously a "machinic assemblage" and a "collective assemblage of enunciation"). For more detail on regularizing processes of semiotic formation, see *Habit*, passim, on the three syntheses.
The way in which a statement envelops a literal meaning and a logical presupposition should not be confused with what Roland Barthes calls connotation and defines as the form of ideology. Connotation is the embedding of an implicit expression/content relation in an explicit or denotative one. If the formula for denotation, or literal referential meaning, is \( E/C \), then connotation would be \( E(E/C)/C \) (S/Z, pp. 6–11). For example, a photograph of a flag: the denotative relation would be photo/cloth, and the connotative, photo(flag/patriotism)/cloth. "Patriotism" would be an implicitly conveyed content. Despite his use of Hjelmslev's vocabulary, Barthes's orientation is entirely different from Deleuze and Guattari's. His connotative content is a "signified": the process of connotation is purely linguistic, and produces its effect in the first and last instance on the level of ideas. In other words, Barthes's form of ideology is ideological. His formulas leave no room for the nondiscursive dimension Deleuze and Guattari insist on (again, in common with Bakhtin, whose concept of meaning as an evaluative "theme" that has a unique and unreproducible directional effect in a concrete situation can be compared to the order-word's "unity-in-movement" as described above; see V. N. Volosinov [Bakhtin], Marxism and the Philosophy of Language, pp. 94–105). What falls out of Barthes's equation is precisely the immediately transformational, extralinguistic act enveloped in the statement. Emile Benveniste makes an analogous move in relation to Austin when he argues that performative utterances are purely self-referential and that the act they perform is nothing other than the constitution of the speaking subject in discourse (see "Subjectivity in Language," in Problems in General Linguistics, pp. 223–31; for Ducrot's critique of Benveniste, see Dire et ne pas dire, pp. 70–75). Many semiotics-influenced theories of ideology combine Barthes's internalization of power in linguistic structure and Benveniste's linguistification of subjectivity (typically with varying doses of Althusser and Lacan thrown in, depending on whether the focus is the "social" or the "individual"; a useful example is Kaja Silverman, The Subject of Semiotics). In so doing, they doubly exclude what they set out to explain: relations of force between bodies. Because they place the functioning of power primarily on a dematerialized linguistic or subjective plane they end up doing little more than idealizing the formations of power they set out to critique.
46. On the ORDER-WORD, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, 75–89, 106–110 [95–113, 135–39].

47. Austin speaks at length of the conventional or RITUAL aspects of PERFORMATIVES, but he avoids the obvious political conclusions by never linking them to mechanisms of social control: see, for example, *How To Do Things with Words*, pp. 18–19. Foucault is less restrained. On education (and by extension all institutionalized speech—and all speech to the extent that it is institutional [Ducrot, note 42 above]) as ritual, see *L'Ordre du discours*, pp. 46–47.

48. On what is taught in the schools as conveying ORDER-WORDS, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 75 [95].


50. On the "I" as the marker of a social function, see Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 95.


52. The ELEMENTARY UNIT OF LANGUAGE: *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 76 [95].


54. For Nietzsche on PERSPECTIVE as an interaction of real selective forces, see *The Will to Power*, secs. 481, 490, 493–507, 518, 556, 568–69, 636 (pp. 257, 270–71, 272–76, 281, 301, 306–307, 339–40). An objective perspective is also called an OBJECTIVE ILLUSION or "objective dissimulation": see *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 373 [448], and Deleuze, *Cinema II*, p. 69 [94].

55. In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari rename the "part-objects" of psychoanalysis PARTIAL OBJECTS. A partial object is a libidinally in-
vested objective perspective of one body on another (or of one part of a body on another part, which may be on that same body or a different one). "Libidinally invested" means prone to be repeated. A partial object is the site of what I called a "REPETITION-IMPULSION." It is a private order-word, the juncture at which power and language meet on and for an individual body. The prelinguistic signs which give it expression are in a language that has only one speaker (more a jargon than a language). The repetition-impulsion is not to be confused with Freud's "repetition-compulsion," which is the tendency of a traumatized body to reduce its libidinal events as much as possible to one of their three simultaneous moments or dimensions (the past). For more on part-objects, see Habít, "Burp." On jargon and prelinguistic or "ASIGNIFYING" signs of desire, see Anti-Oedipus, pp. 38, 289 [46, 343].

56. The DEPTHS OF MATTER: Deleuze and Guattari (following both Spinoza and Leibniz) do indeed assert that PERCEPTION AND THOUGHT HAVE SUBSTANCE. (Today, one might invoke the involutions of brain matter, or better, the quantum waves crossing the brain’s synaptic fissures.) The assertion of substance allows Deleuze and Guattari to maintain that the proposition that thought-perception is always real and of the outside applies even to fantasy: if a fantasy has substance, it is a body, and its apprehension by another thought-body is as real as the perception of an object, or body with extension (thought and perception have only "intension," or virtual reality; they are real but not objective). See the definition of "mode" in Spinoza: Practical Philosophy, pp. 91–92 [118–120]: "effects [thoughts or perceptions] are indeed things, in other words real beings with an essence and existence of their own." On thought and extension as different substances, ibid., p. 52 [73]; on perception as having the same substance as thought, ibid., p. 104 [142]; on a thought as a body, A Thousand Plateaus, p. 86 [110]; on thought as OUTSIDE, Foucault (1986), pp. 51, 92–93, 95, 120, 126–27, and Foucault, "The Thought from Outside," Foucault/Blanchot; on the outside of thought as atmospheric, Foucault (1986), p. 129. Deleuze's essay "Klossowski or Bodies-Language" (Logic of Sense, pp. 280–301 [325–50]) covers many of these issues: see esp. pp. 327–32 on thought carrying a thing outside itself by reproducing its essential dynamism in its own substance. In this essay Deleuze calls the object's constitutional openness to grasping and manipulation by thought FLECTION (the process of its reproduction in thought is, of course, REFLECTION).
57. On the untimely, see A Thousand Plateaus, p. 296 [363]. On subsistence (also called “insistence”), see Différence et répétition, pp. 111, 202, and Logic of Sense, pp. 5, 110, 180 [13, 134, 211] (on page 5 of the English, “insist” is translated as “inhere”).


60. It is possible for every “I do” to be unique, yet actualize “roughly” the same interrelation of relations, because “I do,” if properly understood, expresses the realm of possibility of marriage. Every variation falling between the two relative thresholds of a meaning can be subsumed in a single diagram or statement. Such a diagram is not exact, since it does not explicitly account for each potential actualization. But, if carefully used, neither is it inexact, because it does not overstep the limits beyond which an essentially different event transpires. It is calculated to be anexact, to precisely span a range of virtuality. The concept of anexactitude allows one’s analysis to function at a certain level of generality without losing sight of the multiplicity immanent to each unique speech act. Every essence is in any case anexact by nature because the actualizations it envelops are in principle infinite. The infinitive (“to marry”) is the most economical way of expressing an essence because it connotes rigor but by its very name conveys limitlessness. A fuller expression would develop the series of actualizations implicit in the infinitive into a continuum of variation (for example, in the form of an ordered array of literal diagrams, or more adequately, as an equation or set of English instructions for the generation of any number of gradated diagrams). On anexactitude and “vague” essence (a term coined by Husserl), see Logic of Sense, pp. 114–15 [139–40], and (in relation to the Kantian “schema”), A Thousand Plateaus, 367, 407–408 [454–55, 507–508]. For more on Kant’s schema, see Deleuze, Kant’s Critical Philosophy, p. 18 [28–29].

61. Quantum leap: Werner Heisenberg, one of the inventors of quantum mechanics, invoked a concept of potentia to describe the virtual reality of the quantum level of matter as it emerges from energy:
"it is as though the program of Galileo and Locke, which involved discarding secondary qualities (color, taste, etc.) in favor of primary qualities (the quantities of classical mechanics), had been carried a stage further and these primary qualities had themselves become secondary to the property of potentia in which they all lay latent" (quoted in J. C. Polkinghorne, *The Quantum World*, p. 81).

62. On superlinearity, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 85, 91, 95 [108, 115, 121]. The superlinearity of the abstract machine is also expressed in the phrases "abstract line" and "broken line of becoming." The image these phrases invoke is of a set of mutually exclusive linear trajectories through the world coexisting in a state of potential, as if crumpled into a supercharged bundle bristling with energy. When one of those trajectories finds a body to express it, it breaks from the bundle, striking out into the world of actuality. The path the body follows can be represented graphically as an arrow passing between two adjacent points (*A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 294n83). The points represent other actual bodies around which the body in becoming navigates, seen from the point of view of their own pathmaking capacity. The bodily coordinates in the actual world through which the body-in-becoming moves envelop other potential trajectories still crumpled in the ball of virtuality. The line of becoming is "abstract" because its linear directionality can only be conceived or diagrammed in relation to other lines remaining in a state of envelopment (in other words, as an angle on the virtual). It is "broken" because the path taken is a breakaway of potential: a zigzag from the virtual into the actual, from one actual state of a body toward another, and away from the actual and virtual states of certain other bodies. Those bodies, if not passed by, might overpower the body-in-becoming, reenveloping its trajectory—but at their coordinates. Every becoming runs the risk of all or part of its transformational potential being annexed to a foreign body through a process of forcible repotentialization (capture). On the abstract line and the broken line, see *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 293-94, 294n83, 298, 497-99 [359-60, 359n67, 365-66, 621-24], and *Différence et répétition*, pp. 44, 352-54.

64. INFORMATION: *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 76 [96].


66. LINGUISTICS AS INSUFFICIENTLY ABSTRACT: *ibid.*, pp. 90–91 [115].


69. Such a rereading of FOUCAULT would, most notably: rehabilitate his much maligned *Archaeology of Knowledge* by helping to clarify its philosophical underpinnings; and correct the impression that Foucault is reducible to a philosopher of language by highlighting the neglected role in his work of "nondiscursive formations" (institutions understood as forms of content) and "visibilities" (what I have called "vertical content"; in this connection, see Foucault [1986], p. 117). The appearance of Deleuze's book on Foucault should go a long way toward motivating a reassessment. Unfortunately, the English translation (*Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988]) sometimes obscures key philosophical distinctions Deleuze takes pain to make. Most seriously, it tends to submerge the all-important concept of virtual-actual by such word choices as "particular element" and "particular feature" for "singularité," "realization" for "actualisation," "evolution" for "devenir" (becoming), and by phraseology assimilating virtuality to possibility. Other slippages reintroduce a communicational model of language ("transmission" for "émission," "medium" for "milieu"), and both mechanism ("machine-like" for "machinique," which is conventionally translated as "machinic") and subjectivism (in one passage, "d'après un principe de parcimonie" becomes "begrudgingly" and "le possible" becomes "sense of possibility"). The translation should be used with caution. In the present work, I have chosen to give page references only to the French.

A quick indication of the philosophical overlap between Deleuze and Foucault, as seen from Foucault's side, can be had by referring to *L'Ordre du discours*, pp. 58–61, where Foucault describes his celebrated
historical "breaks" as incorporeal "events" and speaks of "cesurae" in a vocabulary similar to the vocabulary of fractalization adopted here. See also Foucault's brilliant review of *Logic of Sense* and *Différence et répétition*: "Theatrum Philosophicum," *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, pp. 169–98. For the confluences with Deleuze and Guattari's political thinking, see "Intellectuals and Power" in the same volume. Deleuze and Guattari state their areas of disagreement with Foucault in *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 531n39 [175–76n]: first, force is more fundamentally a phenomenon of desire (which is not a personal phenomenon, but rather the contextual impulsion or unity-in-movement immanent to language) than of power (which as we have seen is a network of elaborated forces operating in a certain impulsive mode); and second, resistance ("escape," becoming other) is primary in relation to power rather than a derived response to it. Both of these points are developed below (although not directly in relation to Foucault).

**Habit**


2. In "Coldness and Cruelty," Deleuze analyzes two highly elaborated kinds of coldness (that of the masochist, and the sadist's "apathy") as strategies for chilling humanity in order to reconnect with intenser pleasures, in an escape from warmed-over Oedipal normality (Deleuze, "Coldness and Cruelty," in Deleuze and Sacher-Masoch, *Masochism*, esp. pp. 51–52, 117–19 [50–52, 117–20]). A third usage of cold (this time involving drugs) as the degree zero of subjective reconstruction is described in *A Thousand Plateaus*, pp. 152–54 [188–91]. Deleuze and Guattari's use of terms such as "intensity" and "sensation" should not be mistaken for a back-door return to subjectivity as understood by phenomenology: a field of untamed experience grounding conscious thought. Although intensity and sensation are on the level of the complicated causality from which subjectivity arises, they have nothing to do with the phenomenological concept of originary experience. This will become clearer later in this chapter, in the section comparing subjectivity to inhumanly warm water. For the critique of phenomenology, see *Différence et répétition*, p. 179, and Foucault (1986), pp. 116–19.