The Politics of Language:

Enunciation as Political Praxis in Guattari and Deleuze

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ABSTRACT

Through the study of the philosophy of Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze, this thesis seeks to extract and elaborate a political practice of language by investigating their critique of linguistics and the development of a semio-pragmatic conception of language. Whereas most scholars see Deleuze and Guattari's critique of linguistics as a project that claims to enact an escape from language, this thesis argues that implicit in Deleuze and Guattari's apparently antagonist approach to language is a new way of thinking about language as a social and political practice.

The thesis delineates a trajectory of research that is focused not on Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of literature, nor on a philosophy of language, but rather on how language operates within a semiotic framework of power. It provides an analysis of Louis Hjelmslev's theory of the sign and Guattari and Deleuze's Hjelmslevian reading of Foucault's statement as the main resources for Deleuze and Guattari's elaboration of a pragmatics that is both political and semiotic, and which responds to the need identified by Guattari to produce a political genealogy of content.

To develop a theory of a political practice of language the thesis turns to Guattari's institutional reflections and takes the La Borde clinic as a case study. It examines clinical experimental protocols and Guattari's theory of subject- and subjected-group to discern the particular role that language plays in the framework of collective analytical processes of enunciation. It is argued that Guattari's reinterpretation of Sartre's dialectical sociology suggests a role for language – as social practice – in processes of autonomy and institutional creation.

Finally, the thesis discusses two main ideas: the idea of an a-signifying use of language (a use that is not primarily concerned with signification) and the conceptualisation of language as intervention, following Guattari's attempt to mobilise an expanded notion of analysis – a collective militant analysis – moving from the clinical context to more general social contexts.

Ultimately, the thesis argues that Guattari and Deleuze's critique of linguistics and Guattari's mobilisation of analysis as a form of political intervention make it possible to reclaim language as the centre of social and political struggles.

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Introduction:

An 'escape from' or an 'escape for' language?

This thesis seeks to extract and elaborate a political practice of language from the philosophy of Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze. It draws primarily on their critique of structural linguistics and their prioritization of semiotic and pragmatic approaches over semiological ones. It also investigates Guattari's work in the context of institutional analysis: in particular, the extension of institutional analysis from clinical to broader militant, social and institutional contexts. Focusing on these two main lines of enquiry, the thesis claims that despite the fact that Deleuze and Guattari's collaborative work on language is generally seen as a project to escape *from* language, their writings provide important insights into what a political practice of language might entail. This is an aspect, however, that has not been sufficiently systematized, and because of this, has remained mostly overlooked.

This thesis understands Deleuze and Guattari's critique of linguistics and semiotic theory not from the perspective of 'a renewed theory of language' (equivalent to Deleuze's theory of literature or Guattari's theory of analysis, which constitute a complete theoretical corpus), but from the point of view of a political analysis of language. This is evident from the moment in which they claim that dominant theories of language fail to shed light on the mechanisms of power that work through and/or within language, and that escape the domain of linguistics per se. This is where Lecercle's argument that Deleuze and Guattari's critique of language is immanently concerned with a diagnosis of modern capitalism and is

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therefore political is perhaps more accurate.[1]

Conceptually, the thesis investigates Deleuze and Guattari's use and reinterpretation of Hjelmslev's semiotics, with implications for a conception of language as being traversed by power relations (via a Foucauldian-Hjelmslevian reading of the statement), and it draws on the shared theoretical concerns of Guattari and Sartre regarding the praxis of groups from the perspective of groups' abilities to make a statement.

The work of Danish semiotician Louis Hjelmslev is recurrent throughout the entire thesis. Because it plays a crucial role in my reading, his work occupies a substantial position in the research. I claim that only through Deleuze and Guattari's reinterpretation of the semiotics of Hjelmslev is it possible to fully comprehend their novel take on language, both conceptually and practically. With Hjelmslev, Deleuze and Guattari are able to avoid the problems raised by ideological interpretations of language and by the formalist tendencies of French philosophy of the 1960s and 1970s. I am referring to the fact that Hjelmslev conceives of the sign as the result of a relation of reciprocal presuppositions between a form of content and a form of expression. Thus, because expression and content sustain no causal relationship, expression is not determined by content as Marxism would have it, nor is content the effect of expression as per structural linguistics. Building on Hjelmslev's model, Deleuze and Guattari develop a pragmatic understanding of language that situates the political at the deepest level of the articulation between expression and content, on the basis of a matter–form contact.

What serves Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics of language so well is that Hjelmslev's model — despite being concerned with linguistic formalisation —

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[1] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, 'Deleuze, Guattari and Marxism', *Historical Materialism: Research in Critical Marxist Theory*, 2005; 13(3): pp. 35–55.

unmasks the fundamental duality between content and expression, and thus affords a processual perspective with which to comprehend the articulation between a form of expression and a form of content. I claim that what Deleuze and Guattari find in Hjelmslev is what can be called a non-reductive linguistic formalisation. By this I mean a non-representational and non-translational view of language, which understands language as a contingent, partial, local and strategic formalisation amongst other non-linguistic formalisations, and dependent upon a series of processes that are not all linguistic in origin. Following Foucault, the definition of power (*puissance*) as the relation between non-formed matters and non-formalized functions or forces, and the definition of power formations (*pouvoir*) as formalized elements, articulate the tendency revealed in the research, that a political analysis of linguistic formations should focus on the process of formalisation as the micropolitical site par excellence.

Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Hjelmslev towards the development of what I call here a semiotic pragmatics of language is further consolidated by Foucault's theory of statements and discursive formations. Indeed, Foucault's development of an analysis of language based on the statement (instead of linguistic or even semiotic perspectives) allows us to understand not only how language is traversed by both social and political relations of power, but also how it functions, beyond both semantic and syntagmatic perspectives, as an intervention (its non-repeatable existential dimension).

If Deleuze and Guattari's development of a semio-pragmatics of language brings to the forefront how social and political structures (particularly the capitalist state) take control over the articulations *expression-content* and *matter-form*, then this implies that any political practice of language would require, at the very least, an

autonomization of content from preformed significations. Although it is possible to infer this reasoning, a clear and concrete formulation of what a political practice of language would involve is not systematically developed in Deleuze and Guattari's joint work.

The aim of extracting a politics of language from Deleuze and Guattari is to think about what a political practice of language might entail. To this effect, the thesis focuses on the work of Guattari, and, in particular, his work on institutional analysis. Taking Guattari's experiments and writings on La Borde as a case study, the thesis tries to understand how these reveal the development of Guattari's thinking regarding a politics of language. The question for Guattari, at La Borde, was how to create the conditions for an autonomous and singular enunciation of individuals and collectives. To this end he developed several experiments, together with Jean Oury, the purpose of which were to undermine the power coordinates that are usually distributed via language. In particular, the relations between patients, clinical staff and the institution were at stake, but equally important was his thinking concerning group therapy.

Sartre's influence on Guattari is clearly felt in Guattari's conceptualization of groups. The association of the group-subject with a capacity to enunciate and 'make a statement' supports the idea that language performs a social and political role. Conceptually, an analysis of Sartre's group-in-fusion in comparison with Guattari's subject-group demonstrates that there was also a clear reinterpretation of Sartre's dialectical sociology. Guattari's emphasis on the group-subject's capacity to enunciate and an understanding of processes of institutionalization as creative processes, accentuates the reinterpretation of Sartrean dialectics, and suggests a role for language — as social practice — in the creation of new institutional forms.

Guattari also proposes an extension of the concept of analysis from the clinical to broader socio-political settings, which, as I demonstrate, is primarily concerned with a renewed practice of language.

The thesis further elaborates on the idea of language as political practice by turning to the concept of the 'minor'. A minor use of language is contrasted with Deleuze and Guattari's diagnosis of modern capitalism, with its effects on the collective enunciation of minorities. In this vein, it is evident that Deleuze and Guattari's definition of capitalism is inseparable from a critique of language. Namely, given the definition of the nature of the capitalist axiomatic in terms of a reductive semiotisation. Moreover, understanding capitalism as semiotic operator is suggestive of this central aspect in their argumentation.

Ultimately, the thesis argues that Guattari and Deleuze's political critique of existing theories of language allows us to reclaim the question of language as being at the centre of social and political struggles. In so doing, it presents an alternative to the common understanding of the political dimension of language in Deleuze and Guattari — an understanding that is constructed around Deleuze and Guattari's apparently antagonist attitude towards language — by demonstrating how the 'sortir de la langue' ('escape from language', Guattari's title for the second chapter of his *The Machinic Unconscious*) opens the reverse side of a programme of what I call an 'escape for language', which recasts language as a political and social practice, and brings into focus how and why language remains a fundamental and privileged means of intervention in the world.

Guattari and Deleuze

The thesis is not concerned with the collaboration between Deleuze and Guattari, or

with a simplistic distinction between what is Deleuze's and what is Guattari's work. It is also not primarily concerned with Guattari's contributions to semiotics or linguistic theory in general (despite Guattari's clear achievements in these areas, as highlighted by authors such as Gary Genosko). However, it is evident that the thesis on the whole is far more concerned with Guattari than with Deleuze. The inversion in the thesis's title of the usual order of the names 'Deleuze and Guattari' (which is how their joint work is signed) to 'Guattari and Deleuze' indicates the importance of Guattari for the research developed here.

There are two reasons for giving this precedence to Guattari over Deleuze. The first reason is the more obvious one. Guattari's work is far more in need of unravelling than that of Deleuze, whose oeuvre is one of the most widely studied in contemporary French thought. In contrast, there are only a few monographs devoted exclusively to the work of Guattari in the English-speaking world: notably, Gary Genosko's *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction* and *Félix Guattari: A Critical Introduction*,[2] Franco 'Bifo' Berardi's *Félix Guattari: Thought, Friendship, and Visionary Cartography*,[3] and the edited volume entitled *The Guattari Effect*,[4] by Éric Alliez and Andrew Goffey. Most recently, Andrew Goffey has been responsible for a series of translations, including *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*[5] and the forthcoming *Lines of Flight: For Another World of Possibilities*.[6] In general the field that has been most receptive to Guattari's work is media theory (however most studies are centred on infocapitalism and thus do not focus on language as practice), with the exception perhaps of Brazil, where Guattari has had — and still has — a remarkable

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[2] Gary Genosko, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction* (London: Continuum Press, 2002); Gary Genosko, *Félix Guattari: A Critical Introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2009).

[3] Bifo Berardi, *Félix Guattari: Thought, Friendship, and Visionary Cartography* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008).

[4] Éric Alliez and Andrew Goffey, *The Guattari Effect* (London: Continuum, 2011).

[5] Félix Guattari, *Schizoanalytic Cartographies*, trans. Andrew Goffey (London: Bloomsbury, 2012).

[6] Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles* (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011).

presence in psychology and psychoanalytic studies, and in social movements due to the wide reception of *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*.[7] This book, which resulted from Guattari's trips to Brazil with Suely Rolnik, documents his meetings with militant groups and social movements across Brazil in the years that followed the military dictatorship (which were known as 'Abertura', or 'the Opening').

However, the emphasis on Guattari rather than Deleuze here does not find its primary justification in the lack of academic commentary but rather in the fact that, with Deleuze, the question of language tends to be dealt with exclusively in his philosophy of literature (with the exception of *Logic of Sense*, which in any case deals with sense and not language directly), whilst with Guattari, from the very start the question of language is dealt with not only in terms of literature but mostly from the perspective of an everyday practice of speech and writing. The thesis's trajectory of research purposefully avoids the association of the question of language with that of literature. It concerns the language of everyday life, of writing and speech, as individual and collective practice, and not only that of literature, which is *par excellence* the site of the politics of language for Deleuze.

For this reason, the thesis starts with *A Thousand Plateaus*, where Deleuze and Guattari's critique of linguistics reveals their very conception of language, but goes on from there to problematize language as social practice via the works of Guattari, and in particular his writings on La Borde. In *A Thousand Plateaus* — particularly on the fourth plateau, called 'November 20, 1923: Postulates of Linguistics' — Deleuze and Guattari develop a critique of language which, despite drawing on the previous works of both Guattari (in relation to Hjelmslev) and

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[7] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, trans. Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008 [orig. 1986, Micropolítica: Cartografias do Desejo]).

Deleuze (in relation to the Stoics), is not concerned with literature. In this regard, it is relevant to note that the concept of the 'minor', first developed in *Kafka* five years before (as 'minor literature'), is defined in *A Thousand Plateaus* as a treatment of language that is no longer exclusive to literature. In *A Thousand Plateaus* the 'minor' is invested with a practical meaning and is extended to a social and political treatment of language within an expanded domain. In my view, the concept of minor literature is consolidated politically not only through its method but because the 'minor' writer engages political minorities (outside of literature) who are barred from the grand language of literature and thus from expression. It is this problematization of literature as a question of minorities that constitutes language as a political problem. However, from my perspective what is missing from Deleuze and Guattari's proposal and from Deleuze's literary project more generally is a problematization of how the political achievement of literature extends to expression in a more general sense, beyond its literary circulation, and how it impacts the minority status of the minorities concerned.

Thus, the thesis plots a trajectory that purposefully avoids the path of literature. The only exception to this is the references to their joint book on Kafka, and the concepts of becoming minor and the collective assemblage of enunciation. Although the latter is introduced in *Kafka*, it does not subsume the politics of language into the politics of literature. In any case, it is undoubtedly a Guattarian notion, judging by early texts published in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality*. Focusing on language as the prime object of study (and not as a subset theory of literature) means unearthing Deleuze and Guattari's project of a pragmatics of language that is both semiotic and political, and which this thesis proposes to attempt through Hjelmslev-Foucault-Guattari. Deleuze and Guattari's semio-pragmatics of

language, as I call it, not only allows for a manner of understanding language that poses the question of language as indissociable from a question of power (or pragmatics), but can also be used to begin to anticipate and construct an idea of language as social and political practice on the reverse of this pragmatics. This is why I take Deleuze and Guattari's framework of a pragmatics of language in their critique of the general postulates of linguistics as the starting point of this thesis.

This investigation implies a coherence that, in terms of the question of language, is alien to Guattari and Deleuze's project since, as I have discussed earlier, it is debatable whether they actually have a unified theory of language as a whole. If in the 'Postulates of Linguistics' their critique is politically oriented towards denouncing the limits of structural linguistics, the critique of linguistics is also very clearly (particularly in Guattari's work) the reverse side of a practical escape not *from* language but *for* language, which can be seen as part of a larger project of re-founding social practice, in which language takes an important role.

I have already referred to the ways in which this thesis distances itself from literature in order to clear the ground for a better understanding of what 'a politics of language' could mean, once shorn of its literary connotations. Ultimately, the thesis does not provide an exegetical reading of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of language, but rather an examination of their political critique of the ways in which language is understood, towards the construction of a political practice of language.

The general field of Deleuze and Guattari studies of language

Lecercle's *Deleuze and Language*[8] is the most comprehensive and fully devoted

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[8] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language* (Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002).

book on the study of language in Deleuze. I share with Lecercle the framing of the question of language as a problem ('and not as a theme'), as a result of the apparently paradoxical combination of distrust and fascination with language that Deleuze's work reveals, yet my research has led me to disagree with others aspects of Lecercle's work.

I have noted already how this thesis seeks an alternative perspective of language to the one found on literature, and Lecercle's work falls within the category of works whose understanding of language is predicated on a reading of Deleuze's theory of literature. Furthermore, there are aspects of Lecercle's study that are irreconcilable with this thesis. Whilst Lecercle views Deleuze's theory of language as fundamentally pragmatic in nature, he also views language as a site of subjectification through interpellation and ascribes to Deleuze a linguistic conception of reality which, in my view, is an inappropriately Althusserian interpretation of Deleuze's conception of language. This conclusion from Lecercle follows from his first error, which is to read Deleuze and Guattari's theory of language in the light of the Althusserian theory of interpellation, by which the subject is produced by language. In my thesis, such a reading is quickly dispersed when Deleuze and Guattari's theory is confronted with Hjelmslev. The mutual reciprocity between content and expression, and the material-semiotic perspective underlining the formation of the sign as a matter-form contact, clearly departs from any exclusively linguistic conception of the subjectivity.

Other significant studies with implications for this research have been developed by Gary Genosko and Maurizio Lazzarato; both of these highlight the uniqueness and relevance of the notion of a-signifying semiotics (or post-signifying semiotics) that comes from Guattari's work in particular. For Lazzarato any political

consideration of language in the present time has to consider the mechanisms of capitalism as they operate, which implies the recognition of capitalism as a semiotic management of fluxes and social relations, thereby considering language from both a signifying and an a-signifying point of view. Lazzarato remarks that the importance of a-signifying semiotics and the role they play needs to be emphasized, and that they have been ignored by most linguistics and political theories (e.g., those of Butler, Rancière, Virno, etc.). Similarly, for Gary Genosko, it is a matter of regaining the importance of signals, so far consigned to the 'lower threshold of semiotics'. The main focus for Genosko, however, is Guattari's contribution to semiotic theory. For him the conceptualization of a-signifying semiotics is one of a technomaterialist semiotics, perfectly adapted to infocapital,[9] and thus placing Guattari at the forefront of innovative semiotic theory. Moreover, like Lazzarato, Genosko's focus is the a-signifying machines that work beneath the banking and info-capitalist system, automating either data collection or messages produced by signifying semiologies. He articulates his reading by using Guattari's notion of 'part-signs', i.e., signs that 'work things' prior to representation (such as passwords, PINs, etc.). They are also described as avoiding linguistic formation as an imposition of form and signification that is prior to content. Genosko writes that 'a-signification operates by means of part-signs, that is, particle- or point-signs, as Guattari called them, and not through the fully formed signs of any tradition'.[10] But if this reading is particularly convincing in framing the operations of finance and the financialization of language, or the ways in which language is mobilized in spite of content, it seems, in my view, to fail in properly exploring the relation between a-signifying and signifying semiotics. This is the case, perhaps, because Genosko is not interested in thinking

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[9] Gary Genosko, *Félix Guattari: A Critical Introduction* (London: Pluto Press, 2009).
[10] Ibid., p. 93

about a politics of language, but also because a-signifying semiotics have been tended to be reduced to infocapitalism in current theorisations of Guattari's work (which is also why the field that has been most receptive to Guattari so far has been media studies).

My own focus is instead on language and the politics of its use, and not the ways in which people are co-opted by financial machines, nor the nature of infocapitalism and the operations of algorithms. In that sense, I develop here an aspect of a-signifying semiotics that has been far less explored. The key aspect, as I argue, is that despite not being based on representation or meaning, a-signifying semiotics do not avoid these either. In fact, Genosko recognises as much when he notes that 'as far as the relations between signifying and a-signifying is concerned: the latter uses the former, puts it into play in some manner, as it were, only as a 'tool', and without itself functioning either semiologically or symbolically'.[11] In this sense, I argue that a-signifying semiotics refers to processes (relations of power) that underlie every communication, and are thus central to the discussion of a politics of language proper — but more importantly, they inform a political programme for language as practice. This point is particularly important because it clarifies the fact that the 'escape' from language is not an escape from language *tout court*, but from its exclusive understanding as signification. The matter is thus what language does and how it intervenes. To develop my argument I show how a-signifying semiotics are the privileged mode of operation of language in Guattari's clinical analysis. I am thus speaking of a use of language which, although presenting itself in a semiological register, has an impact that results from the fact that it is not *primarily* signifying. For Guattari, analysis puts in place a collective analysis *en acte* (*instead of a* meta-

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[11] Gary Genosko, *Félix Guattari: A Critical Introduction*, p. 96.

narrative) as a way of mapping processes prior to substantialization and the creation of autonomous points of reference. In this sense Lazzarato's 2014 publication, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, is the most important precedent to this research. Understanding capitalism as a 'crisis in subjectivity', Lazzarato identifies the problem of representation as central to today's political struggles, comparing democratic with linguistic forms of representation and similar modes of power seizure. From his perspective, any political break would require these to be overcome. He thus argues that Guattari, by 'making the "existential" which is neither linguistic nor semiotic an essential condition of enunciation,...carries out a major shift which neutralizes the power of representation'.[12] This leads Lazzarato to an explicit conception of a political language, developed not only from Guattari but also through Foucault's parrhesiastic speech. Arguing that language is not at the centre of enunciation, Lazzarato follows Guattari in claiming that speech has the dual function of signifying, communicating and declaring politically, but also, as an intervention, 'to produce assemblages of enunciation able to capture, territorialize, and deploy the singularities of a focal point of existential subjectivation and give consistency and durability to them'.[13] Because of his focus on language as intervention (i.e., an existential dimension) — that I discuss in this thesis in terms of a practice of language — *Signs and Machines* is perhaps the most important precedent to my own reflections. In particular I share with Lazzarato the attempt to construct an idea of practice that is not limited to ideas of use, or to how context affects communication, but functions as both analysis and intervention.

While I would praise Guattari and Deleuze's sustained contribution to a

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[12] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and The Production of Subjectivity* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2014), p. 203.
[13] Ibid., p. 204.

political conception of language, I am also critical of the lack of an equally systematized idea of practice to follow their conceptualization of such a politics. No doubt the conceptualization of the mechanisms of power that operate through language and on language are more clearly formulized than any kind of practical response to them. This is the reason and motivation behind the second part of this thesis, in which I attempt to formulate the kind of political practice that should follow. This is also the reason that led me to move my research away from 'Deleuze and Guattari', and instead towards an investigation of 'Guattari and Deleuze'. Guattari's institutional analytical work in the clinical setting of La Borde, and beyond (with militant and research groups, and institutions more generally), offers the necessary material to build on the theorisation of Chapters One and Two, and elaborate what a political practice of language might involve.

It should also be possible to raise questions regarding how far Guattari's framework can be extended from a controlled setting like La Borde, or militant or research institutions, to other more structured or 'institutionalized' settings in society. The success of Guattari's approach as it stands depends on its ability to develop people's and groups' capacity for elucidating and reading reality in different ways, and developing new forms of subjectivity. However, the very relationship between processes of subjectivity production and language needs to be far more developed.

The presentation of the concept of collective assemblages of enunciation — as a better concept for dealing with language and enunciation than that of the group — makes sense because it very clearly places us in the position of analysing the collective extended relations, both linguistic and extra-linguistic, upon which language depends. However, abandoning the concept of the group-subject raises a

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series of problems. From a strategic point of view, the figure of the group-subject articulates a very clear political figure that is lost as a result of the analytical angle that is imposed with the concept of the collective assemblage of enunciation. While it may allow us to move more clearly toward a politics of the analysis — the ability to read a situation and thus to act on it strategically — some sense of agency is lost. Guattari's decision to depart from the concept of the subject-group is, however, only a conceptual one; in reality much of the practical politics he deploys continue to revolve around the figure of the group. In my view, if there were a concept that could provide a fitting political replacement to that of the group, this would be the concept of minority; but again, their relation is scarcely articulated.

Chapter description

The thesis is divided into two parts, each comprising two chapters. *Part One* focuses on the critique of language and the analysis of the political that is immanent in Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics of existing theories of language. *Part Two* elaborates on this critique and constructs language as political practice.

Chapter One consists of a conceptual analysis of Deleuze and Guattari's critique of dominant theories of language and what they call the general postulates of linguistics which, I claim, is primarily a political critique. The key text here is 'Postulates of Linguistics' from *A Thousand Plateaus*. The 'Postulates' reveal Deleuze and Guattari's sustained attempt to denounce the primacy of the linguistic signifier in the production of meaning and the separation of language from speech (*parole*) in structuralist models. The intentions underlying Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatic conception of language (that differs from the perspectives of Benveniste's linguistic pragmatics and Austin's speech acts) are fully evident when seen in the light of their critique of Saussure. They point out that it is not the abstract

functionality of the linguistic system or even the primacy of form (the signifier) over content (the signified) that is the pitfall of Saussure's model, but rather the insufficient level of abstraction that it affords. This is because it does not adequately account for language's interventions within an extended social field. Their claim that there is no no language that does not in itself require an extra-linguistic world is explored concomitantly with the argument that language intervenes and has a real impact in the world, which both ideological or symbolic theories of language fail to grasp. In this respect, by referring to authors such as Austin, Ducrot, Benveniste, Saussure and Hjelmslev, it is argued that Deleuze and Guattari's critique of language develops into a social and semiotic pragmatic metacritique, which changes the concept of language from representation to intervention and practice, and thus potentially allows for a political recasting of language. Particular importance is given to the influence of Hjelmslev's extended semiotic model of substance-form-purport interactions, and the reciprocal presupposition between expression and content (replacing the Saussurean signifier and signified association) in their view of language. Together with their discussion of order-words as the basic units of language, it is argued that this is the key to fully understanding what is at stake in their pragmatic move: a general project that demands that an analysis of language be dependent on both an analysis of how a semiotic system or modes of semiotization interact with the material concrete world, and an analysis of the semiotic impact of the material.

Chapter Two investigates the notion of power that is immanent in the formulation of the semiotic and political pragmatics introduced in Chapter One ('linguistics is nothing without a pragmatics (semiotic or political) to define the effectuation of the condition of possibility of language and the usage of linguistic

elements'[14]). In doing so the chapter provides a sustained reading of Hjelmslev's theory of the sign and a comparative reading of Hjelmslev and Foucault. The point of departure is Deleuze and Guattari's argument, introduced in the previous chapter, that the primacy of expression over content in structural linguistics fails to identify the socio-political manoeuvre behind the formalisation of content hiding under the presumed universality and transcendence of signification. In so doing, it fails to recognise the political origins of content and of significations. The chapter explores how the reinterpretation of Hjelmslev by Guattari and Deleuze suits the purposes of a general 'political genealogy of content' (Guattari's term in *Molecular Revolution*[15]) because it allows an analysis of language to be carried out not at the surface level of form, but at the deepest level of matter-form contact, where, according to Deleuze and Guattari, language, and social and political problems, interpenetrate. I highlight the notion of formalisation that, I claim, arises within Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Hjelmslev, to make sense of the concept of power that emerges with their pragmatic framework. One of the most significant issues that the chapter emphasizes results from the definition of power as the relation between non-formed matter and non-formalized functions, after Foucault. Hence a political analysis of linguistic formations has to account for the process of formalisation as the process by which relations of force and power formations relate to each other. It is noted how the notion of formalisation is pluralized, following Hjelmslev's double formalisation of content and expression, with implications for a critique of self-sufficient and meta-linguistic formalisation. Guattari's reinterpretation of Hjelmslev's theory of the sign follows this redefinition of formalisation as plural, parallel, local formalisations, of

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[14] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p.94.
[15] Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire* (Fontenau-sous-Bois, Recherches, 1977), p. 242.

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which the linguistic is part.

In *Part Two*, this thesis attempts to elaborate language as a social and political practice. **Chapter Three** takes as a case study the clinic La Borde, and examine the role language plays in the autonomy of groups and individuals, and in institutional creativity. The chapter starts by providing a brief contextualization of the institutional movement in France, to put into context the approach developed at La Borde, as proposed by Guattari (and the founder Jean Oury). It focuses in particular on a description of the clinical approach, with the creation of conditions for a social enunciation to be developed in an open communicative environment and with employing a polyphony of expression. Clinical and collective protocols, such as the grid and the emergence of local languages, is explored. The chapter demonstrates that whilst Guattari's group-subject is clearly inspired by Sartre's dialectical sociology, and modelled on the concepts of 'seriality' and 'group-in-fusion', two crucial differences arise, which are important for my project. Contra Sartre, Guattari believes in the creative capacity of institutionalization processes, and he differentiates between serial and active groups on the basis of their ability or inability to make a statement — or, to put it in other terms, to be a mouthpiece or a spokesperson. I go on to examine the movement from expression to enunciation,[16] which demanded not only the multiplication of forms of expression (linguistic, gestural, through drawing or music), but also the reconnection of expression to the real concrete problems of the patients in the institution (e.g., expression through means other than language, and the recasting of language as a lived language: 'speech'). Finally, this chapter argues that La Borde allowed Guattari to foreground the way in which language's political relevance depends on reconnecting language to

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[16] This also reflects the title of one of Félix Guattari's unpublished seminars: 'Substituer l'énonciation à l'expression', *Les Séminaires de Félix Guattari*, 1984, Chimères. Available at: http://www.revue-chimeres.fr/drupal_chimeres/files/840425.pdf.

an existential-enunciative function.

Chapter Four is entitled 'Minor Enunciation and Collective Militant Analysis'. This chapter focuses on the concept of minor enunciation and minorities, and traces the development of this concept from a strict literary framework (in *Kafka*) to the political development that took place in books such as *A Thousand Plateaus* (in which this concept is directly proposed as a counteracting practice to the capitalist axiomatics). I suggest that the concepts of minor enunciation and minorities entail new conceptions of majority and minority, which are not numerically or quantitatively defined, but instead refer to a use of language which is measured in regard to a distance or proximity from a dominant pattern or rule. I argue that minorities are described in similar terms to how subjected groups were conceived of by Guattari, and that they are associated with a political use of language whereby language participates in social struggles. In the concept of the minor, there is a use of language that is opposed to the dominant semiotics of the axiomatization and instrumentalization of enunciation. The chapter examines Deleuze and Guattari's definition of capitalism as a semiotic operator, in order to define the implications of an axiomatization of enunciation. This process of axiomatization is defined as a rupture of the connection between statements and the collective assemblage of enunciation, with implications for the capacity of enunciation to introduce problems into the political space. The main conception introduced in this chapter is that of the 'collective militant analysis' — the mode of expression of a collective analysis — which I explain as being the result of the expansion of the analytical practice from the context of La Borde into an enlarged context. Underlying the processes of collective militant analysis are what Guattari termed a-signifying semiotics: semiotics that 'function independently of whether they signify something for

someone or not'. To think of language in terms of a-signifying (or post-signifying) semiotics implies thinking in terms of processes that might in some cases continue to depend on signifying semiotics (or semiologies), but that engage in relationships between matter, substance and form that are not *primarily* signifying. It is thus around the a-signifying nature of processes of collective militant analysis that a practice of language as intervention is be made clear.

References and translations

All references to works by Deleuze and Guattari are to the English editions. In the case of untranslated texts, I have used my own translation and transcribed the original French quotation in the footnote. Forthcoming English editions of texts used in this thesis include Guattari's *Psychoanalysis and Transversality*[17] (Semiotext(e)) and *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*[18] (Bloomsbury). At the date of submission of this thesis, these were not available; hence I maintained the quotations from the original texts.

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[17] Félix Guattari, *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle* (Paris: François Maspero, 1974 [orig. 1972]).
[18] Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles* (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011).

Chapter One: The Critique of Language

> Pragmatics is a politics of language.[1]
>
> – Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*

Deleuze and Guattari's concern with the political question of language begins to take shape in the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Anti-Oedipus* (1972) with a description of 'capitalism of our times' according to a semiotic operation of an axiomatic kind. But it is in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980), and in particular Plateaux 4 'November 20 – 1923 – Postulates of Linguistics', that a conception of language within a renewed framework is more properly developed with a direct political purpose. 'Postulates of Linguistics' critically addresses what are identified as the dominant principles of pervading linguistic theories and addresses their inability to expose the inherently political nature of language. It proceeds by advocating a move to pragmatics as the proper level of analysis to account for the political in language. This practical recasting of language revolves around the following points: first, there is no language in itself that is not already an intervention in an extended material and social field; second, meaning is not necessarily, nor intrinsically, linguistic; and third, expression is an independent formalisation from content but the measure of its independence is also the measure of their reciprocal presupposition.

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[1] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 82.

This position is constructed in stark contrast to prevalent postulates of linguistics, in a reference to Jean-Claude Milner's four axioms of language (*langue*) in his book *For the Love of Language*.[2] These are formulated in the conditional form as:[3] 'language is [*serait*] informational and communicational'; 'there is [*il ya aurait*] an abstract machine of language that does not appeal to any extrinsic factor'; 'there are constants or universals that enable us to define it as a homogeneous system' [*il y aurait des constantes ou des universaux de la langue, qui permettraient de définir celle-li comme un système homogène*]; and 'language can be scientifically studied only under the conditions of a standard language'. Distancing themselves from Saussure, Chomsky and Lacan, Deleuze and Guattari unpack each of these postulates. Not only does their framework move away from any representational denominational approach, but it also negates the primacy of the linguistic signifier in the production of meaning. Instead, it frames language production within an enlarged semiotic field of heterogeneous elements – not exclusively linguistic – that affect language and are affected by language. In so doing, it displaces the primacy of linguistic signifying, not to reject signification per se, as many critics have partially supposed, but more accurately to break with the primacy of the linguistic and to open language to the extended field of pragmatics. It should be noted that pragmatics here is understood as the interaction of the phonological, the semantic, the syntactic, the political and social, considering both the life of signs in social practices and the conditions of possibility under which language is put into operation in a given social field.

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[2] Jean Claude Milner, *For the Love of Language*, trans. A. Banfield (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 1989 [orig.1978]). Cf. Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and language* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 85.
[3] Brian Massumi's English translation loses the conditional form of the original: 'le language *serait*' is translated as 'language is'.

This introductory chapter aims at unfolding Deleuze and Guattari's critique of linguistic theories with a view to the emergence of their singular conceptualisation of language, which I claim is fundamentally guided by a political reappraisal of language. In regards to the overall structure of the thesis, this chapter aims at laying the foundations for an understanding Deleuze and Guattari's critique of prevalent linguistic theories as a political critique concerned with exposing the extra-linguistic relations on which language depends and by which it is traversed. It also establishes the fundamental heterogeneous character of language whose constant variation[4] is its practical measure – 'there is no mother tongue, only a power-takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity.'[5] I suggest that Deleuze and Guattari's particular contribution is that of situating the political level of analysis of language at the pragmatic level. Such an analysis of the political requires both a social (via Austin, Ducrot and Benveniste) and semiotic metacritique (via Saussure and Hjelmslev), at which point the very concept of the practice of language changes from representation to intervention.

1.1 – Critique of the General Postulates of Linguistics: From Saussure to Lacan and Hjelmslev

The point of departure of Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the general postulates of linguistics is the refusal of a conception of language as informational and communicational. Such a conception became predominant during the 1960s and 1970s through the influence of Claude Shannon and Warren Weaver's theory of

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[4] 'Must it not be admitted that every system is in variation and is defined not by its constants and homogeneity but on the contrary by a variability whose characteristics are immanent, continuous, and regulated in a very specific mode (variable or optional rules)?' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p. 93.

[5] Ibid., p. 7.

information.[6] The important aspect here is Shannon and Weaver's focus on the transmission of the message regardless of its content.[7]

The widespread understanding of language as representation and denomination was opposed by Saussurian structuralist-inspired theories of language, amongst others, which tried to address the autonomy/internal difference of the semantic process as internal to language resulting from a differential between linguistic relations. However, such a refusal that language was a representation unleashed other problems. More importantly, it was achieved at the cost of the bracketing of the sign's referent, or the real objects in the world it referred to, of Saussure's study of language (*langue*) as a normative system. Also, meaning was now conceived as a purely functional and differential product, generated in the linguistic system and formed in the relations between signs in the linguistic chain.[8]

It is in this context that – although they share an opposition to denominational theories – Deleuze and Guattari engage in a critical dialogue with Saussure. Despite Deleuze and Guattari's sparse direct references to Saussure, it can be argued that the critique of the general linguistic principles is clearly informed by a critical dialogue with Saussure's framework. With this in mind, I give a brief description of his model from the point of view of what is most relevant to understanding Deleuze and Guattari's own conceptualisation of language.

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[6] See Claude E. Shannon, 'A Mathematical Theory of Information', *Bell System Technical Journal*, 27 (3): 379–423 July–October 1948; Shannon, Claude Elwood and Warren Weaver, *The mathematical theory of communication* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1949). As we shall see, it is on the notion of redundancy in particular that the opposition between the perspectives of Deleuze and Guattari and information theorists becomes evident.

[7] In this sense an urgent message raises exactly the same issues as a non-urgent one does. The question that Shannon was trying to address was the relation between the message as a quantity of information, the rate of information, and the characteristics of the channel through which the message would be transmitted, i.e. how to deal with noise in military and communication systems. This was practical research but its consequences brought about an idea of language where content was disconnected from expression.

[8] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959 [orig. 1916]), p. 70.

Saussure's theory of semiology was developed in the landmark *Course in General Linguistics* (1916), resulting from his lectures at the University of Geneva given between 1906 and 1911. A fundamental contention of Saussure's theory was that language should be examined in itself and for itself, as a system of signs, independently of any connection to real objects. This was so because in his view doing otherwise would be to assume that between (linguistic) signs and world referents there was a natural, organic or internal connection. Instead, for Saussure the linguistic sign was arbitrary. To understand this construction more clearly one should remember that the sign is not the association of a thing in the world with a word or a name. Instead, Saussure's schema speaks of concepts or abstract formulations of phenomena (the *signified*) and sounds or visual patterns (the *signifier*), and not things or words. These are mental constructions and patterns of sensory experience, respectively, which is not the same as the physical sound itself, but its psychological or conceptual reception.[9] The definition of the arbitrariness of the sign concerns the connection between the *signified* (the mental concept or ideational content) and the *signifier* (the acoustic or written image), the unit of which constituted the sign. The relation between a signifier and a signified is arbitrary in the sense that it is not sustained by an internal connection. For example, between the idea of a cat and the sequence of sounds *c-a-t*, which acts as its signifier, there is no natural, internal connection. To the same extent, the sign was also independent from its world referent insofar as their connection was determined by social convention and not by any linguistic function.

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[9] 'The linguistic sign unites, not a thing and a name, but a concept and a sound-image. The latter is not the material sound, a purely physical thing, but the psychological imprint of the sound, the impression that it makes in our senses. The sound-image is sensory, and if I happen to call it 'material', it is only in that sense, and by way of opposing it to the other term of the association, the concept, which is generally more abstract.' Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959 [orig. 1916]), p. 66.

Saussure further distinguishes between language and speech: the first refers to the system of rules and conventions of a signifying system (in the sense of a particular language or language system such as English), and the later (language in use) to its concrete and individual practice.[10] It is important to notice here that Saussure saw language as having three main aspects. Thus, to 'language' (*langue*) and 'speech' (*parole*) Saussure adds 'language-speech' (*langage*), understood as the sum of the above, including their psychological, physiological and physical aspects. This is relevant not only as a clarification of Saussure's own conceptual terminology but equally because these terms have often been translated in different ways.[11]

However, under the claim that: 'The true and unique object of linguistics is language qua *langue* studied in itself and for itself',[12] *language (langue)*, that is, a given language as a synchronic set of rules and relations, was to be the proper domain of linguistic analysis and not *speech*, or the spoken utterances of language *(parole)* that occur in diachronic time. This led Saussure to focus the study of the sign on the functionality of the system at a given point in time (synchronic analysis). In other words, the separation between *langue* and *parole*, and the contention that 'language is form not substance', determined that the study of the system of language would be isolated from actual individual speech.

The distinction between language and speech also represented a distinction between a social fact and an individual one. Whereas speech referred to an individual act, language was something the individual would learn and register passively; a

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[10] It is worth noticing that Saussure distinguished between three terms: *langage* (natural language), *langue* (a particular language), and *parole* (speech).

[11] Whereas *langage* has been translated as 'language', 'speech' or 'language-speech', *parole* has been translated as 'speech', 'speaking', 'utterance' or 'speech-act'. Only *langue* has been commonly translated as language. But regardless of the specific translation, more problematic is the English version of *ATP*, which conflates *langage* and *langue* under the equal translation of 'language', something that raises important problems in the understanding of Deleuze and Guattari's *Postulates of Linguistics*. Cf. *ATP*.

[12] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959 [orig. 1916]), p. 232.

social fact was by definition something that related to a community of speakers (*masse parlante*). In this regard, it is important to note that Saussure's theoretical binarism of *langue* and *parole* does not necessary comply with the pervading argument that Saussure's model excludes the social entirely from the analysis or is inadequate to convey the heterogeneity of speech (and hence language as a general system) because it claims a study of *langue* 'in and for itself'. This 'in and for itself' does not mean that Saussure's model is blind to the social aspects of language, or speech, per se. Rather, a more accurate way of putting the problem would be that for Saussure the unity of language is to be found at the level of *langue*, and hence the study of the unity of language requires subordinating *parole* to *langue*.[13] I return to this point in a later stage of this chapter, as this is a reason behind Deleuze and Guattari's praise of and dissidence from Saussure, whose model, for them, was yet to fulfil the necessary measure of abstraction to grasp the workings of language, or the system of language as a whole (to use Saussure's terms). Moreover, for Saussure neither language-speech in its totality, nor speech (*parole*) in its peculiarity could be objects of scientific study due to their heterogeneity. Only language (*langue*) could be addressed objectively:

> In setting up the science of language [*langue*] within the overall study of speech [*langage*], I have also outlined the whole of linguistics. All other elements of speech – those that constitute speaking [*parole*] – freely

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[13] For instance, Holdcroft argued that Saussure's concentration on the study of language-speech in general (*langage*) on *langue* was often and wrongly 'interpreted as a warrant to ignore the diverse studies belonging to the field of *parole*. Instead, the key aspect was that of understanding the degree and nature of the subordination of the study of *parole* to that of *langue*.' On this account of the Saussurean programme, it is clear why the study of langue should be viewed as pre-eminent. It is because in a quite literal sense it is what gives unity to the study of language (*langage*); and because this is so, other areas of study, those belonging to *parole*, are subordinate to it. This account is, of course, quite different from one that advocates concentration on the study of langue 'in and for itself, as did the editors in the last sentence of CLG [*Course in General Linguistics*], at least if this.' Holdcroft, David. 1991. *Saussure: signs, system, and arbitrariness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), p. 34.

subordinate themselves to the first science, and it is by virtue of this subordination that the parts of linguistics find their natural place (...) Language on the contrary is a self-contained whole and a principle of classification. Once we give it first place amongst the facts of speech, we introduce a natural order into an assemblage that is amenable to no other classification.[14]

Langue/parole

Leaving aside the problems involved with trying to resolve the study of the systems of language through a certain degree of abstraction in the model which I develop in detail in section 2.5 of the current chapter, this separation between language and speech and the primacy of language over speech in the study of language is not without its difficult problems, some of which were advanced by Deleuze and Guattari, making close reference to Labov and Volosinov's arguments. In Deleuze and Guattari's work, the importance is placed on speech rather than *langue*.

In Labov's *Sociolinguistic Patterns*,[15] in an argument presented as the 'Saussurian Paradox', Labov notes with some irony that in distinguishing between language (*langue*) as social and speech (*parole*) as individual, a single individual would suffice for the analysis of language. From one single individual we would be able to access all the normative aspects of language. Deleuze and Guattari follow the same argument: 'speech is consigned to individual variations; but since the social part is self-enclosed, it necessarily follows that a single individual would be enough to illustrate the principles of language, without reference to any outside data, whereas

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[14] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959 [orig. 1916]), p. 17.
[15] William Labov, *Sociolinguistic patterns* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973).

speech could only be studied in a social context.'[16] Labov's point for his development of a conception of language as a system in 'continuous variation' was that the synchronic analysis of language (*langue*) developed by Saussure and later by Chosmky was insufficient insofar as 'one cannot understand the development of a language change apart from the social life of the community in which it occurs (...) social pressures are continually operating upon language, not from some remote point in the past, but as an immanent social force acting in the living present'.[17] In fact, Saussure had been subject to the criticism of not only Labov but also of Volosinov. In *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language*, for example, Volosinov makes a similar critique to the one developed by Labov. He argued that for Saussure language was a system of 'normatively identical forms' that standardises each factually specific and unique utterance.'[18] Against this, Volosinov conceived that language could indeed in certain cases appear to the individual as a system of immutable norms. However, for Volosinov, the individual's perspective did not make language into such a system. Instead, to what he understood as the truly objective viewpoint, language would always appear as a 'ceaseless flow of becoming'.[19] As such, Volosinov would invert the Saussurian primacy of the *langue* as a collective or social fact that is 'the norm for all other manifestations of speech'.[20] The important aspect here, however, is that by diverting the focus away from language (*langue*), it is not that Volosinov gives primacy to the individual. On the contrary, Volosinov claims that Saussurean focus on language (*langue*) is a form

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[16] *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 524, note 7. It is worth noting how this argument is presented by Labov as a critique of Chomsky as well. In Labov's view his distinction between *competence* and *performance* would only re-emphasise the problematic Saussurian distinction between *langue* and *parole*, a point that does not go unnoticed by Deleuze and Guattari.

[17] William Labov, *Sociolinguistic patterns* (Philadelphia, PA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1973), p. 3.

[18] Valentin Volosimov, *Marxism and the philosophy of language,* trans. Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), p. 65.

[19] Ibid., p. 66.

[20] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, p. 9.

of individualism in disguise: 'represented as a system of self-identical, immutable norms, it [*langue*] can be perceived in this way only by the individual consciousness and from the point of view of that consciousness.'[21] Instead, if one would objectively avoid the subjective or individual perspective when looking at language one would 'discover no inert system of self-identical norms. Instead, we would find ourselves witnessing the ceaseless generation of language norms.'[22] In Volosinov's dialogical model therefore, it was necessary to avoid a synchronic analysis of language, as it failed to capture the historical becoming of language: 'A synchronic system acts merely as a conventional scale on which to register the deviations occurring at every real instant in time.'[23] Whereas for Saussure language was the product of a language community, e.g. the community of English speakers, and this was the reason why language would operate as a normative system and yet be able to change over time, for Volosinov that same language community did not require language to be an immutable norm in the first place. On the contrary, if one would take into consideration the speaker as well as the listener, one would see how both expected language to be open to constant change, dependent and evolving according to a pragmatic context.[24] For Volosinov this was the social dimension of language; a shifting focus on speech would reveal language to be socio-historical and always collective in nature. 'Language is a continuous generative process implemented in the social interaction of its speakers'.[25] Thus, only by focusing on the domain of

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[21] Valentin Volosimov, *Marxism and the philosophy of language*, trans Ladislav Matejka and I.R. Titunik (New York: Seminar Press, 1973), p. 65.
[22] Ibid., p. 66.
[23] Ibid., p. 66. Moreover, it is also important to notice the political dimension of Volosinov's critique. As Grisham demonstrates, 'Volosinov's critique of Saussure is directed at two fundamental assumptions of capitalist ideology-the bias against the collective and for the individual (langue) and the bias against history (synchrony).' Grisham, Therese, 'Linguistics as an Indiscipline: Deleuze and Guattari's Pragmatics', in *SubStance*, Vol. 20, No. 3, Issue 66: Special Issue: Deleuze & Guattari (1991), pp. 36–54, published by: University of Wisconsin Press, 41.
[24] Ibid., p. 68.
[25] Ibid., p. 98.

speech (*parole*) could language as a social construction be properly analysed.[26]

Signification

Signification (also described as value) was, in Saussure's framework, understood from a functional perspective as well. It is defined as an internal measure of difference between signs.[27] Signification was the result of relations of difference between correlated signifiers and signified contents.

Two kinds of relations between linguistic signs, or two axis of analysis, explain the production of signification: the syntagmatic axis (a sequence of chain relations, which concerns the position of a specific word or the syntax and grammatical rules that determine the choice of a word and not another) and the paradigmatic or associative axis (the relations of opposition, which concerns the choice of a word on the basis of content). To illustrate the two kinds of relations, we can take the word 're-play' as an example. Signification in the syntagmatic axis emerges from the differential relation between words that come before and after it, so that the result of preceding 'play' with 're', 're-play', is different than from following it with 're', 'play-re'. This was what Saussure called the linear nature of the signifier, a principle that 'maintains that since what a signifier represents is auditory, it can only represent a span of time, which has a linear character'.[28]

In discourse, on the one hand, words acquire relations based on the linear

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[26] Further subtleties in Volosinov and Labov's critiques are beyond the purview of this research. For the moment what is important for our purposes is a critique that is better summed up in Terry Eagleton's words: 'Saussure strips language of its sociality at the point where it matters most: at the point of linguistic production, the actual speaking, writing, listening and reading of concrete social individuals.'[26]

[27] *Signification* referred to meaning in the context of *la langue* whereas *sens* corresponded to meaning in the context of *parole*. Cf. Carol Sanders, *The Cambridge Companion to Saussure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p. 79.

[28] David Holdcroft, *Saussure: signs, system, and arbitrariness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 67.

nature of language because they are chained together. This rules out the possibility of pronouncing two elements simultaneously (...) The elements are arranged simultaneously on the chain of speaking. Combinations supported by linearity are syntagms.[29]

In the paradigmatic axis, the word 'play' could be replaced by 'set' ('re-set') or 'boot' (re-boot). In the paradigmatic or associative axis the choice between 're-play' and 're-set' or 're-boot' takes place outside discourse and results from mental associations (for Saussure these are unconscious or involve memory). Taking these two principles into consideration, a sign is only attributed signification by virtue of its difference from other signs in a linguistic system of relations (associative and linear); signification does not exist alone in signs, but is a function of the two types of relations it enters into with other signs (syntagmatic and paradigmatic).

The problem, however, is raised by Saussure himself: 'we could never discover the "first sign" from which it all began, because, one sign presupposes another from which it differs, and that another.'[30] If this is so – if form is always prevalent – then the syntagmatic axis or the linear chain of signifiers is always determinant over the paradigmatic axis, or the signified: i.e. signification would be always predicated on the relation of a sign to a previous sign, or its syntagmatic possibilities, and would not be the result of the two types of relations in equal balance but of the signifier's prevalence. In sum, a given sign is defined not by virtue of an intrinsic value or meaning, but rather through its relative position within the overall system of signification and through its difference from all the other signs in that system. As a result, a sign does not refer back to an object in the world but rather to another sign that in turn refers us back to another sign, and so forth. In this

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[29] Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin, ed. Charles Bally and Albert Sechehaye (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1959 [orig. 1916]), p. 123.
[30] Terry Eagleton, *Literary theory: an introduction* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minneapolis, 2010), p. 98.

formulation, not only is signification internally defined according to linguistic relations, but language is separated from a denominational function as well as from a referential function.

What is interesting to note here is a discrepancy in Saussure's theory and model. If signification is dependent upon a first point of the chain that is impossible to locate, then signification is conceptual and the sign as the unit between signifier and a signified is no longer purely linguistic. However, in the apparent arbitrariness of the sign lies a critical point that Deleuze and Guattari identified, which is that this arbitrariness reveals in fact the sovereignty of the signifier.

As Gary Genosko points out, by having defined the sign as an arbitrary association between a signified and a signifier and not as a semiological function, Saussure's model – and contrary to his express effort to establish no priority between the signifier and the signifier – allowed other authors, such as Lacan, to separate the signifier from the signified in the name of the signifier. Ultimately it was a formal process, the *differential relation* between signifiers, which determined their associative link to specific signifieds or contents. [31] In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari note the same paradox by remarking that:

> [Two] dimensions exist side by side in Saussure: the one horizontal, where the signified is reduced to the value of coexisting minimal terms into which the signifier decomposes; but the other vertical, where the signifier is elevated to the concept corresponding to the acoustic image – that is, to the voice, taken in its maximum extension, which recomposes the signifier ("value" as the opposite of the coexisting terms, but also the 'concept' as the opposite of the acoustic image). In short, the signifier appears twice, once in

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[31] Gary Genosko, *Félix Guattari an aberrant introduction* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 160. For a more detailed development of the problems inherent to not defining the relation between signified and signifier as a semiological function, see Chapter 2 of David Holdcroft, *Saussure: signs, system, and arbitrariness* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

the chain of elements in relation to which the signified is always a signifier for another signifier, and a second time in the detached object on which the whole of the chain depends, and that spreads over the chain the effects of signification.[32]

As such, the signified is merely reduced to the value of the existing minimum terms filtered by the signifier. The section that follows argues how Lacan's appropriation of Saussure's signifier is evidence of this. The functional framework devised by Saussure left a space in the general schema of meaning production to be occupied by the transcendence of a signifier, which is no longer just the acoustic or visual image of the sign, but the assumption of the significance of the sign itself as the first sign of the chain that can never be found, but is always already there. In other words, this is where the order of the signifier begins, with the second version of the signifier, appearing now as a detached object, 'up on high'. Thus, the Saussurian masses (in French *masse*, or the community of speakers) become, for Deleuze and Guattari, objects of a 'generalized slavery', that is the result of a discreet subordination to the transcendence of the signifier and general inability to take hold of one's own statements.

Lacan

Claiming that the unconscious was structured as a language, Lacan's first reference to Saussure appears in an essay from 1957, 'The agency of the letter in the unconscious since Freud', in which the claim is made.[33] Before that, his 1953 report given at the University of Rome, published four years before, under the title of *The*

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[32] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004 [orig. 1972]) p. 207.
[33] 'The agency of the letter in the unconscious or reason since Freud.' Jaques Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Aland Sharidan (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1977 [orig. 1966]), pp. 146–178.

function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis, had already focused on the importance of language to the study of the mind.[34] However, the admitted indebtedness of Lacan's concept of the signifier to Saussure's is certainly not a guarantor of fidelity.

Lacan's description of the relation between signifier and signified differs profoundly from Saussure's. Sanders (2006) and Lecercle (2002) have, amongst others, raised the issue in detail.[35] The key to understanding how this 'reconstruction' takes place is perhaps Lacan's transformation of Saussure's diagram of the sign presented in the *Course*. Saussure's original diagrammatic depiction of the sign showed the signifier and the signified separated by a horizontal line, which is their reciprocity; encircled by an ellipsis indicating their status as components of the sign; and by two upwards and downwards arrows indicating their mutual dependence.

Figure 1. Saussure's model of the Sign

However, in Lacan's re-presentation of this diagram, it is transformed in three ways:

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[34] 'Whether it sees itself as an instrument of healing, of training, or of exploration in depth, psychoanalysis has only a single medium: the patient's speech (...) I shall show there is no speech without a reply, even if it is met only with silence, provided that it has an auditor: this is the heart of its function in analysis.' In 'The function and field of speech and language in psychoanalysis'. Ibid., 40.

[35] This point is also argued by Lecerlce: 'what we are faced with is a projection, back on to an unwitting Saussure, of a concept of signifier that has only the slightest links with the linguistic signifier.'[35] See Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and language* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), pp. 78–79; Carol Sanders, *The Cambridge Companion to Saussure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.171.

[It] placed the signifier (which Lacan capitalised) over the signified (in lower-case italics) in what amounted to an inversion of the diagram in the Course. Second, it deleted the ellipsis and the arrows in order to make the signifier capital and pre-eminent in its authority over the signified (...) Third, the deletion of the ellipsis and arrows destabilised the structure of the sign that the diagram in the Course had conveyed in terms of interdependence and reciprocity.[36]

If for Saussure – and despite their associative and linear relations – the signifier referred to the signified, in Lacan, the signifier would refer only to another signifier. Signification would therefore *irrevocably* emerge as a continuous process, 'an incessant sliding of the signified under the signifier.'[37]

<u>**Signifier**</u>
signified

Figure 2. Lacan's model of the Sign

The signifier in Lacan is therefore markedly different from Saussure's original concept, gaining pre-eminence over the signified. In fact, this was part of Lacan's understanding of the signifier as the basic unit of language and his argument that 'meaning occurred as a phenomenon of displacement through reference to previous signifiers and in the absence of an actual signified.'[38]

At this point it could be tempting to suggest that Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Saussure was from the very start a reading of Lacan. However, this would

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[36] Carol Sanders, *The Cambridge Companion to Saussure* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), p.171.
[37] Jaques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection* (London: Tavistock Publications Limited, 1977 [orig. 1966]), p. 154.
[38] Carol Sanders, *The Cambridge Companion to Saussure*, p.171.

imply interpreting Deleuze and Guattari's framework of language as a reaction to Lacan, which is neither the point of this thesis, nor the most accurate conclusion to draw. Ultimately, it could be argued that the functional framework devised by Saussure left a space in the general schema of meaning production to be occupied by the transcendence of a signifier, which is no longer defined as the acoustic or visual image of the sign, but by the fact it allows the very basics of language to work – the assumption of the significance of the sign itself, or the recognition of sign itself as signifying, but not necessarily significant.[39] This is where Lacan enters. Lacan occupies the place Saussure left empty in the general origin of the signifying chain and by doing so he reveals the paradox in Saussure's schema. This is perhaps what Deleuze and Guattari had in mind when they wrote in *Anti-Oedipus*: 'perhaps that is what incites the anger of certain linguists against Lacan, no less than the enthusiasm of his followers: the vigour and the serenity with which Lacan accompanies the signifier back to its source, to its veritable origin, the despotic age.'[40] In this regard they turn towards Roudinesco to further pose the problem: 'in Lacan, the hypothesis of an unconscious-as-language does not closet the unconscious in a linguistic structure, but leads linguistics to the point of its autocritique, by showing how the structural organization of signifiers still depends on a despotic Great Signifier acting as an archaism.'[41]

The extent and details of how this movement is key to Lacan's critique of the Freudian unconscious is beyond the scope of this thesis. For what matters, it is this capital 'Signifier', emerging from the Saussure/Lacan move, which should be

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[39] This is also where the order of the signifier begins and is different from meaning (signifying).
[40] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 209.
[41] The essay of Roudinesco to which Deleuze and Guattari direct the reader is 'L'action d'une metaphore', *La Pensee*, February 1972. 'Elisabeth Roudinesco's excellent article on Lacan, where she analyzes the twofold aspect of the analytic signifying chain and the transcendent signifier on which the chain depends. She shows that, in this sense, Lacan's theory should be interpreted less as a linguistic conception of the unconscious than as a critique of linguistics in the name of the unconscious.' *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 310.

identified as the object of Deleuze and Guattari's critique when referring to the 'signifier' in their work, most notably in the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia, Anti-Oedipus*. We can then say that there are two orders of the signifier that become clear in the Saussure/Lacan move and that are exposed in Deleuze and Guattari's critique: one, the acoustic image or visual pattern; the other, a higher order signifier, represented by the letter or the alphabet as a transcendent mark of signification.[42] This is a critique that is as much Lacan's as theirs, as Deleuze and Guattari grant by revealing with 'serenity' the signifier as imperialist. It is this Lacanian reading of Saussure's schema of signification that allows us to begin to understand Deleuze and Guattari's claim that Saussurian linguistics discovered a field of immanence in the systems of relations of linguistic elements, or functions; however, it only reached a relative immanence. It presupposed the transcendence of a signifier (in the form of a signifying chain of relations) to the determinacy of a minimal identity to which the signified was only secondary.

1.2 - The Correct Level of Abstraction

The abstract functionality of the linguistic system and the emphasis on form have been often used as the grounds to claim that Saussure left the social outside of his model or that his approach turned into an idealism of the structure.[43] However, Deleuze and Guattari's issue with Saussure's model was not with it being abstract or

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[42] It is important to retain that in this sense whilst for Saussure meaning was produced by a synchronic correlation between signifier and fixed signified contents, for Lacan meaning was the result of a play of signifiers apart from any synchronic correlation to fixed signified contents.

[43] In this regard Terry Eagleton writes: 'The suspicion began to arise, then, that structuralism was only not an empiricism because it was yet one more form of philosophical idealism – that its view of reality as essentially a product of language was simply the latest version of the classical idealist doctrine that the world was constituted by human consciousness.' Cf. Terry Eagleton, *Literary theory: an introduction* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minneapolis, 2010), p. 94.

not, but rather, in their own words, that it was 'not abstract enough' to be able to account for the language's imbrications with an extended social field and to part ways with the signifying primacy of the linguistic.[44] The question here is to attain a level of abstraction of the model enough to engage the social and political dimensions of language, both at the synchronic and the diachronic level, and thus to allow for a conceptualising of language within a scheme of relations and interpenetration in the social field irreducible to the operations of the signifier, or the linguistic. For Deleuze and Guattari Saussure's linguistic formalization has the dual problem of not being abstract enough (to reach 'the abstract machine that connects language to the semantic and pragmatic contents of statements') and of being universalist: linguistic analysis tends to start from universal categories to which the world of how language exists is reduced. The concept of 'abstract machines' is a direct engagement with this critique. Preserving the ambiguity at its core, the idea of the concept is to dispute 'abstract universals' in that 'abstraction can only result from machines and assemblages of concrete enunciations' (abstract-concrete).[45]

> *Our criticism of these linguistic models is not that they are too abstract but,*
> *on the contrary, that they are not abstract enough*, that they do not reach the
> abstract machine that connects a language to the semantic and pragmatic

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[44] 'Saussurian linguistics does discover a field of immanence which constitutes the system of relations that unite the elements of the signifier.' However, as Deleuze and Guattari contend, this is a relative immanence as it still presupposes the transcendence of the signifier as well as the determinacy of a minimal identity that is imposed by this field of relations and 'the elements of the signifier as distinguishing units are regulated by 'coded gaps' that the signifier overcodes in its turn.' *AOE*, p. 241-242. In regards to definition of the social it is important to note the differences between the social in Saussure's understanding defined as the community of speakers [*masse parlante*] and in Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of the collective of a machinic nature.

[45] Félix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2011 [orig. 1979]). The use of the term abstract machine is found in Ducrot and Todorov's description of Chomsky's generative grammar. 'Linguistic theoreticians such as Chomsky have introduced the concept of the *abstract machine* inhabiting linguistic or syntagmatic machines'. See Félix Guattari, 'On Machines', *Complexity*, ed. Andrew Benjamin, *JPVA*, No 6, 1995 [orig. 1993], p. 8-12, available here:
http://www.ntua.gr/archtech/forum/post2006interaction/on_machines.htm

contents of statements, to collective assemblages of enunciation, to a whole micropolitics of the social field. A rhizome ceaselessly establishes connections between semiotic chains, organizations of power and circumstances relative to the arts, sciences and social struggles. A semiotic chain is like a tuber agglomerating very diverse acts, not only linguistic, but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive: there is no language in itself, nor are there any linguistic universals, only a throng of dialects, patois, slangs, and specialized languages. There is no ideal speaker-listener, any more than there is a homogeneous linguistic community.[46]

It is precisely here that we have the first insight into the importance of the semiotician Hjelmslev in offering an alternative to aspects of Saussurian semiotics. (Given Hjelmslev's crucial influence in Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics of language, this thesis draws extensively on Hjelmslev's influence upon the latter.) To directly clarify how it does offer an alternative to Saussure, I deal mainly here with two aspects: one, in what sense Hjelmslev's theory consists of an immanent approach to language (in his own definition) through the level of analysis/functions; and, two, how it allows for the inclusion of non-linguistic elements in the analysis of language in a manner that Deleuze and Guattari make serve the purposes of a pragmatic approach. Deleuze and Guattari argue that the glossematics of Hjelmslev devised a framework of analysis where language emerged as a pure field of algebraic immanence, dispensing with the surveillance on the part of a transcendent instance such as the formal signifier, and not reducing semiotics to a narrow focus on linguistics.

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[46] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 7. My emphasis.

Mainly outlined in *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* (1943),[47] Hjelmslev's theory attempts to radicalise Saussure's claim that language, as a system, should be studied at the level of form not substance. In contrast to structural linguistics, whose method, as we have seen, consists of defining linguistic units per their formal features (position in a sentence, relations of content opposition, etc., which we have described as the syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes between the signifier and the signified whose unit constituted the sign), the glossematic method focuses on analysing linguistic units uniquely on the basis of their functions or relations, independent of the elements' formal characteristics. It transforms formal features such as syntactical position into functions so that linguistic units may be studied from the point of view of internal functions or relations. The sign is defined as a mutual interdependence between two planes, that of expression and that of content. These planes consist of two constants, which are two interrelated forms: the expression-form and the content-form. The variables of the two planes are the so-called 'expression-substance' and the 'content-substance'. These two substances are articulated by the respective forms so as to bring about a manifested sign in a specific expression-form (for example, the acoustic material of a natural language) and in a specific content-form (for example, the psychological content of a text). In so doing, Hjelmslev set out to develop an analytical immanentism of language based on a relational meta-semiotics that is purely immanent in that it relies only on terms describing relations.

Deleuze and Guattari rely on glossematics' claim to study linguistic phenomena rigorously from a meta-semiotics of relations, to say that Hjelmslev

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[47] Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, trans. Francis J. Whitfeld, (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969 [orig.1943]).

conceives of a pure field of algebraic immanence that no longer allows any surveillance on the part of a transcendent entity or privileged reference to a universal and formal signifier.[48] As noted previously, problems arise when the linguistic units in structural linguistics are defined from distinctive formal features, i.e. elements bound by formal properties, giving precedence to the signifier over the signified in the determination of meaning. As I mentioned before, although originally Saussure did not aim to privileged the signifier on the production of meaning, the establishment of the relationship of the signifier and the signified as purely arbitrary and associative has allowed for the possibility of separating the signified and the signifier. Moreover, the idea that meaning was produced functionally was not fully convincing since the signifying chain forgoes the designation of a state of things, or an entity it signifies. What is retained is the formal relation of sign to sign insofar as it designates a signifying chain; not much attention is paid to the real object in the world or to the states of affairs language is referring to. The sign becomes a symbol because of the constant movement of referral from sign to sign. Contents are abstracted to the signifier and content or the signified becomes purely a medium for the signifier; this is what we have seen as redundant semiology of the signifier. Moreover, Hjelmselv defines an extended configuration of relationships that include an axis of substance and form, expression and content, and non-formed matter. Due to the latter, Deleuze and Guattari considered that the net devised by Hjelmselv was not linguistic in origin ('despite what Hjelmslev himself may have said, the net is not linguistic in scope or origin,' according to Deleuze and Guattari).[49] Thus, the creativity of the semantic process which in structuralist models was to be found at

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[48] Developed by Louis Hjelmslev and H. J. Uldall during the 1930s, glossematics was a system of linguistic analysis based on the distribution and interrelationship of glossemes, the smallest meaningful units of a language, e.g., a word, a grammatical element, a word order, or an intonation.

[49] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, A Thousand Plateaus, p. 93.

the level of the system of language within itself (the functional association of a signified with a signifier and the differential derivation of meaning) is conceptualised within a concatenation between expression and content in an enlarged field of relations.

In *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, which gather Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* writing notes addressed to Deleuze, Guattari's appreciation and enthusiasm for Hjelmslev's model is striking in the manner as Hjelmslev is seen to respond to his and Deleuze's project at a semiotic level. In the manner of a dialogue with Hjelmslev, Hjelmslev's quotes are *italised* in Guattari's original text, as one can see in the following excerpt:

> His idea is to "constitute an immanent algebra for all languages". He considers that until now, the term linguistics has been used abusively to designate an erroneous study of language from transcendental points of view that are no longer relevant (...) But his claim goes beyond linguistics: his machine needs to work in the extralinguistic field as well. How is it a machine? With Hjelmslev, structures are connected to processes. There is no dualism between form and substance (a totality is not composed of objects but dependencies. It is not substance but its internal relations that have a scientific existence. This is not metaphysics: only terms describing relations.[50]

And in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari would further develop the importance of Hjelmslev's contribution in so far as he managed to move away from Saussure's signifier:

> Hjelmslev's very special position in linguistics, and the reactions he provokes, seem to be explained by the following: that he tends to fashion a

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[50] Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Œdipus Papers*, ed. Stéphane Nadaud (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006 [orig. 2004]) p. 201.

purely immanent theory of language that shatters the double game of the voice-graphism domination; that causes form and substance, content and expression to flow according to the flows of desire; and that breaks these flows according to point-signs and figures-schizzes. Far from being an overdetermination of structuralism and of its fondness for the signifier, Hjelmslev's linguistics implies the concerted destruction of the signifier, and constitutes a decoded theory of language about which one can also say – an ambiguous tribute – that it is the only linguistics adapted to the nature of *both* the capitalist *and* the schizophrenic flows: until now, the only modern – and not archaic – theory of language.[51]

The extent to which Hjelmslev's model is able to develop what in his words was an 'immanent understanding of language as a self-subsistent, specific structure'[52] is, of course, debated by Deleuze and Guattari. To start with, the original model's focus on constants, that is the form, and not the variables, or substance, is still reinstating a substance–form dualism: 'In short, the forms of the signified and the signifier are dominant relative to the material sense of things and significations in our minds. Instead of the imperialism of the signifier, it's the imperialism of form.'[53] This aspect of Hjelmslev's original formulation is clearly acknowledged by Deleuze and Guattari and will be the subject of a reformulation in their own semiotics of language so that the sign becomes the expression of a matter-form continuum. (We will see in Chapter Two how Deleuze and Guattari re-interpret the Hjelmslev sign as mutual

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[51] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 243.

[52] Regarding his emphasis on constancy in regards to the coherence with the an immanent perspective, Hjelmslev writes: 'Avoiding the hitherto dominant transcendent point of view and seeking an immanent understanding of language as a self-subsistent, specific structure, and seeking a constancy within language itself, not outside it, linguistic theory begins by circumscribing the scope of its object. This circumscription is necessary, but it is only a temporary measure and involves no reduction of the field of vision, no elimination of essential factors in the global totality which language is [p.19] (...) In its point of departure linguistic theory was established as immanent, with constancy, system, and internal function as its sole aims, to the apparent cost of fluctuation and nuance, life and concrete physical and phenomenological reality. A temporary restriction of the field of vision was the price that had to be paid to elicit from language itself its secret. But precisely through that immanent point of view and by virtue of it, language itself returns the price that it demanded.' Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*, trans. Francis J. Whitfeld (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969 [orig.1943]), p. 127.

[53] Félix Guattari, *The Anti-Œdipus Papers*, p. 206.

solidarity not just between the content and expression plane of form but substance and purport or unformed matter.)

However, the manner in which Hjelmslev's original formulation still presupposes a primacy of form over substance is no longer crucial given that this time 'it's a machinic form', suggests Guattari. Here we ought to understand the 'machinic' as translating a focus on relations and processes, or modes of affectation, rather than formal properties. The key thing to note here is that the analysis is now connected directly to processes, internal relations of affectation that account for passages between signs. The notion of the 'machinic' is therefore best defined according to a specific mode of relation (beyond the exclusively representational or symbolic mediation through a mode of relation non-exclusively human but different from the mechanic), rather from the elements of which the relation refers to and directly reverts the notion of structure to a secondary plane.

In being 'machinic', Hjelmslev's model is also closer to being able to grasp the realities to which it is referring. (As we will see in Chapters Three and Four, in fact they go beyond the model as description to assume the model as intervention, when Guattari, in particular, strongly develops the idea that the analysis of the political must follow a politics of analysis.) The question of the politics of language thus cannot be simply posed in terms of what is outside of language or not, since language does not exist alone independent and active in an extended assemblage that supports it.

This is not the place to draw a comparison between Saussure and Hjelmslev; mainly Deleuze and Guattari make Hjelmslev serve the purposes of a pragmatics of language.[54] To summarise, if we analyse the Saussurian model from Deleuze and

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[54] 'Hjelmslev remarked that a language necessarily includes unexploited possibilities or potentialities and that the abstract machine must include these possibilities or potentialities. "Potential" and

Guattari's point of view, there were several critical issues in the Saussurian model in need of re-evaluation. These are the association of the system of language with an ideal individual; the separation of *langue* from *parole* (or from actual speaking and listening, reading and writing); the primacy of form over substance; and, lastly, the signifying redundancy or over-dependence of the signifier in the production of meaning.[55] As such, the model fails to offer an account of the pragmatics that affect language, not only severing the subject of language from the subject of practice (rather connected to a structure), but also cutting off statements from the way they affect the material world and are in turn affected by it. By severing language from the actual speaking, writing and reading of concrete social individuals, Saussure strips language of its sociality at the point where it matters most for the possibility of a political practice. Such a pragmatic approach would have to be both semiotic and political, both internal to language and external to it. It should have to surpass the divide between language and substance. Synchronic and diachronic, material and semiotic: to focus both on language as a general system and language as inseparable from a concrete world it lives in and is affected by.

Hjelmslev opens up a way of conceiving of language within an extended assemblage of factors, linguistic and non-linguistic, signifying and non-signifying, that surpass the subordination of the signified to the signified: it replaces a relation of

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"virtual" are not at all in opposition to "real"; on the contrary, the reality of the creative, or the placing-in-continuous variation of variables, is in opposition only to the actual determination of their constant relations (...) While linguistics ordinarily concerns particular languages, Hjelmslev's algebra aims to calculate the general system of language in relation to which particular languages would reveal their characteristics. But the calculation of theoretically possible formal relations at the level of the general system includes non-materialised elements, that is, elements not realised in any existing languages. The glossematist is not, then, a linguist proper for she/he is interested in a virtual (potential) language.' Cf. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 99.

[55] In regards to this point, Terry Eagleton will suggest that: 'I have said that structuralism contained the seeds of social and historical theory of meaning, but they were, on the whole, not able to sprout. For if the sign-systems by which individuals lived could be seen as culturally variable, the deep laws which governed the workings of these systems were not.' Terry Eagleton, *Literary theory: an introduction* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minneapolis, 2010), p. 94.

association between a signified and a signifier and the relative arbitrariness of the signifier-signified pair (which we showed resulted in the primacy of the signifier over content) with a relationship of reciprocal presupposition between expression and content.

This helps to explain Deleuze and Guattari's turn towards Hjelmslev's extended semiotic model of substance-form-purport interactions as key to the pragmatic move that would follow: a general project of pragmatics that demands the analysis of language to be dependent on both an analysis of how a semiotic system or modes of semiotisation interact with the material concrete world and an analysis of the semiotic impact of the material.

1.3 - Deleuze and Guattari's Pragmatics of Language

Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of a pragmatics of language revives the terms of, on one side, the relation between the incorporeal transformations and bodies derived from the Stoics, developed in Deleuze's *The Logic of Sense* (1969),[56] and the relation between expression and content, developed by Guattari in *The Machinic Unconscious* (1979, before *A Thousand Plateaus*)[57] via Hjelmslev. The extent to which the latter exerts influence upon Deleuze's ambivalent structuralist conception of the relation of language to the event in *The Logic of Sense* bears the mark of Guattari's striking importance upon what would become Deleuze and Guattari's

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[56] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Continuum [orig., 1969]).

[57] See, particularly, section 'Sortir de la langue' (rendered in the English translation directly as 'Escaping Language') which is a condensed version of the 'Postulates of Linguistics' previous to *ATP*. Félix Guattari, *L'inconscient machinique, Essais de schizo-analyse* (Éditions Recherches, Paris, 1979). For the English translation, see *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*. (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2011). Also cf.: Guattari's published notes on *Anti-Oedipus* directed at Deleuze, in particular, the ones regarding Hjelmslev: 'Hjelmslev and Immanence', *Anti-Oedipus Papers* pp. 201–223.

collaboration.[58] The decisive impact Guattari has on Deleuze can already be deduced from Deleuze's preface to *Psychoanalysis et Transversalité*, which credits Guattari for the early conception of the 'machinic' – from Hjelmslev ('Hjelmlsev's machine, the semiotic machine)[59] – which will free himself from the impasses of a structuralist theory of meaning by replacing the linguistic with the machinic. However, as Osborne accurately noted, the importance of Deleuze's conditions for the reception of Guattari's work ought not be neglected, referring to the seventh section, 'Final Criteria: From the Subject to Practice' of the essay 'How Do We Recognize Structuralism?' 'which narrates an immanent passage of structuralism beyond itself'.[60] Equally essential is to note Guattari's interest in Deleuze's work prior to their collaboration evident from his paper 'Machine and Structure' (1969),[61] which references Deleuze.

Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics of language takes as its starting point the need for theories of language to focus on non-grammatical factors for the analysis of the production of meaning, that is, non-linguistic factors on which the effectuation of language depends. The main points of argument are: that language intervenes and has a real impact upon the world, which both ideological or symbolic theories of language fail to reveal (via Hjelmslev); and that the production of meaning does not depend only on linguistic factors alone but results from interactions of a matter–form

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[58] For a detailed exposition of Guattari's influence on Deleuze and Guattari's project, see Éric Alliez, *The Cause of the Guattari Effect,* available here: http://www.artbrain.org/the-cause-of-the-guattari-effect/ and the volume edited under the title *The Guattari Effect,* with Andrew Goffey, gathering contributions of a seminar organised at the Centre for Research in Modern European Philosophy, London in 2008: Éric Alliez and Andrew Goffey, *The Guattari Effect,* (London: Continuum, 2011). See also in French, journal Multitudes' dossier « L'effet-guattari », *Multitudes* 3/2008 (n° 34).
[59] Félix Guattari, 'Hjelmslev and Immanence', *Anti-Oedipus Papers,* pp. 201–223.
[60] See Peter Osborne's book review of Francois Dosse's *Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari: intersecting lives* 'Guattareuze?', *New Left Review* (69), pp. 139–151, 2011. Rölli, 'A Pragmatism of Difference?', *Deleuze international*; Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and language* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 100.
[61] Félix Guattari, 'Machine et structure', *Psychanalyse et transversalité* (Maspéro, Paris, 1972), pp. 240–248. The essay was written in 1969, and published in 1972. It was first written at the request of Lacan, who later refused to publish it.

continuum. One way of understanding Deleuze and Guattari's singular conception of pragmatics is to think that they construct a pragmatics that is conceptually attentive to context and non-grammatical relations (speech, dialogue, etc) but more importantly that is based on a semiotic theory of the relations of substance-matter-form.

I shall start with the first point. The premise that language is intervention rather than representation relates to both Deleuze's study of the Stoics and Hjelmslev. Thus they should be granted a few words. Hjelmslev is the object of analysis of Chapter Two, so I only briefly outline the main points from his theorisation that contribute to Deleuze and Guattari's move beyond Saussure.

The Stoics

The particular construction of language presented in Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* (1969) provides fruitful insights into Deleuze's later development of a theory of language together with Guattari. *Logic of Sense* is concerned with the ontological priority of events over substances or bodies.[62] This is a philosophical construction developed primarily by reading Lewis Carroll and the Stoics. What I shall focus on here is how Deleuze's reading of the Stoics influenced his theory of language. I agree with Lecercle that this is the only book of Deleuze's that is directly concerned with language.[63]

By having conceived the relation between bodies (any formed content) and incorporeal acts (the expressed of the statement) in the terms of a reciprocal presupposition and independence, rather than representation, the Stoics were,

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[62] See Sean Bowden, *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's the Logic of Sense* (Edinburgh University Press, 2011); James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's A Logic of Sense: A critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh Philosophical Guides, 2009).
[63] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 99.

according to Deleuze, the first to have developed a theory of language.[64] Deleuze writes 'the stoics [*sic*] displace all reflection, (and perform) a new distribution of beings and concepts', thereby moving beyond the representational framework of expression and focusing instead on the points of intersection and insertion of one into the other.

The Stoics's metaphysics distinguished between bodies (with their tensions, physical qualities, actions, passions, and states of affairs corresponding to the mixtures of bodies) and incorporeal entities or events (the effects of the first). The difference between bodies and their effects (incorporeals) is the difference between 'red' and 'becoming red', for instance: the red of iron is a corporeal entity and results from quantitative or qualitative mixtures that correspond to a certain states of affairs; but 'becoming red' is an incorporeal entity, and the effect of the mixture that occurs in bodies. The incorporeal transformation – or event – results from the mixture that occurs in bodies as something that 'insists' ('inheres') or 'subsists'. Marking a difference from the Platonic essence, to which things are resemblances or imitations, for Deleuze the pure event does not exist as such: it can only be captured as an infinitive; it takes place at the surface. Instead of the Platonic vertical structure things-essences, Deleuze's reading of the Stoics extracts a superficial diagram: 'This is a reorientation of all thought and of what it means to think: there is no longer depth or height (...) not Essence but event.'[65]

The relation of language to incorporeals – the event – is developed through the analysis of propositions. Deleuze claimed that 'It is characteristic of events to be expressed or expressible, uttered or utterable, in propositions which are at least

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[64] For a broader perspective on these, cf. John Sellars, 'An Ethics of the Event: Deleuze's Stoicism', *Angelaki*, Volume II, 3, December 2006, pp. 157–171.
[65] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 130.

possible.'[66] However, the expressed of the proposition, although existing outside the proposition, does not merge with it. They remain independent in the same manner as they reciprocally presuppose each other. According to Deleuze's, 'sense is attributed, but it is not the attribute of the proposition.' There is a difference between red as the attribute of the proposition, or the predicate that is attributed to the subject of the proposition – the incorporeal or expression – and 'red (the becoming)' that is instead the attribute of the thing or state of affairs' – the corporeal or formed content. It is only in this sense that language holds an intrinsic connection to events.

It turns one side toward things and one side toward propositions. But it does not merge with the proposition that expresses it any more than with the state of affairs or the quality that the proposition denotes. It is exactly the boundary between propositions and things. It is in this sense that it is an 'event', on the condition that the event is not confused with its spatio-temporal realisation in a state of affairs.[67] To understand this claim one should observe how in Series no. 3, Deleuze draws a distinction between the different relations that propositions enter into: these are either relations of denotation (a representative relation to an external state of affairs or bodies, or what was referred above as the classical idea of language as representation); of manifestation (a statement of desires and beliefs that correspond to the proposition, or the *I* of the speaker taking control over the process of enunciation); or of signification (the relation of the word to concepts and to language structure). Making reference to Saussure, Deleuze argues that whereas in the diachronic dimension of speech (*parole*) manifestation has priority: 'In the order of

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[66] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p.12.

[67] However, according to Deleuze, if language can capture bodies, in what regards events (or incorporeal effects) it could only do so as an infinitive verb (a verb that stands by itself and needs neither tense nor subject). Thus, whereas bodies would correspond to nouns and adjectives, incorporeal attributes (events) would always be enveloped in verbs: 'The verb has two poles: the present, which indicates its relation to a denotable state of affairs in view of a physical time characterized by succession; and the infinitive, which indicates its relation to sense or the event in view of the internal time it envelops.' Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 184.

speech, it is the I which begins, and begins absolutely. In this order, therefore, the I is primary, not only in relation to all possible denotations which are founded upon it, but also in relation to the significations which it envelops.'[68] In the synchronic dimension (*la langue*), signification has a certain degree of autonomy. In any case, Deleuze's point is that none of these dimensions would be able to capture the event.

Thus, to these dimensions Deleuze would add a further one, that of sense as the expression of the proposition, 'an incorporeal, complex, and irreducible entity, at the surface of things, a pure event which inheres or subsists in the proposition'.[69] It is this dimension that I am interested in here, insofar as it allows an important critique of linguistics, predicated on its inability to grasp the event of language.

Deleuze argued that reducing language to the denotative, manifest or signifying structure of propositions, has as a consequence the inability to grasp the event of language. To further understand the relation between language and the event, it should be noticed how Deleuze conceived of two series: of bodies and of propositions – propositions being the domain of language.[70] To these he added the event as something that referred to both of them: it referred to bodies or things as a 'special attribute' that is ascribed to them; and it referred to propositions as their expressed (the event is the *sense* of the proposition). For instance, the event 'becoming red' is the special attribute ascribed to a thing (or body or state of affairs) that has become red. Also, 'becoming red' is the expressed of the proposition or expression 'it has become red'. Or in other words, 'becoming red' should be understood as the sense that is attributed to the thing denoted by the subject, in a

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[68] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 15. It is worth contrasting this *I* with the first pages of *Anti-Oedipus* and the repetition of the impersonal 'it' (*ça*). The point here is not that Deleuze is not yet interested in the impersonal, which he clearly is, when he declares that 'sense is of a radical different nature', but that in here he conflates speech with enunciation.

[69] Ibid., 19.

[70] It is essential not to confuse this with Saussure's opposition between language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*). Saussure's distinction did not concern a separation between bodies and their effects, but between language and its use.

manner that the event is expressed by the verb.[71] At this point it is important to notice, as Patton has done, that 'because what is expressed in a proposition is its sense, it follows that sense and event are two sides of the same incorporeal surface.'[72]

It is essential to notice how Deleuze is not speaking about things, propositions and events as three distinct categories. The event occupies a different position in relation to the previous two without transcending them: 'It organizes these two series which it separates, since it is by and in this separation that it distinguishes himself from the bodies from which it ensues, and from the propositions it renders possible.'[73]

In this sense, the proposed schema precedes the idea in *A Thousand Plateaus* of the event *qua* assemblage: a conceptual arrangement composed of *machinic* assemblages of desire (bodies or mixtures of bodies) and collective assemblages of enunciation (propositions). Despite still betraying a focus on the individual (impersonal) instead of the collective, this would come to be a central aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's politics of language.

The intrinsic connection of language to events

There are two further aspects, following from the above, that came to influence Deleuze and Guattari's later works in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. The first one concerns the idea that language is not only able to grasp events, but has an intrinsic connection to them. Contrarily to a language that was typically thought

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[71] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 19.

[72] Paul Patton, *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics* (California: Stanford University Press, 2010), p. 87.

[73] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 182. In his reading, Deleuze placed Stoicism in opposition to the Epicureanism: 'Equivocity is always the equivocity of nouns. The Verb is the univocity of language, in the form of an undetermined infinitive, without person, without present, without any diversity of voice. It is poetry itself.' *The Logic of Sense*, p. 185.

under the opposition content-expression (Saussure), Deleuze, like the Stoics, conceived of two series (bodies and propositions), to which he added the event as the special attribute of bodies and the expressed of the proposition (sense). However, in what concerns language, what we have here is not exactly an opposition, as the relation between the proposition (expression) and sense or the expressed (event) is thought of as one of reciprocal presupposition: sense does not exist outside of the proposition, although it does not merge with it either. Expressed and proposition remain independent in the same manner as they reciprocally presuppose each other:

> [Sense] turns one side toward things and one side toward propositions. But it does not merge with the proposition, which expresses it any more than with the state of affairs or the quality which the proposition denotes. It is exactly the boundary between propositions and things.[74]

Moreover, being located in the same plane, and not in a relation of transcendence, they constantly pass into each other, therefore avoiding the Platonic separation between appearances and (transcendent) ideas. Language as expression and event as expressed reciprocally presuppose each other. Thus, in arguing for this reciprocal presupposition, not only was Deleuze opposing Platonism and Saussure, but more importantly he was as well arguing that language holds an intrinsic connection to events:

> The event belongs essentially to language; it has an essential relationship to language (...) the event is not what occurs (an accident), it is rather inside what occurs, the purely expressed.[75]

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[74] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 22.
[75] Ibid., p. 149.

In addition to this, the event – as the expressed of the proposition – is also what makes language possible:

> What is expressed is not the same as the expression. It does not preexist it, but pre-inheres in it, thus giving it a foundation and a condition (...) what renders language possible is the event insofar as the event is confused neither with the proposition which expresses it, nor with the state of the one who pronounces it, nor with the state of affairs denoted by the proposition. [76]

This is the first aspect where in *Logic of Sense* Deleuze anticipates his shared critique with Guattari of Saussure in *A Thousand Plateaus* I noted above, particularly as regards Saussure's absolute distinction between language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*). Whereas Saussure distinguished between language and its use, a focus on the language as event (sense) forces the abandonment of a synchronic vs. diachronic opposition. Deleuze's proposed distinction between bodies and their effects – effects that are expressed by propositions – thus pushed language beyond the domains of denomination, manifestation and signification.

Language and incorporeal transformations

Incorporeal transformations typically involve changes in the properties of the body concerned. These might be changes or relations in other bodies; for example, the transformation of the accused into a convict at the conclusion of a criminal trial is an incorporeal transformation. This is crucial because by assuming the close relationship between events and their forms of linguistic expression, it can be claimed that certain language uses contribute to the effectuation of the incorporeal transformations current in a given society in a point in time. By conceiving of an

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[76] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, pp. 181–182.

intrinsic connection to events, language is seen to intervene, rather than represent or communicate.[77]

Again, it should be stressed that incorporeal transformations do not stand in a relationship of identity to bodies. The Stoic metaphysics implied by Deleuze requires that language as an event is not a realisation of an incorporeal transformation in a corporeal state of affairs, and above all is not reduced to a role of representation, denotation or even signification.[78]

As we have seen, language as event is not exhausted in a relation of identity between the statement and the act, but it *represents* the performance through language of immanent relations between act and statement that are not reducible to the conditions prior to the actualisation of the event. It is not a communication of events; the virtual determinations of political semiotic systems are not defined – at least not essentially – by their characteristics in the results of their actualisations. But it aims to frame the determining factors as neither outside nor inside language but traversing it in their totality as its immanent prerequisite.

If in *A Thousand Plateaus*, language is said to play a role in the effectuation of the 'incorporeal transformations' underway in a given society at a given time, it is because the claims that it intervenes rather than represents had started to be constructed from the Stoics. It is in this sense that we can understand the lengths at which Deleuze and Guattari go to show how signs work directly with the realities to which they refer:

We cannot even say that the body or state of things is the 'referent' of the sign.

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[77] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 96.
[78] At this level Deleuze will also differentiate sense from signification: 'sense is not to be confused with signification; it is rather what is attributed in such a way that it determines both the signifier and the signified as such.' Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, p. 51.

In expressing the noncorporeal attribute, and by that token attributing it to the body, one is not representing or referring but *intervening* in a way; it is a speech act. The independence of the two kinds of forms, forms of expression and forms of content, is not contradicted but confirmed by the fact that the expressions or expresseds are inserted into or intervene in contents, not to represent them but to anticipate them or move them back, slow them down or speed them up, separate or combine them, delimit them in a different way. The warp of the instantaneous transformations is always inserted into the woof of the continuous modifications.[79]

Hjelmslev's expression-content

I suggested before already some of the terms in which Hjemslev can be made to serve the purposes of Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics of language: by offering an alternative model to defining linguistic units by functions rather than formal properties ('this is not metaphysics only terms describing relations'[80]); and allowing the inclusion of the extra-linguistic in the analysis of language ('the Hjelmslev machine, the semiotic machine').

The key point to note here is Deleuze and Guattari's use of Hjelmslev's substitution of the Saussurian pair signifier-signified by expression-content to develop a conception of the sign as a relation of mutual reciprocity and independence between expression and content establishing pragmatics, that is, language as practice, at the core of the production of the sign.

A detailed exposition of Hjelsmlev's conception of the sign will be the aim of Chapter Two. For the moment, I will briefly comment on the expression-content relations in its relation to Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatic argument (the extent to which Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Hjelmslev is a reinterpretation of the

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[79] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 86.
[80] Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus Papers*, p. 201.

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glossematics of Hjelmslev will also be dealt with in Chapter Two). As we have seen, breaking with the classic approach of epistemology and logic, where the sign was viewed as the expression of content that was external to it, Hjelmslev's *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* (1943) defined the sign as a semiotic function between expression and content. Under this meta-model, the pair content – expression (generally referred to as *plane of content and plane of expression*) refers to the two sides of the linguistic sign, the expression plane and the content plane (semiotic functives of expression and content) whose interaction constitutes a sign. Deleuze and Guattari pursue the relation of presupposition yet independence, premised on the conception of a matter of content and a matter of expression, but also *a form of content* and a *form of expression*, as a pragmatic argument that locates pragmatics at the level of the semiotic-material production of the sign.

The importance of Hjelmslev for Deleuze and Guattari's own purposes is that the sign can be conceived as a relation between a content and expression along non-formed matter-substance-form interacting triad. But, in addition, the singularity of Hjelmslevian conception is that it attributes to content its own form (content, in this sense, can no more be considered a 'signified' than a 'signifier'). Form is not exclusive to expression is this sense. Content and expression are defined according to a relation of solidarity and reciprocity towards one another, characterising a connotative semiotic, a semiotic whose expression plane consists of a content layer and an expression layer[81] that cannot be defined outside this relation. Hence, through Hjelmslev, instead of establishing an association, conformity or correspondence, a relation of representation or referential function between content and expression, Deleuze and Guattari are able to establish a relation of reciprocal and independent

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[81] A simple semiotic whose expression plane cannot be analysed as a content-expression constellation is, in contrast, termed a denotative semiotic.

presupposition between content and expression. The apparently paradoxical statement is as follows: 'the functional independency of the two forms is only the form of their reciprocal presupposition and of the continual passage from one to the other.'[82] For example, when speaking we do not necessarily say what we do, neither do what we say. This allows us to construct the idea that expression does not merely represent or signify the object it refers to, rather that it interacts with the body it refers to. The necessary premise is thus the following: 'We must recognize that expression is independent and that this is precisely what enables it to react upon contents'.[83] The best image to describe the expression-content relation would therefore that of the battle rather than isomorphism or homology: 'there is no isomorphism or homology, nor any common form to seeing and speaking, to the visible and the articulable. The two forms spill over into one another, as in a battle. The image of a battle signifies precisely that there is no isomorphism.'[84] The key idea is that form is not a particular privilege of expression. Content has its own form too: 'bodies already have proper qualities, actions and passions, souls, in short forms, which are themselves bodies. Representations are bodies, too!'[85] Expression in reality is that which is inscribed in the bodies, not a representation of bodies themselves. 'The paradox gets us nowhere unless, like the Stoics, we add that incorporeal transformations, incorporeal attributes, apply to bodies, and only to bodies. They are the expressed of the statements but are *attributed to bodies*'. If indeed expression can be explained according to a projection of (linguistic) form upon matter, however, the very singular nature of the content it aims to grasp is not fully irreducible to expression because content has its own form. The meeting point

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[82] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 96.
[83] Ibid., p. 99.
[84] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (Paris: Éditions de Minuit, [orig. 1986]), p. 66.
[85] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 95.

of expression and content escapes the formalisms of translation. Only through disjoining the form of content from the form of expression is it possible, on one side, to problematise the capacity of expression to intervene upon contents, and, on the other side, for content to intervene upon expression. This order of intervention refers to points of insertion of reciprocity rather than origin or causality: 'what we must determine is not an origin but points of intervention or insertion in the framework of the reciprocal presupposition of the two forms.'[86]

It is precisely the awareness that language as linguistic formalisation is a result – rather than a representation – of a state of things that the glossematics of Hjelmslev (from and beyond the Stoics) helped construct. Deleuze and Guattari pursue the relation of presupposition yet independency premised in the conception of a matter of content and a matter of expression, but also *a form of content* and a *form of expression*, as a pragmatic argument that locates pragmatics at the level of the semiotic production of the sign.

The work of linguist Oswald Ducrot was particularly important to Deleuze and Guattari's definition of pragmatics due to the manner in which it covers a pragmatics that takes into consideration not only a discursive explicitness, but also non-discursive implicitness. Ducrot's theory of argumentation unfolds in the discussion of juridical processes, whereby an immediate transformation of a defendant into a convict takes place: an immediacy of transformation which, according to Ducrot, is due to the regulation of a social field that allows for its effectuation. The important thing to note here is the manner in which Deleuze and Guattari described Ducrot's example of the defendant-turned-convict in a court of law. In *A Thousand Plateaus* this transformation of the defendant into a convict is

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[86] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 97.

described by Deleuze and Guattari in the manner of incorporeal transformations or noncorporeal attributes and in terms of immediate imbrications of expression and content: 'the transformation of the accused into a convict is a pure instantaneous act or incorporeal attribute that is the expressed of the judge's sentence.'[87] The word becomes body as much as the body becomes word. In every case incorporeal transformations conceptualise acts that are ascribed to bodies by being expressed in utterances. Through Ducrot, the point that Deleuze and Guattari want to make is that the conditions of effectuation of the sentence are in excess of language. They depend on the example of law from other things, such the representation of power and justice of law in a given society – and on such things as the court apparatuses, the ritual, the reading of the sentence, etc. Hence, for conceptualising a politics of language, it is important to consider the conditions of possibility for its effectuation according to the transformations that are underway in a particular social field.

In this sense, the meaning of the pragmatic lies in its position in a power relation that defines the conditions of possibility of what 'can be said' or the effectuation of these incorporeal transformations. However, and this is what we want to note here, by thinking these conditions from the point of view both of the points of intersection of content and expression or the reciprocal presupposition between corporeal and incorporeal transformations – via a semiotisation of matter but also a materialisation of semiotics – the locus of pragmatics is not only placed at the level of the social structures, but also at the level of the linguistic and the semiotic, substance and form. It is only by having unveiled the proper semiotics corresponding to Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatics that we can now move to expounding the

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[87] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 81.

crucial concept of 'order-words', which forms the basis of a political pragmatics of language that would be nothing without a semiotic pragmatics to accompany it.

1.4 - Order-words: The Minimal Unit of Language

Deleuze and Guattari's conception of language is singularly constructed through the concept of the 'order-word'. The 'order-word' is the minimal unit of analysis of language revealing the relation of every word to an general pragmatics: 'the relation of every word or every statement to implicit presuppositions, in other words, to speech acts that are, and can only be, accomplished in the statement.'[88] In the original *mot d'ordre*, the term has commonly been translated as 'order-word'. The common usage of the term in French is close to that of the 'slogan'. The term has multiple references, such as Lenin's essay 'On Slogans' and Elias Canetti's 'Crowds and Power'.[89] In the field of linguistics, the term is unveiled in reference to both J. L. Austin's theory of the illocutionary and speech acts, and to Oswald Ducrot's concept of presupposition in language as a non-linguistic form of constituting meaning.

With the concept of 'order-word' Deleuze and Guattari's aim is to demonstrate how language always implicitly transmits something of the community of users that is outside the purely linguistic content. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari take the well-known example of the bee illustrated in Benveniste first pragmatic theory of enunciation to support the idea that the capacity for indirect speech, to tell of things one did not experience directly, is a defining

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[88] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 79.
[89] Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, 'On Slogans' in *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1977 [Orig. 1917]), Volume 25, pp. 185–192; Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart (New York: Continuum, 1962 [Orig. 1960]).

characteristic of language.[90] Although a bee is able to communicate to a second bee what it has seen – a source of food, for instance – through an organic coding process, a second bee will not be capable to transmit the same message to a third different bee. As such it cannot be said that the bee has language because it lacks the essential ability to pass on a message from a second to a third, neither of which have directly experienced the object itself of the message, and so forth. Because of this, the translational movement of indirect speech that is proper to language within a social field is missing. This amounts to saying say that language is based not on the informational or communicational dimension, but on the implicit dimension of statements, i.e. on the act of transmitting a statement. On Deleuze and Guattari's account, it is precisely this redundancy of indirect discourse that is the defining dimension of language: 'language in its entirety is indirect discourse.'[91]

Deleuze and Guattari describe order-words as the minimal, elementary unit of language: 'language is the transmission of the word as order-word, not the communication of a sign as information.'[92] Framed as such, the indissociable relation of every statement to implicit presuppositions allows Deleuze and Guattari to raise important questions about the relation of language to power, in particular, power conceived as something that lies beyond the discursive, and that is manifested in the semiotic coordinates that are distributed by means of the extra-linguistic features of language. This aspect will be developed in Chapter Two of this thesis.

The constants of grammar, for instance, to follow the example given in the text, impose orders of duality upon the world: 'the compulsory education machine does not communicate information; it imposes upon the child semiotic coordinates

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[90] Émile Benveniste, *Problems in General Linguistics*, trans. (Miami: University of Miami Press, 1971 [Orig. 1966]), p. 24
[91] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 84.
[92] Ibid., p. 77.

possessing all of the dual foundations of grammar (masculine-feminine, singular-plural, noun-verb, subject of the statement-subject of enunciation, etc).'[93] It is from this prism that it can be said that grammar is a power marker before even being a syntactic marker. Thus, the concept of 'order-words' is mobilised to display the intrinsic connection of the statements to implicit presuppositions and to non-discursive 'commands' that are linked to a certain social context.

But to understand this, in the first instance it is essential to notice how following from Austin and Ducrot, and their development of the theory of the performative and the illocutionary, Deleuze and Guattari disentangle the command from the imperative. The imperative might be a particular feature of language, but it is the study of the performative and the illocutionary that grounds the entirety of language: 'pragmatics becomes the presupposition behind all of the other dimensions and insinuates itself into everything.'[94]

In his later lectures of *How To Do Things with Words*, Austin develops an idea of language as a form of action, a *speech act* theory.[95] Austin's main goal was to argue how language acts in the world, by the single fact of saying something. Even platitudes always accomplish a social act, and are always part of a speech act. In this way, Austin moved away from his original distinction between *constantives* ('it is raining') and *performatives* ('we should go inside'). Instead, in his new framework for the understanding of language, Austin distinguished between the *locution* (the act of saying), the *illocution* (the act performed *in* saying something, i.e. its function), and the *perlocution* (the act performed *by* saying something, i.e. its consequences): 'We can similarly distinguish the locutionary act "he said that ..." from the

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[93] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 76.
[94] On should bear in mind, however, that pragmatics here is not the Anglo-Saxon pragmatics of communication and information. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 78.
[95] This work resulted from his William James Lectures delivered at Harvard University in 1955, published posthumously in 1962.

illocutionary act "he argued that ..." and the perlocutionary act "he convinced me that ...".[96]

Deleuze and Guattari were particularly interested in this movement, as for Austin the performative would become a subset of the illocutionary – an illocutionary act with a specific performative injunction. Implicit in this is an understanding of language not reduced to the perspective of its content (of what is being said) and focused on the relation between speech and what is accomplished in the act of speaking.

This can be exemplified with the example of the news in the media. Despite the fact that 'news' is related to semantic content, the act of the 'media news' is less about information than about determining what should or should not be considered 'information', that is to say, determining what is news or not. Moreover, these acts performed by saying are commands that, as such, do not require the imperative or the performative injunction. Again, this is also a good example to understand how information only needs to be at a bare minimum for the emission of the command.

Deleuze and Guattari further understand these immanent relations between statements and acts according to Ducrot's theory of implicit or non-discursive linguistic presuppositions that are coextensive with language.[97] Here, the legal cases explored by Ducrot in *Dire et Nepas Dire* provide some of the clearest examples, namely the speech act uttered by the judge: 'I sentence you to ...' For Deleuze and Guattari, this is an illocutionary act, an act that is accomplished by the act itself of speaking. Yet the key is that the sentence is accomplished only because it is socially and politically supported by 'implicit or nondiscursive presuppositions', which are the court, the law, a political relation to law, etc.

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[96] J. L. Austin, *How to do Things With Words: The William James Lectures Delivered at Harvard University, 1955* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 102.
[97] Oswald Ducrot, *Dire et Nepas Dire: Principes de Sémantique Linguistique* (Paris: Hermann, 1972).

It is in this sense that for Deleuze and Guattari the illocutionary is 'explained by collective assemblages of enunciation, by juridical acts or equivalents of juridical acts, which, far from depending on subjectification proceedings or assignations of subjects in language, in fact determine their distribution.'[98] I shall speak of collective assemblages further ahead, but for the moment it suffices to say that the illocutionary of Austin is understood together with the importance given to implicit presuppositions of language by Ducrot as the grounds for the argument that the basic unit of language is indeed the order-word, as an act that is linked to statements by social obligations. Importantly, the social obligations here are not those external to language. By social obligations Deleuze and Guattari are referring to non-discursive presuppositions, or what Deleuze and Guattari would come to refer to as collective assemblages of enunciation.

Redundancy

The relation between the statement and the act is internal, immanent, but it is not one of identity. Rather, it is a relation of redundancy. The order-word itself is the redundancy of the act and the statement.[99]

The use of the term 'redundancy' by Deleuze and Guattari and the importance given to it is in direct opposition to theorists of communication, information and linguistics. Whereas redundancy (for instance, for Shannon) referred to the necessity of repeating data to compensate for noise, and therefore the necessity of compressing a message by eliminating useless data, Deleuze and Guattari have almost the opposite understanding; they see redundancy as the unused capacity of a code.[100]

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[98] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 78.
[99] Ibid., p. 79.
[100] Ibid., p. 79.

They stress that:

> The most general schema of information science posits in principle an ideal state of maximum information and makes redundancy merely a limitative condition serving to decrease this theoretical maximum in order to prevent it from being drowned out by noise. We are saying that the redundancy of the order-word is instead primary and that information is only the minimal condition for the transmission of order-words.[101]

Deleuze and Guattari's point is not about the problems of how much data can be compressed without making the message unintelligible, but counters the primacy given to code as information in theories of communication. Information theorists ignored the pragmatics of the unused or excess code, i.e. they ignored the importance of transmission as order-word, therefore effectively ignoring such a political dimension of language.

Deleuze and Guattari also note that 'Redundancy has two forms, frequency and resonance; the first concerns the significance of information, the second (I = I) concerns the subjectivity of communication.'[102] The first, the redundancy of a constant repetition of the same type of news in the media, thus corresponds to what Deleuze and Guattari call the signifying regime of signs, and is therefore a relative de-territorialisation (akin to the signifier itself, in its redundancy or 'excess'); the second is a redundancy characteristic of a positive line of flight, corresponding to the subjective regime, and proceeding therefore by absolute de-territorialisation. This distinction is not of minor importance as it implies two very different conceptions and uses of order-words. Yet, despite information theorists, it is precisely redundancy that would come to characterise new media technologies more than anything else. 'Newspapers, news, proceed by redundancy, in that they tell us what

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[101] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 79.
[102] Ibid., p. 79.

we "must" think, retain, expect, etc.'[103]

A key example of this is the use of the instruction 'like' in the social network Facebook. 'Like' does not necessarily mean that someone *likes* a particular *post* or *comment*, but more precisely a validation of the comment in a certain sphere of discourse. This example is relevant to illustrate why, according to Deleuze and Guattari, one of the characteristics of 'order-words' is the relation of redundancy, but not of identity, between the statement and the act. If in information and communication theories, redundancy is conceived as the difference between the number of bits used to transmit a message and the number of bits of actual information in the message, this also indicates the unused capacity of a code which, opposite of being superfluous, is actually what is crucial to the message, indeed much more than its content.

This example of Facebook is particularly revealing since the instruction 'like' could be equally replaced by a 'hit' or a quantitative instruction, given that the only thing at stake is really how much more a comment circulates and gains visibility in the network (dependent on how many hits/likes it has). The fact that software developers conceived a 'like button' shows a careful design that aims to capitalise on all possible ways of getting the user engaged in the network: in this case in particular, by developing a code that is ambiguous, that is, to the point at which a 'like' does not necessarily mean *to like* something. However, it nevertheless signifies within the system or context. When using Facebook, the meaning of 'like' will vary according to its use or pragmatics (in relation to a certain content one actually likes, or equally dislikes but is still required to hit 'like', as this is the only available option for stating one's interest in the topic). But in all cases, the code 'like' is redundant to

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[103] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 79.

the act: the hit, the quantitative instruction, these are the order-words at stake. Both in the case of the media news referred earlier and this last example, what the message does goes well beyond the purely explicit and semantic content.

Moreover, this example, which points above all our attention to the 'context' also invokes an understanding of language according to a certain 'usage of linguistic elements' that became dominant at a certain point in time and which make a standard use of language that we referred commonly as language (*langue*) (synchronic analysis). Hence, there is no unity of language or an ideal listener or speaker, but a particular usage of linguistic elements that became dominant, as it was predicated, in a particular social field at a specific time. It is important to understand language in this tension and as a treatment of linguistic variables – that is, not as a static language but a use or treatment of language – to reveal in language the order of relations of power that traverse it that confer on it a dominant status.

Non-discursive presuppositions

As the example of the judge's sentence makes clear, order-words are characterised by the immediacy of their effectuation. They are referred to as speech-acts, in reference to J. L. Austin, since they constitute acts that are accomplished in the statement and statements that are accomplished in acts that in consequence constitute an immediate change in the general semiotic context they apply to. We can put it otherwise by saying that they manifest 'a concrete analysis of a concrete situation'. We do this to refer to the conditions of effectuation of a certain statement, the social obligations or non-discursive presuppositions – but also by referring to Lenin, with whom Deleuze and Guattari have the most fruitful dialogue regarding order-words,

in particular with his essay 'On Slogans' from 1917.[104]

The matter concerns two statements, one from Marx and Engels, the second from Lenin himself. The first is the well-known slogan by Marx and Engles, 'Working men of all Countries Unite!', from *The Communist Manifesto* of 1848, later converted by Lenin into 'Workers and Oppressed Peoples and Nations of the World, Unite';[105] the second is Lenin's slogan 'All power to the Soviets'. The first, according to Deleuze and Guattari 'constituted an incorporeal transformation that extracted from the masses a proletarian class as an assemblage of enunciation before the conditions were present for the proletariat to exist as a body.'[106] The workers, the workers of the world, as a class, were thus for the first time constituted as a common political and social entity, thus converting a series of discrete struggles and peoples into a common one.

The second was the object of Lenin's essay on slogans, questioning if after 4 July 1917, the slogan was still valid. For Lenin, the slogan only made sense in the peacetime period from 27 February to 4 of July, a period during which there was a voluntary power sharing between the Soviets and the Provisional Government and there was a possible peaceful path for the Revolution:

> The Soviets were delegations from the mass of free – i.e., not subject to external coercion – and armed workers and soldiers. What *really mattered* was that arms were in the hands of the people and that there was no coercion of the people from without. That is what opened up and ensured a peaceful path for the progress of the revolution. The slogan 'All Power Must Be Transferred to the Soviets' was a slogan for the next step, the immediately

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[104] Lenin, V.I. [1917], 'On Slogans' in *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1977), Volume 25, pp. 185–192.
[105] The first version is from the 1948 *The Manifesto of the Communist Party* by Marx and Engels. Cf. Marx, Karl and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (Pluto Press: London, 2008 [orig. 1948]), p. 84.
[106] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 83.

feasible step, on that peaceful path of development. It was a slogan for the peaceful development of the revolution, which was possible and, of course, most desirable between February 27 and July 4 but which is now absolutely impossible.[107]

His argument was that a slogan needed to be just, i.e. as a concrete analysis of a concrete situation. Only in that capacity would it be able to effectuate itself as a transformation. But by the same token, once the concrete situation changes, the slogan loses its efficacy. And indeed, as the conflict broke out on 4 July, the claim for a transfer of power to the Soviets would be, for Lenin, pointless.[108]

The point that matters to Deleuze and Guattari, nonetheless, is Lenin's understanding of the pragmatics of speech and the ability of the slogan to provide a rallying cry to the masses of workers. Lecercle argues as much: 'Naming the conjuncture with the slogan that, in the conjuncture, is just, is no metaphor it is an action which is the source of a revolution and engages a metamorphosis.'[109] To do a concrete analysis of a concrete situation is therefore to 'intervene' in that same situation and thus changing it – an idea that as we shall see later will have important implications for Deleuze and Guattari's thought of language as analysis and intervention.[110]

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[107] Lenin, V.I. [1917], 'On Slogans' in *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1977), Volume 25, pp. 185–192.

[108] Lenin's objective was a peaceful transition, for example by the transfer of power to the Soviets. Of course, to Lenin, transferring power to the Soviets would only make sense insofar as they would eventually abdicate from it. His reasons were that the 'transfer of power to the Soviets would not, and could not, in itself have changed the correlation of classes'. Ultimately the power should be transferred to the Bolshevik party, something that once the civil conflict with the Provisional Government and the Mensheviks started should be claimed directly. Cf. Lenin, V.I. [1917], 'On Slogans' in *Lenin Collected Works* (Progress Publishers: Moscow, 1977), Volume 25, pp. 185-192.

[109] Jean-Jacques Lecercle, *Deleuze and language* (Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 172.

[110] It is perhaps relevant to compare this understanding of the slogan with the one developed by Ernesto Laclau. He gives the example of the seemingly empty rhetoric and slogans employed by populist movements. While their meaning may be relatively vapid and empty, they can function within a particular context to produce a novel collective identity. See: Ernesto Laclau, *On populist reason* (London: Verso, 2005), p. 14.

As this case demonstrates, language is not self-sufficient in the way in which it dispenses the extended social field to support its effectuation, hence the importance that Deleuze and Guattari place on the external pragmatics of non-linguistic factors. What is relevant here is that 'order-words' reveal the outside of language from which its effectuation depends. For instance, by revealing the capitalist assemblage that constituted workers across the world as workers that shared a common condition, the order-word made possible the effectuation of language. Hence, if order-words, implicit presuppositions or speech acts reflect the conditions of effectuation of a given language within a certain social field in a given time, we can say that Deleuze and Guattari place language at the frontier of struggles for the effectuation of this and that particular statement, of what can be said, and of what counts as having been said. A madman dressed as a judge reading aloud the same sentence the judge stated in court does not make any man a convict; nor does an artist performing the same procedure in a gallery.

We can now begin to see more clearly the purposes served by the concept of order-words. The focus on order-words exposes the relations of power that traverse language and are reinforced through language, be it linguistically or non-linguistically; and by displaying the social condition as a necessary condition for the effectuation of language – alluding to 'there is no language in itself' – they also present a horizon for intervention.

In this way, by focusing on the functioning of order words, Deleuze and Guattari attempt to grasp language in an embedded relation with the diversity of heterogeneous elements that constitute the social assemblage at its base. This is the level of abstraction that is necessary to the connection of language to the reality of the social and to grasp the corporeal and incorporeal transformations that are under

way in a particular social field. The order-word is the variable of enunciation that effectuates the condition of possibility of language.

> We must therefore return to a focus on the 'order-word' as the only 'metalanguage' capable of accounting for this double direction, this double treatment of variables. The problem of the functions of language is in general poorly formulated because this order-word variable, which subsumes all possible functions, is overlooked.[111]

In this sense a few final considerations about order-words are required, taking as a point of departure Deleuze and Guattari's reference to of Elias Canetti's 'Crowds and Power'. Canetti describes order-words or commands according to two aspects, the first that of carrying a death sentence, and the second that of instigating flight.[112] For Canetti the death sentence-flight relation is enacted originally between two animals of different strengths, and because of that it precedes speech: 'Flight is the final and only appeal against a death sentence. For the roar of a lion is a death sentence. It is the one sound in its language which all its victims understand; this threat may be the only thing they have in common, widely different as they otherwise are. The oldest command-and it is far older than man-is a death sentence, and it compels the victim to flee.'[113] Deleuze and Guattari use Canetti to grasp this dual dimension of order-words: 'A father's orders to his son, 'You will do this,' 'You will not do that,' cannot be separated from the little death sentence the son experiences on a point of his person. Death, death; it is the only judgment, and it is what makes judgment a

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[111] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 107.
[112] Ibid, pp. 118-120.
[113] Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*, trans. Carol Stewart (New York: Continuum, 1962 [orig. 1960]), p. 304.

system. The verdict. But the order-word is also something else, inseparably connected: it is like a warning cry or a message to flee.'[114]

The flight, that for Canetti was an external consequence, is for Deleuze and Guattari, no longer a flight from the order-word but of finding the components of passages for the variation of language and connection to the practical multiplicity of the world[115]. For Deleuze and Guattari the two dimensions of the order-word refer to a matter of legislation through constants (death-sentence); and to a matter of pushing language towards a continuous variation (flight). To these two dimensions correspond two different treatments of language (constancy and variation) and two dimensions of redundancy (frequency and resonance).

> The question was not how to elude the order-word but how to elude the death sentence it envelops, how to develop its power of escape, how to prevent escape from veering into the imaginary or falling into a black hole, how to maintain or draw out the revolutionary potential of the order-word.[116]

Thus if 'order-words' reveal the mark of power in the constants or the implicit upon which they depend, they also stress the capacity of language to actualize a social field that is under way. This double tone of 'order-words' represents Deleuze and Guattari's possibility for a political practice of language. Such practice would be measured according to its capacity to open up passages and links to the heterogeneity and polivocality of the social experience:

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[114] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 107.
[115] But if the order-word is understood by Canetti according to these two dimensions -one the death-sentence, the other the instigation of flight-, Deleuze and Guattari's version far exceeds his original ambitions. Deleuze and Guattari point out that '[Canetti's analysis] presupposes the existence of a very particular psychic faculty in the absence of which the order-word would not have this mode of action'. *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 525. Against this, Deleuze and Guattari will expand on Canetti's confinement of order-words to a psychological aspect, by understanding the 'sting' as the broader domain of implicit presuppositions and relations of power, i.e. as the basic condition of language.
[116] Ibid., p. 121.

The order-word is also something else, inseparably connected: it is like a warning cry or a message to flee. It would be oversimplifying to say that flight is a reaction against the order-word; rather, it is included in it, as its other face in a complex assemblage, its other component. Canetti is right to invoke the lion's roar, which enunciates flight and death simultaneously.[117]

Understood as intervention, order-words allow posing questions not only about the nature of language but also the political potential of language. Namely, if we are able to establish, for instance, that by connecting language to its use or pragmatics one is re-connecting the subject with the political through practice.

We can now better understand Deleuze and Guattari's claim that 'linguistics is nothing without a pragmatics (semiotic or political) to define the effectuation of the *condition of possibility* of language and the *usage* of linguistic elements.'[118] Their argument is that the inquiry into the pragmatics of language cannot be limited to covering the 'social', but it has to concern the very formation of the sign in its relationship with the realities it refers to (articulations between expression and content) It is only in the sense that the condition of possibility of language and the usage of linguistic elements are grounded to a pragmatics that is both semiotic, linguistic and social, that we can understand the political dimension of Deleuze and Guattari's thought.

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[117] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 107.
[118] Ibid., p. 94.

Chapter Two: Power: Hjelmslev and Foucault

In short, we should never oppose words to things that supposedly correspond to them, signifiers to signifieds that are supposedly in conformity with them. What should be opposed are two distinct formalizations, in a state of unstable equilibrium or reciprocal presupposition.

– Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*[1]

'Strata are historical formations, positivities or empiricities. As 'sedimentary beds' they are made from things and words, from seeing and speaking, from the visible and the sayable, from bands of visibility and fields of readability, from contents and expressions. We borrow these last terms from Hjelmslev, but apply them to Foucault in a completely different way.

– Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* [2]

What is a crystallization of power in the linguistic field? We can understand nothing of this question if power is again represented as being uniquely an ideological structure.

– Félix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious* [3]

Following the investigation in Chapter One into Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the general postulates of linguistics that were prevalent in the 1960s and '70s, this

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[1] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. Brian Massumi (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p.67.

[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* (London/New York: Continuum, 2006 [orig. 1986]), p.42.

[3] Félix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011 [orig. 1979]), p.35.

chapter furthers examines Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatic conception of language as a pragmatics of power.

As we have seen in Chapter One, drawing particularly on the plateau 'General Postulates of Linguistics' of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari's critique of linguistics was set against a series of predominant assumptions. These were that language is communication; that language is a system made of universal rules; that language (*langue*) can be studied independently from speech (*parole*) (or from actual speaking and listening, reading and writing); and that there is a language in itself. Contrary to many critics who have often dismissed Deleuze and Guattari's intention of understanding the political dimension of language – focusing exclusively on their claim to escape from language (*langue*) – I have argued that what is at stake is not the devaluation of language as a potential sphere of politics (as a space of resistance and intervention), but the necessary downplaying of the primacy of its representational and signifying functions by any conceptualisation of language which aims to grasp its political dimension. In this sense, I argued that Deleuze and Guattari's critique of the universalism of theories of language (*langue*) and their motto 'to escape from language', cannot be confused with a political dismissal of language. Instead, it aimed firstly to confront structuralist linguistics' focus on language (*langue*) with a non-linguistic conception of pragmatics.

Thus, Deleuze and Guattari's contention that language is not just a matter of syntax and semantics makes the point that language itself is not linguistic in nature. For instance, grammar is not simply the architecture of a sentence: rather, it distributes implicit semiotic coordinates embodying dualities over gender or over subject–object relations. More crucially, the transmission of a message depends not only on the linguistic material but on conditions that lie outside the domain of

language itself, and that define a certain context at a given moment in time. I claim that these conditions of a pragmatic order imply a need for an understanding of language within a broader field that is non-linguistic. The issue is that by moving beyond linguistic and universalist conceptions of language, Deleuze and Guattari develop a pragmatic framework whereby language is seen as both intervening in, and affected, by relations of power.

When read in this light, Deleuze and Guattari's treatment of the notion of the speech-act in the 'General Postulates of Linguistics' section of *A Thousand Plateaus* is clarified. The intrinsic link between speech and act or expression and content prevents the effectuation of language from being explained from an exclusively linguistic point of view. It is Deleuze and Guattari's claim that only a pragmatics that subverts the supposition that meaning is exclusively linguistic in origin is able to grasp the contingency of the effectuation of language in a field of power relations. Hence their call for a political genealogy of content, which disentangles the relations between expression and content in the light of power relations (instead of returning to a totalising signifier, which subsumes content to itself, as in structuralist linguistics).

Deleuze and Guattari's development of such a semio-pragmatic conception of language represents a decisive step beyond structural linguistics and the emphasis on form over content. Language does not have self-sufficient formalisation or universality, nor is it revelatory of a hidden truth or origin. From this point of view, Deleuze and Guattari's account of language conceives it as being at the frontier of power struggles. Consequently, this implies that the very notion of linguistic expression has to be understood according to a set or relations and from a strategic and relational point of view.

The coming together of Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus* around a semio-pragmatics of language had already been foreshadowed by Guattari's *The Machinic Unconscious*, (which came out in 1979, one year before *A Thousand Plateaus*). This approach can be seen as fundamentally aimed at articulating the claim of a general pragmatism of language (speech-acts) in the light of the problem of power (regimes of signs). This move does not only follow from a critique of the distinction, taken from Saussure, between language (*langue*) and speech (*parole*), but as a general critical stance in regards to structuralism that is informed by an attempt to grasp the articulations between expression and content, via Hjelmslev, at the level of formed and non-formed matters.

Importantly, such a conception enters into a dialogue with specific changes that occurred in Foucault's thinking in the 1970s concerning linguistic formations and the nature of power. In this period, Foucault similarly distanced himself from the Marxist economic conception of power as a problem of class struggle and the conception of discourse as ideology (a superstructure determined by base relations of production). Because of Deleuze and Guattari and Foucault's shared interest in an understanding of language that is not framed by ideology, Foucault's understanding of language as an exercise of power, but also as resistance to that exercise, are examined here, with a particular focus on the relations between statements (*énoncés*) and discursive formations.

Key to understanding the emergence of Deleuze and Guattari's semio-pragmatic conception of language is the question of the reciprocal engagement between forms of expression, regimes of signs or incorporeal transformations (semiotic systems that are contingent, historically and temporally), on the one hand, and forms of content, regimes of bodies, or corporeal transformations (physical

systems), on the other. This is a framework that they inherit from Danish semiotician Louis Hjelmslev, and then transform. But, as we see through their dialogue with Foucault, this is further understood as a question of power. However, it can be asked: what exactly does this mean? And what reformulations of Foucault does Deleuze and Guattari's contribution entail for a general theory of power in the field of language?

2.1 – Power and Language: Abstraction and Formalism

A theory of power in the linguistic field derived from Deleuze and Guattari's writings must follow from their critique of structural linguistics and the figure of the signifier. As described in Chapter One, in their view, it is the study of the signifying regime that first makes clear the inadequacy of prevalent linguistic theories to capture the political dimension of language. This study is carried out in the name of a pluralism of 'regimes of signs' (this is *A Thousand Plateaus*' semiotic project).[4] In this process, and having departed from the structuralist theories of the 1960s and 1970s, a more precise theory of how power affects language starts to emerge through Deleuze and Guattari's engagement with the problem of universality and formalism in linguistics. In *Molecular Revolution* (1977) Guattari writes that the problem is not the 'universal formalism in itself, but the way in which a system of power arrives at using the means of a signifying formalisation to unify all the modes of expression'.[5]

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[4] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 124.
[5] My translation of: 'Ce qui est en question, ce n'est donc pas la mise à jour d'un formalisme universel en tant que tel, mais la façon dont un système de pouvoir est amené à utiliser les moyens d'une formalisation signifiante pour unifier tous les modes d'expression et les centrer sur ses valeurs'. Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire* (Fontenay-sous-Bois: Éditions Recherches, 1977), p. 242.

'The life of language, at the semantic and pragmatic levels, escapes to this type of formalization'.[6]

As such Deleuze and Guattari's critique of language is first a claim that structuralist analysis hides the fundamental duality of content and expression resulting in the misrecognition of the relations of power behind the formalisation of content. By focusing primarily on the signifier (the signified is never put into question) these models forcibly obscure the political origins of content and signification. Moreover, in the primacy of one form of expression alone (obedient to linguistic rules) and behind the logic of the signifier (and its predominance over the signified) lies a strategy to enforce universality and transcendence by power formations. Crucially for Guattari, the prevailing formalist position that determines the primacy of expression over content is explained according to a political and social order that modelled it under the guise of a 'presumed' universality and transcendence of signification. Guattari's proposal rests on the argument that 'there is nothing mechanic in the structuration of contents: the social field is not a superstructural content determined mechanically by a economic infrastructure, neither is the semantic field a signifying structure'.[7]

Form–matter: regimes of signs and formalizations

In plateau 5 of *A Thousand Plateaus: On Several Regimes of Signs* Deleuze and Guattari propose the notion of 'regimes of signs' defined as any specific

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[6] My translation of: 'La vie du langage, au niveau sémantique et pragmatique, échappe à ce type de formalisation'. Ibid., p. 248.

[7] My translation of: Il n'y a rien de mécanique dans la structuration des contenus: le champ social n'est pas un contenu superstructural déterminé mécaniquement par une infrastructure économique, pas plus que ne l'est le champ sémantique par une structure signifiante'. Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire*, p. 241.

formalization of expression, at least when the expression is linguistic'.[8]The text argues for the existence of diverse 'regimes of signs' beyond the primacy of the signifying (this is in reference to Saussure's structuralist linguistics of the sign that privileges the signifier and its signifying or semiological function). Instead, Deleuze and Guattari claim that not only are there many regimes of signs (hence they prefer to use the plural 'regimes of signs', rather than 'a regime of signs' or 'regime of the sign'), they would go even further and argue that, in fact, there are only mixed regimes of signs and the only thing that can be assumed is that at every particular time or period some regimes are assured predominance above others.

The different regimes of signs are always defined in relation to processes of signification: for instance, defined as the *pre-signifying, counter-signifying, signifying and post-signifying, amongst others.* These should be not confused with linear or historical categories: 'there are many regimes of signs. Our own list is arbitrarily limited. There is no reason to identify a regime or a semiotic system with a people or historical moment'.[9] The key idea is that the signifying regime is not the only regime of signs and even if it has been determinant in the development of semiology and linguistic theories, the analysis of language cannot be reduced to the problem of signification. As a result, *Deleuze and Guattari* argue, the primacy given to the signifying regime overshadows the differentiated elements at play in the formalisation of linguistic expression. Rather, considering that 'language never has universality in itself, self-sufficient formalization, a general semiology, or a metalanguage,' Deleuze and Guattari argue that to grasp the political question of language one has to turn to the 'form of content that is simultaneously inseparable from and independent of the form of expression [with] the two forms pertain[ing] to

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[8] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.111.
[9] Ibid., p. 131.

assemblages that are *not principally linguistic'.*[10] The crucial conceptual conjecture here is one that Deleuze and Guattari construct via a reading of Hjelmslev: that the political lies not at the level of linguistic form, but rather at the level of the deep interactions between planes of matter, form and substance, along two axes of expression and content: 'the inter-penetration of language and the social field and political problems lies at the deepest level of the abstract machine, not at the surface'[11]. Thus, the proper level at which to grasp the political is the level of the relations between matter and form, expression and content. This claim can also be understood as the question of how social and political structures interact with the basic level of the production of the sign (the substance-form coupling and expression and content reciprocity). To clarify this argument, I turn to Deleuze and Guattari's use of Hjelmslev's semiotic theory and Foucault's theorisation of power.

2.2 - A return to Hjelmslev

To understand the previous claim, it is instructive at this point to review Hjelmslev's semiotic model of language, particularly the expression–content relation and the purport–substance–form triad.

Breaking with the classic approach of epistemology and logic, where the sign was viewed as the expression of content external to it, Hjelmslev's *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language* (1943) defines the sign as a semiotic function between expression and content.[12] Despite a general criticism of Hjelmslev amongst his contemporary scholars who claimed that the expression/content pair was only a superficial operation replacing Saussure's contrast between a signifier/signified

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[10] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 111.
[11] Ibid., p. 91.
[12] Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory Of Language*, trans. Francis J. Whitfield (London: The University Wisconsin Press, 1969 [orig. 1943]).

(*signifiant* /*signifié*), a thorough analysis of Hjlemlsev's model help us shed light on the innovative fashion in which Hjelmslev conceived of the relationship between expression and content. Moreover, it will help us understand how Deleuze and Guattari will be able to replace the conceptualisation of the sign as an arbitrary *association* (in the case of Saussure between a signified and signifier), by the figure of the sign resulting from the logical-mathematical idea of *function* that refers to the interactions between content and expression.[13] Moreover, in addition to Hjelmslev, Deleuze and Guattari understand function as difference.

Hjelmslev introduces two axes of observation in his model of language: one that features non-formed matters (designated as *purport*), form and formed matters (substance), and another that focuses on the interaction between content and expression, both at the level of form and formed matters (substances). None of these axes represents a linear continuum. They are a schematic meta-model of language that allows for the conceptualisation of the diverse elements that interplay at the level of linguistic formalisation. Under this meta-model, the content–expression pair refers to the two sides of the linguistic sign (generally referred to as *plane of content and plane of expression*), or semiotic functives of expression and content, whose interaction constitutes a sign. Thus, the Hjelmslevian distinction gives not only expression, but also content, its own form. Content and expression are defined according to a relation of solidarity and reciprocity towards one another, thus characterising what is called a connotative semiotic, a semiotic whose expression

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[13] In addition to function, Hjelmslev also introduces the idea of functive: 'By introducing the technical term function we seek to avoid the ambiguity that lies in the conventional use made of it in science, where it designates both the dependence between two terminals and one or both of these terminals-the latter when the one terminal is said to be 'a function of' the other. The, introduction of the technical term functive serves to avoid this ambiguity, as does the introduction of a usage that avoids saying that one functive is 'a function of' the other, and replace this with the phraseology: the one functive has a function to the other'. Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory Of Language*, p. 34.

plane consists of a content layer and an expression layer that cannot be defined outside this relation:[14]

> The terms *expression plane* and *content plane* and, for that matter, *expression* and *content* are chosen in conformity with established notions and are quite arbitrary. Their functional definition provides no justification for calling one, and not the other, of these entities *expression*, or one, and not the other, *content*. They are defined only by their mutual solidarity, and neither of them can be identified otherwise. They are each defined only oppositively and relatively, as mutually opposed functives of one and the same function.[15]

At the level of the sign, content corresponds to thought or the conceptual plane and speech, and expression refers to sound or the phonic plane. Hjelsmlev's semiotic net can be visualised as follows:

	purport unformed matter	form	formed matter
expression			
content			

Figure 3. Hjelmslev's semiotic model

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[14] In contrast, a simple semiotic whose expression plane cannot be analysed as a content-expression constellation, is termed, denotative semiotic.

[15] Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory Of Language*, p.60.

Furthermore, content and expression can be analysed as purport, form and formed matter (substance). Within the content plane, 'content–purport' is described as an amorphous thought-mass that refers to unformed and analysed thought. In one example given by Hjelmslev, relating to colour, the content–purport is the colour itself, which is referred to by different words in three different languages: in English, *green*, in French *vert* and in Welsh *glas*. Purport is the spectrum of colour to which different ranges of expression refer.

We move to the field of substance when purport is labelled in one particular language, for example, as 'green'. 'Content-substance' as formed matter is purport viewed from the point of view of a particular language and is the result of a process of 'form' acting upon purport. This is important because it is illustrative of the predominance and dependence on form over matter that still characterises the Hjelmslevian model: a content-substance is dependent upon a 'forming' process in language:

> The substance depends on the form to such a degree that it lives exclusively by its favour and can in no sense be said to have independent existence.[16]

The same applies to the definition of the 'content-form'. If the content-substance 'green' refers to that area of the colour spectrum (the purport) – which, in English, is delimited as a major colour 'green' – the content-form is the content 'green' purely defined in opposition to other content-forms, expressed, for example, in *yellow*, *blue*, or *red*. Although the expressions *green* in English and *glas* in Welsh can be regarded as having a common purport, the two expressions have different content-substances,

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[16] Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory Of Language*, p.50.

because English and Welsh carve up the colour spectrum in different ways. Welsh has another sign to refer to another shade of what is referred to as *green* in English, whereas what is called *glas* in Welsh is expressed in English as either *green*, *blue*, or *grey*. This also exemplifies the relation of reciprocal presupposition between expression and content. The content-form can be defined only in relation to the sign function in terms of the interaction between content and expression (connotative semiotics).

A similar differentiation between purport, form and substance can be made *within* the expression plane. 'Expression-purport' is defined by Hjelmslev in parallel to content-purport, as an amorphous, unanalysed sequence of sounds, a 'vocalic continuum'. Through the existence of an 'expression-form' (which exists by virtue of being connected with a content-form in a linguistic sign), the 'expression-purport' is formed into an 'expression-substance'. An expression-substance, then, is a sound sequence pronounced in a particular language by an individual person. An expression-substance, i.e. a particular pronunciation by an individual person, only exists *qua* substance by virtue of its relationship to an expression-form, i.e. by being the substance for a form. An expression-form, finally, is a sound sequence, which is interpreted, within a particular language, in terms of the phonemes by which this language carves up and selects from the complete range of possible human vocalisations. The phonemic (formal) nature of sound is in turn determined by its being linked to content. In other words, for Hjelmslev, also in the expression plane, 'form' is characterised in relation to the sign function: an *expression*-form is defined by forming a connection with a *content*-form and in this way constituting a sign. The

distinction between form and substance conforms to the contrast between phonology and phonetics.[17]

For Hjelmslev the type of semiotic relationship which holds between form and substance in this case is termed manifestation, and is described as the relationship between a *constant* and a *variable*, or between a schema and a usage: a linguistic schema (i.e. a sign, a form) is manifested in a usage (i.e. substance). In this framework, the form–substance contrast appears as a distinction, which can be used to grasp the relation between language and its sign-forms, and the particular uses which are made of these signs in different situations. A schema is a constant by virtue of the sign relationship, i.e. by virtue of the connection between content and an expression. Within the content plane as well as the expression plane this schema (i.e. content-form and expression-form, respectively) is manifested in a particular usage (i.e. a content-substance and expression-substance). Compared to the schema, this usage is a variable, since one schema (a constant) can be manifested in various possible usages. Hjelmslev calls the elements that are distinguished in an analysis of form invariants, and those which are arrived at in an analysis of substance variants.[18]

In regard to our analysis what is important to retain here is that the notions of form–substance–purport are intrinsically defined in relation to each other: purport provides the substance for a form, with form providing the mould for purport. However, the existence of a substance is entirely dependent on a form being 'projected' onto the purport, 'just as an open net casts its shadow down an undivided surface'.[19] Likewise, the relationship between form and substance is described in

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[17] The distinction between phonology and phonetics gradually became more important in the first half of the twentieth century and led to the definition of entities such as the phoneme, which is defined as the correspondence between minimal differences in sound to minimal units of meaning. A perfect example of the crafting of meaning *qua* sonic matter and vice-versa.

[18] Cf.: Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory Of Language*, p.61.

[19] Ibid., p. 57.

terms of a manifestation of form according to different usages. The differentiation between form and substance indicates a general type of semiotic contrast that recurs along a continuum: 'what from one point of view is "substance" is from another point of view "form"'.[20] In this sense, although it is possible to say that Hjelmslev's model opens the way for a pragmatic approach, a closer reading of Hjelmslevian pragmatics must deal with the fact that form always takes precedence over substance. A content-*form* serves to 'form' an area of conceptual purport into a content-substance, by virtue of being linked to a content-expression in a particular language. The same is true of expression-form: an expression-form serves to 'form' an area of phonic purport into an expression-substance, by virtue of being linked to a content-form in a particular language.[21] Therefore, it is 'form' which has a privileged role with regard to the linguistic sign as determined in terms of content and expression.

The Linguistic Sign and Relation to Form

In Hjelmslev's formulation, *form* is primary in the definition of the sign. Much as in Saussure, in the Hjelmslevian framework form is intrinsic to the definition of the sign; content-form and expression-form are defined by interacting with a form on a reverse plane. As mutually defining sides of a sign function, this interaction between content and expression is the principal characteristic defining the nature of a linguistic sign. In other words, the unit of the sign is constituted by the content-*form* together with the expression-*form*. In this sense it is important to note that although in Hjelmslev's theory the interaction between non-formed matter and formed matter takes place along the form–substance–purport triad (indeed, introducing this

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[20] Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory Of Language*, p. 81.
[21] This is in spite of Hjelmslev claim that all he is interested in is in language [*langue*]. We can see how, in his model, he incorporates the effect of particular languages, the particular usage or contextual implications and effects on linguistic expression.

interaction is one of the most innovative aspects of Hjelmslev theory) the sign remains to be conceived only in terms of form. This is because, the sign, in Hjelmslev's model is mainly of a linguistic nature, and the reciprocal interaction happens at the level of form only. In this sense, the interaction does not reach the level of matter (as it will in Guatttari's interpretation), as a sign is in great part defined as the carving up or forming purport and turning it ('forming it') into substance.

The establishment of the primacy of substantialisation over non-formed matter (purport) does not, however, proceed without a crucial difference to that of Saussure. If, in reality, in Hjemslev's approach the primacy of form is maintained, it is also true that it refers to two different, parallel yet reciprocal processes: one of expression, the other of content:

> The sign is, then, paradoxical as it may seem, *a sign for a content-substance* and *a sign for an expression-substance*. It is a two-sided entity, with a Janus-like perspective in two directions, and with effect in two respects: 'outwards' toward the expression-substance and 'inwards' toward the content-substance.[22]

Moreover, Hjelmslev's primary characterisation of the form–substance–purport conceptualisation makes it possible to think about the semiotic relationship by which the purport, or non-formed matter ('sound as such', for instance) is linked to language—that is, to linguistic signs or forms. It emphasises the relevance of positing the relation between the formed and the non-formed. These innovations of Hjelmslev's theory are what I believe Deleuze and Guattari saw as the possibility to renew a conceptualisation of linguistic formalisation. Understood as plural and non-reductive, such new conceptualisation of linguistic formalisation offers the method for a political genealogy of the sign.

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[22] Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory Of Language*, p. 58.

In Deleuze and Guattari's reinterpretation of Hjelmslev, a materialistic approach to language begins to be more clearly formulated with the introduction of some crucial differences. Their semio-pragmatic approach attempts to account for language as an intervention into relations between discursive and non-discursive domains, linguistic and non-linguistic elements, and between matter and form.

In Deleuze and Guattari's interpretations of Hjelmslev's idea of stratification in *A Thousand Plateaus*,[23] strata are acts of capture, which proceed by coding and territorialialisation. Stratification is described according to two independent yet reciprocally presupposing articulations, which receive the names of 'content' and 'expression', in a direct reading of Hjelmslev. The first articulation, content, is defined as 'it chooses or deducts, from unstable particle-flows, metastable molecular or quasi-molecular units (substances) upon which it imposes a statistical order of connections and successions (forms)'.[24] The second articulation, expression, 'establishes functional, compact, stable structures (forms), and constructs the molar compounds in which these structures are simultaneously actualized (substances)'.[25] Forms of content and expression are variables of a function of stratification (form qua strata). Content and expression are differentiated from the philosophical distinction between 'substances' and 'forms'. The reason is that each one of the two articulations involves substances and forms: both 'choosing or deducting' (substance) and 'ordering' (form).

This corresponds to Hjelmslev's theory in that both content-form and expression-form exist by interacting with a form on a reverse plane: an expression-

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[23] See *A Thousand Plateaus*, particularly Plateau 3, 'The Geology of Morals: Who does the Earth think it is?'.
[24] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 46.
[25] Ibid., p. 46.

form or a content-form, respectively. In his article 'La Stratification du Langage' (1954), Hjelmslev refers to the double distinction between form/substance and content/expression as the stratification of language, leading, as we saw previously, to the differentiation between content-form, expression-form, content-substance (purport) and expression-substance (-purport). However, in Deleuze and Guattari's use of Hjelmslev, the precedence of form over matter that is maintained at the level of the sign is dissolved, so that the constitutive relation between expression and content is not only accounted for at the level of form, but also of matter—that is, accounted for at the level of the relations within the triad purport-substance-form. In Chapter 3 of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari speak of a double articulation of content and expression within each of their triadic strings of purport-substance-form. In addition to Hjelmslev, Deleuze and Guattari also describe the relation between content and expression as not being one of correspondence or conformity but of isomorphism:

> The important thing is the principle of the simultaneous unity and variety of the stratum: isomorphism of forms but no correspondence; identity of elements or components but no identity of compound substances.[26]

Claiming that there is no 'correspondence' means that there is no resemblance, conformity, or pre-determinant connection between these two independent and heterogeneous strings or axes. Double articulation therefore means the heterogeneous distribution of content and expression that differentiates between real distinctions in a stratum. It must not be confused with form and substance that are differentiated

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[26] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*., p.51.

without real distinction (since substances are nothing other than homogeneously formed matter).

> The distinction between the two articulations is not between forms and substances but between content and expression, expression having just as much substance as content and content just as much form as expression. The double articulation sometimes coincides with the molecular and the molar, and sometimes not; this is because content and expression are sometimes divided along those lines. There is never correspondence of conformity between content and expression, only isomorphism with reciprocal presupposition. The distinction between content and expression is always real, in various ways, but it cannot be said that the terms pre-exist their double articulation. It is double articulation that distributes them according to the line it draws on each stratum. (...) Even though there is a real distinction between them, content and expression are relative terms ('first' and 'second' articulation should also be understood in an entirely relative fashion).[27]

In conceptualising the relation of expression and content in terms of a reciprocal presupposition with distinct formalisations, Deleuze and Guattari follow Hjelmslev in the attempt to dissolve the hierarchy implicit to the definition of the sign according to the pair signifier-signified. This is why Deleuze and Guattari argue that, despite what Hjelmslev may have said, his model is not specifically linguistic in nature. His model allows understanding the sign prior to the substance-form coupling and according with a processuality of formalization(s). As such, Deleuze and Guattari's reinterpretation of Hjelmslev stresses the role played by the relation between matter and form in the formation of the sign. Departing from Hjelmselv they extend the mutual solidarity of expression and content within the purport-substance-form triad.

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[27] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p.49.

At this point it is perhaps useful to remember the diagram presented by Hjelmslev, given at the beginning of this chapter, and to note the alterations introduced by Guattari in his new version:

	matter	semiotically formed substances	
		substance	form
expression		a-signifying semiotics	
content		signifying semiologies	

a-semiotic encodings
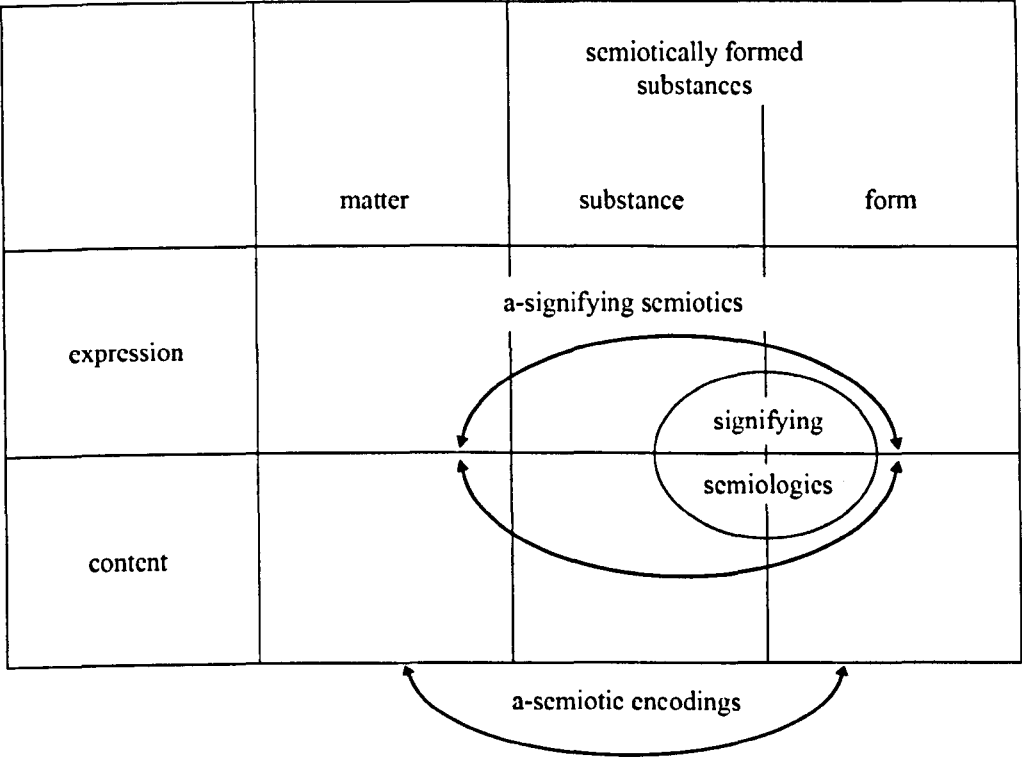
Figure 4. Guattari's reinterpretation of Hjelmslev semiotic model,'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', 1977, *Molecular Revolution*.

There are two main issues at stake here: the first concerns additions to the Hjelmslevian grid that, by including relations of power, allow a more precise understanding of the political manoeuvres behind signifying semiologies; and a second type of additions that allow for a more elaborated semio-pragmatic conception of language than that which has been presented so far.

In *Molecular Revolution*,[28] Guattari introduces a revised version of the Hjelmslevian grid that includes several new relations and transformations, including a redefinition of the categories of expression and substance. Let us first explain the new categorisations that Guattari introduces in order to clarify the relation between signifying semiologies and power. Firstly, at the level of substance of content Guattari adds to the generic idea of concepts specific social values and principles. At the level of substance of expression, in addition to images, colours, words and sounds, Guattari adds a series of extra-linguistic materials, such gestural, technical, biological and aesthetic substances. In doing so he refuses the notion that only semiotics and semiology are available for expression, and enlarges the possible modes of expression. At the same time, at the level of formalisations of expression, Guattari argues that these tend to be reduced to linguistic formalisations: thus, syntax and grammatical rules become the essential norms for the 'correct' use of language. Finally, in formalisations of content he adds social norms, distributions of what can be said or not, equivalences of values, dominant interpretations, etc.

Let us now see how, expanded and specified in this way, the Hjelmslevian glossematic grid is able to capture with precision the operations of what Guattari calls signifying semiologies, and how they are easily mobilised by forms of power (in particular, the state). The key aspect I would like to foreground is the relation of expression and content, which returns us to the critique to the primacy of the signifier over the signified amply discussed in Chapter One. The problem, as it was noted, is that structuralist linguistics masks the fundamental dualism of content and expression, by paying attention to expression only (the signifier), and, in doing so,

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28 Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire* (Fontenau-sous-Bois: Recherches, 1977), p.279.

fails to recognise the political origins of content and of significations. Semantics, for Guattari, is never put in question by structuralist linguistics. The issue for Guattari, nevertheless, is not that of putting into question a formalism that is universal, but of understanding the ways in which a system of power is able to use the means of a signifying formation to unify all modes of expression, centring them under its own values: i.e. how one unique formalisation of expression (language) is made central and used to translate all other ones.[29]

Guattari also contends that the articulation between formalisations of content and formalisations of expression is done by social institutions, via an abstract semiotic machine.[30] This machine allows for the articulation of the linguistic machine (the proper language rules) with the structuration of specific power formations. Whereas Saussure thought the relation between the signifier and the signified was arbitrary, and Hjelmslev thought his version of expression-content was a simple function, both were unable to account for power. But in conceiving this articulation as operated by social formations (not necessarily only the state), it is easy to understand the formation of a national language and its rules of speaking (form of expression) and how it is coupled with national values and norms (forms of content). The question then is, as Langlois has argued, that of understanding 'who has the right and legitimacy to articulate the linguistic machine with power formations', and, I would like to add, beyond legitimacy, who has the ability to do so?[31]

Deleuze and Guattari also remark that the very independence of expression and content is, at the same time, what gives rise to the imperialist pretensions of language'. In their view, linguistic strata operate a distribution of content and

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[29] Félix Guattari, *Révolution Moléculaire*, p. 242.
[30] Ibid., p. 241.
[31] Ganaele Langlois, 'Meaning, Semiotechnologies and Participatory Media' (*Culture Machine*, Vol. 12, 2011) p. 15.

expression that is different from other strata: in contrast with the geological, crystalline, or physiochemical, whereby strata differs in order of magnitude or scale, and where the content is molecular and expression is molar, and also in contrast to organic strata, whose autonomous expression preserves and even amplifies the molecular-molar relation, in language, the form of content becomes alloplastic (alloplastic strata) rather than homoplastic. It thus concerns a new distribution of content and expression that operates through overcoding and translation (vs. inductions and transductions, respectively referring to the geological and the organic).

However, let us now return to Guattari's transformation of the Hjelmslevian grid (Figure 4), to focus on two important additions: the first one concerns the category of matter or purport, that in Hjelmslev's grid was described as unknowable until the moment when form was projected over it. However, for Guattari, matter itself needed to be properly conceptualised, as, rather than being an invisible domain, it manifests at the level of unorganised material intensities. Guattari thus subdivides matter into matter of expression, or *sens*, and matter of content, or continuum of material fluxes. This distinction was to be essential, because, as Guattari remarks, it 'opens the way to the study of semiotics independent of signifying semiologies, that is to say, of semiotics which, to be precise, would not be based on the bi-polarity of signifier-signified'.[32]And, as I shall show later on, this was indeed the case: the distinction between matter of expression and matter of content was one of the main aspects that allowed Guattari to develop a semio-pragmatic conception of language.

The second addition concerns a curved line that is now under the grid itself, connecting material fluxes to formed content, thus avoiding the semiotically formed

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[32] Félix Guattari, 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Gnosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996 [orig. 1977]), p. 148.

substances. This line refers to what Guattari called a-semiotic encodings: these are not semiotic, strictly speaking, but refer instead to forms of communication that take place without a translational device (*écriture*), let alone a signifying system, such as genetic encodings.

The most important addition, however, is two two-way arrows connecting the now existing category of matter with substance and form along both axes of content and expression. These arrows refer to what Guattari termed a-signifying semiotics, i.e. semiotics that 'function independently of whether they signify something for someone or not'.[33] A-signifying (or post-signifying) semiotics implies the workings of 'a-signifying machines' that might in some cases continue to depend on signifying semiotics (or semiologies) but that create relationships between matter, substance and form that are not *primarily* signifying.

In *Signs and Machines*, Maurizio Lazzarato has amply discussed the importance of Guattari's concept of a-signifying semiotics in seeking to understand processes of (machinic) enslavement in modern capitalism that remain invisible from the perspective of classical political analysis, focusing in particular on the operations of a-signifying signs (informational) in media or finance. However, I would like to focus here on another important aspect of this formulation, which is the way it regards a pragmatics of language. The key aspect here is that a-signifying semiotics are not based on representation or meaning—but neither do they avoid it. What remains hidden in today's discussion of a-signifying semiotics from the perspective of financial algorithms is how a-signifying semiotics concerns, in Guattari's conception, language: language as intervention (or, as put in Chapter One, as order-word). The point then is one of language as action or intervention. And in that sense

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[33] Félix Guattari, 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', p. 150.

information is only required insofar as a strict minimum is required for the intervention to be successful or received:[34] a-signifying semiotics 'are not primarily concerned with meaning as the content of signification, but with the adequation of a communicative ensemble with the real'.[35] The problem is, then, one of adequation, or, as in Deleuze and Guattari's discussion of Lenin slogans, *justness*.

A final point should be added to clarify that the concept of formalisation used by Guattari, and later on by Deleuze as well. Formalisation is not a term used by Hjelmslev – he used instead the terms content-form and expression-form. Moreover, it is employed by Deleuze and Guattari in a very different way to that used in French epistemology, by which formalisation was equated with a process of mathematical abstraction of content into form as opposed to interpretation. By conceiving the idea of two parallel processes of formalisation, one of content, the other of expression, Deleuze and Guattari moved away from the absolute priority given to form by Hjelmslev. In their view, every formalisation is a local formalisation, subject to relations of forces and power formations, and is therefore strategic and dynamic, rather than aspiring to an absolute translation of matter into form. The very concept of formalisation in this sense is invested with a pragmatic dimension.

We have so far examined the way in which Deleuze and Guattari make Hjelmslev's work serve the purposes of a semio-pragmatics of language. This is mainly visible in the conception of language involving two intertwined systems, with parallel modes of formalisation, and how this accounts for the conditions under which language is effectuated.

However, in order to understand this move to, and beyond, Hjelmslev, it is necessary to clarify the dialogue that Deleuze and Guattari establish with Foucault,

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[34] 'One must be just informed enough not to confuse "Fire!" with "Fore!"' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 76.

[35] Ganaele Langlois, 'Meaning, Semiotechnologies and Participatory Media', p. 21.

regarding the nature of power and knowledge. In particular, I will focus on how Deleuze and Guattari use Foucault to read Hjelmslev and vice versa. This dialogue becomes manifest at the level of the conception of discursive formations, the idea of reciprocal presupposition between form and expression and the articulation between form and non-formed matters.

2.3 - A Dialogue with Foucault

Deleuze and Guattari's reading of Hjelmslev as the basis of a semiotic pragmatics of language becomes clearer when they bring Foucault to bear on Hjelmslev's conceptual terms. Foucault's development of a concept of power beyond the juridical-discursive is central to understanding Deleuze and Guattari's development of a semio-pragmatic approach that avoids reducing the analysis of language to linguistic perspectives. However, despite briefly alluding to the close relationship between Hjelmslev and Foucault in several texts, Deleuze and Guattari have never clearly declared this. Nonetheless, I argue that such a connection exists.

In his book on Foucault, Deleuze engages with Foucault's notion of 'statement' (*enoncé*). In this case, the connection to Hjelmslev is explicit, as Deleuze reads Foucault by focusing on the reciprocal presupposition between expression and content. And, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Foucault's studies of the prison and delinquency are used to support the idea that in language there is a mutual reciprocity between expression and content (the prison-form of content and delinquency-form of expression), borrowing the terms from Hjelmslev, in opposition to the Saussurian pair of signifier and signified. According to Deleuze and Guattari, Foucault's

research was profoundly concerned with linguistics.[36] Even more clearly, in

'Microphysics of Power and Micropolitics of Desire', Guattari, approximates

Foucault's contribution to his own specific emphasis on a semio-pragmatic

conception of language, by noting how 'Foucault commits himself to describing the

actual agents that engender the discursivity of social groups and institutions – which

in turn leads him to the modalities of the construction of subjectivity, virtually

unrecognized until then.'[37]

Indeed, if in his early works Foucault was developing research the principles

of which were those of structuralism, in *The Archeology of Knowledge* (published

one year before *Anti-Oedipus*) he considerably moved away from a structuralist

analysis.[38] By this time, Foucault had become critical of structuralism's practice of

'treating discourse as groups of signs (signifying elements referring to contents or

representations)'[39] or its focus on language (*la langue*) without much concern for its

practice (speech) or its referent. Instead, he wished to move away from a direct focus

on language and instead turn his attention to the problem of enunciation. This

implied understanding language within the broader sphere of discourse. In contrast

with structural linguistics' practice of looking for universals (*langue*) behind the

local and unique bits of language that are actually written and spoken (*parole*), and

treating discourse as signifying elements referring to contents or representations,

Foucault's poststructuralist project becomes one of exposing the historical specificity

of discourses. As such, discourses should be understood from the perspective of

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[36] 'Let us follow Foucault in his exemplary analysis, which, though it seems not to be, is eminently concerned with linguistics.' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 66.

[37] Félix Guattari, 'Microphysics of Power and Micropolitics of Desire', *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Genosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996 [orig. 1986]), p.175.

[38] We are referring here to *Folie et Déraison: Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (1961) and *Naissance de la clinique: une archéologie du regard médical* (1963), which, by Foucault's own admission, still followed in the footsteps of structuralism and a hermeneutics of social discourse.

[39] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. Sheridan Smith (London/New York: Routledge, 2010 [orig. 1969]), p. 54.

'practices that systematically form the objects of which they speak'.[40] Foucault was interested in posing the question of language by carrying out an inquiry into its mode of existence, and through the lens of its productive dimension—that is, through the analysis of the specific conditions of its occurrence in a specific context in time. In particular, this meant giving attention to the effects it triggers rather than what it manifests, represents or signifies.

In what follows, I demonstrate how Deleuze and Guattari read Hjelmslev together with Foucault in such a way as to present language as traversed at all levels by relations of power. However, before moving directly to the question of power, it is necessary to clarify how the notions of statement and discourse make possible to move away from linguistics. Only after doing so it is possible to understand Foucault's development of a conception of power in relation to language, and to explain how it is helpful to understanding Deleuze and Guattari's semio-pragmatic conception of language. In particular, through the analysis of their reading of Foucault in relation to the semiotics of Hjelmslev, I construct their pragmatics of language as a pragmatics of power that is both semiotic and political.

The concept of statement

> Language (langue) and statement are not at the same level of existence.[41]
> — Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge
>
> —

In his text 'Microphysics of Power / Micropolitics of Desire'[42], Guattari praises Foucault for having moved away from an hermeneutics of discourse (where

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[40] Michel Foucault, The Archaeology of Knowledge, p.49.
[41] Ibid., p. 85
[42] Félix Guattari, 'Microphysics of Power and Micropolitics of Desire', pp. 172–181.

discourse was concerned with origins and thus 'plac[ed] itself at the disposal of the signifier') to a conception of enunciation, where the statement assumed a central role due to its capacity in regard to 'existential production'. For our purposes, the concept of the *enoncé,* most commonly translated as 'statement', is the key concept when seeking to analyse Foucault's approach to language. Equally important are the notions of 'discourse' and 'discourse formation', which stand against the idea of a structure or unity of discourse, as they are intrinsically connected to the foundation of Foucault's concept of power. Before looking at these notions it is necessary to provide a quick overview of the notion of statement.

Foucault conceives of the statement as being the 'modality of existence proper to that group of signs'.[43] In contrast to a sentence or a proposition, the Foucauldian statement is a function of existence – a 'statement-event' – that is not exhausted by language alone. It is important to notice from the start how Foucault's primary research was concerned with illuminating the interplay of relations inside and outside the linguistic domain with which the event of language is concerned:

> However banal it may be, however unimportant its consequences may appear to be (...), a statement is always an event that neither the language (*langue*) nor the meaning can quite exhaust. It is certainly a strange event: first, because in one hand it is linked to the gesture of writing or to the articulation of speech, and also on the other hand it opens up to itself a residual existence in the field of memory, or in the materiality of manuscripts, books, or any other form of recording; secondly, because like every event, it is unique, yet subject to repetition, transformation, and reactivation; thirdly, because it is linked not only to the situations that provoke it, and to the consequences that it gives rise to, but at the

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[43] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.120

same time, and in accordance with a quite different modality, to the statements that precede and follow it.[44]

In this analysis, Foucault is interested in emphasising two aspects: the role played by the non-linguistic, and the contingent historicity of the emergence of the statement in a determinate field. Par excellence, his method of analysis (archaeological) aims to focus on what is behind the formation of discourses, and consequently how statements influence the formation of objects and social practices. This is what Foucault means by describing the statement according to the specific conditions of existence that see it emerge in a determinate field. Even though it can take a linguistic form, the statement is a socio-historical function, rather than a strictly linguistic one; hence it is neither quite linguistic not exclusively material (in the words of Guattari, the statement engages a capacity of existential production, or what he calls diagrammatic function).

It is instructive to understand how Foucault would differentiate his conception of statement from Austin's theory of speech-acts. Both Foucault and Austin agree that statements do things, bring about pragmatic effects, rather than merely 'represent' states of affairs: they are not mere propositions. However, even if Austin's speech-acts and Foucault's statements can be said to 'accomplish' events and create effects, equivalences between some speech-acts and some statements are merely coincidental. While Austin emphasises the local context-dependence of the occurrence of most speech-acts (person, time, place, language, etc.), for Foucault it is crucial to stress the ways in which the context-dependence of a statement reveals how it does not constitute a unit in the linguistic or the signifying sense, i.e. how its

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[44] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.31.

effectuation is not internally dependent. Instead, for Foucault, the same speech-act can, in fact, give rise to different statements.

For Foucault, speech-acts can correspond to different statements; every statement occurs within a specific socially and historically formed discursive practice; and each produces different objects. This means that 'a statement exists outside of any possibility of reappearing', i.e. that it cannot be repeated (an argument that, more recently, Maurizio Lazzarato returned to in his critique of Butler's politics of speech-acts).[45] Rather than focusing on formal properties, logical structures or transcendental foundations, Foucault gives priority to the analysis of language as an event inscribed in a concrete historical space-time.

> The analysis of statements, then, is a historical analysis, but one that avoids all interpretation: it does not question things said as to what they are hiding, what they are 'really' saying, in spite of themselves, the unspoken element that they contain, the proliferation of thoughts, images or fantasies that inhabit them: but, on the contrary, it questions them as to their mode of existence, what it means to them to have come into existence, to have left traces, and perhaps to remain there, awaiting the moment when they might be of use once more.[46]

Moreover, in place of Austin's conception of 'speech-act', Foucault argues that the 'statement' is 'not itself a unit, but a function that cuts across a domain of structures and possible unities, and which reveals them, with concrete contents, in time and space'.[47] For Foucault, neither grammar nor logic, or speech-analysis, can capture the specificity of the statement. If it were considered as a unit the statement would be

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[45] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines: Capitalism and The Production of Subjectivity*, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2014), p. 188.
[46] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 123
[47] Ibid., p.98.

a unit of a very different kind: statements are, for Foucault, 'functions of existence' that are made to work, rather than closed-upon linguistic entities. It is useful to give an example to understand the motivation behind Foucault's desire to distance himself from Austin's speech-act for the purpose of his own conception of language: for instance, the proposition 'I am lying!' allows endless statements depending on the context in which it is uttered, if it is the repetition of a previous identical proposition, etc. Unlike the proposition or the speech-act, the statement never re-appears because it identifies an existential (non-repeatable) unit.

Foucault, then, makes the existential the centre-piece of his notion of statement. And, in doing so, he directly connects language to materiality: 'The statement is always given through some material medium, even if that medium is concealed, even if it is doomed to vanish as soon as it appears. And the statement not only needs this materiality (...) it is partially made up of this materiality'.[48]

Discourse formations

> Discourses are composed of signs; but what they do is more than use these signs to designate things. It is this *more* that renders them irreducible to language (langue) and to speech. It is this 'more' that we must reveal and describe.
>
> – Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*[49]

The idea of the 'more' of language, pointing to its dependency upon factors outside of the purely linguistic, is key to understanding how Foucault is central to Deleuze and Guattari's thought on language. As we saw before, according to Foucault, statements should be understood *not by deconstructing them into fixed components,*

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[48] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.112.
[49] Ibid., p.54.

but only via the rules that govern their functioning. It is crucial to bear in mind, however, that these are not linguistic rules. They have to do with historically variable bodies of knowledge, which pre-condition what it is possible to know or say. Hence, they are not susceptible to a general theory of language (*langage*). On the contrary, they expose the fragility of such approaches, as they point to the things that are outisde language itself. This is the point of the 'archaeological method': to unmask the apparent independence of language by revealing the relation between speech-acts and the various social institutions and other settings that contribute to the event of language.

To properly grasp the concept of statement, one requires the more encompassing notion of discourse (the definition of which has varied across Foucault's work). For Foucault, statements, or, better, groups of statements, are the constitutive elements of discourse; and discursive formations (or systems of formation) are the rules that govern these groups of statements (or discourse). Importantly, discursive-formations should also be understood as an enunciative system. They refer to a particular way of organising knowledge through discourse.

> Discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs, in so far as they are statements, that is, in so far as they can be assigned particular modalities of existence (...) the law of such a series is precisely that which I have so far called a discursive formation (...) the term discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation.[50]

Foucault's point is to speak of clinical, political, legal discourses, etc, i.e. groups of statements that come together in a coherent way. But, more importantly, it is to understand discourse as a site of political struggle, given that some discourses

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[50] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.121

become successful (such as the discourse on sustainable living) and others are fenced off (such as the discourse on land rights). At the same time, for Foucault, discursive formations are derived from a discursive practice, which he understood as a 'body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in the time and space that have defined for a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of the enunciative function.'[51]

> By system of formation, then, I mean a complex group of relations that function as a rule: it lays down what must be related, in a particular discursive practice, for such and such an enunciation to be made, for such and such a concept to be used, for such and such a strategy to be organized. To define a system of formation in its specific individuality is therefore to characterize a discourse or a group of statements by the regularity of a practice.[52]

Thus, the concept of discursive-formations emphasises the idea that discourse does not merely reflect extrinsic conditions, but rather it produces them, insofar as it structures the way in which reality is perceived: it relates elements and concepts, and makes it possible for certain non-discursive elements to constitute themselves as objects. At the same time it recognises that extrinsic elements and agents have their play in the production of discourses. For instance, psychiatry is a discursive practice that is inseparable from non-discursive formations, such as the state and institutions like La Borde. The point is that neither social structures, nor any one single element, determines the emergence of a discourse. It is not a matter of economic, normative, or juridical practices, but of relations that are established at a certain time between linguistic and non-linguistic domains. This notion demands a dynamic approach to

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[51] Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p.131.
[52] Ibid., p.74.

the relations between the linguistic and non-linguistic elements.

Finally, Foucault's intention is to place this notion of discourse in opposition to two others that conceive of discourse either as the formulation of an already existent articulation that precedes the discourse (the question of origin), or as the manifestation of another secret or underlying murmur, a discourse that is animating discourse from within or from below (manifest discourse as a repressive presence of what it does not say). Whereas the first saw the historical analysis of discourse as the quest for, and repetition of, an origin that eludes all historical determination, the second sees it at as the interpretation of the 'hearing' of an 'already-said' that is not the same as a 'not-said'. Instead, Foucault argues that discourse can never be other than what it is:

> We must be ready to receive every moment of discourse in its sudden irruption. Discourse must not be referred to the distant presence of origin, but treated as and when it occurs.[53]

We can see, then, how fundamentally Foucault's conceptualization of discourse formations addresses historically- specific relations between disciplines (defined as bodies of knowledge) and their practices as forms of social control that concretely restrict social possibilities of seeing and saying. For instance, if *Madness and Civilization* depicts the conditions that lead to the possible development of a discipline like psychiatry, and its constitution as an autonomous discourse, it does so because Foucault intends to investigate systems of thought independently of famous thinkers and authors. And in doing so, and under the term discursive formations, he opens the way to a very different archaeology (genealogy) of the politics of language.

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[53] Cf. Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, p. 28.

> The omnipresence of power: not because it has the privilege of consolidating
> everything under its invincible unity, but because it is produced from one
> moment to the next, at every point, or rather in every relation from one point
> to another. Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything, but
> because it comes from everywhere. And 'Power,' insofar as it is permanent,
> repetitious, inert, and self-reproducing, is simply the over-all effect that
> emerges from all these mobilities, the concatenation that rests on each of
> them and seeks in turn to arrest their movement.[54]
>
> - Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*

The previous discussion takes us to a couple of important conclusions: first, the fact

that language has an effect on the things it refers to – that is, it cannot be seen as a

simple innocuous translation, rather, it intervenes in, as much as it is dependent

upon, the very things it refers to; second, that the question of language should be

treated neither on the basis of a universal logos levelling out existential contingency,

nor as the revelation of an original meaning, but, instead, as a specific irruption in a

given moment in time, in a certain context, the statement representing an

actualisation in a field of possibilities. Having come to this understanding, we should

now address an aspect that is central to Foucault's thought, and that lies at the centre

of this reasoning, which is the question of power.

It is clear that for Foucault discourse cannot be developed separately from the

question of power. Indeed *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (1969) and *The Order of*

Discourse (1971) prepares the passage from discourse to power—later made explicit

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[54] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality. Volume 1: An Introduction,* Trans. Robert Hurley (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979 [Orig. 1978]) p. 93.

in *Discipline and Punish* (1975)—based on the idea that there is no discourse that is not associated with forms of power, that there is no knowledge that is independent from the institutions that produce it, as much as there is also no apparatus of power which does not produce the knowledge by which it understands its own production. Undoubtedly the question of power runs through both Foucault's and Deleuze and Guattari's work, bringing them together. In an interview published in 1972, Foucault said to Deleuze: 'If reading your books (from Nietzsche and Philosophy to what I imagine will be Capitalism and Schizophrenia) has been so important for me it is because they seem to me to go very far in posing this problem (who exercises power and where it is exercised?): underneath the old theme of meaning, signified and signifier etc., at last the question of power, of the inequality of powers and their struggles'.[55]

To speak of power in relation to language one should distinguish between two main areas of investigation: first, how discursive formations are the result of relations of power (not continuity or truth), thus evidencing how language is anything but a constant; and, secondly, how discourses produce the objects they speak about, thus evidencing the way in which language participates in forms of subjugation. For the purpose of this thesis I shall develop both these dimensions, as they unfold a renewed way of thinking about power within the field of language. These preclude explaining language in terms of the signifier–signified binary, or through a formalist position that begins with transcendent universal forms, the opposition between infrastructures and superstructures, dominant and dominated, etc. However, before we address these two dimensions, a general clarification about the

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[55] 'Intellectuals and power: A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze'. In *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews by Michel Foucault.* Ed. Donald F. Bouchard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980 [Orig. 1977]), p. 209. [This discussion was recorded on March 4, 1972, and it was published in a special issue of *L'Arc* (No. 49, pp. 3–10), dedicated to Gilles Deleuze. It is reprinted here by permission of *L'Arc*].

notion of power in Foucault is necessary: the key novelty in Foucault's conception is that power is not a property, rather it is a relation of forces. In Foucault, power is understood as relations of force (quantitative), rather than a property (qualitative) one is endowed with, or a stable entity. In *The History of Sexuality* he writes:

> *Power is not something that is acquired*, seized, or shared, something that one holds on to or allows to slip away (...).
>
> *Relations of power are not in a position of exteriority with respect to other types of relationships* (...), but are immanent in the latter (...).
>
> *Power comes from below*; that is, there is no binary and all-encompassing opposition between rulers and ruled at the root of power relations (...).
>
> *Where there is power, there is resistance*, and yet, or rather consequently, this resistance is never in a position of exteriority in relation to power (...). [My emphasis]. [56]

In more general terms, Foucault's conception of power has three main aspects: power is not, in essence, repressive; it is exercised before it is owned; and it is transversal to both oppressors and oppressed. With this transversal conception of power, Foucault attempts, first and foremost, to understand how scientific or disciplinary bodies of knowledge, are, far from being objective or independent, affected by power, and consequently should be subject to political dispute. His goal is to replace the classical history of science as the continuous accumulations of facts, moving increasingly closer to truth, and to discredit the idea that knowledge results from individual acts of brilliance from genious minds. Instead, scientific discourse, as Foucault demonstrates in *Madness and Civilization*, is discontinuous, often

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[56] Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, pp. 94-5.

incongruous, and is the result of one discourse gaining preeminence over others; equally certain individual inventions and discoveries only make sense if understood in the context of a determinate discourse.

With this in mind, it is clear that such a notion of power has direct consequences as regards an understanding of language. What Foucault tries to address are the conditions in which 'enunciation' takes place. As we saw previously, for Foucault discourses (or, roughly speaking, bodies of knowledge) are discontinuous (not cumulative) across history. This means that knowledge in this sense loses its positivist imprint and emerges as a product of forces in history. Thus, what is to count as 'truth' – for example, the truth about a person's sexuality or health – is therefore always the effect of specific kinds of techniques—the very kinds of institutional and discursive practices which Foucault analyses in *Madness and Civilization* and *The Birth of the Clinic*. But this analysis is only possible because it relies on a notion of power that lies not on discursive formations but before them. In this sense, power is on the side of 'unformed forces', which in certain contexts and given moments in time originate specific discursive formations or bodies of knowledge. And in this one should include the linguistic system itself.

As described above, Foucault's concept of the statement and discursive formations exposes language as being at the centre of relations of force. And by relations of force, I mean power. The discursive formation is dependent upon a series of local and historically contingent relations, which cannot be predicted by a general theory. Hence, in regards to language (*langage*), according to a Foucauldian framework, the linguistic as a specific formalisation in time and in a given context is just one instance of how power affects discursive formations. It is a component of discursive formations, which in turn are contingent on a series of factors outside the

linguistic per se: that is, social and historical relations. Because such relations are local and historically contingent (traversed by power), they cannot be captured by any general theory. Only what Foucault calls 'archeological' or later 'genealogical' investigations can identify these rules.

The second area in which Foucault's notion of power affects previous conceptions of language is the idea that discourses produce the objects they speak about. We can better understand this claim if we recall how in Foucault the notion of discourse is associated with a dispute over what counts as truth—it subsumes the problem of truth to that of force, it directs the discussion of language to the questions: what can be possibly be said? And what can be possibly be thought? The idea of discursive formation dismantles the idea that words simply represent things: instead, each discursive formation is a function of existence, whose emergence or irruption is informed by a reciprocal relation between words and things (or, in Hjelmslev's terms, expression and content). This is central because it evidences the way in which language participates in forms of subjugation, namely the ways by which social groups and institutions operate through language, and in particular capitalism.

It is in this way that across modernity Foucault identifies a form of power that is not exercised through traditional techniques of repression but through a positive production of knowledge, a power that is not in fact repressive, but generative, a power that can only function thanks to the formation of knowledge.[57] This leads him to describe power, in *Power/Knowledge* that 'Power must by analyzed as something which circulates, or rather as something which only functions in the form of a chain. It is never localised here or there, never in anybody's hands, never appropriated as a

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[57] This was developed further in an early definition of 'biopower' in his 1975 university course *The Abnormal* at the Collège de France. This allowed Foucault to distinguish between the domains of the Law and the Norm.

commodity or piece of wealth.'[58] This productive approach to power goes beyond

the idea of power as property, structure or institution, as something one is endowed

with, and that can be owned, to something that corresponds to a complex strategic

situation grounded in relations of force that are contingent and local in a particular

society. The economy of power relations is thus a transversal one, not subservient to

an infrastructure—superstructure approach (this is not an economicist conception of

power, nor is power a property of the state). At the same time, and importantly, from

the idea of the contingency and historicity of discursive formations, emerges the idea

that it is possible to intervene in the economy of discourse, by means of procedures

that control, select, organise, and distribute discourses, i.e. a generative and strategic

conception of power. This means that to understand power and how it operates

requires not so much analysing a specific power, or source of power, but analysing

strategic relations, techniques of governing and how these produce states of

domination.

There is, however, one final aspect of power I have not yet discussed: power

conceived as strategic means an idea of power as not being something that one side

does to the other, but as a field of contestation and therefore of resistance. As we

saw, according to Foucault resistance is co-extensive with power, and therefore if

there is a power relation, there is a possibility of resistance. But this is not a

resistance opposed to power, against it from the outside, but one that is internal to it.

In that sense there is not one resistance, but rather 'a plurality of resistances', to

power. The point here is not to say that there are not great binary oppositions and

ruptures in history, but to focus on the multiple more transient, more mobile

resistances that traverse individuals, institutions or social formations. And neither

[58] Michel Foucault, 'Two Lectures' in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972-1977.* Ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books 1980 [Orig. 1977]), p. 98.

does it mean that existing power relations cannot be criticised. It is not a question of an opposition between power and resistance, but a matter of ever-changing struggles in space and time.

An example of the above conception of power used by Deleuze and Guattari is taken from *Discipline and Punish*. Here Foucault develops a concept of power-knowledge in which power and knowledge are understood correlatively – although power in the case of the Panopticon still only refers to the disciplinary power that affects bodies. For instance, using the example of the institution of the prison and the discourse of delinquency, bodies of knowledge (discourses) such as criminology and psychology organise the functioning of the prison and justify the prison to society at large. And yet, these bodies of knowledge can only justify the prison because they themselves are the possibility of the existence of such discursive formations. As such they constitute their own object of concern. But the important point is that, in Foucault's conception, there is always a possibility of resistance. This strategic conception of power, and the way it traverses language, becomes particularly evident when set in relation to Foucault's creation of the Prisons Information Group (*Groupe d'Information sur les Prisons*, the GIP) the purpose of which was to create conditions that would allow prisoners to speak by themselves:

> When the prisoners began to speak, writes Foucault, they possessed an
> individual theory of prisons, the penal system, and justice. It is this form of
> discourse which ultimately matters, a discourse against power, the counter-
> discourse of prisoners and those we call delinquents—and not a theory about
> delinquency.[59]

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[59] Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze, 'Intellectuals and power: A conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze', in *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: selected essays and interviews by Michel Foucault*, ed. Donald F. Bouchard (New York: Cornell University Press, 1980 [Orig. 1977]), p. 209. The actual interview took place on March 4, 1972.

Finally it should be noted that in subsequent works Foucault shifts his focus on power to control rather than the relation of forces. In *The Order of Discourse* Foucault argues that there are three modes of control: a) control of discourse power that takes place through prohibition/censorship, as well as through the neutralisation of the representations (knowledge) discourses convey; b) control of the conditions of circulation of discourses, a control that takes place when the presence or the circulation of specific discourses is blocked or limited within a particular social domain or institution; c) control of the conditions of production of discourses, by establishing restrictions and rules – that is, sociolinguistic, linguistic, and rhetorical constraints – in different social contexts. In any case, ultimately Foucault's conception of power is one that traverses both language, knowledge, peoples and institutions. It infiltrates all social aspects as it is not limited to the opposition between the state and citizens or simply that between classes. It operates, in Foucault's terms, a microphysics.

2.4 – From Microphysics to Micropolitics

Strata are historical formations, positivities or empiricities. As 'sedimentary beds' they are made from things and words, from seeing and speaking, from the visible and the sayable, from bands of visibility and fields of readability, from contents and expressions. We borrow these last terms from Hjelmslev, but apply them to Foucault in a completely different way.

Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault* [60]

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[60] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, p. 42

As Deleuze explained to his students in his Foucault course (1976), the issue of power is an issue of relations of force where, applying the terms of Hjelmslev, form concerns strata and stratification. Coming back to the question of knowledge (*savoir*) in Foucault, for Deleuze knowledge is something that is distributed across strata. Thus, the difference between power and knowledge is – in Deleuze's view – that in the strata there are only formed matters and formalised functions ('visible matters and enunciative functions', 'matières visible et des fonctions énonçables'), whereas power knows no form (lies before stratification). Continuing to use Hjelmslev's terms, and applying them to Foucault's discussion of the Panopticon, Deleuze further specifies:

> A formed matter is a substance: for instance, a student is a substance, the prisoner is a substance. But a formed matter is formed by what form? The prisoner is formed matter (a substance) that is formed by the prison-form, or the worker is formed matter that is formed by the factory-form, etc. On strata there are only formed matters. And there is never what the scholastic tradition or the aristotelic tradition called naked matter. (...) So, on the level of knowledge, there are only formed matters and on strata formalised functions. Formalised functions are actions directed to an end. To form, to formalise a function, is to finalise it. All enunciative functions are formalised and finalised functions, all visible matters are also already formed matters, or, to use different words, organised. (...) What formalises functions is the statement. What forms matter is visibility. (...) But what is power? Power is the relation between non formed matters, naked matters and non formalised functions.[61]

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[61] My translation of: Gilles Deleuze, 'Foucault - Le Pouvoir',*Lectures at Vincennes*, available at: http://www2.univ-paris8.fr/deleuze/article.php3?id_article=84

One therefore understands how, for Deleuze, Foucault's notion of power corresponds to Hjelmslev's relation between non-formed matters and non-formalised functions, which in turn are described at the level of forces. The 'prison-form' is a form of content on a stratum and is related to other forms of content (school, barracks, hospital, factory). This form does not refer back to the word 'prison' but to entirely different words and concepts, such as 'delinquent' and 'delinquency', which express a new way of classifying, stating, translating, and, even committing, criminal acts. Delinquency is a form of expression in reciprocal presupposition with the form of content 'prison'. Both form of content (the prison-form) and form of expression (the discourse of delinquency) are in reciprocal presupposition. They are also parallel formalisations that inform one another. The discourse informs the way the prison is managed but the prison itself also informs the discursive formulations.

This is how Deleuze and Guattari use Hjelmslev's semiotic terms to apply them to Foucault, suggesting that although though it does not seem so, Foucault's framework is imminently concerned with language. Indeed, returning to the case of the prison (of Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment*), using Hjelmslev, the prison can be seen as a content-form that is articulated with expression-forms, such as the discourse on delinquency or criminology. Knowledge, such as criminology and psychology, organise the functioning of the prison and justify the prison to society at large. But whilst the expression-form of the discourse on delinquency or criminology form the object prison (the prison-form), the formed object itself constitutes in its own right what Foucault called a field of visibility of the form of the discourse of criminology of delinquency. So, if delinquency is understood only as a signifier, even a juridical signifier, the signified of which is the prison, such an approach flattens the entire analysis, and misses the microphysical level of relations of forces.

Now, it is precisely the microphysical framework that is of interest to Deleuze and Guattari's semio-pragmatic conception of language. A political analysis of linguistic formations as formations of power has to account for the process of formalisation, as the process by which relations of force and power formations strategically relate to each other. And it is to this end that both authors read Hjelmslev together with Foucault. They suggest there is a similar movement in Foucault, when he considers a form of reciprocity between the discursive and the non-discursive in his theorisation of language. This brings to the fore a new conception of power in the field of language, along with a renewed materialism of language: a microphyscs of power whose decoding was, in Deleuze and Guattari's terms, the object of a micropolitics.[62]

Indeed, Deleuze praises Foucault by saying that, contrary to most approaches, a microphysics of power is not focused on molar entities, nor the opposition to them, of infrastructures–superstructures, dominant–dominated, class opposition; if the move from the macro to the micro was only a move from size, or a minituarisation; or if it was even confused with a politics concerned with size, etc. If that would be the case the political capacity of microphysics would be lost. Rather, it is the very nature of politics and critique that is of concern to both Foucault, and his critical approach is one that is adequate to the mechanisms of power that are at stake and that fundamentally operates in a transversal way (power is in no way located within a state apparatus but rather is everywhere, affecting formalisations of content and expression, the segments of which they intertwine).

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[62] Guattari writes: 'Across these various prescriptions, we see that the decoding of the "political technologies of the body", the "microphysics of power", and of the "discursive policy", proposed by Foucault does not consist of a simple contemplative point of reference, but rather involves what I have called micropolitics, that is, a molecular analysis that allows us to move from forms of power to investments of desire.' Félix Guattari, 'Microphysics of Power and Micropolitics of Desire', p. 177.

2.5 - A Semio-pragmatic Conception of language

I have mentioned how relations of power are manifest, in terms of Deleuze and Guattari's appropriation of Hjelmslev's grid in a series of parallel local formalisations. Hence, according to Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatic approach every pretension to a universal formalisation of language is a sign of a political operation to hide the micropolitical origin of statements. A pragmatic approach thus claims that there are only local, contingent and strategic formalisations. Such understanding of formalisation is a materialistic, non-formal concept of formalisation since its very notion implies a dynamic of relations between a triad of purport–substance–form. This renewed concept of formalisation is opposed to the idea of self-sufficient formalisation of language, substituting the former by a local formalisation of expression and content. As Deleuze and Guattari point out several times it is a matter not of one but of multiple formalisations (in the plural), in opposition to a universal formalisation of expression. This point is made by Guattari in *The Machinic Unconscious*:

> Two attitudes or politics are possible with regard to form: a formalist position that begins with transcendent universal forms cut off from history and which are 'embodied' in semiological substances, and a position that begins with social formations and material assemblages in order to extract some (to abstract some) of the semiotic components and abstract machines from the cosmic and human history that offers them. With this second path, certain 'accidental' conjunctions between 'natural' encodings and sign machines will affirm themselves, will make the 'law', during a given period. However, it will be impossible to consider them

independently of the assemblages that constitute the nucleus of their enunciation.[63]

As we saw, an encounter between diverse semiotic systems of formalisation on the planes of expression and content requires the semiological function to be read micropolitically. This is so because the mutual presupposition of the two planes exhibits a variety of shifting power relations. In Guattari's view, signification is defined as an encounter between diverse semiotic systems of formalisation on the planes of expression and content imposed by relations of power.

In this sense, the argument that Deleuze and Guattari are trying to formulate is that at the basis of distinct formalisations of content and expression are relations of forces and formations of power. The points of antagonism which make up the statement (we are already using the statement in the pragmatic sense employed by Deleuze and Guattari) should be examined at the level of matter as much as the level of form. An examination that on the one hand would take into account the isomorphism of forms (real difference) and on the other the process of formalisation (formal difference), subject to relations of force and formations of power.

Likewise, the illusive appearance of one single regime of signs over another, examined in the light of this set of relations between matter and form, reveals that any predominance of one regime over another is a matter of a political manoeuvre. In other words, a certain regime of signs is a contingent state of predominance (visibility, in Foucault's terms) over other possible regimes of signs, which can only be adequately understood in relation to the dynamics of the relations between expression and content and imbrications along a continuum of matter-form. Hence,

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[63] Félix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious*, p. 15.

in the words of Guattari, 'the search for the points of micropolitical antagonism should be analysed at all levels'.[64]

Explained in such a way every linguistic formalisation should be problematised in light of these relations. Consequently, following this perspective, the primacy of one regime above others cannot be taken as an absolute condition since a mixed regime of signs is always present, despite different conditions of 'formalisation'. According to Guattari, any appearance of unity in the linguistic field is nothing but a power manoeuvre, which has the intention of hiding a political multiplicity or a social field, which is always multiple.

In considering that it is legitimate to divide the work of content from the work of expression, thereby masking the fundamental duality of content and expression, structuralist analyses ends up promoting a transcendent order founded upon the allegedly universal nature of the signifying. In terms of a critique then, the predominant formalism of the signifier would have to be seen in this light, and its predominance problematised. If, indeed, as Deleuze and Guattari have demonstrated, any linguistic account that places an emphasis on the signifier obscures the independent nature of content by subsuming it to the former, then the very role of content, of things, physical acts and systems, would be removed from the political question. Furthermore, by proposing the primacy of form over matter at the level of the sign, the sign itself would only reflect a dematerialised entity cut off from the very conditions of its existence, and, hence, language would be removed from any real possibility of political engagement in a materialist perspective. In any case, Guattari explains, what is of concern is not the universal formalism in itself, but the

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[64] My translation of: 'chercher les points d'articulation, les points d'antagonismes micropolitique à tous niveaux'. Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire*, p. 242.

way in which a system of power arrives at using the means of a signifying formalisation to unify every mode of expression and make them serve its purpose.[65]

As Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate, through Foucault and Hjelmslev, it is not justified to speak of just a formalisation of expression, but rather independent yet reciprocal formalisations of content and expression. However, in Deleuze and Guattari's conception, each formation of power (regime of signs), operates by organising a system of redundancy of content (a signifying redundancy rather than a machinic redundancy). This is the reason why a political genealogy of content is called for, in the terms of Guattari.

But, most important of all, the objective of this semiotic model of analysing language is to reveal, in Guattari's words 'the points of micropolitical antagonisms at all levels'. This analysis of points of articulation at all levels, or micropolitical analysis, through Hjelmslev, is now able to account for all dimensions of the imbrications between matter and form, linguistic and non-linguistic, so it traverses the socio-political and the semiotic, the expression and content, on the basis of a differential relation between the two entities. Deleuze and Guattaris's premise is that only in such a way can we 'arrive at something in the assemblage itself that is still more profound than these sides and can account for both of the forms in presupposition, forms of expression or regimes of signs (semiotic systems) and forms of content or regimes of bodies (physical systems)'[66] and engage the socio-machinic assemblage, which, ultimately, is the only effective producer of rupture and innovation in the semiotic field.

However, regarding language, what Foucault shows is the precise way in which the statement (*econcé*) is not linguistic but existential. As Guattari notes in

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[65] Félix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2011 [orig. 1979]).
[66] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus, p.141.*

Microphysics of Power/Micropolitics of Desire, '[the statement] it is also a capacity of existential production',[67] and 'All the themes that we might call Foucauldian existentialism converge on this pivotal point between semiotic representation and the pragmatics of "existentialization"'.[68] As we saw, discourse produces and defines objects of knowledge. Since it is central to discourse, language has real-world effects – for instance, effects that take place within a social and institutional setting that defines the specific roles and hierarchies among participants. Thus the Foucauldian point of discourse analysis is to understand how discourse is articulated in a social field, i.e. its mode of existence. This means that what Foucault read together with Hjelmslev allows us to do, in breaking with the semiotic and linguistic reduction of signifying semiologies, is to understand the articulation (political) between linguistic activity and a world of power relations. And more than that, when read together with Foucault's analysis of the statement, the power relations formalised in the Hjelmslevian grid indicate something more than a broadening of the semiotic register beyond the signifying regime of signs: they evidence the construction, in Deleuze and Guattari's conception of language, of how a semiotic pragmatics is, in fact, an existential pragmatics.

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[67] Félix Guattari, 'Microphysics of Power and Micropolitics of Desire', p. 178.
[68] Ibid., p. 181.

Chapter Three: Groups, Institutions and Collective Enunciation

In our view, the characteristic of this new mode of action articulating the political struggle with everyday life (...) is a 'collective analytic' intervention of the social *unconscious* , even if such a project is not explicitly declared as such. The aim of 'militantism' becomes twofold: it is on the side of the intervention, but also on the part of the the persons intervening. It is about permanently working the militant collective enunciation and not just the statements produced.

– Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles* (My translation)[1]

The current chapter deals with the work developed by Guattari at the clinic La Borde as part of the institutional psychotherapy movement in France. The institutional problematics are crucial to this research to the extent that it is framed by Guattari as a question of a general '*prise de la parole*', both within the general framework of mental care, the human sciences,[2] and in society at large. In an interview published

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[1] My translation of: 'À notre sens, la caractéristique de ce nouveau mode d'action articulant la lutte politique à la vie quotidienne, le mot d'ordre à la recherche, l'intellectuel et le militant au droit commun, aux prostituée, etc.. c'est une intervention 'analytique collective' sur l'insconscient social, même si un tel projet n'est pas explicité en tant que tel. L'object du 'militantisme' se dédouble: il est du côté du domaine d'intervention, mais également du côté des intervenants. Il s'agit, en permanence, de travailler l'énonciation collective militante et pas seulement les énoncés produits.' Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*, (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011), p. 83.

[2] In the essay 'Introduction à la Psychothérapie Institutionnelle', the general problematics of the group emerges from a critique of the *abstracting* and universalising tendencies of psychology and psychotherapeutic institutions' reinforcement of individual alienation. For Guattari, the assumption of

in *Pratique de l'institutionnel* (1985), Guattari explained his view of institutional

practices as practices that involved the analysis of the local pragmatics of a certain

context, with the aim of identifying elements such as 'sequences of nonsense and

institutional lapses hitherto marginalised' and giving them expressive means. It was

the rigidity in the ways of speaking, modes of social relation and modes of thought

that characterised the classical institutions of care that the institutional movement

sought to oppose. The purpose of the institutional movement was to create conditions

amenable to different behaviours, different ways of thinking and speaking, so that

hitherto marginalised 'symptoms' could find an expression at the institutional level.

For Guattari, this would allow both access to 'unconscious formations of

subjectivity' and general access to the subject.[3] As Guattari explained, the purpose of

institutional therapy was not 'to produce new objects, neither the relation itself, but

to develop new forms of subjectivity'.[4] As we shall see below, Guattari would later

argue that instead of institutional therapy, this approach should more adequately be

termed 'institutional analysis'.[5]

The way to create a heterogeneity of expression in the institution was to

adopt the institution itself as the matter of expression, which meant including the

tasks of everyday life into the analytic process. So instead of patients being removed

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direct access to the subject by psychology and, more generally, human sciences, simply disregarded the essential fact that the observer influences the object of observation. Moreover, it imposed upon the subject of study a projective grid of interpretation of the subject. 'Introduction à la Psychothérapie Institutionnelle', *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, pp. 37–51.

[3] A similar vein of thought is clear in the critique Guattari makes of social science research that is in general dominated by an excessive bureaucratism and is thus unable to connect with and express the people/object of study of the research, hence producing an alienated 'scientific' discourse.

[4] 'Notre objectif de thérapie institutionnelle n'était pas de produire des objets ni même de produire de « la relation » pour elle-même, mais de développer de nouvelles formes de subjectivité'. 'La Grille', typescript dated 29 Jan, 1987. Published under the same title in Félix Guattari, 'La 'Grille,' *Chimères* 34 (Autumn, 1998), pp. 7–20.

[5] With institutional analysis Guattari meant no general model, no abstract protocol that could be prescribed as such. In Guattari's perspective, institutional analysis did not aim to offer a general, abstract model of intervention subtracted from the 'local' pragmatics at play in a concrete context. 'Institutional Practice and Politics', *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Gnosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996 [orig. 1985]), p. 62.

from the tasks of daily life or retreating into the conservative inactive role implied by the doctor–patient hierarchical status, the approach of institutional analysis, as far as defended by Guattari, was based on the core principle that patients should take responsibility for their existence in an ethical rather than technocratic manner. We shall see how this was the case at La Borde with the creation of clubs and ateliers, task rotations and collective discussions of the daily life of the clinic. To quote Guattari, 'where there exists a univocal expression, a polyphony of enunciation will affirm itself,' and as such continuous process of institutional reinvention will take place. This reconnection with daily life from an existential-ethical perspective had, as a consequence, a collective participation in the definition and organisation of the concrete institution.

Thus, to return to Guattari's words, this was a movement from expression to enunciation,[6] which demanded not only the multiplication of forms of expression (linguistic, gestural, drawing, music), but also the reconnection of expression to the real concrete problems of the patients in the institution (expression through means other than language and the recasting of language as a lived language, 'speech'). The articulation between the need to allow people to express themselves, to construct their own modes of speaking, and processes of collective institutional creation was key:

> It's here we introduce this notion of 'institutionalisation', this problem of production of institutions: who produces the institution and articulates its parts? Is there a possibility to operate transference of responsibility so that

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[6] This also reflects the title of one of Félix Guattari's unpublished seminars 'Substituer l'énonciation à l'expression', *Les Séminaires de Félix Guattari*, 1984, Chimères, Available here: http://www.revue-chimeres.fr/drupal_chimeres/files/840425.pdf.

institutional creativity can replace bureaucratism? Are there specific methods 'to give voice to the object we want to study?'[7]

Through the discussion of processes of institutionalisation and collective formation in La Borde, this chapter aims to explore Guattari's idea that institutional therapy was concerned with a *'prise de la parole'*. To revert to the framework explored in Chapter Two, this conforms to what Deleuze and Guattari called, via Hjlemslev, a reconnection between expression and content, i.e. the idea that language should become the expression of concrete problems of existence. Whilst doing this, I bear in mind Guattari's focus on rethinking the institutional framework beyond the strict model of the hospital to other social organisations and the de-psychologisation of the mental[8] – hence the importance of Guattari's renaming of 'institutional psychotherapy' as 'institutional analysis'.[9] In this context, because of its relation to the concrete problems of institutional therapy, language is seen to have a direct effect on the transformation of the institution itself. Finally, this chapter argues that La Borde allowed Guattari to foreground the way in which language's political relevance depends on reconnecting language to an existential-enunciative function.

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[7] My translation of 'Félix Guattari, 'Introduction à la Psychothérapie Institutionnelle', *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle* (Paris: François Maspero, 1974 [orig. 1972]), p. 41.

[8] The issue here, as Guattari explains in *Pratique de L'institutionnel*, 'was to elaborate a method of analysis of the formations of the unconscious able to separate the analysis from the personological and familial frameworks to account for assemblages of enunciations of another type, of a bigger social scale and infra-individual.' 'Institutional Practice and Politics', *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Gnosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996 [orig. 1985]), p. 122.

[9] 'In my first articles, I put forth the idea of an overcoming of institutional psychotherapy by a technique of institutional analysis. It was then a question of refusing a too restrictive definition of institutional psychotherapy. In my view, we had to study and make use of the link that exists between it and similar practices in other domains: pedagogy, city planning, militantism (especially in the UNEF and the "Mutuelle Nationale des Etudiants de France," with which I was associated. Besides, I thought that we would be able to advance in this new discipline only to the extent that it would set itself up in connection with larger political problems, for example, the problem of the opposition within the Communist Party (such as it was organized around the newspaper *La Voie Communiste*), the renewal of forms of revolutionary struggle, etc... This attempt lasted until May '68. With a group of militants, we managed to develop an intense multidisciplinary activity within the Federation of Study Groups in Institutional Research (FGERI), and through the first issues of the journal *Recherches'*. Félix Guattari, *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977–1985*, p. 34.

2.1 – Institutional Therapy

I don't see a contradiction between institutionalization and creative capacity.

– Félix Guattari, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil* [10]

The practical ground for Guattari's theoretical approach to the semio-pragmatics of language was the clinic La Borde, founded by psychiatrist Jean Oury and set up within the context of the French psychiatry post-war movement institutional psychotherapy, the foundations of which had been laid by François Tosquelles in the 1940s. [11]

Deleuze's preface to Guattari's *Psychanalyse et Transversalité* [12] describes the institutional therapy movement as an alternative to both the regime of the law of the classic psychiatric hospital and the 'liberal contractual' regime of the analytical approach. In the latter, the physical enclosure imposed by the classical mental health care institution is dispensed with to allow for the constitution of a 'therapeutic' relationship between patient and analyst. This relation is the main tool and condition of treatment (if patient and analyst are not able to enter into the therapeutic relation, namely the patient negates the will to change, the analytical process is over). Deleuze

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[10] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, trans. Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008 [orig. 1986, Micropolítica: Cartografias do Desejo]), p. 169. A more direct translation of the title of the original book would be 'Micropolitics: Cartographies of Desire'.

[11] Although referring to the practice developed at Saint-Alban's by Tosquelles, the term was coined only and introduced a decade later, in 1952, by Georges Daumézon and Philippe Koechlin, 'La Psychotherapie institutionnelle francaise contemporaine', *Anais portugueses de psichiatria*, 4.

[12] Félix Guattari, *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle* (Paris: François Maspero, 1974 [orig. 1972]), p. 156.

astutely compared the relationship's 'condition' to a contract of a liberal type, as against the regime of law of the old hospital.[13]

Institutional therapy changed both focuses. Not only was it concerned with the physical conditions of the places of care and how these impacted the life of patients and the clinical work, but also rejected the secrecy surrounding the dual analyst–patient relation. The emergence of the movement was partly the product of the war years, which had shown the dangers of concentration camp-like institutions. Psychiatrists, themselves trapped with their patients in asylums, realised that physical, social and individual 'alienation' were part of the same problem. What institutional psychotherapy proposed was to treat the pathogenic factors of institutions of care, connecting the individual to the collective (changing the focus from one to the other), moving from the mental as a purely internal thing to the analysis of the mental from the point of view of the external factors bearing upon mental illness – from the secrecy surrounding the patient–analyst relationship to a focus on the context or the institutional setting in which the therapy occurred. The famous motto says it all: To treat the ill without treating the hospital is madness!'[14]

The Foundations of Institutional Therapy

The foundations of institutional psychotherapy were laid by the work developed by the psychiatrist François Tosquelles in the 1940s, with whom Jean Oury did clinical training at Saint-Alban's hospital. Tosquelles, a Catalan psychiatrist refugee in France, arriving at the psychiatric hospital of Saint-Alban (in Lozère) in 1941,

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[13] In its foundation, the analytical treatment was developed in relation to the treatment of 'neurosis', as famously inadequate to the treatment of psychosis given its privileged reliance on the interpretation of speech as access to the unconscious. The non-irreducibility to logic that is a characteristic feature of psychotic disorders did not conform with the possibility of working with interpretation through personal verbal accounts.
[14] 'Soigner les malades sans soigner l'hôpital, c'est de la folie'.

observed that in most asylums were immersed in a state of alienation from the rest of society. This condition not only endangered their economic survival but also had a negative impact on the therapeutics of mental illness. The occupation years threatened the mental health institutions with famine and extinction (a form of 'soft extermination' of the mentally ill – as Pollack calls it[15]), and Tosquelles advanced a series of initiatives to ensure the physical survival of the institution. The first thing was to remove all physical elements of segregation from the 'external world' – such as the walls of the hospital, which were destroyed stone by stone by residents – so as to open up the hospital to society, to economic and social relations at large, as opposed to enclosing the institution in on itself. The purpose was to allow patients to seek work and to allow food provisions to enter the hospital. The requirement of these exchanges – due to the precarious economic condition of many patients – precipitated free movement, outweighing the traditional 'discipline' or 'security' of the classic mental institution.

Thus, the institutional opening not only concerned the spatial-functional level of mental institutions – breaking down of concentration camp-like conditions, such as segregated inmates, locked rooms or intense surveillance – but also the very social structure of the hospital. It is important to note that at the time a strict hierarchical mode of relationship – in particular the authority of doctors in relation to patients and the draining of responsibility from mental health patients – was still the most common mode of organisation of hospitals. The spatial organisation of the hospital mirrored the nature of the institutionalised doctor–patient relationship and the

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[15] It is estimated that 40,000 mentally ill people died of starvation during the war years. There would be no casualties of this 'soft extermination' in Saint-Alban. See Jean-Claude Pollack, *Épreuves de la Folie: Travail psychanalytique et processus psychotiques* (Ramonville Saint-Agne: Éditions érès, 2006).

buildings reflected conceptions of mental illness (the extent to which the spatial settings instantiated ideas of mental illness was taken over by Foucault later on).[16]

In this sense, Tosquelles was a pioneer in establishing a relationship between the institution of care and the therapeutics itself. Hence, at Saint-Alban, measures promoting a more flexible relationship between staff and patients, with a special focus on fostering social dynamics and patients' sense of participation and responsibility over the running of the institution, were put forward. Examples of this are the creation for the first time of an 'independent and legal patients association', the publishing of a newspaper, the arranging of feasts and festivals, and the facilitation of collective moments of discussion through daily meeting and discussion groups.

La Borde Clinic

La Borde was founded in 1952 by Jean Oury (who had undertaken medical training at Saint-Alban with Tosquelles); Guattari joined soon after. Prior to creating La Borde, Oury worked in Chateau de Saumery, where he was transferred in 1949 when the clinic was in need of staff. This detail is relevant to the extent that Saumery served as a preparatory phase for what would become La Borde. There the small size of the establishment, which at the time had only thirty patients, implied a constant reshuffling of activities and demanded that everyone be involved in aspects of the daily running as well as the therapeutic activities of the clinic. Four years after arriving at Saumery, Oury bought the nearby La Borde Château and created La Borde, taking with him some of the nurses and thirty-three patients. Guattari joined

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[16] Foucault, Michel. *Histoire de la folie à l'âge classique* (Paris: Plon, 1961).

Oury in 1955, after meeting him through Oury's brother, Fernand Oury, who was Guattari's high-school teacher (later on a leading figure in the institutional pedagogy movement). Guattari's first joined La Borde in the capacity of someone who had experience in working with groups in militant and collective organisations such as the 'youth hostels' movement (this was a movement that had begun under the Popular Front as a means to encourage young people to travel by providing cheap lodgings).

From the early days of their collaboration, Oury and Guattari attempted to deal with the paradox that institutions of care presented to the treatment of psychosis: whilst psychosis demanded the patients be withdrawn from their social and familial contexts, institutions of care were not free from the violence and restriction characteristic of personal contexts – they were themselves ill in that sense.[17] The term *pathoplastique,* coined by Oury, refers precisely to the 'illness' that affected both the establishment and the carers. The therapeutic conundrum resulting from institutions of care whose organisational principles reflected principles contradictory to the treatment is posed well by Jean-Claude Pollack, a psychiatrist working in La Borde:

> How can we expect patients with schizophrenia not to consider themselves masters of the world, when the doctors or the monitors continue to behave like wise men and the guarantors of the rules? (...) The flows and exchanges would not be made difficult by rules, by hierarchies, by arbitrary territories, by imaginary positions or fictitious roles (...) The regulations should be worn out by the rotation of tasks, the diversity of functions, the multiplicity of investments.[18]

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[17] See Jean-Claude Polack, 'La Borde en son temps. Chronique d'une clinique critique', *Multitudes* Available here: *http://www.multitudes.net/La-Borde-en-son-temps/.*
[18] Jean-Claude Polack, 'La Borde en son temps. Chronique d'une clinique critique', *Multitudes* Available here: *http://www.multitudes.net/La-Borde-en-son-temps/.*

Influenced by the Freudo-Lacanianism and the Marxist sociology (at least until as far as 1968), Oury and Guattari maintained that two kinds of alienation, one social, the other individual and mental, existed in mental institutions. To address these alienations, they defended the need for reconstructing the very idea of the institution of care, according to the relations it made possible amongst people. More importantly, the *désaliénation* should concern the therapeutic protocols themselves. Dismissing all tendencies to psychologisise the social, the social-organisational principles forming a certain institutional context were not treated independently from the therapeutic processes.

Institutional therapy opposed the strict and hierarchical social environment that was characteristic of the nineteen-century asylum structure, avoiding stereotypical and fixed roles amongst staff. With the aim of creating a collective social life in the clinic in La Borde, there was a strong encouragement of group activities, the creation of meetings and assemblies in which information about the hospital would be exchanged and ideas discussed, eliciting the participation of patients in the daily structuring of the clinic and levelling the hierarchies of power associated with medical roles – often a cause of passivity and disengagement in the basic aspects of daily life. Oury and Guattari believed that when given autonomy and responsibility the patients were more engaged in the life of the clinic and in their own therapeutical process. The general passivity generated by traditional hierarchical systems, with the imposition of change from above, was counterbalanced by the creation of individual assumptions of responsibility through the adoption of roles of responsibility within the daily running of the institution.

This emphasis on the reformulation of the institution of care itself is particularly distinctive of La Borde's approach to psychotherapy and distinguishes it

from the anti-psychiatry movement, with which it is sometimes identified. Despite recognising the important contribution of R.D. Laing in placing mental illness on the public agenda, Guattari was critical of Laing's and David Cooper's reductionist etiology of mental illness. For Guattari the etiology of psychosis could never be reduced to interfamilial conflicts, neither could the issue be posed in terms of a lack of acceptance by society. Contrarily to anti-psychiatry, institutional psychotherapy never wanted to eradicate the specialised institution of mental care as such. Both Oury and Guattari defended that those suffering from mental illness had the right to psychiatric treatment, and required specialised places of care and proper treatment time. Through different material and pragmatic instantiations of the institutional setting, the effort was made to continuously recreate the institution, allowing patients to regain a sense of responsibility and 're-appropriate the meaning of their existence in an ethical and no longer technocratic perspective'.[19]

The Institutional as 'Modelling Paste'

In a text entitled 'De Leros à La Borde: Analytical Practices and Social Practices', Guattari draws a comparison between the institution and the modelling paste that is used in analysis as an alternative means of expression when language fails. For Guattari, at La Borde, the equivalent to modelling paste was the 'institutional matter' of the collective activities, the group discussions, and the daily life offering a heterogeneous 'palette of expression', always in a process of reinvention.[20]

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[19] Félix Guattari, 'La Borde: a Clinic Unlike Any Other', *Chaosophy,* ed. Sylnère Lotringer, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 1995 [orig. 1977), p. 191.

[20] Félix Guattari, *De Leros à La Borde. Pratiques Analytiques et Pratiques Sociales* (Clamecy: Nouvelles Éditions Lignes, 2012), pp. 58–88 The metaphor is a direct reference to Gisela Pankow's work on the body image in schizophrenia. Speaking of a hiatus between content and form, Pankow would often ask patients to make drawings or a clay model to gain access to the patient's spatial words. See Pankow's *L'homme et sa psychose,* 1969.

This general idea of a non-replication of modes of relations and power hierarchies implied a critique of the primacy of language as mode of expression. Instead, other forms of communication (gestural, symbolic, etc) – but also other forms of expression at large – were to the focus of attention. Because of this, previously unrecognised symptoms were now manifested at the level of the institution – including interactions amongst patients, with medical and non-medical staff, and different relationships with the physical space of the hospital, etc., – and had for the first time a weight in the process of analysis. The kitchen at La Borde, was for Guattari an excellent example of these processes at work:

The kitchen then becomes a little opera scene: in it people talk, dance and play with all kinds of instruments, with water and fire, dough and dustbins, relations of prestige and submission. As a place for the preparation of food, it is the centre of exchange of material and indicative Fluxes and prestations of every kind. But this metabolism of Flux will only have transferential significance on the condition that the whole apparatus functions effectively as a structure which welcomes the preverbal components of the psychotic patients.[21]

In this sense what institutional therapy tried to do with the institution was comparable to what psychoanalysis tried to accomplish at the level of the analyst and the analysand. Guattari uses the Lacanian notions of *full* and *empty* speech to illustrate this point. Lacan suggests that this interpersonal dialectic is implicated in every speech act, even outside the consulting room: 'In its essence, the efficacious transference which we're considering is quite simply the speech act. Each time a man

[21] Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Bloomington: Indiana University Press [Orig. 1992]), p. 69.

speaks to another in an authentic and full manner, there is, in the true sense, transference, symbolic transference – something takes place which changes the nature of the two beings present.'[22] The difference between full and empty speech is not so much that one expresses the truth and the other not, for the whole point of analysis is to pinpoint the latent truth manifest in empty speech. Therefore for Lacan, 'full speech' is not necessarily speech that utters the truth, but rather 'speech which performs'.[23] The truth of the interpretation proves to be much less important than its role in advancing (or not advancing) the analysis, by transforming imaginary transference into symbolic transference.

However, one should notice how Guattari's attention to empty speech or *'parole vide'* went beyond the psychoanalytical Lacanian approach, in which a contract with the *'parole plein'* was the goal (the signifier). In La Borde there was an attempt to create the conditions for the institution itself to speak as opposed to interpret it. In this regard Guattari refers to Claude Poncin, who put forward the concept of *'situèmes'* to refer to the intra-institutional relations in the context of La Borde (in reference to the idea of phonemes in language, the basic structures of the language). Formed by silence, nonsense, the rooms and garden, and the clothes worn, no less than what was actually being said – every institutional instance having communicational potential – *'situèmes'* would thus constitute the basic 'unit of language' at La Borde.[24]

For Guattari the univocality of the method of transference – the psychoanalytical transmission indissociable from interpretation via language – was seen to be unable to account for the multiplicity of modes of expression. Underlying

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[22] Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book 1. Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953-54*, trans. John Forrester (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), p. 109.

[23] *The Seminar. Book 1. Freud's Papers on Technique, 1953-54*, p. 107.

[24] See Félix Guattari, 'La 'Grille,' *Chimères* 34 (Autumn, 1998), p.5. Available here: http://www.revue-chimeres.fr/drupal_chimeres/files/34chi01.pdf.

this assumption was Guattari's argument that the primacy of the analyst–analysand model, the so-called face-to-face dual analytical relation predominant in the analytical approach, established hierarchical relations of power that were improper in the therapeutic process. For Guattari such clinical settings reproduced 'chains of signification', thus constraining patients and depriving them of a sense of responsibility over their own lives. By rethinking the institution as an augmented space of expression, institutional therapy advocated an increase in opportunities for analysis. This was so because, as both Oury and Guattari argued, the institution had a therapeutic coefficient – it was perceived as the multiplication of possibilities of expression for the patients and potential object of interpretation – besides the usual linguistic interpretational tool of the psychoanalytic and the analyst-analysand transference. An example of such a multiplication of possibilities of expression is that at La Borde staff did not wear overalls with a badge and name as in most psychiatric hospitals. Rather, patients and personnel would wear their own clothes for the sake of what Oury explains in one interview was the therapeutically effort of creating conditions for a 'space to speak', 'a space of syntax' or 'spaces of the saying', to produce 'heterogeneity' and 'liberty of circulation' in the clinical setting, and thus granting a means through which people could express themselves freely:[25]

> What I call the architectonic – the totality of relations, roles, functions and people that defines the site where *something happens* – is based upon heterogeneity rather than homogeneity! This is the fundamental word, 'heterogeneity' (...) In psychiatric hospitals they stress that nurses should wear overalls with a badge and a name clearly marked. They say this is done so as not to disorientate the patient. The first thing we did here at La Borde was to dress the patients in their own clothes, so there would be the

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[25] See Jean Oury, 'The Hospital is Ill', interview with Mauricio Novello and David Reggio, *Radical Philosophy*, 143, May/June 2007, pp. 32–45.

possibility of relationships at the same time as they personalize themselves. When there is no possibility of personalization it is terrible: with the uniform, or the pyjamas they provide, you cannot be heterogeneous. When the nurses wear overalls, we find ourselves one hundred years behind. This is a very serious problem. If we do not do something about it, all our efforts will be in vain, useless. We must find the means through which people can express themselves. This is what we call, here at La Borde, the 'liberty of circulation.'[26]

One sees here the difference between this approach and the conception of the institutional relation between object, patient and analyst in terms of triangulation or mediation. This is different from simply extending the classical psychoanalysis from the consulting room to the extended physical space. In La Borde the institution not only provided a means of expression but also decentred the therapy away from the person and familiar by bringing to the forefront relationships existing in the background: the institutional context, its constraints, organisation, specific practices, etc. The idea was to account for a wider social scale.

Transversality

There is a speed of subjugation that is opposed to the coefficients of transversality.
– Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*[27]

It is important to note how in the context of institutional therapy, the analytical

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[26] Jean Oury, 'The Hospital is Ill', pp. 32–45.
[27] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004 [orig. 1972]), p. 349.

function of the therapist in the classical psychoanalytical model becomes collective. First, because in a strict sense, analysis is no longer a privilege of the therapist only, but is collectivised i.e., it takes place collectively (in group sessions, discussion, etc). But second, in a wider and more important sense, it is collective because it is impacted by spatial dispositions, linguistic and signifying dimensions, technical, economic and sociological factors, rather than purely by personal, individual dispositions.

To conceive this mode of connection, in the early texts 'Transference' and 'Tranversality', from *Psychanalyse et Transversalité*, Guattari puts forward the notion of 'transversality'. The concept is an alternative, both practical and conceptual, to the classical psychoanalytical notion of 'transference' inspired by from Schotte's 'institutional transference'. Schotte argues that in transference there is not an actual dual relation, but mediating objects that act as a medium of the transference; this is a relationship of triangulation.[28] The concept of transversality is a departure from Schotte's. Like Schotte, Guattari disagrees with the assumption of a dual relationship, but unlike Schotte, with Guattari the institutional object is not a matter of triangulation. In his view, the institutional object is not a mediator, but is what is real and informs the social unconscious.

Transference is the classical psychoanalytical phenomena described at the level of the analyst–analysand, the so-called face-to-face, dual relationship. It denotes a shift onto another person (*Ubertragung*; literally, 'carrying over'), of feelings and desires formerly linked to persons of the patients' past whom he/she was invested in. It is indissociable from the twin pillars of psychoanalysis, interpretation and language (*langage'*), since it is precisely the shift occurring between analyst–

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[28] Jacques Schotte, 'Le Transfert dit fondamental de Freud pour poser le probleme: psychanalyse et institution.' *Revue de psychotherapie institutionnelle*, 1965. Available here: http://www.balat.fr/IMG/pdf/TransfertSchotte.pdf.

analysand that is subject of analysis.[29] Transference is the object of interpretation that has to be resolved for it to be characterised as therapeutic. It is easy to see the problems arising from such a method in the light of Guattari's work, as described so far. The primacy of the linguistic, the secrecy, and the hierarchical analyst–analysand relationship, as well as the interpretation of the meaning of the transference, all presented problems. I have demonstrated how the institutional framework sought to work with a heterogeneity of modes of expression, and strategically use institutional relationships in the analytic process.

With the concept of transversality, Guattari aimed to grasp the institutional communicational dynamics beyond the rigidity of both traditional vertical and horizontal pathways of communication.[30] It sought to overcome the problems arising with both the strict vertical hierarchy, specific to the analyst–analysand relationship, and with the horizontality of self-managed areas, with its informal processes of communication.

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[29] 'Transference' was first used in *Studies on Hysteria* (Freud and Breuer, 1895d). It implies the maintenance of a particular relational form and fidelity to a past relationship, as preserved in the unconscious. These passages point up the critical importance of taking language into account in connection with interpretation and with the way in which words are invested with meaning.

[30] Deleuze introduces a similar concept of transversality ('transversals') in his book on Proust (*Marcel Proust et Les Signes* 1964). This appears in the second edition of the book in 1970 (after Deleuze work with Guattari), in a newly added chapter, entitled 'La Machine Littéraire'. Deleuze directs the readers to Guattari's work as a continuation of the research in transversality in the psychoanalytic field. Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000 [orig. 1964]), p. 168. For Deleuze, transversality is the essential dimension that pervades Proust's *A La Recherche du Temps Perdu Recherche*. Deleuze defines transversality as follows: 'this dimension of transversality, in which unity and totality are established for themselves, without unifying or totalizing objects or subjects (...) causes the viewpoints to interpenetrate and brings into the communication the sealed vessels that nonetheless remain closed' (Ibid., p.169). Deleuze refers to a mode of communication, a mode of analysis and articulation of different dimensions without totalization: 'A system of communication, though it must not be confused with a direct means of access, nor with a means of totalization (...) from one world to the other, from one word to another, without ever reducing the many to the One, without ever gathering the multiple within the One, without ever reassembling the multiple in a whole, but affirming the very original unity of precisely that multiplicity, affirming without uniting *all* these irreducible fragments' (Ibid., p. 126). Transversality is also understood as having the effect of moving things, objects and subjects from a passive to a active nature, non-reducible to external or univocal modes or organisation which are imposed upon certain scenes: 'To make another person see is to impose on him the contiguity of a strange, abominable, hideous spectacle. It not only imposes on him the vision of the sealed and contiguous vessels, partial objects between which a coupling *contra naturam* is suggested, but treats that person as if he were one of these objects, one of these contiguous aspects that must communicate transversally' (Ibid., p. 141).

But there is also another sense implied in concept of transversality – transversality as vehicle between a manifest and a latent content (Guattari borrows the terms from Freud). I draw this aspect from Guattari's use of the metaphor of the horse's blinkers to describe the degree of transversality in an institution. Guattari compares the 'blinkers' of the horse, the degree of enclosure they impose on the field of vision, to the dominant rules in the hospital (the 'juridical' aspect of the institution, generally conceived by the managing team and the medical staff). These distribute functions, modes of relationality, rules of conduct and spaces of visibility, according to which certain behaviours are encouraged whilst others are explicitly repressed.

However, in real concrete cases we know that there are relationships and interactions between, for instance, patients and staff whose nature escapes this mode of formal organisation. To exemplify a mode of horizontal communication, Guattari gives the example of the patients in the courtyard. People sympathise with others differently; people are bound in personal ways that are not accounted for in the most formal visible representation of the institution. The way these two facets of an institution resonate with each other corresponds to a certain degree of transversality. In Guattari the latent/manifest distinction comes from Freud; there is a difference between the manifest content of the group (the things it says and does at the explicit level) and the latent content (the group's unconscious desire and the implicit). The problem with using Freud's terms is that whilst they succeed in helping us clarify the interaction between desire and subjectivity, implicit and explicit, content and expression, they inadvertently induce a sense of direction in transversality – from the latent to the manifest, from the implicit to the explicit.

However, in Guattari's sense, it is not a question of direction, but of bringing into contact and opening up passages of communication between the different levels. As Gary Genosko puts it: 'Transversality is the transference become vehicular.'[31] That is, it is a non-signifying mechanism of creating communication between different dimensions of the institution – a conceptual mechanism that, as we will see, became essential to frame Guattari's experimental protocols in La Borde.

3.2 - La Borde's Experimental Protocols: *La Grille*

From 1953 until the early 1970s, a variety of institutional therapy techniques were developed at La Borde. Oury and Guattari performed different roles. Oury was in charge of the medical aspects and the psychoanalytic training, and Guattari was responsible for the institutional-organisational aspects and for promoting collective life in the clinic. In 'Analysis, between Psycho and Schizo', the psychiatrist Jean-Claude Pollack describes the local pragmatics according to three axes: the development of the autonomy and parity of the patients in the clinic; the undermining of hierarchies, status and rigidity of knowledge; and finally the exploration of all the possibilities of institutional care in which analytic capacities were extended to everyone and every situation.[32]

One of the most singular experiments developed by Oury and Guattari at La Borde was named the 'grid' ('*la grille*'). After an initial period in which the organisation of work and activities within the clinic was more or less spontaneous and self-managed, a strategy became necessary to 'frame the deregulation' [*cadrer le*

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[31] Gary Genosko, *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Gnosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996), p. 15.

[32] Jean-Claude Polack, 'Analysis, between Psycho and Schizo', *The Guattari Effect* (London, New York: Continuum), pp. 57–67.

dérèglements], to use Guattari's words.[33] Whilst trying to avoid jeopardising the amicable atmosphere of the clinic, around 1957, a schedule system – the grid – was created which would perform a key role in the life of the clinic in the years to come. In fact, the grid would become one of the defining features of La Borde. In particular, by focusing on the grid I want to explore and extract the sense in which it was, for Guattari, an 'articulatory system' connected to 'the invention of a language':[34]

> The goal of the grid is of rendering articulable the work's organisation with the subjective dimensions to allow for certain things to come into the daylight, to allow certain surfaces of inscription to exist. These modifications of affection depend upon the capacity of the grid to become a system of articulations. Such a system is connected to the invention of a language, with its own particular mode of naming the different tasks, and a rhetoric that is specific to it, as the only one capable of treating certain problems.[35]

Thus, in the context of the present thesis, the grid is of particular importance, as it allows us to grasp Guattari's theorisation of language reconnected with an existential-enunciative function. The grid was a tabular representation of the work schedule. It included a list of tasks and activities and the names of people rotating. It also recorded the amount of time each person spent on each task per week. Visually it consisted of two axes – a vertical axis with a list of names of the people charged with specific tasks and a horizontal axis measuring times, from 8am to 9pm. The grid was subdivided into tasks [*tâches*] and activities [*activités*]. A sample grid from the 1960s would necessarily include dishwashing, night duties, housecleaning, kitchen

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[33] See Félix Guattari, 'La 'Grille,' *Chimères* 34 (Autumn, 1998), p. 1. Available here: http://www.revue-chimeres.fr/drupal_chimeres/files/34chi01.pdf. This was a typescript of a presentation given by Guattari in 1987 at La Borde later published at *Chimères* with the same title.
[34] Ibid., pp. 1–14.
[35] 'La 'Grille', *Chimères* 34, p. 12.

duties, and waiting at the table, all tasks defined on the basis of the minimal functioning of the clinic, which should always be secured.[36] These tasks were linked to the functioning of the clinic and had a higher 'disagreeability' coefficient than the activities, which included the clubs, journal, and even other activities previously listed as tasks, but which, at a certain moment, everyone might have wanted to do such as being in charge of the laundry. Staff and personnel would collect points that corresponded to each of the tasks (though not the activities). Overall, the distribution of points was affected by frequency; by the number of times it was necessary to perform a certain task in the space of a week; and by the absolute points corresponding to each task.

Although there was only a fixed series of rotating tasks, the grid accounted for everyone's work in the clinic, from patients to non-medical personnel, doctors and nurses. The grid took into account factors of space and materiality as well as human factors (who was in charge, etc). It was a system of the rotation of tasks in which medical and non-medical staff performed interchangeably. The purpose was to decentralise power and maximise the therapeutic potential of the institution, thus creating an heterogeneity of experiences and conflict situations that would force people to actively decide, speak and engage with daily life without shedding responsibilities. The point was not necessarily to establish an absolute egalitarianism in the clinic but to use people's energy differently. It aimed to articulate the organisation of work with subjective dimensions, and in this way to facilitate the production of new subjectivities (in contrast to the 'normal' approach to mental health institutions up till then, in which both patients and staff were organised

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[36] See 'Histoires de La Borde: 10 ans de psychothérapie institutionnelle à la clinique de Cour-Cheverny 1953-1963', *Recherches* 21 (March–April, 1976). Also see the monograph *L'Institutionalisation des collectifs de travail. Monographie sur la clinique de La Borde*, a detailed study by the Cerfi of the work developed at La Borde, published in 1974.

according to a strict schedule and determined power relations, often promoting low levels of responsibility and a lack of existential autonomy).

It is important to say that the team managing the grid [the *grilleuse*] also rotated and was never composed of doctors. The principle was that, contrary to the common model of mental health institutions, the division of labour and daily structuring of the clinic should not be dependent on medical staff. This did not mean, of course, denying their medical power but determining limits to the organisation of work arising from the same structure. The special issue of *Recherches* titled 'Histoires de La Borde: 10 ans de psychothérapie institutionnelle à la clinique de Cour-Cheverny 1953-1963', conducted by researchers of the Cerfi (*Le Centre d'études, de recherches et de formation institutionnelles*), gathers a series of interviews and archive material, and provides an extensive account of the complexity involved in the process of making the grid.[37] A simple substitution of one person for another had to be negotiated at the collective level. Changes in personnel would, of course, cause disruption in the usual running of this or that task, since people would have already gathered a support group to work with. For instance, if someone was responsible for the cleaning on the first floor he/she would have gathered a group of people to help in the task. These same people might not want to work with the new person.

The grid was a notation system too. It not only served as a formal structuring system for task distribution through the awarding of point for each task, but it distributed people across spaces and time as well. The disputes it would give rise to would highlight the informal aspects of the institution, which otherwise would not

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[37] See 'Histoires de La Borde: 10 ans de psychothérapie institutionnelle à la clinique de Cour-Cheverny 1953-1963', *Recherches* 21 (March–April, 1976).

have a proper surface to be inscribed on. In *La Grille*, Guattari foregrounds this aspect when remarking how the grid revealed that many people wanted to do the laundry. The notation coming from the system of points and the discussions of the task distribution allowed the attribution of tasks and the rotation to be subject to feedback and review. Drawing on all the information made visible in the grid – personal, or therapeutic factors, the number of times people had been in charge for this or that task – the grid was permeable to feedback, in itself shaping and revealing the institutional processes that were occurring, and which would otherwise not be so expressively accounted for. Over time tasks would become more subtly differentiated, responding to successes and failures, as the schedule developed in a non-linear fashion, building in layers of supervision and review as it unfolded.

In this process of collective elaboration of the grid it was of paramount importance that each task attribution was negotiated through dialogue. In Cerfi's 'Histoires de La Borde' we can read how the definition of the managing team [*grilleuses*] and the putting up of the daily grid was subject to intense conflict. We can imagine how this had an impact upon the construction and dismantling of relations between people in the clinic and how it re-organised affects, sympathy and discord. Eventually at each transformation implied in the grid, a different group would emerge in relation to an object of conflict. These were groups to which speech would be central – in the sense of Guattari's idea of a *prise de la parole*. However, the grid forced this to happen in such a way that speech (*parole*) had to deal with a broader pragmatics that exceeded the domain of language (*langage*).

According to Guattari, the grid was about avoiding rigidity and repetition, exploring new and multiple investments of desire and a diversity of functions. The extent to which the grid scheduled people's lives, forcing them to be uncomfortable

at times when they had to move from one task they felt happy with to another etc., can be surely raised. Indeed, in the issue 'Histoires de La Borde' from *Recherches*, one can read that the fulfilling of the basic tasks (cleaning, kitchen) could be interpreted as imposing a degree of command, insofar as these were tasks that were not open for discussion or absolutely needed to be done. But overall, the purpose was that everyone would share these tasks. In this way, and compared to the classical mental health hospital, the experiment avoided the rigidity of subjectivities associated with work. To quote Guattari: 'This evolutive self-managing rotation system is a formidable machine to cause *le hasard* [chance occurrences], provoke encounters and speaking, and thwart the routine or boredom.'[38]

In this sense it should be noticed how, for instance, whereas most hospitals had night and day shifts, in La Borde this did not happen: rigid and repetitive timetables or even timetables that would determine a set of rigid tasks were avoided. Instead of the typical three to eight night and day shifts, there was, for instance, a night rotation that implied starting work at 6am or, on the contrary, starting later at night. As such, the list of tasks to rotate included both specialised and non-specialised functions. Of course, some tasks would be only partially rotational or not at all, as with the cooks, who participated only in a partial system of rotation. In any case, the staff was not restricted to specific tasks, and could engage other activities, which would allow for a diversity of experience in the workplace.

In 'Sur les rapports infirmiers-médecins',[39] Guattari explains how interdisciplinarity was encouraged at the clinic with the purpose of diminishing the hierarchical status of certain professions, such as the hierarchy of doctors and nurses.

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[38] 'La Grille', p.8 . 'Ce systéme de roulements autogéré, évolutif, est une formidable machine à provoquer le hasard, tramer les rencontres et la parole, et déjouer la routine ou l'ennui.'
[39] Félix Guattari, 'Sur les rapports infirmiers-médecins', *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, pp. 7–17.

New forms of dialogue ensued when the doctors and nurses were working with non-medical staff. In regards to task rotation between specialised and non-specialised tasks, Guattari refers to the resistance from non-specialised staff to the performance of activities that they considered to be the domain of the specialised staff. People who, until that moment, had been used to dealing with material tasks, had now to deal with medical ones. In the same way, doctors and nurses had to engage with material tasks that they were not used to. The grid had many problems and contradictions, which Guattari is careful to note. But these forced it to develop in time. The team responsible for the grid and review had to change periodically as otherwise this would create positions of power over others; at times the grid had the reverse effect of promoting disinvestment as people could ease into a certain task knowing they would not stay there forever.

In an exposition of the grid at La Borde entitled 'La Grille' given in 1987, and later published in *Chimères 34* (1998), Guattari explains that the grid allowed the instituting of an analytical relationship between the diverse institutional facets and the individual and collective affects. It also allowed for the gaining of access to the ways in which complex institutional interrelations affected the psychic economies of actual groups and their members.[40] It is very important to remember that the grid was a formal, non-interpretative system. It did not interpret – it just notated. The mechanism was simple, with the names of people on one side, and tasks, activities and times on the other. It can easily seem contradictory that in a place such as La Borde such a strong formal mechanism should be used.

But this is what I believe to be the key aspect. As a formal mechanism the grid offered a space for the inscription of otherwise invisible mutations of desire

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[40] See 'La 'Grille', *Chimères* 34.

shaping the institution. In my view, the grid conforms to a process of 'non-interpretative formalisation' of affects and desires on the basis of which it is possible to intervene and construct the institution collectively. These kinds of situations (or *situèmes* to use Poncin's term), reflecting the instantiation of relations of power, could be analysed and tracked through the grid and then properly problematised and dealt with – in such a way that it would feed back into the institution itself. Thus, beyond a static representation of the institutional object, the grid aimed to model current fluxes of desire and libidinal investments in the institution over time, in a diachronic perspective: 'The grid employs time – inscribed on a piece of paper – the machine for 'rotating' functions, inscribed in a gestural semiotics, changes in hierarchical categories, inscribed in juridical and social semiologies, are all manifestations of the same particular abstract machination expressing a certain mutation - certainly local and of little consequence – in the relations of production.'[41]

As I have already noted, as part of institutional therapy, power relations between patients and medical staff, but equally between members of the staff themselves, were seen as part of the therapeutic process. To treat the patients involved treating the hospital and its human alienation. And in that sense both the physical structures of the hospital (the garden, the laundry, and the ateliers) but also the human atmosphere (modes of communication and subjectivity) offered analytical possibilities, and thus contributed to the overall therapeutic impact of the institution as a whole. It is towards this objective that the grid was most valuable, as it constantly exposed the relations of power that constituted the institution. It was a

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[41] My translation of: 'La grille des emplois du temps - inscrite sur du papier - la machine des 'roulements' de fonction, inscrite dans une sémiologie gestuelle, la modification des catégories hiérarchiques, inscrite dans une sémiologie juridique et sociale sont autant de manifestations particulières d'un même machinisme abstrait exprimant une certaine mutation - certes locale et de peu de conséquence - des raports de production.' Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire* (Fontenau-sous-Bois, Recherches, 1977), p. 271.

formal surface in which power relations came to visibility – in particular, all those aspects that were left outside the traditional doctor–patient relation.

I think that the grid became an essential tool for Guattari to address the role of language in the institution, and its relation to other modes of expression. As I have noted, it was paramount that the grid was discussed verbally among those affected by it. This was part of a process of 'reclaiming the word' and fostering an active attitude towards the organisation of the clinic. To quote Guattari:

> It is very important that the assignment of tasks be negotiated by speech (*parole*). It is useless to parachute someone into a task – especially if this is strategic – without his/her consent, without knowing how it is for him/her at that moment of the day in relation to the rest of his/hers employment of time, and above all compared to what he/she would really like to be doing. And therefore it is essential that there can be a vibrant local language (*langue locale*) that allows for the expression of these problems.[42]

Notice how the idea of a 'local language' is associated with speech (*parole*). For Guattari a local language was a language that is alive, inflected by speech, and raising concrete problems of a concrete situation. Calls to exit language (*sortir de la langue*) are a constant in Guattari's work, as a concern with the power of dominant semiologies, with language being presented as superior to other forms of expression, or when it is used to implement the transcendence of the signifier. But I don't think this means that Guattari was not interested in the role of language in social processes.

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[42] My translation of: 'Il est très important que l'affectation de quelqu'un à une tâche soit négociée par la parole. Ça ne sert à rien de parachuter quelqu'un dans une fonction— surtout si elle est stratégique—sans son accord, sans savoir comment ça se situe pour lui, à tel moment de la journée par rapport au reste de son emploi du temps, et surtout par rapport à ce qu'il a vraiment envie de faire. Et donc il est indispensable que puisse exister une langue locale vivante qui permette d'exprimer ces problems.' 'La Grille', *Chimères* 34, p. 8.

As his experiments in La Borde amply demonstrate, it seems to me that he was interested in particular in opening language up to the multiplicity of social processes.

In this sense, in the short essay 'La Grille', Guattari describes the method of the grid (discussed in section 2.1) as an articulatory mechanism, a 'collective analytic discursivity', whose purpose is finding the language to express the problems particular to a specific institution and from that process to begin to singularise the trajectory of the institution and those involved: 'This system is connected with the invention of a language, with its own particular mode of naming different tasks, and a rhetoric that is particular to it, and that is the only way to treat certain problems (...).'[43] We can now understand how the grid, more than bringing power relations into visibility, was a mechanism that served not only to make people speak but to empower themselves through speaking. As such, the grid and the discussions it generated fostered the development of a local jargon or local language, as Guattari called it.

La Borde's local language was not only a consequence of the grid. Overall it was the result of a daily life of encounters between different forms of knowledge production, different cultures and backgrounds, in a collective linguistic creation. The interchange between medical and non-medical personnel allowed for the collective investigation of psychopathology with vocabulary adjusted to local use. Moreover, there was also jargon related to the activities in the clinic, for instance, the acronyms 'S.C.A.J.' [*Souscommission d'Animation de la Journée*] or 'B.C.M'. [*Bureau de Coordination Médicale*]. A common language was being forged, between medical and personnel, and from the interchange of material and social tasks, technical and specialised knowledge, a collective learning of psychopathology,

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[43] My translation of: 'Lequel système est lié à l'invention d'une langue, avec son mode de désignation particulier des différentes tâches, et une rhétorique qui lui est propre et qui se révèlent seuls capables de traiter certains problèmes'. 'La Grille', *Chimères* 34, p. 12–13.

composed of psychiatric terms adjusted and reviewed according to local use.

By giving itself to the expression of concrete problems – and bearing in mind the extension of the analytical power beyond the closed doors of the doctor's office – the development of a local language allowed for processes of auto-elucidation. And perhaps even more importantly, it allowed for the development of what we could understand as a processual collective formalisation. Despite the desire to 'escape from language', we can thus see how in La Borde Guattari developed a focus on language, but in a way that contradicted the exclusivity of the linguistic as the privileged instrument of the analyst in the transference-interpretation operation. This was a language open to the social unconscious, with a direct impact on the multiplicity of modes of thinking and of analysis in the institution. Through the grid and the development of a local jargon, in La Borde language gained a concrete role in the reorganisation of the field of formal acceptance of other possibilities of thought and subjectivities.

3.3 - Theory of Groups

The grid was supported by a wide range of collective activities, clubs, workshops and committees, a journal, assemblies and discussion groups. The group was the basis of the collective life of the clinic. This was not one just group, but several, coming together according to different tasks, sometimes temporary, at other times for a longer duration. The purpose was the development and enlargement of the network of interactions among those living in the institution, but also collective life was meant to contradict the secrecy of other models of therapy. The collective life ought to be synonymous with a space for speech, for discussion, and for putting forward

ideas, desires and forms of resistance.

Guattari's interest in groups emerges from his background and continuous engagement in militant organisations. He had been involved with several interdisciplinary groups, such as the G.T.P.S.I (*Groupe the travail de psychologie et de sociologie institutionnelles,* formed in the early 1960s) and the FGERI (*Fédérations des groupes d'études et de recherches institutionelles,* founded in 1965), and associated publishing platforms such as *Recherches* and *Chiméres*. These were research groups that brought together people from an array of different disciplinary and practical backgrounds, such as urban designers, psychiatrists and artists, animated by similar principles as those of the institutional approach. In Guattari's own words, these interdisciplinary groups allowed a 'detour through other disciplines allowed them to clear up false problems (relative, for instance, to the functioning of space: problems concerning volumes, levels, communications, institutional options and micro-political options of promoters and users).[44] To this extent his clinical work is impossible to dissociate from his political militancy.

Deleuze's preface to Guattari's *Psychanalyse et Transversalité* (1974) deals precisely with the issue of Guattari's work at the confluence of militancy and transdisciplinary experimentation. Deleuze outlines three concerns guiding Guattari's work. How should the political be introduced into the practice and theory of psychoanalysis? How should psychoanalysis be introduced into militant revolutionary groups? And how should specific therapeutic groups be created whose influence would affect as much political groups as well as psychiatric and psychoanalytical structures?

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[44] Félix Guattari, 'Institutional Intervention', *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977–1985,* p. 35.

Guattari's answer to these questions can be found already in his early work, in the essay 'Introduction à lá Psychoterapie Institutionnelle' (1962–63) where the question of the group arises as the problem of creating new institutions (within the frame of the articulation of a social group in a larger social field). In this essay Guattari makes a distinction between two types of group, one subject-group/independent [*groupes-sujets*], the other subjugated group/dependent [*groupes-assujetti*]. This distinction bears a particular relation to the function of enunciation because a subject-group is defined according to an ability to make a statement, whilst the subjugated group is only a spokesman for another's speech. Implicitly, subject-groups (La Borde's groups are described more than once as subject-groups) also have active roles in institutional processes which are not contradictory to their own creativity. The distinction between both groups is subsequently developed in the texts 'Transversalité' (originally written for a presentation in 1964) and 'Le groupe et la personne' (1966). These notions are inspired by Sartre's dialectical sociology, and modelled on the concepts of 'seriality' and 'group in fusion'. Thus a clarification of Sartre's theory of groups is called for.

Sartre's Theory of Groups

Sartre's theory of groups is laid out in *Critique of Dialectical Reason*.[45] Here he poses the question of how groups are formed and how social structures change, with the purpose of re-orientating political theory from the focus on the individual and the 'given class' to the formation of groups. The impact Sartre had on Guattari is largely

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[45] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason. Volume 1*, trans. Alan Sheridan-Smith (London, New York: Verso, 2004 [orig. 1960]).

due to Sartre's existentialist Marxism, which led him to fuse psychological and sociological aspects in the accounting for human praxis.

For Sartre, 'seriality' is the most general mode of daily social life. From the French, *sérialité*, it designates a passive mode of being that characterises gatherings of individuals whose unity is derived from the outside. People waiting in a queue at a bus stop or the mass of people listening to a radio broadcast are examples used by Sartre to illustrate the concept. The reasoning is that, since the listeners to the radio cannot change the content of the emission, and since the people cueing for the bus cannot change its timetable, they are acted upon rather than acting. Thus, what unites them is their impotence, triggered by a inert social setting. It is inertness rather than praxis that is the active principle of their unity. Sartre compares this to a mathematical series where each individual can be attributed a number (ordering), but where the relation between individuals is externally based. Any one individual can be replaced by any other without compromise to the serial unity of the collective.

In addition to this, seriality corresponds to a state of alienation defined as being other to oneself: in seriality 'everyone is the same as the Others insofar as he is Other than himself. I am not the centre of my world, which is elsewhere, in other people.'[46] To this contingent and semi-unified gathering of unrelated individuals marked by passivity and united only by a common external object (the coming bus, a broadcast in the radio, an ordering number), and who have no connections between themselves, Sartre gives the name of 'collectives' (*collectifs*) or 'non-active human gatherings' (*rassemblements humains non actifs*). He then opposes this mode of serial mode of social being to 'active gatherings' (*rassemblements actifs*), which he designates as 'groups' (*groupes*).[47]

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[46] Jean-Paul Sartre,*Critique of Dialectical Reason. Volume I*, p. 260.
[47] Ibid., p. 371.

Despite the fact that seriality is the general mode of daily life sociality, 'collectives' can exit their mode of seriality. For instance, continuing to use Sarte's examples, people in a queue can unite to write a letter demanding more frequent buses. Thus, a 'collective' (inert and externally formed) may indeed transform into a 'group', but a 'group' may fall into seriality after the momentum of its contingent formation. Likewise, class for Sartre may either be passive (formed by labour and the means of production which it does not own) or active (since it can decide to fight against its condition and turn into a 'group').

According to Sartre, the move from a 'collective' to a 'group' happens when individuals find a shared common interest that engages a common emotion, establishing ties of sympathy and purpose. The coming into being of a 'group' is exemplified through the well-known example of the taking over of the Bastille in France. People who occupied a serial mode of social relation in regards to the monarch, land owners, etc., realised that they could make common cause against their oppressors. The point here is that this active gathering of individuals inaugurates a new type of sociality – beyond the technocratic-serial mode – which is affective and sustained by a common purpose. To this gathering Sartre gives the name of 'group in fusion'[48] since it acts if it were a single subject rather than a gathering of subjects.

Further to this, Sartre explains that the 'group in fusion' has a triadic form. It comes together under a menace of an external kind that it must internalise in order to maintain itself once the latter is extinguished. He gives the example of the threat represented by the gathering of 35,000 royal troops encircling the city of Paris in the

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[48] The English translation of the *Critique* by Alan Sheridan-Smith renders the term 'groupe en fusion' as 'fused group'. 'Group in fusion' appears not only to be a more direct translation, but better captures the way in which Sartre conceives of the dynamic nature of the group, as opposed to the ossified nature of the 'collective'.

early days of July 1789. Faced with the fear of the troops, the people of Paris gathered, storming multiple sites in search for guns and ammunition – the most famous the Bastille – on 14 July. Sartre's claim is that despite the inert grouping, generated by an external cause, throughout the process people recognised themselves in the Other as potential victims, and each other saw in the Other the same project as his own (a common praxis). Thus, 'the result, in the field of praxis, was that the people of Paris armed themselves against the king.'[49]

Conceptually, the group in fusion represents in Sartre the possibility of a genuinely reciprocal community that has managed to overcome alienation and find a mechanism of unification (internalisation) without a transcendent mediator. Further, this is a group whose unity does not come at the cost of each individual's praxis. It is a group where each member becomes a third to all the others, and thereby is grounding the omnipresent centrality of each. Each member is the centre, while the centre is everywhere; otherness has been transformed into identity.

Still, the problem arises when the practical basis of the unity of the group – the external menace – is lost and its goals are accomplished. Since the group comes together only as an effect of an external threat, this is a legitimate question to pose. What would sustain the unity of the group from that moment on? How would a group's stability then be maintained with the loss of its practical oriented constitution? Part of the answer is given by Sartre. A new kind of group develops from the group in fusion: the 'groupe assermenté' or, in English, the 'pledged group' or 'sworn group'. The group comes together through an oath. 'Serment' (in English translated as 'pledge' or 'oath') denominates the protocol by which a 'group in fusion' is transformed into a permanent group.

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[49] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason. Volume I*, p. 355.

Furthermore, the group in fusion may also develop into an institution. However, with institutional unification comes the introduction of organisation, function, division of labour and hierarchy. It is the most solid and inert form of being and Sartre connects it to the alteration of the group.[50] In this process the inner qualities of each individual cease to be relevant and serve only to threaten destabilisation and obstruction to the prescribed function. Each member is no longer seen as the initiator of free praxis but 'through the Other and through all, as an inorganic tool by means of which action is realized'.[51] In an institutional context, internal relations between individuals become determined by external relations and seriality returns to the group (like collectives). In Sartre's conception of the institution, the individual is no more than a quasi-inorganic entity whose inertia carries and executes orders.

The being of the institution, as the geometrical locus of intersections of the collective and the common, is the non-being of the group, produced as a bond between its members. The unity of the institution is the unity of alterity in so far as it is introduced into the group and used by the group to replace its own absent unity. But its relation to everyone is one of interiority, though it may define itself as praxis in exteriority: in fact, it determines everyone both in inertia and in practical obligation. Indeed, it transcends everyone in so far as it resides in all the Others, and is unpredictable and other in them, and dependent on this unpredictability. On the other hand, *as an institutionalised praxis, it remains either a power over everyone* (in the name of pledged faith) *or, if everyone represents and maintains it, his own free power over the Others.*[52] [My emphasis]

[50] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason. Volume I*, p. 422.
[51] Ibid., p. 599.
[52] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Critique of Dialectical Reason. Volume I*, p. 604.

Sartre's description of the institution is close to that of the serial group. Sartre's ascribes a vertical passivity to the institution and a horizontal passivity to the serial group. The socially inertia characteristic of the serial group is replaced in the institution by a passive seriality resulting from a collective operation in favour of a common regulative practice. In the serial group each person is united to the others through an external, ordering object; in the institution each is united to the others primarily through a command–obedience relationship.

Before turning more fully to the distinctive features of Guattari's project (in relation to Sartre), a few points of clarification are required. For Sartre, there seems to be an inevitable progressive serialisation of the group, with the group in fusion coming to being and sustaining itself only with the proviso of a practical threat (despite its further interiorisation). It is the omnipresent threat of seriality that is the driving force behind social transformative change. The fact remains that the stability of the group is very frail. Furthermore, it is not clear what the nature of this social change is if the relation between the group and the institutional process is conceived negatively; the institution is the failure of the group to materialise in institutional forms. If Sartre's theory of groups indeed makes the point – that there is a non-institutional foundation to all institutions – then this is not the same thing as saying that institutions' formations proceed from 'group' processes. Rather, the institutional process is linked to the group's alteration: the institution comes at the expense of the free praxis of individuals, the essential characteristic of groups with an active agency such as the group in fusion.

One can admit to a partial process of social structural change if one adopts Sartre's schema; however, it does not seem to prefigure the possibility of a formalisation of the group in fusion that does not inevitably result in the

neutralisation of its potential for change and institutional creativity. For Sartre, the process of institutionalisation sacrifices individual agency and deems very difficult any possibilities of socially transformative change.

Guattari's work will attempt to answer some of the same questions. How do groups remain at work without falling back into seriality and how do they operate at the level of effective structural social change? But with an essential difference: whereas for Sartre the question is one of going from an individual subjectivity to a collective one, for Guattari the subject is already collective, the collective preceding the individual with no loss of singularity. Drawing on the terms of Sartre and the shortcomings of his theory of subject-groups, I will argue that only by finding a way in which both individual desires and collective goals are articulated within a (non-totalising) group can this group become an agent of change.

Guattari will take Sartre's terms of seriality and rethink the concept on the basis of a capacity to make a statement that distinguishes the active and passive mode of agency of the groups. This difference will be articulated with a capacity to reorganise the *milieu* that groups inhabit. In the concrete setting of institutional analysis, at La Borde, Guattari connects institutionalisation processes with processes of 'taking over the word' in a manner that restores a creative capacity to the process of institutionalisation, reviving Sartre's 'institution' as the most rigid form of being. Thus in the following section I will return to the question of the group (beyond Sartre) according to an ability or inability to 'speak'. My aim here will be to extract and tease out the role of language within such framework that is left open by Guattari.

Guattari's Group-Subject and Subjugated Groups

In the essay 'La Borde: A clinic unlike any other', Guattari refers to Sartre's idea of seriality as 'the repetitive and empty character of a mode of existence arising from the way a practico-inert group functioned'.[53] He then states that in La Borde he was interested in exploring how 'to be disengaged from seriality and to make individuals and groups re-appropriate the meaning of their existence in an ethical and no longer technocratic perspective'.[54] He defines two types of (non-absolute) groups opposed in the manner they relate to seriality: 'subject-groups' and 'subjugated groups'.

In another essay, 'Transversality', Guattari clarifies that groups are like oscillating poles, since every group can at a certain moment vary between the two positions.[55] A subject-group 'is a group which proposes to rediscover its internal law, its project, and its action in relation to other groups.'[56] In *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, Guattari argues that it implies an 'active micropolitics': 'the subject-group's vocation is to manage its relation to external determinations and its own internal law, as far as it is at all possible.'[57] The subject-group has interiorised its external source of unity and made of it a common objective, refining and structuring it along the way.

In contrast, a subjugated group is dependent on the hierarchical arrangement of other groups within an institution: it 'receives its determinations from other

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[53] Félix Guattari, 'La Borde: a Clinic Unlike Any Other', *Chaosophy*, ed. Sylnère Lotringer, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) 1995 [orig. 1977), p. 191.

[54] Ibid., p. 191.

[55] 'Every group, but particularly every subject group, tends to oscillate between two positions: that of a subjectivity aspiring to take the word [*prendre la parole*] and an alienated subjectivity which disappears from view in the social alterity.' My translation of: 'n'importe quel groupe, mais plus spécialement les groupes-sujets, tend à osciller entre ces deus positions: celle d'une subjectivité ayant vocation de prendre la parole, et celle d'une subjectivité aliénée à perte de vue dans l'altérité sociale'. Félix Guattari, 'La Transversalité', *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, p. 76.

[56] Félix Guattari, 'Le Groupe et la Personne', *Psychanalyse et Transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, p. 156.

[57] Félix Guattari, 'Notes about certain concepts', *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, p. 471.

groups', and 'tends to be manipulated by all sorts of external determinations and to be dominated by its own internal law (Superego)'.[58] The members of the subjugated group are united to each other by an external object and embody a prior praxis without having a project in common of which they are aware, and without being aware of one another. In a psychoanalytical frame, Guattari maintains the difference of the two groups in terms of the manner in which a subject tries to integrate him/herself in a social field (*Moi Idéal and d'Idéal du Moi*), either by actively integrating him/herself through articulations of speech (sometimes establishing a rupture of a dominant language), or by subsuming him/herself to an pre-established order and pre-given social field.[59]

One example of a subjugated (practico-inert) group drawn from Guattari's work is the group of patients gathered around the administration of medication, in a given room of the clinic. This would not constitute a 'group' as such, but a gathering or a grouping of people unified by the circumstance of being given medication. Its unification is a function of an external imperative, with the elements of the group remaining only superficially connected. The nurse administering the medication is, in this sense, an agent of a practico-inert structure, but also the spatial setting is a practico-inert effect. Guattari finds that places, not only people, are agents of passive-inert groupings. This is in accordance with the institutional approach by which the institutional object itself, including spatial and physical elements as much as relational, affective elements, enters the field of causality.[60] Indeed, in 'La Borde:

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[58] Ibid., p. 471.

[59] 'Introduction à la Psychothérapie Institutionnelle', *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, p. 44.

[60] As argued by Bosteels, Guattari is critical of one-way causality; the influence is never unilateral. He does not seek to resolve opposites in the manner of dialectical reason. This critical strategy is especially relevant in regard to Freudianism and Marxism, two traditions which Guattari's theoretical work most interacts with, as they tend to define the subject and society through such forms of causality – proposing a notion of causal hierarchy between the various semiotic regimes: for example, by reducing socio-political relationships directly to the personal unconscious, in one case, or by

a Clinic unlike any other', Guattari notes how the passive-inert group formation was an effect of different persons administering the medication as well as the repetitive use of the same spatial setting. This is why factors of space and staffing entered 'the grid' rotation system, so as to avoid groups being determined by external factors. In La Borde, it was decided that neither would the medication be administered by the nursing team only, nor would the administration of it occur in the same spatial setting every time. It is in this sense that the protocol of the grid, which was examined earlier in this chapter, was developed as a methodological tool oriented towards preventing groups and individuals from falling within the passivity of seriality.

In this framework, a subject-group is a group that manages to articulate its external source of unity within a common project and praxis, without disregarding either the individual or the collective as active agents. As Guattari states, the formation of such groups is 'a matter of bringing forward the sort of activities that favour an assumption of collective responsibility and yet are founded on a re-singularisation of the relation to work and, more generally, personal existence'.[61]

Guattari further notes how groups in the institutional therapy approach are different from simple group practices: 'The first takes into account the pre-personal singularities of members as much as the group dimensions.' In such condition, even the silence of the catatonic could become relevant, as noted by Guattari: 'The silence of a catatonic can make up a part, perhaps even constitute the masterpiece, of an

interpreting cultural productions as being overcoded by the material environment, in the other. See Bruno Bosteels, 'From Text to Territory: Félix Guattari's Cartographies of the Unconscious', *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*, eds. Eleanor Kaufman and Kevin Jon Heller (Minneapolis, London: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), pp. 152–154.
[61] 'La Borde: a Clinic Unlike Any Other', *Chaosophy*, p. 193.

institutional assemblage of enunciation.'[62] But more can be said to distinguish them: first, in the institutional approach the group work is situated and grounded in the whole of the institutional object, which means that the questions affecting the group are real and make up its members' daily lives; second, something more fundamental is being pursued – the focus point of the therapy is the decentralisation of oneself in the creation of a collective project and not simply an inter-subjective interchange.

The echoes with Sartre are clear in terms of the active/passive mode of being of groups and the internal/external basis of the unity of the group. But, in contrast to Sartre, Guattari's approach perceives the group as the agent of institutional creation and reform. As noted above, in Sartre, institutionalisation represents only the return to seriality and the aporia of the group in fusion. A return to seriality marks the progression from groups to institutions. Instead, Guattari suggests a different perspective: within the institutional therapy framework the dialectics of group-institution is reinvented within a creative-constitutive dimension with a potential for change.

The point to note here is that Guattari does not deny the possibility of an active and creative character to the process of institution formation. It is here that Guattari parts ways with Sartre by conceiving of institutionalisation as a process that is compatible with creative capacity, or with the potential for transformative change. To quote Guattari, 'a discussion of the process of institutionalisation has nothing to do with pre-established organisation charts and regulations; it has to do with the possibilities for change inherent in collective trajectories – evolutionary attitudes,

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[62] My translation of: 'Le silence d'un catatonique peut faire partir peut-être même constitute un piece' maîtresse d'un agencement d'enonciation institutionnel! Tout cette dimension des singularités pré-personnelles est trop souvent separée des dimensions groupales,' 'Pratique de L'institutionnel', *Pratique de L'institutionnel et Politique*, p. 83.

self-organisation, and the assumption of responsibilities.'[63] The concerns orienting Guattari's institutional work thus far (how to *prendre la parole* and is there a chance to replace bureaucracy with institutional creativity?) require, therefore, dealing with the question of how to invent new institutional forms within collective processes. And as the experiment with the grid has made amply evident, they also require an understanding of the politics of language in the institution.

Groups, Seriality and Language

> Groups-subjects, on the other hand, are defined by coefficients of *transversality*, that ward off totalities and hierarchies. They are agents of enunciation, environments of desire, elements of institutional creation.
>
> – Gilles Deleuze, 'Trois problèmes de groupe'[64]

The difference, for Guattari, between *subjugated groups and subject-groups* is already clear in his early writings in *Psychanalyse et Transversalité*, and point towards a role of language in the problem of seriality. In a passage one can read that:

> To understand seriality (...) it is important not to lose sight of the fact that this is something that develops from speech [*parole*] and in the field of language [*langage*]. A speech that is imprisoned in a pre-given circuit but which also enters into its open totalisation a certain number of pieces of information, capitalising a certain expression, happening to the entire language circulated in society's age of code.[65]

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[63] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, p. 376.

[64] Gilles Deleuze, 'Three Group-Related Problems', trans. Michael Taomina, *Desert Islands* (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004,), p. 198. Originally published as the preface to Guattari's *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, 1972.

[65] My translation of: 'Pour compreend ce jeu de sérialité (...) il ne faut pas perdre de vue qu'il s'agit de quelque chose qui se développe à partir de la parole et dans le champ du langage, d'une parole qui est

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Agreeing with this, in the preface to *Psychanalyse et Transversalité, Deleuze* insists

on the distinction between the two types of groups as a question of enunciation and

institutional creation:

> The hierarchy, the vertical or pyramidal organisation which characterises
> the subjugated groups is meant to ward off any possible inscription of
> nonsense, death or dispersal, to discourage the development of creative
> ruptures, and to ensure the self-preservation mechanisms rooted in the
> exclusion of other groups. Their centralization works through structure,
> totalisation, unification, *replacing the conditions of a genuine collective
> 'enunciation' with assemblage of stereotypical statements cut both from
> both the real and subjectivity.*[66] [My emphasis]

From this excerpt we can start to construct an idea of seriality as a problem that

affects language. For Guattari, seriality is the incapacity to make a statement and

having one's cause heard. It is in this sense that, acting on a serial mode of being, the

subjugated group behaves as the mouthpiece of a speech that is not the group's own.

In an institutional setting this refers to a group that does not make an active

contribution to change, since its speech is only the repetition of an already

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prise dans un circuit donné, mais qui fait aussi entrer dans sa totalisation ouverte un certain nombre
d'informations, qui capitalise une certaine expression, qui se trame sur la totalité du langage mis en
circulation dans la société à l'état decode.' 'Introduction à la Psychothérapie Institutionnelle',
Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle, p. 43.

[66] Corrected Translation of: Gilles Deleuze, 'Three Group-Related Problems', trans. Michael Taomina,
Desert Islands (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004,), p. 198. Originally published as the preface to
Guattari's *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle,* 1977. 'La hiérarchie,
l'organisation verticale ou pyramidale qui les [les groupes assujettis] caractérise est faite pour conjurer
toute inscription possible de non-sens, de mort ou d'éclatement, pour empêcher le développement des
coupures créatrices, pour assurer les mécanismes d'autoconservation fondés sur l'exclusion des autres
groupes; leur centralisme opère par structuration, totalisation, unification, substituant aux conditions
d'une véritable 'énonciation' collective un agencement d'énoncés stéréotypés coupés à la fois du réel
et de la subjectivité.' Gille Deleuze, 'Trois problèmes de groupe', *Psychanalyse et transversalité.
Essais d'analyse institutionnelle,* p. vi.

established language (*langage*). On the other hand, the group-subject is characterised by the production of ruptures of meaning. It is a group that seeks through speech (*parole*) to negotiate new institutional possibilities; it brings forward new problems and analytical readings, which are in nature different from the dominant significations. Hence, in contrast with the subjugated group, a subject-group is a group that makes a statement.

What does it mean to 'make a statement'? What exactly does this distinction entail? In the previous chapter I discussed the importance of the statement in Foucault, focusing on its existential dimension in excess of what can be captured by linguistics. But in this context Guattari's conceptualisation more closely evokes Benveniste's difference between the subject of the statement (*énoncé*) and the subject of the enunciation (*énonciation*), a reference important to Deleuze and Guattari's definition of a semio-pragmatics of language. Benveniste identifies two sides in any use of language, *énoncé* and *énonciation*. This leads him to argue that the subject is split in relation to the linguistic capacity. The first, *énoncé*, corresponds to the particular content of a statement, i.e. to what is being said; the second, *énonciation*, corresponds to the *act* of saying, or the utterance, presupposing both a speaker and a listener. [67] For instance, the 'I' that exists within the *énoncé* ('He said that "I" will do this') is not the same 'I' that utters the sentence. The same statement can be uttered perhaps as a whisper so that no one can hear it, or instead in loud voice, so that everyone hears it. Thus the subject renders himself as a subject both by the use of the pronoun 'I', and as the subject that utters the pronoun 'I'. Statements such as 'I am lying' or 'I can't speak' make this split evident. This slip of the subject, however, is only artificial since the message conveyed is not independent of either

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[67] Émile Benveniste, Problems in General Linguistics, trans. Mary Elizabeth Meek (Florida: University of Miami Press, 1971 [orig. 1966]).

the 'I of the statement' (the subject represented) or the 'I who does the rendering' (enunciation). For example, whispering a statement can determine its meaning more than its actual semantic content.

This distinction is relevant for Guattari insofar as he associates this split with the distinction between the group-subject and the subjugated group. Guattari's group-subject is a subject of enunciation, whilst the subjugated group is a vehicle of a statement that is not the group's own. If we follow Benveniste's distinction, we can now understand how for Guattari, to make a statement is to be a subject of enunciation. In the French, the contrast is in Guattari's use of terms *prendre la parole* and *porter la parole*, literally, 'taking the word' (the subject-group) and 'carrying the word' (the subjugated group).

In *Machinic Unconscious* (1979) and in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) with Deleuze, Guattari further elaborates a conception of semiotic subjection that echoes the description of the association between the subjection of subjugated groups and the incapacity of making a statement. The point of subjection – Deleuze and Guattari designate this as subjectification as well – occurs when the two subjects collapse: when the subject of the enunciation retreats into the subject of the statement, resulting in a subject bound to statements 'already there', in conformity with a dominant or transcendent reality.[68] In this manner, semiotic subjection takes place when the subjected group is a vehicle of dominant, given signifying logics (for instance, groups constituted by nationalist agendas operating through media campaigns) and thus fails to constitute the terms of its own collective project. Its unity is found in an external signifying logic and in other's statements, for which it is only the 'mouthpiece' (akin to Sartre's group in fusion). To quote Guattari in

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[68] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p. 145.

Psychanalyse et transversalité: Essais d'analyse institutionnelle, the subjugated group endeavours to struggle 'against any possible inscription of non-meaning as a form of securing itself – so as to collectively refuse to face up to the nothingness, that is, to the ultimate meaning of the projects in which we are engaged'.[69]

In contrast, with the subject-group it is a question of the statements produced being an extension of the agency of the group. The ability to make a statement represents the possibility of self-elucidating the common cause of the group. Moreover, the capacity of subject-groups to make their own statements, establish their own reading of situations, guide their own semiotic process, and elucidate their own projects are conditions for the institutionalisation process. Thus, there is a significant difference between being a group that functions as a mouthpiece for a discourse that is not its own, and a group that is its own spokesperson:

> The group-subject is not incarnated in a delegated individual who could pretend to speak in its name. First of all, it is a project resting on a provisional totalisation, producing a truth in the unfolding of its action. Unlike Althusser, the group-subject is not the theorist who produces concepts. It produces signifiers, not signification. It produces the institution, the institutionalisation, not the party and the line. It modifies the general sense of history, it does not pretend to write it.[70]

Here lies, in my view, the crucial contribution of Guattari's elaboration which I propose to understand as follows. The extent to which the capacity of enunciation

[69] I am refering to text 'Le transfert' published originally in *Psychanalyse et transversalité: Essais d'analyse institutionnelle* (Paris: François Maspero, 1974 [orig. 1972]). Here I am using the translation by John Caruana, 'The Transference', *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Gnosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996 [orig. *Le Transfert*, 1972]), p. 62.

[70] 'Le groupe-sujet ne s'incarne pas dans un individu délégué qui pourrait prétendre parler en son nom. Il est d'abord un project s'appuyant sur une totalisation provisoire et produissant une vérité dand le déroulement de son action. A la différence d'Althusser, le groupe-sujet n'est pass le théoricien qui produit des concepts; il produit des signifiants, pas de la signification; il produit l'a instituition, l'institutionnalisation, pas le parti e la ligne; il modifie le sens général de l'histoire, il ne prétend pas l'écrire; il interpreté la situation, éclaire par sa vérité ensemble des formulations qui coexistent synchroniquement dans le mouvement ouvrier'. 'Le Groupe et la Personne', *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, p. 161.

determines whether the group is on the side of seriality or institutional creativity, and whether it is at the centre of its dissolution or institutionalisation, is indicative of an enunciative process which plays a role in the very constitution of the subject-group as such. Thus, instead of distributing subjects of enunciation and objects of statements (that is, subjects who are speakers and subjects who are spoken about, perpetuating dominant significations), in auto-elucidation (such as in the discussions of the grid) a process occurs by which a group becomes both a subject of the enunciation and a subject of the statement (a subject-group). Moreover, when language is part of this process – and not a mechanism of serialisation – then it then becomes capable of an enunciative function.

3.4 – Collective Assemblages of Enunciation

In the section that follows I trace the progression of the idea of the group to the idea of collective assemblages of enunciation.

> I've changed my mind: there are no subject-groups, but assemblages of enunciation, pragmatic assemblages that do not coincide with circumscribed groups. These assemblages can involve individuals, but also ways of seeing the world, emotional systems, conceptual machines, memory devices, economic, social components, elements of all kinds.[71]

Guattari explains that what he once called the experience of a group-subject is best conceptualised by the more inclusive concept of 'assemblage'. Guattari was concerned with the restrictive character of the concept of group, as he thought

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[71] Félix Guattari 'The Unconscious is Turned Towards the Future', *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977–1985*, p. 180.

enunciation could not be reduced to a group of people. Instead, it could only be understood according to pragmatic relations that allow taking in consideration a broader set of different elements. In *Introduction à la Psychotérapie Institutionnelle* (presented in 1962–1963, then published in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality* book), we can read that 'if we do not start from the definition of the subject as unconscious subject, or rather as a *collective agent of enunciation* [my emphasis], we risk *'chosifier'*, under the form of structure, the institution, and the whole society.'[72] Despite the fact that the notion of 'collective assemblages of enunciation' has a presence in Guattari's early work – such as in presentations and essays from the early 1960s gathered in *Psychoanalysis and Transversality* (published in 1972) – clearly stemming from a analytical experimental angle, it is in *Kafka* (1975), with Deleuze, that the theory of assemblages gains conceptual consistency, achieving its fullest elaboration in *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980):

> Quite different from the notion of the group, this notion of assemblage leads us to contemplate problems in their entirety, and to take into account social mutations, subjective transformations, semantic slidings, everything that touches on perceptions, sentiments and ideas. We cannot attribute responsibility for a statement (*enoncé*) to any social transformation, group or individual, in the sense in which we usually understand it. To grasp this type of phenomena, it is not enough to say, as it still was said a few years ago: 'we have to take the context, the implicit, into account...' Power relations, hierarchies, technological mutations (...) are an intrinsic part of an assemblage of enunciation.[73]

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[72] My translation of: 'Si l'on ne part pas de la définition du sujet comme sujet inconscient ou plutôt comme agent collectif d'enonciation, on risque de chosifier, sous forme de *structure*, l'instituition, et d'ailleurs la société tout entière.' 'Introduction à la Psychothérapie Institutionnelle', *Psychanalyse et transversalité. Essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, pp. 46–47.

[73] Félix Guattari, *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977–1985*, p. 48.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the term 'assemblage' denotes a broader notion than those of system, process or form. An assemblage comprises heterogeneous elements, which may be of a social, economic, subjective or libidinal order. By definition the assemblage is described according to two axis, one of content, the other of expression. The axis of content corresponds to the machinic ('the machinic assemblage of bodies, of actions and passions, an intermingling of bodies reacting to one another'[74]), while the axis of expression corresponds to the collective assemblage of enunciation ('of acts and statements, of incorporeal transformations attributed to bodies'[75]). The assemblage of enunciation is just one side of an assemblage, the other side being a machinic assemblage of desire. This is an artificial distinction, of course. For what is most crucial is that the two sides are mutually presupposing: there is no machinic assemblage of desire that is not a collective assemblage of enunciation. And collective, in Guattari's sense, cannot therefore be understood here only in the sense of social grouping: 'it also implies the inclusion of a variety of collections of technical objects, material or energetic flows, incorporeal entities, mathematical or aesthetic idealities, etc.'[76]

Thus, a statement should be understood as a component of a collective assemblage. For Deleuze and Guattari, statements are not a function of a subject that has produced them but a function of an assemblage that makes the statement its 'first gear' in order to connect to other gears that will follow. Regarding the translation of 'agencement' by assemblage, it is essential to bare in mind its intended sense of agency, which is somewhat lost in the English translation. In English, assemblage conveys the idea of a fixed state of affairs, whereas the original 'agencement' refers

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[74] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 97.
[75] Ibid., p. 98
[76] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, p. 464.

to the process whereby different elements come together. In foregrounding the act of coming together, '*agencement*' maintains an important constructivist perspective. Thus, it is not a matter of the ordering of terms (for instance, in the case of a sentence, the paradigmatic or syntagmatic axis) but of the statement, i.e. the effects or the sense that is generated by such assemblage.

> The minimum real unit is not the word, the idea, the concept or the signifier, but the assemblage. It is always an assemblage which produces statements. Statements do not have as their cause a subject which would act as a subject of enunciation, any more than they are related to subjects as subjects of statements. The statement is the product of an assemblage – which is always collective, which brings into play within us and outside us populations, multiplicities, territories, becomings, affects, events.[77]

In excerpts such as this the assemblage is presented as the minimal unit of analysis of statements. As such, there is no longer a subject of the enunciation, nor a subject of statement. Rather, there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage.[78] The subject of the statement is collective, which means redeeming the intrinsic social character of language: 'a subject is never the condition of possibility of language or the cause of the statement: there is no subject, only collective assemblages of enunciation.'[79] In this way, the concept of a collective assemblage of enunciation becomes central to Deleuze and Guatttari's semio-pragmatics of language. Emerging from Guattari's explorations in La Borde, it does not refer to exclusively material, discursive or

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[77] Giles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues*, p. 51.
[78] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976 [orig. 1975]), p. 22.
[79] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 130.

linguistic realms, but consists of coexistent signs, beyond the individuated instances of linguistics.

Despite the fact that the concept of collective assemblages of enunciation replaces the notion of subject-group in Guattari's theorization, in my view, it is not the refusal of the previous elaborations *tout court* Rather it is the re-articulation of the ideas already advanced in the theorization of the subject-groups whilst putting forward a more encompassing conception of collective enunciation. Neither is it a refusal of the role of language: the concept of assemblage allows for the describing of local processes (speech, groups) in a regime of multiple intersections and offers an analysis of their interaction. It allows for an understanding of modifications of collective modes of semiotisation on the basis of concrete pragmatic fields. Thus, the political condition of the collective assemblage of enunciation is that of its capacity to engage and articulate the multiplicity of the social, and to produce ruptures in dominant semiotics: the assemblage demands to know 'who is speaking?', 'who is intervening?', and 'what assemblage of enunciation makes something real?'.

3.5 - Analysis Beyond the Institution

This chapter has analysed Guattari's work at the clinic La Borde to extract a role of language within collective processes of institutionalisation. It has pursued the trail of the connection between creative institutionalisations processes and 'speaking subjects' to construct the problematics of language as a question of reconnecting language to an existential-pragmatic function.

The institutional analysis approach departs from the need to break mental institutions' stagnation, bureaucratisation and alienation as a problem of seriality in which language performs a role. At stake in La Borde was how to make the

institution a vehicle of expression of multiplicity, or what for Guattari meant an increase in the coefficient of transversality in the institution.

I looked first at the role of experiments such as the grid in the institution. Put into place by Guattari, the grid was a strategic procedure of giving visibility to power relations otherwise never incorporated in the therapeutic process. But more importantly, due to the discussions it engendered, the grid promoted the development of local languages to express local problems within processes of institutional transformation. In its discussions speech (*parole*) had to deal with a broader pragmatics that exceeded the domain of language (*langage*) and made it possible to institute an analytical relationship between the diverse institutional facets and the individual and collective affects. In the context of this thesis, this example provides important evidence of how for Guattari, it was never a matter of 'escaping from language'. Instead it was a matter of avoiding the imposition of dominant problems and the priority given to language over other modes of expression. What the grid made possible was thinking in terms of a politics of language.

To develop this further, I turned our attention to Guattari's focus on the formation of groups in the clinic and their ability to participate in the transformation of the institution. Importantly, for Guattari, processes of making the institution do not contradict the creativity of the group, but are indicators of its agency.

Departing from his conceptualisation of two groups, the subject-group and the subjugated group and their difference in the ability to 'make their own statements', I investigated how the capacity to make a statement is key to processes of institutional creativity. The importance given to groups is that individuals in a group process can become signifiers in their own right in a communicative system whose members are independent, yet are simultaneously in a relation of difference to

avoid totalisation. The aim of such groups is not to operate a majoritarian exclusion or totalisation but leave open paths of communication to the heterogeneity of social experience. I determined how the concept of groups bears a close resemblance to Sartre's 'group in fusion' and 'fused group', but established a key difference between Guattari's understanding of processes of institutionalisation which for Sartre are synonymous with the return to seriality. For Guattari, it is the capacity to guide its own process of enunciation that distinguishes the experience of the subject-group from the others. This is what Guattari will refer to as self-modelling or guiding one's own semiotic process, and from this ideas of autonomy can be derived.

> What characterizes a process of singularization (which, at one time, I called the 'experience of a subject-group') is that it is self-modeling. In other words, it captures the elements of the situation, it constructs its own types of practical and theoretical references, without remaining dependent in relation to global power, whether in terms of economy, knowledge, technology, or segregations and prestige that are disseminated. Once groups acquire this freedom to live their processes, they acquire an ability to read their own situation and what is taking place around them. It is this ability that will give them at least some possibility of creation and make it possible to preserve this very important character of autonomy.[80]

I defined this process of institutional creation as a process of bridging the difference between levels of manifest statements and latent statements and of surpassing vertical and horizontal communicational impasses in the institutional setting. This pursuit, however, has nothing to do with applying psychoanalysis to groups, but with creating the conditions amenable for an analysis of the social unconscious and finding ways to bring it into expression: to make language as enunciation traverse the form and matter, libidinal singularities and social determination, and to bring to the

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[80] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, p. 62.

fore the multiplicity that characterises the social unconscious. When understood in the perspective of enunciation, this struggle is the struggle for the multiplicity to enter dominant signifying logics. It corresponds to the effort of moving away from the logic of perpetuation of the dominant group to bear the multiplicity rather than the dominant character of the language of power. This conforms to a process of 'constituting not an avant-garde, but groups adjacent to social processes.[81] I further suggested a line of continuity between Guattari's concept of group-subject – which was constructed on the basis of a capacity of enunciation – and the development of the concept of 'collective assemblages of enunciation'. Here, the collective is no longer associated with a social grouping, but is clearly defined as a multiplicity composed of heterogeneous elements. The concept accounts for the new machinic and hetereoneous composition of the social field and for the collective nature of the statement, the 'assemblage' being the minimal unity of analysis. The creative institutionalisation has thus to be understood as a material and as semiotics, as located between desire and a subjective dimension.[82] As such, a collective enunciation would have to be understood on the side of social processes and their articulation with formal processes and concrete existential situations.

Conceptually, the role of transversality in establishing this rapport is key since it establishes the terms of heterogeneity and communication that are necessary. As noted before, the purpose of an institution such as La Borde is to increase the

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[81] Gilles Deleuze, 'Three Group-*related* Problems', *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 199. This essay is Deleuze's preface to Guattari's *Psychoanalysis and Transversality*, originally published in 1972.

[82] 'What matters to me is to find a certain number of markers in the relation between sensible discursivity in the domain of language, the communication of scientific statements and pathic, non-discursive apprehension. To do that, I'm led to postulate an existential apprehension alongside the relative, limited, delimited speeds of communication. It is always this double articulation which leads me to pose on the one hand, a world of discursivity, a world of discursive complexity, and on the other hand, a world of non-discursive complexity, and what I call a chaosmic apprehension of this latter.' Félix Guattari, 'Refounding the Production of Subjectivity. Interview with John Johnston', *Guattari Effect*, ed. Éric Alliez and Andrew Goffey (London, New York: Continuum), p. 32.

level of the transversality within the institution; to increase the dialogue between the different levels, by a heterogeneity of means of expression (silence, nonsense, gestural, affective, aesthetic, etc.); and to promote a collective analytical process that forces the interaction between formal and unformed components. But when I say this I am referring in particular to the process that Guattari understood as institutional or collective analysis: a process that renders the multiplicity of the social experience articulated through speech and which is connected with a concrete existential situation.

The analytical process demands a rigorous analysis of the diverse heterogeneous elements involved in a concrete situation. Univocal signifying logics have the effect of masking the multiplicity of the social field, hence an analytical strategy of enunciation has to operate at the level of engendering the multiplicity expressively. The institution has to become a spokesperson of multiplicity, of *speaking subjects,* or in Guattari's words '*a subjectivity which speaks'*.

Ultimately, from a critical standpoint the question that arises at the end of this chapter is concerned with the extendability of institutional experiments to the domain of real politics despite Guattari's efforts in this sense. In particular, is the kind of collective enunciation that operates within the particular context of the institutional extendable to other realms? Is the political multiplicity in conflict with the concept of formalisation itself and with political practice? But more importantly, where to locate political agency within the following statement by Deleuze and Guattari: 'the conclusion of these types of transformations will depend essentially on the capacity of the assemblages created to articulate these social and political disputes. If this articulation is not produced: no desired mutation, no struggle for spaces of liberty

can ever hope to trigger large-scale social and economic transformations'?[83] At stake here is the extent to which the conceptualisation of collective assemblages is able to overcome the limitations within the idea of group. The following chapter attempts to address these questions.

[83] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 239.

Chapter Four: Minorities and Collective Militant Analysis

How, in these conditions, can we still hope to preserve the creative dimension of language? How can we understand the possibility of 'deviants', groups-subjects to invent words, break a syntax, change meanings, produce new connotations, words of action, political order-words, engage revolutions both in society as much as in language?

- Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*[1]

In our view, the characteristic of this new mode of action articulating the political struggle with everyday life (...) is a 'collective analytic' intervention on the social unconscious, even if such a project is not explicitly declared as such. The aim of 'militantism' becomes twofold: it is on the side of the intervention, but also on the part of the persons intervening. It is about permanently working the militant collective enunciation and not just the statements produced.

- Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possible*

This chapter examines Deleuze and Guattari's politics of language and enunciation along two lines of enquiry—namely a politics of language as practice and a politics of language as analysis and intervention—and is divided into two parts. The chapter sets to construct a politics of language of use and accordingly delineate a practice of intervention. Subsequently, efforts are directed to expanding Chapter 3 through

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[1] My translation of: 'Comment, dans ces conditions, peut-on encore espérer préserver la dimension de la créativité de la langue? Comment compreendre que les déviants, des groupes-sujets, puissent inventer les mots, casser una syntaxe, changer des significations, produire des connotations nouvelles, des mots d'action, des mots d'ordre politique, engendrer des révolutions aussi bien dans la société que dans la lange?' Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*, (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011), p. 161.

responding to a political practice of language outside the experience of La Borde and posing its problematisation from the perspective of a wider social sphere.

I depart from Deleuze and Guattari's notion of minor literature developed in *Kafka* to elaborate on a conception of a minor use of language, as defined by Deleuze and Guattari as political. According to Deleuze and Guattari, a minor (political) use of language is characterised by a particular relation between content and expression. This use is one in which expression frees content, 'anticipating the material'. In other words, it refers to a contact between form-matter unmediated by representation. For this reason, the expression that advances content has to be non-signifying or a-signifying.[2] The semiotic framework used is again recognisably Hjelmslevian, and echoes Guattari's notion of 'a-signifying semiotics' fully developed in *Molecular Revolution*[3] (introduced in Chapter Two) and again covered in the concluding section of the current chapter.

In my view, the concept of minor literature is consolidated politically not only because of its method but because the 'minor' writer engages political minorities (outside of literature) that are barred from the grand language of literature and thus from expression. It is this problematisation of the literature, as a question of minorities, that constitutes language as a political problem; however, in my perspective, what is missing from the proposal of Deleuze and Guattari, as well as from Deleuze's literary project more generally, is a problematisation of how the political achievement of literature extends to expression in a more general sense, beyond its literary circulation, and how it impacts the minority status of the minorities concerned. Nevertheless, the conception that the minor is a use of

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[2] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976 [orig. 1975]), p.41.
[3] Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire* (Fontenau-sous-Bois, Recherches, 1977).

language is key to our research owing to the fact it emphasises the idea that there is not 'a' language, but rather different treatments of language. Deleuze and Guattari's idea, as has been discussed in previous chapters, emphasises that these treatments can either reveal the multiplicity of social experience or otherwise attempt to unify the heterogeneity in a single mode of expression. For them, the presumed unity of the former can be explained only according to a power manoeuvre resulting from the enclosure of language upon itself since there is no real unity to language, nor the self- sufficient formalisation of language outside the pragmatics of its effectuation.

What the minor treatment of language does is work within the major, dominant use of language, and as a tensor with the aim of minorising language in a movement towards the enunciation of social and political struggles. The tensor operates through establishing rather than interpreting connections; hence, the minor writer is a machine-writer, operating connections in the semiotic and the material, at both sides of a collective assemblage of enunciation.

In continuing with the problematisation of language as a political problem, this final chapter considers Deleuze and Guattari's further elaboration of the minor, this time drawing on the notions of minorities and majorities. The text in question here is *A Thousand Plateaus* where, in moving away from the question of literature, the formulation becomes more clearly engaged in a political arena of discussion that does not depend on literature. In this particular work, minorities, defined according to a particular mode of transversal organisation and use of language, are opposed to the capitalism of modern times, defined according to the processes of axiomatic semiotisation. I extrapolate on this contrast between minorities and the capitalist semiotisation in an effort to elaborate further on what a political practice of language might entail.

The second part of the chapter is concerned with the notion of collective militant analysis, developed by Guattari as an extension to the clinical framework developed at La Borde to militant and research groups; however, attempts are made to critically draw conclusions concerning its extendibility to even more general social contexts and social practices. Drawing from the notion of collective militant analysis, the chapter establishes how a politics of language concerns the capacity to outline new realities, performing a central a role in the processes of autonomisation. In the framework of militant analysis, the political dimension of language is be posed both from the perspective of an understanding of language as intervention and also from the perspective of a-signifying semiotics. A politics of language in Deleuze and Guattari emerges that is not primarily centred upon meaning and the content of signification, but rather concerns the adequation and fairness of a communicative ensemble with the real. The chapter concludes with a proposal to consider militant analysis as a semiotisation *en acte* adjacent to social processes, towards the construction of new outlines of reality.

4.1 – The Concept of the Minor

Deleuze and Guattari's theory of literature, as developed in Kafka, is the most commonly used grounds for arguing for a political formulation of literature in Deleuze and Guattari's studies. Here, our focus will not be on the question of literature, but, exclusively, on the question of language and how language is conceived within such a formulation. Our aim will be centred on grounding the concept of minor within a movement from literature to its outside, in the direction of

social and concrete political realities. This movement is also marked in Deleuze and Guattari's own work when the question of the minor deviates from a literary framework in *A Thousand Plateaus.*

From the start, the conception of minor literature is posed as a question of use or treatment of language. To quote Deleuze and Guattari, 'a minor literature is not the one of a minor language (*langue*); it is rather that which a minority does *within* a major language (*langue*)'[4]. This clarification is important to emphasise the role of language in this process. This particular use of language is associated with a 'minority' (to what a minority does to language), and is considered relative to a 'major language'.

In the particular case of Kafka, the major language is the German of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, when this is adopted as national official language for the Czech speakers. Czech, which is mixed with Yiddish, can be spoken, but is not suited for literature in the sense of how it is understood by Kafka (the German of Goethe, the classical German is the language of the grand literature). There is also the vehicular language of commerce and exchange in the Austro-Hungarian Empire or the bureaucratic German, which Kafka uses in his professional interactions. Kafka's situation as a writer marks not only his individual situation but also the impasse that bars access to writing for the Jews of Prague. By the same logic, it also incarnates the situation of the linguistic imposition or dominance as manifestation of political power over the people of Prague. Minorities in this sense, as people imposed upon by a language that is not their own, are defined in relation to the distance from a pattern or rule that establishes itself as a norm (the good and the bad language), and not because they are more-or-less numerous.

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[4] My translation of: 'Une littérature mineure n'est pas celle d'une langue mineure, plutôt celle qu'une minorité fait dans une langue majeure' (Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, Kafka pour une littérature mineure, Ed. Minuit, 1975), p. 29.

In keeping with the definition provided initially, the minor is not a minor language but rather is a treatment of the major language by a minority; meaning that a minor treatment of language has to be understood according to a force exerted upon the major language to make it minor; this is to say, to express the linguistic heterogeneity of the community of speakers whose power of expression has been left impoverished to a national language which is foreign. Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, when Kafka adopts the Prague German as his writing language 'as a fluid language intermixed with Czech and Yiddish', he forces a variation within major German.[5] In so doing, he is exposing the socio-political conditions corresponding to the stability of a 'state of language'; that is, he reconnects language (*langue*) with the collective assemblages of enunciation (economic, social and political, as well as technical, human and scientific factors), namely the pragmatics, that support it. As Ronald Bogue argues in *Deleuze on Literature*, 'Kafka defamiliarizes the Law by depriving it of its conventional, commonsense logic'.[6] In doing so Kafka operates a critique of law as grounded on a properly structured set of values or principles. Its social representation is thus dismantled.

In this manner, the three essential characteristics of minor literature, according to Deleuze and Guattari, are highlighted as the deterritorialisation of a language (*langue*), the connection of the individual with a political immediacy, and the appeal to a collective assemblage of enunciation (*agencement collectif d'énonciation*)[7]. The deterritorialisation of language (*langue*) refers to the need to break language free from the structure of identity, the purpose of control or the

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[5] 'They lived between three impossibilities (that I will arbitrarily call language impossibilities for the sake of simplicity, because I could call them something else): the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, and the impossibility of writing any other way, to which I'm tempted to add a fourth impossibility, the impossibility of writing," Kafka writes to Max Brod.
[6] Ronald Bogue, *Deleuze on Literature* (New York: Psychology Press, 2003), p. 80.
[7] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, p.16.

normativity (the good or bad usage of language) associated with a 'primitive territoriality'. Whilst in major literature the social milieu occupies only the background of the narrative, in minor literature, in contrast, through using the standard language but writing as a 'foreigner', writing brings to the fore the social and political factors that determine its status as such. The political immediacy refers to this last point. Lastly, because minor literature is understood to engage a political and social struggle, it requires to be seen not from the point of view of an individualist instance of linguistic enunciation, but from the instance of the collective subject of the assemblage of enunciation it engages. We have seen in Chapter 3 how the concept of collective assemblage, extracted from the study of the literature of Kafka, corresponds to an existential-pragmatic approach to language and enunciation. With Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka is seen to give us the method to a practice of language, within literature, of connecting it with the social and political pragmatics, and of its engagement with a particular struggle—the struggle for the enunciation of the minorities.

A minor Treatment of Language

In semiotic terms, the minor treatment of language is conceptualised by Deleuze and Guattari in terms akin to their semiotic pragmatics and that reflect the aforementioned characterisation of minor literature as deterritoralisation, political immediacy and a collective assemblage of enunciation. In terms affiliated to the Guattari-Hjelmslev framework, the minor is presented as a treatment of language by which the expression-content correspondences are disorganised with the purpose of liberating content from a formal pre-conceptualisation by which it is restrained. For this purpose, the expression has to be non-signifying. For this effect, according to

Deleuze and Guattari, Kafka's use of language is poor in comparison to the grand language of major literature (represented by Goethe); it is seen to go against the pretension of a major styles or literary genre, and characteristically deploys non-sense as a strategy against representation. They described Kafka as deploying an irregular, obsessive use of language that is characterised by the dryness of language, the avoidance of metaphor, symbols or mythic associations, poor syntax, and limited vocabulary.

As Deleuze and Guattari put it, a minor literature 'begins by expressing itself and doesn't conceptualise until afterward (...) to take over, to anticipate the material'.[8] In contrast, a major or established literature goes from content to expression, 'since content is presented in a given form of the content, one must find, discover, or see the form of expression that goes with it'.

How does expression connect with unformed content? The fashion in which Kafka uses sound and noise in his novels, for Deleuze and Guattari, is indicative of an attempt to disturb overly formalised content-expression relations by dominant signification (for instance Gregor Samsa's warbling in *The Metamorphosis:* 'it was clearly and unmistakably his earlier voice, but in it was intermingled, as if from below, an irrepressibly painful squeaking, which left the words positively distinct only in the first moment and distorted them in the reverberation, so that one didn't know if one had heard correctly')[9]. This critique of signification cannot be understood in absolute terms; it reverts to the instrumentalisation of language by power structures that over-determine the formalisation of content. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari, when language 'ceases to be the organ of one of the senses and

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[8] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 29-28.
[9] Franz Kafka, *The Methamorphosis.*

it becomes an instrument of Sense'[10]. Sense, with a capitalised *S*, is understood as an instrumentation of language by a form—the mark of the Signifier as representation. 'There is a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form'.[11] Hence, the pianist who doesn't play, the singer who doesn't sing, the whistling of the mouse, yet there a music, there's a song. It's 'language torn from sense, conquering sense'.[12] In terms that clearly echo Hjelmslev's diagram, a minor or political use of language thus has to be understood not as making expression-content correspondences between two types of form, but rather as disorganising forms 'in order to liberate pure contents that mix with expressions in a single intense matter' (somewhat of the affirmation of Hjelmslev diagram of the formation of the sign). The role of the writer therefore is that of detaching the signifier from representation (established by a dominant language) by introducing statements which, when entering into contact with non-formalised content, force the field of signification to be reorganised.

Guattari and Deleuze's notion of the 'expression machine' in Kafka's writing conveys precisely this idea. For them, the machine at work in Kafka's writing is one of operating connections and restraining a dominant signification: 'That which makes a machine are connections, all the connections that operate the disassembly'.[13] Along these lines, in minor literature, the writer becomes a person-machine: 'a Kafka-machine is thus constituted by contents and expressions that have been *formalised to diverse degrees by unformed materials* that enter into it' (*my*

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[10] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 20.
[11] Ibid.,, p. 21.
[12] Idib., p. 21.
[13] Ibid., p. 82.

emphasis).[14] The writer stands in between the semiotic and material, operating connections with unformed content, he/she *machinates* signification.

In Kafka, the term 'non-signifying' is used interchangeably with 'a-signifying'. The notion acquires only conceptual density in Guattari's work *Molecular Revolution,* published two years later. However, the use of the term in Kafka anticipates the intentions underlying the concept, namely the necessary liberation of signifying content and expression articulations and direct work of signs with the real.

The minor is not a language

A key formulation in Kafka is that of posing the question of a politics of language in terms of a treatment of language and pragmatics of power. The reason behind conceptualising the minor as a treatment (and not a matter of different languages) is to pose the question of language as a political problem from the very start and accordingly avoid reifying the minor or the major as fixed poles. A minor use of language is always relative to a dominant, standard use. Likewise, there is not only a dominant language in relation to which all others are minor, but rather different positions in relations of power. Accordingly, in this manner, for example, the German Czech is in a relation of minority to the Berlin German, but the Prague German is itself 'minor' in relation to the Berlin German or the Vienna German. For them, stability and linguistic dominance is inseparable from a certain socio-historical context and, consequently, can never be considered immutable or universal. Thus, by conceiving of dominant and minoritarian treatments of language, Deleuze and

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[14] Note how the description of literature as formalization by unformed materials remembers the function of the 'grid' in the analytical setting. Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1976 [orig. 1975]), p. 7.

Guattari are able to suggest that unity and stability can be understood only in line with an operation of power to hide the political multiplicity lying below the linguistic representation. To quote Deleuze and Guattari, 'there is no mother tongue, only a power takeover by a dominant language within a political multiplicity'.[15] Thus, we should understand a 'dominant language' not as a fixed language per se, but rather as a treatment.

The comparison of the minor use of language clarifies with caution that the minor treatment is a tension exercised within a major language, and is defined by variation and heterogeneity. A connection is established between a minor use of language and dialects, clarifying this relation on the basis of a comparison and a difference to avoid the identification of the minor with a regionalism. Dialects are variances of an official national language; most commonly, they are spoken variations, in which sense they hold an important connection to a concrete community of speakers. Deleuze and Guattari maintain that what is crucial in dialects is the variation that characterises them and how such variation penetrates the borders of the other languages with which these enter into contact. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is variation, and not their regional nature, that matters. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, we can read that 'we do not simply wish to make an opposition between the unity of a major language and the multiplicity of dialects. Rather, each dialect has a zone of transition and variation; or better, each minor language has a properly dialectical zone of variation'[16]. Regarding the example of the Quebecois language from Malmberg's study, Deleuze and Guattari observe that it 'is so rich in modulations and variations of regional accents and in games with tonic accents that it sometimes seems, with no exaggeration, that it would be better preserved by musical

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[15] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p. 116.
[16] Ibid., p. 101.

notation than by any system of spelling'. [17] We can see how the notion of dialect does not elucidate that of minor language, but rather the other way around: it is the minor language that defines dialects through its own possibilities for variation. But, the association of the minor with the dialectical also holds an emphasis of the minor as lived language, as a language attached to a practice of speech.

It is in this sense that we understand the connection Guattari establishes in *Machinic Unconscious* between the dynamics of the evolution of a language and a competence-performance interaction with the dialectal variance. As we have seen as in linguistics, in order for language to maintain a connection with reality, the relation between competence and performance has to be left open: 'In some way it is necessary to admit that in order for discursive chains to be in touch with reality they must be disengaged from the constrains of language considered as a closed system'.[18]

Connection with the Social

Whilst it is possible to construct a theory of literature and language conceptualising content and expression relations, form and substance, competence and performance, what Deleuze and Guattari see in Kafka is that the problem of language, within literature, is posed in connection with a social and political problem of minorities. It is this orientation towards a minoritarian social struggle, towards a pragmatic outside of literature, and invested as a problem of language, that confers literature with its political dimension. What is at stake here is not the opposition between the unity of a major use of language and multiplicity of dialects but the connection to the social field—a language in constant creation that serves to open spaces of expression, for the variance of the social.

[17] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 102.
[18] Félix Guattari, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2011 [orig. 1979]), p. 26.

Guattari and Deleuze argue the following: 'the problems of expression are staked out by Kafka not in an abstract way and universal fashion but in relation to those literatures that are considered minor, for example the Jewish literature of Warsaw and Prague'[19]. 'How many people today live in a language that is not their own? Or no longer, or not yet, even know their own and know poorly the language that they are forced to serve? This is the problem of immigrants, and especially of their children, the problem of minorities, the problem of minor literature.' [20]

In the case of the writer of minor literature, the writer takes the place of the minorities to account for this variation through expression. The work of the writer is centred on operating inside language and making expression work with political multiplicity connected to content. Thus, a minor use of language is one in which language is adjacent to social processes and when the enunciatory capacity of language is used for political struggles.

Majority and Minority

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the question of the minor breaks away from the exclusive reference to literature and moves into a clearer political problematisation, as is posed in two key moments. The first one is in the context of a discussion of linguistic approaches to the study of language. Drawing on the claim that language is an essential and heterogeneous reality, Deleuze and Guattari maintain that studies of language focused on extracting constants to propose a universal unity of language conform to a major treatment of language, whilst studies focused on the variables and proposing pragmatics of language are minor approaches to the study of language. This discussion relates to Deleuze and Guattari's opposition between the

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[19] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka. Toward a Minor Literature*, p. 16.
[20] Ibid., p. 19

pragmatics of language and structuralist theories of language (as was the focus of Chapter One). Secondly, the question of minorities is linked with a mode of resistance to the semiotic operation of the capitalist axiomatic. The section following will bridge the two discussions in an effort to arrive at a conceptualisation of the minor as political use of language in an extended context, beyond the framework of literature.

Majority as Constant and Norm

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari put forward notions of minority and majority that are not defined by their numbers; in other words, a majority is not necessarily more numerous than a minority, and a minority is not necessarily characterised by the paucity of its numbers. Rather, Deleuze and Guattari define the majority as pattern or a measure in relation to which both larger quantities and small quantities can be described as constituting a majority. Their example: suppose that the standard is the average adult-white-heterosexual-European-male-speaking-a-standard-language, other groups—women, blacks, peasants—would be minoritarian in regard to this pattern, even if they are more numerous. Thus, the majority represents a constant that is extracted from the variable, of expression or content, serving as the standard measure by which other uses of language are evaluated. Consequently, it is always synonymous with the establishment of a position of power over variation and heterogeneity. Insofar as the majority is associated with the correct or incorrect or a good or bad use of language, the majority also creates a minority that is considered minoritarian independent of its number.

In an effort to illustrate the relation between the constant and the majority, Deleuze and Guattari present the case of electoral choice. They explain that, despite

the fact that people are being given a choice of candidates to vote, their choice is contingent to the constant because one can only vote from within the choice of options given. The operation of extraction constants is always linked with the political operation to impose them on speakers. Situations of semiotic takeover, by a group, a nation or ethnicity, have the effect of emphasising a normative function of language. It is in such case—and when language becomes an axiom of the good and bad, correct and incorrect use of language, in connection with a structure of identity and a place in the *status quo*[21]—that it becomes major; in other words, when it becomes a pattern and a rule according to which every other use of language is measured. Considerations relating to a minor and major study of language are coupled with Deleuze and Guattari's critique of Chomsky's generative grammar and Labov's sociolinguistics in the discussion of dominant postulates of linguistics, which were examined in this thesis in Chapter 1.

It is also important to remark that the majority is the result of a treatment of language or the variable resulting from a splitting of the statement and enunciation in relation to a pragmatics of enunciation. It conveys the crystallisation of competence as standard, following from which every statement is relativised compared to a standard. Insofar as the majority is an abstract standard results from an analytic operation of extraction of constants, Deleuze and Guattari argue that a majority is only a 'majoritarian fact', 'the analytic fact of Nobody', as opposed to the 'becoming-minoritarian of everybody'.

> Continuous variation constitutes to the becoming-minoritarian of everybody, as opposed to the majoritarian Fact of Nobody. Becoming-minoritarian, as

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[21] The example of grammar is a recurrent one in Deleuze and Guattari: 'forming grammatically correct sentences is for the normal individual the prerequisite for any submission to social laws. No one is supposed to be ignorant of grammaticality; those who are belong in special institutions'.[21]

the universal figure of consciousness, is referred to as autonomy. Certainly, it is not by using a minor language as a dialect, by regionalising or ghettoising, that one becomes revolutionary; rather, it is by using a number of minority elements, by connecting, conjugating, that one invents a specific, unforeseen, autonomous becoming.[22]

In this manner, Deleuze and Guattari outline two general treatments of language corresponding to the major and minor distinction: either the variables are treated in such a way as to extract from them constants and constant relations (major treatment), or otherwise in such a way as to place them in continuous variation (minor treatment). Only the second usage of language adopts a pragmatic approach to language to put the components of in a state of continuous variation.

There are not, therefore, two kinds of languages but rather two possible treatments of the same language: either the variables are treated in such a way as to extract from them constants and constant relations or otherwise in such a way as to place them in continuous variation. We were wrong to give the impression at times that constants existed alongside variables, linguistic constants alongside variables of enunciation—that was only for the convenience of presentation. It is obvious that the constants are drawn from the variables themselves; universals in linguistics have no more existence in themselves than they do in economics, and are always concluded from a universalisation or a rendering-uniform involving variables. *Constant is not opposed to variable;* it is a treatment of the variable opposed to other kinds of

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[22] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 104

treatment or continuous variation. So-called obligatory rules correspond to the first kind of treatment, whereas optional rules concern the construction of a continuum of variation.[23]

There are three key considerations to note about Deleuze and Guattari's concept of minorities. We focus here on what minorities are not, given that the concept is often reduced to ideas of small or marginal or refusal of engagement with institutional politics. It is important to understand that the defining criteria of a minority is not a numeral one; rather, minorities are defined by the gap separating them from the majoritarian as the constant and normative system, or this or that axiom constituting a redundant majority.

They are also not to be confused with subsystems within a linguistic community, but with a potential agency within a major form of language that functions as a tensor within a major usage of language for passages to the social heterogeneity that has been left out to be created and minorise the major language. Third, in relating to the former, to speak a minor language is not enough to become revolutionary. The illustration used by Deleuze and Guattari shows that speaking the language of the working class is not what links an individual to the positions of that class, but rather the tension one exercises within a major form of language.[24] The crucial concern to note is that the minor holds a definite dimension of agency.

The concept of minorities benefits from being understood at the historical

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[23] Ibid., p. 100.

[24] In this regard, Deleuze and Guattari refer the readers to the "Strategy Collective" manifesto on the Quebecois language in *Change*, no. 30 (March 1977) and write 'it denounces the "myth of subversive language," which implies that simply being in a minority is enough to make one a revolutionary ("this mechanist equation derives from a populist conception of language. Speaking the language of the working class is not what links an individual to the positions of that class.... The argument that Joual has a subversive, countercultural force is entirely idealistic".

context of its formulation. Both *Kafka* and *A Thousand Plateaus* are books reflecting the specific period of struggles in the 1960s, and a context in which minoritarian formations offered an alternative to the political rigidity of major social, institutional and partidarian formations. Throughout Deleuze and Guattari's work—more particularly, Guattari's—the concern with modes of institutional organisation was never incompatible with minoritarian organisations; in fact, the opposite. For Guattari, it was key to think and experiment with modes of organisation of minoritarian groups and institutionalisation processes adequate to a collective experience and autonomisation processes. An examination of Deleuze and Guattari's perspective on minorities therefore would gain in being coupled with Guattari's work on institutionalisation processes.

Minorities and the Capitalist Axiomatic

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, the concept of minorities is articulated with a diagnosis of 'capitalism of the modern times', to use Deleuze and Guattari's words. It is suggested that minorities are able to oppose the capitalist axiomatic, not only because of the nature of the problems they present and pose to a dominant grid of signification, but in particular owing to the fact they demand to create their own terms of reference.

In the section that follows, this account of capitalism by Deleuze and Guattari will be examined in view of clarifying the sense in which minorities are able to create their own terms of reference, and the role of language in this process. More specifically, exploration will centre on how a minor usage of language contradicts the capitalist axiomatic. In order to do so, this section will show how, for Deleuze and Guattari, the capitalist axiomatic is a particular kind of semiotisation, with discussion surrounding the implications of this for their political analysis of

language. In directly tying processes of semiotisation to the operations of capitalism, this discussion will be central to the research proposal of defining a political practice of language. However, it is not the scope of this research to make a critical analysis of Deleuze and Guattari's account of capitalist axiomatics in the whole.[25]

The Capitalist Axiomatic Semiotisation

Deleuze and Guattari's account of capitalism introduced in *Anti-Oedipus*, and then subsequently developed in *A Thousand Plateaus*, includes the definition introduced by Guattari of capitalism as a semiotic operator. However, before drawing the implications over language of the semiotic operation of capital, first there is a need to clarify the idea of axiomatic. In so doing, emphasis will be placed on how the capitalist axiomatic is an axiomatic semiotisation, and the important implications this has for the present research.

The term 'axiomatic' is first used in *Anti-Oedipus* to describe the latest form of social organisation within universal history and general semiology corresponding to the contemporary capitalist social formation and mode of representation. According to Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism functions 'not metaphorically, but literally' as an axiomatic.[26] The main reference deployed to account the axiomatic is Robert Blanché.[27] Originating in the discourse of science and set theory specifically, an axiomatic is a method of establishing a formal relation between elements and a

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[25] See for example Jason Read, 'The Age of Cynicism: Deleuze and Guattari on the Production of Subjectivity in Capitalism', *Deleuze and Politics*, ed. Ian Buchanan and Nicholas Thoburn (Edinburgh Edinburgh Press, 2008): pp 139-159.

[26] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p.455.

[27] Robert Blanché's 1955 *L'axiomatique*. See Roff 'A critique and reformulation of Deleuze and Guattari's capitalist axiomatic' forthcoming in *Substance* for a discussion of Blanche theory. Roff argues that Deleuze and Guattari's use of set theory involves an erroneous presentations of the axiomatic method. Available here: https://www.academia.edu/4940370/A_critique_and_reformulation_of_Deleuze_and_Guattaris_use_o f_axiomatics.

'set of equations and relationships that determine and combine variables and coefficients immediately and equally without reference to prior and fixed definitions or terms. A model for an axiomatic system is a well-defined set, which assigns meaning to the undefined terms in the system, in a manner whereby the nature of individual elements needs not to be specified'.[28] An axiomatic operates on elements and relations on the basis of ordering a given domain with the adjunction or subtraction of particular norms or commands (axioms). Thus, the mode of operating of the axiomatic is 'indifferent to the properties or qualities of their domain of application and treat their objects as purely functional, rather than qualitatively differentiated by some intrinsic character'.[29]

According to Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism replaces the codes of pre-capitalist societies and modes of production. It does not have a specific code; instead, it has an endless capacity to decode and axiomatise. This is particularly evident in the ability of the capitalist state to capture modes of production (and a relation to land) that existed within specific social and cultural codes, and recode them into state organised labour relations (via private property and enclosures for instance). In such a way, money is fully detached from a direct connection to specific places, beliefs and practices of living, instead becoming a principle of general equivalence.

Importantly, whilst codes require belief, grounding or justification in order to function, axioms relate to nothing but themselves; they are 'primary statements' that do not depend on previous ones. Axioms are either added to the system (sometimes at impressive rates, such as contemporary axioms about health and environmental-friendly living) or subtracted from it; other times, they are subtracted from one area

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[28] See Alberto Toscano, 'Axiomatic', *The Deleuze* Dictionary, ed. Adrian Parr (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005), p. *17-18.*
[29] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004 [orig. 1972]) p. 249.

and added in another.

The axiomatic differs from a system of codes and over-coding by its capacity to operate directly on decoded flows substituting for intrinsic codes an axiomatic of abstract quantities in the form of money[30]; in other words, the axiomatic operates regardless of local semiologies or intrinsic codes. Flows are decoded and axiomatised, where all differentiated elements are operated to the extent that they are indexed in measures of formal equivalences that determine their conjugation with other flows. In this respect, because it is able to operate directly on decoded flows without codes, the capitalist axiomatic is self-regulated in contrast with codes, which require an instance of externality or transcendence.

> If it is true to state that we are not using the word 'axiomatic' as a simple metaphor, we then must review how an axiomatic is distinguished from all manner of codes, over-codings, and re-codings: the axiomatic directly deals with purely functional elements and relations whose nature is not specified, and which are immediately realised, simultaneously, in highly varied domains; codes, on the other hand, are relative to those domains, and express specific relations between qualified elements that cannot be subsumed by a higher formal unity (over-coding) except by transcendence and in an indirect fashion.[31]

The financial and derivative markets have become the quintessential examples of these procedures, where the importance of automated trading and the development of proprietary trading algorithms require operators to be less versed in economics than in mathematics or physics. More specifically, the microsecond speed at which high-frequency trading algorithms operate, independently of any human capacity for

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[30] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004 [orig. 1972]) p.153.
[31] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p.501.

direct supervision, locates the capitalist capacity for axiomatisation at unprecedented levels.

In this context, what is crucial to note is that Deleuze and Guattari refer to the processes of operation of capital as, essentially, a semiotising agency: that translate every sequence of life into terms of exchange and that establish relations and connections between otherwise incommensurable elements. Guattari explains that: 'Capital is not an abstract category: it is a semiotic operator at the service of specific social formations. Its function is to record, balance, regulate and overcode the power formations and the fluxes that make up the planet's overall economic powers'.[32] Deleuze and Guattari argue that although such a system of capitalisation of power can be traced back to the most archaic societies, only in the 'capitalist mode of semiotisation of production has a general procedure of semiotisation of such capitalisation became autonomous'[33], in other words, an axiomatic.

The description of a capitalist axiomatic semiotisation also conforms to what Guattari termed 'Integrated World Capitalism' (IWC). This is a term referring to the neoliberal integration of politics and economics, capital and the state, mostly from the 1970s, through the integration of national economies on an increasingly world scale (in the wake of the post-war UN, IMF, World Bank and other global governance institutions). Deleuze and Guattari trace back the origins of this process to the deterritorialisation of the local modes of semiotisation, which leads to their subjugation to a general and global system of quantification of power and a 'reterritorialisation of the latter system onto a hegemonic power formation: the bourgeoisie of the Nation-States'.[34]

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[32]Félix Guattari, *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977-1985*, ed. Sylvére Lotringer, (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2009), p. 244.
[33]Ibid., p. 244.
[34]Ibid., p. 244.

The semiotisation capacity of capitalism is also explained by Guattari as being parallel to the increasing development of information technologies, rendering not only the data in social form as allowing for different modes of classification and calculus of local powers in which capital works as a general equivalent.

> Integrated World Capitalism is not limited to recomposing, adopting new forms of unification, the flux and hierarchies of statist powers in their traditional sense. It generates supplementary statistic functions that are expressed through a network of international organisations, a planetary strategy of the mass media, and rigorous taking control of the market and of technologies, etc.[35]

In this sense, the semiotisations inherent to the clinical classifications, genome patents, carbon markets, disaster risks or mineral prospection, are all cases that reveal a more generalised condition, whereby technologies of measuring, seeing or classifying are coupled with multiple other legal, technological and material systems in the production of a global process of capitalist integration.

The Axiomatisation of the Social and the Denumerable Majority

In this axiomatic framework, a majority has to be understood as the product of quantification, a classification, of that which is measurable; in other words, the majority is the 'more than 50 per cent' of statistics. This majority, however, is a formal reduction of reality to what can be axiomatised. Simon Tormey and Jules Townshend explain the political outcomes of this in their analysis of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the semiotic operation of capitalism:

> When we hear a politician to say that 'a majority wants x' thus rules out the rationality and desirability of other outcomes (...) Statist politics operates via

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[35]Félix Guattari and Antonio Negri, *New Lines of Alliance. New Spaces of Liberty* (London: Autonomedia/Minor Compositions, 2010 [orig. 1985]), p. 48.

the mobilisation of denumerable sets whether it be 'the majority' or 'the black community' or 'youth'. Similarly radical politics has traditionally operated via the mobilisation of different sets, 'the working class', being the classic formula. This operation is in their view a silencing not only of those who remain outside the set, but of those who lie within, those who are represented in the claim articulated.[36]

In this sense, when any claims enter the field of the axiomatic, this is only to render them quantifiable to a general equivalent that is external to them. As such, the claim loses the connection with its political reality, to its concrete and existential pragmatics. Viewed in these terms, Deleuze and Guattari's interest in minorities becomes clear as for them minorities express the non-denumerable, or the margins of the axiomatisable (Deleuze suggest that *A Thousand Plateaus* moves from classes to minorities).[37] Moreover, in the section of *A Thousand Plateaus*, '7000 B. C.: Apparatuses of Capture', Deleuze and Guattari argue that, in formulating 'their own problems', minorities raise problems that capitalism cannot tolerate:

> However modest the demand, it always constitutes a point that the axiomatic cannot tolerate: when people demand to formulate their problems themselves, and to determine at least the particular conditions under which they can receive a more general solution (hold to the *Particular* as an innovative form). It is always astounding to see the same story repeated: the modesty of the minorities' initial demands, coupled with the impotence of the axiomatic to resolve the slightest corresponding problem. In short, the struggle around axioms is most important when it manifests, itself opens, the gap between two types of propositions, propositions of flow and propositions of axioms. The power of the minorities is not measured by their capacity to enter and make themselves felt within the majority system, nor even to reverse the necessarily tautological criterion of the majority, but to bring to bear the force

[36] Simon Tormey and Jules Townshend, 'Deleuze and Guattari: Rethinking Materialism, *Key Thinkers from Critical Theory to Post-Marxism* (London: Sage Publications, 2006), pp. 38 – 62.
[37] Gilles Deleuze in conversation with Antonio Negri, From the journal *Futur Anterieur* 1(Spring 1990).

of the non-denumerable sets, however small they may be, against the denumerable sets, even if they are infinite, reversed, or changed, even they if imply new axioms or, beyond that, a new axiomatic.[38]

What is important to note about the above quote is not only that, for Deleuze and Guattari, minorities have the ability to formulate their own problems, but that, in so doing, they undermine the capitalist axiomatics. However, this happens not because of a break or ability of transforming existing power structures that such formulation in itself might imply, but because, in so doing, the inability of capitalism to attend to such demands is made evident, i.e. the inability of the capitalist axiomatics to capture the minority as such. For Deleuze and Guattari, this corresponds with the central difference between two types of proposition: one of axioms (processes of semiotisation via denumerable sets); the other of flows (non-denumerable sets). Moreover, Deleuze and Guattari argue that, whilst the axiomatic can incorporate elements of the minorities, through adding more axioms, the process of quantification cannot express the minorities since it does only manipulates denumerable sets, and minorities are non-denumerable and non-axiomisable.

> The response of the States, or of the axiomatic, may obviously be to accord the minorities regional or federal or statutory autonomy, in short, to add axioms. But this is not the problem: this operation consists only in translating the minorities into denumerable sets or subsets, which would enter as elements into the majority, which could be counted among the majority (...). But what we are talking about is something else, something even that would not resolve: women, non-men, as a minority, as a non-denumerable flow or set, would receive no adequate expression by becoming elements of the majority...[39]

In contrast with the system of the axiomatic, Deleuze and Guattari conceptually

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[38] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p. 471.
[39] Ibid., p. 470.

define the minorities as non-denumerable sets, the essential characteristics are of which are the mode of relation between its elements, where its mode of operation is that of operating connections rather than the conjugations of the axiomatic. What characterises the minorities are not the elements but the relations internal to the number established within its elements: 'What characterises the non-denumerable is neither the set nor its elements; rather, it is the *connection*, the "and" produced between elements, between sets, and which belongs to neither, which eludes them and constitutes a line of flight'.[40]

Deleuze and Guattari further suggest that the axiomatic is not a closed totality; it constantly adds or subtracts axioms whenever necessary. The axiomatic system generates 'undecidable propositions' that require new axioms and are constantly breached by components (non-denumerable sets) that open to the outside and may cause the dismantling of the system. Thus, it also can be said that the axiomatic reproduces, to a certain extent, what it constantly aims to eliminate. Capitalism is performed in denumerable sets, but forcibly originates non-denumerable sets that disturb its models. Thus, it is continually setting and overcoming its own limits.

In following from the question of the minoritarian politics of language examined before, a 'minoritarian' politics thus would have to depart from the invention of modes of semiotisation adjusted in connection with the concrete experiences and realities. Such politics inevitably would have to proceed from a taking over the semiotic practice by the masses and for the masses, so that language and enunciation, in adjacency to social processes, could become a catalyst of change, instead of how it is used most often: as a problem of representation. Thus, we can

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[40] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 470.

understand why Deleuze and Guattari turn to the minorities as those who fall outside the logic of identity itself and, by virtue of their singularities, are able to break with the redundant majority of expression, showing inadequacy. Moreover, Deleuze of Guattari also refer to the mode of operation of minorities as that of establishing connections between the elements rather than the conjugations of the axiomatic. This conforms to a previous conceptualisation of a minor treatment of language that always refers to a collective assemblage of enunciation.

And yet, when considering the need to bring 'to bear the force of the non-denumerable sets', one would be wrong in assuming that this would reduce Deleuze and Guattari's politics of language to processes of occasional disruption and resistance, whose fate eventually is to be axiomatised. One should bear in mind that, in *A Thousand Plateaus,* Deleuze and Guattari remind us of the importance of politics as well at the level of major significations, identities or axioms:

> Once again, this is not to say that the struggle on the level of the axioms is without importance; on the contrary, it is determining (at the most diverse levels: women's struggle for the vote, for abortion, for jobs; the struggle of the regions for autonomy; the struggle of the Third World; the struggle of the oppressed masses and minorities in the East or West...). But there is also always a sign to indicate that these struggles are the index of another, coexistent combat.[41]

Thus, the political question is not so much, or not simply, that of forcing the axiomatics to constantly adapt, facing their own limits, as embodied in the minorities, but equally to create new axioms.

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[41] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Brian Massumi, (London/New York: Continuum, 2004 [orig. 1980]), p.471

4.2 - The Semiotic Operation of Capital

According to Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, with the semiotic operation of capital comes a capture of modes of activity that traditionally escape the classic definition of labour. In 'Integrated World Capitalism and the Molecular Revolution',[42] Guattari makes a distinction between social capital and economic capital, where social capital represents the function of social modelling and subjectivity. Conceived as such, capital affects and captures all levels of the social. In *Anti-Oedipus* we can read:

> We seem to be straying from the main concern of psychoanalysis, yet never have we been so close. For here again, as we have seen previously, it is in the interiority of its movement that capitalism requires and institutes not only a social axiomatic, but an application of this axiomatic to the privatized family.[43]

Guattari puts forward the term 'semiotic-machinic integration' to refer to the productive process, which includes the subjectivity of the worker and his/her mode of interaction with society and a 'machinic' context. Guattari proposes that, in capitalist societies, subjectivity is produced at the interception between forms of social subjection and forms of 'machinic' enslavement. Social subjection refers to the production of subjectivities via redundancy (of content repeated over and over again). This is evident in the multiple injunctions distributed today by the social media, from healthy living to the reduction of European politics to the problem of an eventual Grexit, or otherwise to the repetition of social procedures. But more importantly, Guattari claims that at the 'machinic' level, capitalism has produced a

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[42] Félix Guattari, *O Capitalismo Mundial Integrado e a Revolucao Molecular*, trans. Suely Rolnik, Revoluçao Molecular: Pulsações Políticas do Desejo (São Paulo: Brasiliense, 1981 [orig. 1980]), p. 211-225.
[43] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004 [orig. 1972]) p. 303.

form of enslavement, which has consequences over subjectivity. The most evident today is the debt economy and the forced participation of consumers in vast value-production and speculation machines (as receivers, users and creditors.) that indirectly inform European precarious subjectivities.

The economic expression of capitalism, in this sense, is the semiotic subjection of persons. Moreover, in Deleuze and Guattari's conception, capitalism attains such capacity because it works from within the socius in the sense that key to its mode of operation are semiotisation procedures and not only linguistic ones. In semiotic terms, Deleuze and Guattari conceptualise that capitalist semiotic devices operate at two levels: signifying and a-signifying; these relate to the two forms of subjugation mentioned previously, namely social subjection and machinic enslavement, respectively.

> How do we explain that capitalism, with its axiomatic, its statistics, performs an infinitely vaster repression of this production (the decoded and deterritorialised production of desiring-production) than the preceding *régimes*, which nonetheless did not lack the necessary repressive means?[44]

In terms of how these processes work through language and affect language, it is a matter of modes of subjugation, upon which a research has been developed by Guattari. According to Guattari, power in the linguistic field and the stability of a capitalist language depends on the congruence of a semiotic subjection within fields of resonance and a 'machinic' form of enslavement within interactive fields of 'machinic' redundancies[45]. Semiotic subjection refers to the signifying components of capital, and is associated with the modelling of signification, whether at the level of the nation-state (for instance, via a national language) or at the level of media and

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[44] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p.368.
[45] See Félix Guattari, *Machinic Unconscious*.

advertising capacities. However, an important point emerges here: we know, to use Guattari's words, that 'assemblages of content and expression are not heaven-sent'; that is, that there is a specific historical-contextual context and a specific assemblage of power that sustain certain 'universals of signification', which are put in place by specific pragmatic fields. This is what leads Lazzarato to argue that capital operates only semiotically. In fact, for Lazzarato, capital is a semiotic and not a linguistic operator.

> The difference is considerable: in capitalism, sign flows (money, logarithms, diagrams, equations) act directly on material flows, bypassing signification, reference, and denotation, all of which are linguistic categories. A-signifying semiotics function whether or not they signify something or someone. They are not caught in the dualism of signifier and signified. They are operative signs, 'power signs' that do not involve consciousness or representation. Capitalism is machinocentric and not logocentric.[46]

I would, however, refrain from absolutely reducing one to the other. It seems to me that at stake is always the coupling of signifying and a-signifying operations. Indeed, if we recover Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of the news, I would say that it is both the actual content of each news bulletin and the news itself (the fact they are being transmitted) that are the signifying content. In both cases, the stability of the signification depends on the asymmetrical relations of power with television and the position in which we, as spectators, are placed: we are guided by semiotic fluxes to 'pay attention to this and that', thus compromising our capacity of enunciation. Thus, we can say that, from both Deleuze and Guattari's perspective, the axiomatic has implications on language: 1) by alienating enunciation, cleaving it to formalised strata of content and expression; and 2) by manipulating a 'machinic' system to

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[46] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines. Capitalism and the Production of Subjectivity*, trans. Joshua David Jordan (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e) Foreign Agents Series, 2014), p. 25.

proliferate archaisms and reify a major form of expression through axiomatic capture of language.

An Axiomatic Use of Language

Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on the semiotic operation of the capitalist axiomatic and the relation it entails between sign flows and the valorisation process of capital echoes concerns raised by authors Christian Marazzi and Maurizio Lazzarato. The example of media such as television was already discussed in this perspective. It was noted how the power of media is not relative to just how a subject is framed, but on a certain event being selected as news, conveying to the spectator what is 'newsworthy' or not and thus worth of our attention. As such, the importance of the transmission of information does not lie exclusively on its content, but equally on the frequency of the news. It is this frequency that conveys value to a certain event: the value of 'this is or that is important'. But more importantly it also has a hold on the direction of our attention towards certain realities and not others, 'you should be paying attention to this and not that' and so on. Guattari has referred to this process as semiotic modelling.

Thinking about the 2008 financial crisis, we witnessed a proliferation of expert jargon and financial and economic vocabulary. Expressions such as 'subprime', 'a collateralized debt obligation (CDO)', 'hedge fund', 'bailout' 'derivative', etc., are now commonplace. Countries are rated by financial analysis corporations according to their credit worthiness, from 'AAA+' to 'junk' countries. However despite the penetration of economic discourse into daily life, the extent to which this contributes to a real engagement with the concrete questions affecting both the economy and social realities is less clear. Besides, it is also not immediately

understandable how does the proliferation of economic and finance signs contribute to an elucidation of the problems at stake and the formulation of solutions. The fact that the discussion is defined in the terms of the 'expert' can have the effect of a desresponsabilisation on taking decisions or being able to think about concrete situation that affect all of us.

In this regard, economist Christian Marazzi pointed to 'the linguistic opacity that finance prospers, a situation which raises the question of democracy, that is, the possibility of debating strategies, procedures and decisions concerning the life of all citizens'. In *The Violence of Finantial Capitalism*, Marazzi compiled a glossary titled 'Words in Crisis' that includes many terms now familiar to us such as 'derivatives', 'bailout', 'benchmark', 'hedge fund', 'rating agency', 'haircut', etc.[47] Importantly, the discourse of the expert, in this case the economic discourse, more than making it difficult to engage with the terms of the discussion, does something else, which is to define the situation primarily according to its own terms. In this case, primarily in the language of economy, with the economic discourse enforcing the establishing of the parameters of a problem that is far broader, in terms of finance and economics. It is also noticeable how hastily new signs and words such as 'Grexit', 'aGreekment'[48] are put in circulation, and to the same effect, forcing an economic sign over a complex collective assemblage.

The previous examples say something about how language is used in the axiomatic. It could be argued, as Lazzarato does, that language does not play a central role in communication. In the media news, as well as in the overflow of

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[47] Christian Marazzi, *The Violence of Financial Capitalism* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2011), pp. 123- 135.
[48] The term was used by President of the European Council Donald Tusk to describe Greece's bail-out deal in the press conference at the end of the talks over the Greek debt crisis in Brussels. He said: "Today we had only one objective — to reach an agreement. After 17 hours of negotiations we have finally reached it. Someone can say we have an 'aGreekment' (13th July 2015).

economic vocabulary, there is a message that does not depend of the expressed linguistic content. The efficacy of television and advertising depends less from the discursive content and expressed ideas than from what is linguistically unspoken. In the cases illustrated before, the message conveyed is rather that this or that is an important event that should merit our attention, or that the crisis is a financial and economic matter. In this way, the non-linguistic content of language refers us back to the axiomatic and its operative axioms.

Thus, it would be possible to agree with Lazzarato when he argues that 'contrary, to what adherents of the linguistic turn and Lacanians might think, language does not play a central role in post-Fordist capitalism. Like communications and consumption, production does not act on subjectivity primarily or exclusively trough language'.[49] But whilst I agree with Lazzarato in this point, and have suggested along those lines that Guattari's conception of a-signifying semiotics is the realization that a new type of semiotics -beyond language- is the defining mode of operation and capture of the capitalist axiomatic, I resist the idea that is easily drawn from the argument that language is subsumed to the axiomatic. What I think Guattari's diagnosis of capitalism as a semiotic operator gives us instead is the necessary understanding of language from a semiotic perspective -the semiotic pragmatics of power put forward by Deleuze and Guattari-, rather than a semiological one, and which more than undermining language, points towards the possibility to develop on a political use of language.

Notably, the concept of a-signifying semiotics underlines the specific operation of capitalist semiotics, but such a-signifying use of language is also pointed out as playing a role in mobilizing political action, for instance the minor use

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[49] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Governing by Debt* (South Pasadena: Semiotext(e), 2013), p. 190.

of language, as described in the literature of Kafka or, according to Guattari's own view, in analytical clinical practice. The apparent similarity between the two different uses of language with distinct political finalities can be confusing and it has contributed to an overall tendency to read Deleuze and Guattari's project as an escape from language (confusing language with signification) and leaving it difficult to contradict the ideas that language is a mere signifying vehicle of dominant power or that speech is impotent in face of the decodification of signs themselves.

I argue instead that what is important is to determine if and in which circumstances are semiotisation processes being subject to an axiomatic formalisation that is reductive of the collective and social nature of the statements produced. In the axiomatic the semiotization process aims to transform everything into a translatable semiotic substance, according to a logic of generalized equivalence. Such usage entails cutting off the statement from an existential pragmatics since the sign produced does not need to hold any connection to the existential and material referent. The axiomatic replaces the collective assemblage of enunciation and the collective nature of the statement, by a capitalist assemblage of an univocal expression.

Compared to the framework we explored along the lines of Deleuze and Guattari's theory, an axiomatic use of language is no longer a question of the justness, fairness or the adequation of discourse to the real as it was, according to Deleuze and Guattari's view, the case of Lenin's slogans to which we referred in previous chapters. Whereas with Lenin's slogans what was at stake was a interconnection between the body of content and the immateriality of the sign, or the justness of a statement with the real which in the case of Lenin resulted in the mobilization of a political body, in the axiomatic, language means to attain the

operation of a certain axiom of the capitalist axiomatic. Its goal is not the mutual reciprocity between expression and content. The relation between content and expression is secondary to the determination of what must be done. In other words, nothing of what is said really matters, insofar as it succeeds in putting in place certain axioms of the axiomatic. Language itself is decoded and deterritorialised (abstracted), which means that it works independently of the signification it may have for a group of people. Its distinctive use from a pre-capitalist society and codes is that language needs no longer to have any connection to belief, it bypasses signification, any referential function or denotation. As Lazzarato put it 'in the axiomatics, language and statements do not indicate what must be believed but what must be done'.[50] Likewise, language does not need any extrinsic codes to regulate itself neither forms of collective belief to sustain it.[51]

4.3 – Collective Militant Analysis

Guattari's notion of collective militant analysis provides us with insights into the previous questions, and I will discuss this notion in view of these problems and as an articulation of some of the questions I raised throughout this thesis: namely, a political practice of language – understood as a practice of autonomous semiotisation – drawing on the notion of a-signifying semiotics.

For Guattari, analysis does not refer to a therapeutic process in the classical sense of psychoanalysis. The key aspect is that language in militant analysis is

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[50] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, p. 150.
[51] Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 250. Hence, axioms are distinct from codes in that they do not require belief in order to function. This is why Deleuze and Guattari refer to capitalism as 'the age of cynicism' and the 'cynical axiomatic' Ibid., p. 278.

understood to operate in an a-signifying way. That is to say, even though language is a mode of expression that Guattari classifies under signifying semiologies, in this context it does not operate semiologically but semiotically – that is, according to a mode of operation that is not linguistic. In Guattari's sense analysis is a practice that makes use of language in a manner that does not primarily depend on processes of signification, but rather on the pragmatic reorientation that it provokes in any given concrete field. In other words, the analysis relates to the micro-political level that is implied in any effect of meaning triggered by enunciation.

Collective militant analysis is the extension of the work of clinical or institutional analysis, referred to in relation to La Borde, applied to more general social contexts – namely research and militant groups and social movements. The latter is particularly the case in *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, which is perhaps the book that best documents Guattari's involvement with social and political movements. It is also a particularly important book for this research because in it Guattari's (and Deleuze's) theorisation is confronted with concrete social realities. Conceptually, Guattari's framework of institutional analysis was posed from the beginning not as being exclusive to clinical institutions, but as being more generally applicable to a thinking of institutions and modes of research. This is clear from texts published as early as *Psychoanalysis and Transversality*. The fact that we see the same principles applied to research and militant groups goes to show, in my view, what Deleuze identified as being Guattari's aim: to bring politics into analysis and analysis into politics. The group I am referring to in this chapter is a practical and a methodological figure, rather than a conceptual one (such as Sartre's 'group in fusion' or Guattari's 'group-subject'). However some principles that apply to the 'group-subject' are employed in the notion of collective militant analysis: namely,

Guattari's concern with the creation of conditions for collective and/or individual expression, or the concern with experimentation leading to new of modes of organisation that are not incompatible with creativity.[52]

Notably, the notion of collective militant analysis is most clearly discussed in Guattari's un-translated *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un Autre Monde de Possibles*,[53] first published in France in 2011. Some details about the context in which this book was written are important. According to the preface penned by Liane Mozére the book was originally written in 1979 – that is, parallel to *A Thousand Plateaus* and just after *Molecular Revolution*.[54] It was developed in the context of the research at the Centre for Institutional Study, Research and Training (CERFI)[55] and is the outcome of a report delivered to the Ministère de l'Équipement, the former designation of today's Ministry of Ecology, Sustainable Development and Energy.[56] The proposal of a collective militant analysis elaborated in the context of research groups such as the CERFI is important because it indicates a possibility of, or attempt at, transversalising La Borde's experience to other settings. But, most crucially, it is particularly significant that it is being posed within research groups. Research and theorisation moves from being considered as an analytical-passive activity to being associated with a practice that is active and interventionist. Guattari's politics of research have to do with the development of new perspectives and modes of thinking and reading reality. Moreover, in the case of the CERFI - given the existent

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[52] Guattari answers a question about the groups he belongs to: 'the structuring of a group practice can be absolutely necessary in order to ensure that those who never manage to speak have a chance to do so. Collective discourse focuses on certain themes, but maybe other people hope to speak about other things! How can we develop conditions for collective and/or individual expression in a way that will leave room for the most singular modes of semiotisation?' Félix Guattari, 'Institutional Intervention', *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977–1985*, p.55.

[53] Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*, (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011).

[54] Félix Guattari, *La Révolution Moléculaire* (Fontenau-sous-Bois, Recherches, 1977).

[55] Centre d'études, de recherches et de formation institutionnelles (CERFI).

[56] Currently the Ministère de l'Écologie, du Développement durable et de l'Énergie.

cooperation between research and governmental institutions - there was also a clear possibility to effect changes directly at a macro level. Despite the fact that the CERFI cannot and should not be identified with Guattari and Sartre's notions of the group, which was explored previously, it is easy to see how some of the same principles proliferated: namely the premise that interdisciplinary work was necessary to approach each problem. Such a framework necessarily adopted the perspective that to analyse certain problematics it is necessary to put in place an analytical angle that departs from the collective assemblages of enunciation at the base of each situation.

Non-Reductive Pragmatics

According to Guattari, in *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un Autre Monde de Possibles*, a collective militant analysis performs a non-reductive analytical pragmatics. The notion of a 'non-reductive pragmatics' echoes the semiotic pragmatics of language that has been used in this chapter and in the previous chapters. However, the focus here is on its non-reductive dimension. The non-reductive aspect directly contrasts with the axiomatic operation in the sense that whilst the axiomatic by definition operates a reductive translation or general equivalence of different terms to one parameter, the non-reductive pragmatics focuses instead on the existential pragmatic dimension of statements. Such a focus is in contrast with the mode of operation of collective equipment or the conjugations of the capitalist axiomatic, which re-territorialise collective processes in power formations through a series of de-territorialised functions. In other words, enunciation is submitted to a process of stratification that detaches it from the concrete roots of statements. Against this, a collective militant analysis is *non-reductive* because its goal is precisely to make

discernible a field of causality and the existential territories linked with the statements.

Referring to the example of his institutional work in La Borde, Guattari explains that it was not just a matter of adjusting micro-social problems, but of working at the level of making discernible the heterogeneity of factors involved in a specific formation of subjectivity, so as to dispel the myth of direct causality based on one single factor. This attitude towards the analytical practice was necessary to avoid falling into the totalisation of interpretation. As such, a non-reductive pragmatics understands a statement to be collective in nature, in the sense that it bears the mark of a social assemblage. Thus Guattari's proposal is that analysis ought to abandon interpretation and its focus on the signifying, and rather engage in the exploration of assemblages of enunciation as the minimal unity of analysis. In so doing efforts were being made in the direction of a general liberation of expression.

> The most disparate components can interact in order to assemble a statement, a discourse, or a project. This view calls for a case-by-case redefinition of the procedures of pragmatic analysis. It is a question of determining, within each assemblage, the operating components, and the corresponding transference affects, and of finding out which work of semiotic de-outlining should be brought to bear on each of them.[57]

In this sense, the concept of collective assemblages of enunciation has a programmatic or practical dimension that we have not clearly stated. The concept of assemblage allows us to move from a perspective of language or expression that is concerned with the meaning of statements, to a perspective by which statements are viewed according to an interplay of forces and power formations, physical and

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[57] Félix Guattari, 'Institutional Intervention', *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977–1985*, p. 50.

semiotic variables. In the terms that are used by Guattari, it can be said that the conception of collective assemblages of enunciation allows us to employ an abstract-concrete analysis of situations that involves discriminating tendencies and the interaction between the diverse variables.

Non-Axiomatic Semiotic Processes

Guattari maintains that in a collective militant analysis, modes of semiotisation work directly with the reality: that is, signs have an existential relation with the concrete realities signs refer to:

> An analytic militancy cannot be established without the condition of putting into practice instruments of semiotisation that are capable of treating systems of signs together with the realities they refer to, without remaining prisoners of dominant redundancies and power significations.[58]

An example of this is the already evoked emergence of a local language in La Borde that included terms of general psychopathology adapted for a local use. Again what is key to observe is something of the use that is being made of language and what it represents in terms of the general analytical approach. A local language or jargon cannot be seen as a language in itself but rather as a process of collective production of knowledge, having as its operator a linguistic exchange, grounded in a concrete pragmatics. The refusal of the figure of the expert in institutional analysis is precisely an effort to stimulate a production of semiotisation in relation to the immediate and concrete problems, so as to have a direct impact in reality. From the ample discussion of psychopathology and from an open discussion of what mental illness

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[58] Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*, (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011), p.136.

was, a common knowledge of psychopathology was produced *in loco* and *en acte*. As a result of an engagement with language not as communication but as the collective production of a way of reading reality, language was connected to a social and political function, that of making signs serve the purpose of creating outlines of reality which operate politically.

The discussion around the political and social function of signs classically relates to the relation between the critical and the clinical: that is, the production of signs by clinical symptomatology, which was a life-long project for Deleuze.[59] Briefly, Deleuze's critical-clinical project proposes a relation between the critical and the clinical, whereby writers (the critics), like clinicians, are themselves symptomatologists. The political role of the writer (such as Kafka) is that of connecting with realities that fall outside dominant expression. Likewise, the role of the clinician is to create the conditions of expression (produce a symptomatology) for hitherto repressed desires to be expressed. The formalisation of these realities is thus of crucial importance and will irremediably fail if the sign or the symptom does not reciprocate with the forces invested in it. This is the argument of Deleuze's book on Masoch.[60]

In this regard, it is interesting to contrast the approach developed at La Borde with major treatments of language implicit in mental illness manuals such as the *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders* (*DSM*).[61] This is the most

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[59] This is not the context for an exposition of Deleuze's critical-clinical project. For such an exposition see the very comprehensive preface to the English edition of *Critical and Clinical* by Dan Smith, in Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (London: Verso, 1998 [orig. 1993]).

[60] In *Masochism*, Deleuze argues that the nomination sado-masochism is a semiological monster because it conflates two different realities, those of sadism and masochism, and dialectically connects both. See Gilles Deleuze, *Masochism: Coldness and Cruelty*, trans. Jean McNeil (Zone Books, NY, 1971 [orig. 1967]).

[61] In addition to the DSM there is also the International Statistical Classification of Diseases and Related Health Problems, usually called by the short-form name International Classification of

widely used diagnostic manual and standard classification of mental disorders worldwide. For each disorder included in the DSM, a set of *diagnostic criteria* indicate what symptoms must be present (and for how long), as well as symptoms, disorders, and conditions that must not be present, in order to qualify for a particular diagnosis. Coupled with each diagnostic label is a diagnostic code, which is used by institutions for data collection.

The DSM is not only used in clinical practice, it is also used by health insurance companies, pharmaceutical companies, the legal system, and policy-makers. Manuals of this kind give expression to mental disorders. However, they also classify, and they quantify. What are mainly at stake in such manuals are procedures of management and calculation and a general formulation of a language to describe mental illness. In this sense the DSM is a process of semiotisation that axiomatises mental conditions. The need to categorise, compare, and develop a unique language to speak about psychopathology is not so much essential to clinical practice as it is useful to insurance agencies, and technical staff in the elaboration of government policies, etc. If we take the example of the DSM a little further, we can also add that it forges an idea of consensus in the matter of mental illness. However, the advantages of such a consensus are difficult to identify from the perspective of a concrete clinical practice. This is in stark contrast with the work developed at La Borde, for instance with the development of a local vocabulary of psychopathology, where there were directs tool for learning and collective production of knowledge that in themselves were viewed according to a psychotherapeutic potential.

I took time before to describe the importance given to the emergence of local languages and a real collective learning of psychopathology on the basis of a

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Diseases (ICD), the international "standard diagnostic tool for epidemiology, health management and clinical purposes".

shared, vocabulary. The perspective of the minor that I have developed in this chapter implies that the clinician as a symptomatologist is concerned with creating a clinical expression that is able to connect with the complexity of the mental illness. When Deleuze and Guattari speak of a minor use of language with the purpose of connecting expression to the multiplicity of the real, they are reclaiming a function for language which is not that of a general axiomatisation, which we referred to in the example of the DSM. Rather, the notion of collective militant analysis revolves around a project of reclaiming the semiotisation processes to oneself, in the form of an autonomous semiotic praxis by the groups and individuals. In the following excerpt Guattari couples the function of autonomy precisely with the capacity to self-guide semiotisation processes. Guattari defines this aspect as the basis for a process of singularisation in which language plays a role:

> The function of autonomization in a group corresponds to the capability of carrying out its own work of semiotization, or cartography, inserting itself into local power relations, making and unmaking alliances. What characterizes a process of singularization (which, at one time, I called the "experience of a subject-group") is that it is self-modeling. In other words, it captures the elements of the situation, it constructs its own types of practical and theoretical references, without remaining dependent in relation to global power, whether in terms of economy, knowledge, technology, or segregations and prestige that are disseminated. Once groups acquire this freedom to live their processes, they acquire an ability to read their own situation and what is taking place around them. It is this ability that will give them at least some possibility of creation and make it possible to preserve this very important character of autonomy.[62]

[62] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, trans. Karel Clapshow and Brian Holmes (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2008 [orig. 1986]), p. 62.

For Guattari, analysis in the context of groups is important because in place of a meta-narrative it establishes a collective analysis *en acte* as a process of mapping collective processes that leads to the creation of autonomous points of reference. It is thus important to understand that modeling, self-modeling (as in the excerpt reproduced above) or meta-modeling are not to be confused with meta-narratives. As Genosko explains:

> Because they eschew universality for the sake of singularity, and the self-constitution of references, organization, relations, and limits (...) this makes Guattari's metamodel akin to a continuous process of automodelization that attempts to extract its own consistency, rather than deriving it from a universal syntax or model that produces one kind of subjectivity, from the components of the assemblages to which it relates.[63]

The possibility of collective analysis, as Guattari understood it, lies at the level of developing people's capacity to engage in an analytical process that is not concentrated in the figure of the expert, or in the case of La Borde with the figure of the doctor or the psychoanalyst. The clear connection between autonomy and semiotisation processes was already investigated in Chapter Three, in which I attempted to construct the subject-groups' experience on the basis of a distinctive ability to direct their own statement production and guide their own process of semiotisation. Such a process of statement production was described as a process of making signs work at the transversal level of manifest and latent content, and of surpassing vertical rigidity and horizontal communicational impasses at the institutional level. It was suggested that this process could be a link between the

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[63] Gary Genosko, *Félix Guattari: An Aberrant Introduction* (London: Continuum, 2002), p. 27.

capacity of producing statements in connection with concrete and local realities and institutional creation.

4.4 – Analysis as Intervention

Deleuze and Guattari (and particularly Guattari) often refer to the case of Lenin and his reflections on the political importance of slogans. For Guattari, Lenin understood that what was lacking was an enunciation that connected with the masses.[64] Guattari sees in 'Lenin's machine' the identification of a rupture operated by a specific slogan in a concrete and real situation. In Guattari's view, Lenin put in place a methodology of rupture that departed from the need to create other types of semiotisation compared with the ineffective social-democrat, economic, humanist or anarchist discourse.

We have already referred in Chapter One to the case of 'Lenin's assemblage', to use Deleuze and Guattari words, but it is worthwhile to recover the example again in the current line of thought. The case relates to Lenin's 1917 essay 'On Slogans' and concerns a slogan from the First International, 'Workers of the World Unite!' According to Deleuze and Guattari, Lenin understood that the slogan constituted an incorporeal transformation that extracted from the masses a proletariat class, as an assemblage of enunciation, before the conditions were ever present for the proletariat to exist as a body. The slogan is in advance of the political body it constitutes because it engages the pragmatic ground of enunciation, functioning both as analysis and intervention. In the same line, Deleuze and Guattari claim that Lenin's slogan

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[64] Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*, (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011), p. 138.

'All Power to the Soviets' operated a concrete connection with the particular experience of the workers. Lenin's slogan is defined as being an intervention with an operational impact because at a certain moment and in a certain context it was able to engage with the workers' reality, as workers found in Lenin's slogan a discourse that allowed them to advance as a political body. And, as Lenin notices, the slogan ceases to function once the actual conditions on the ground have changed.

In this respect, it is crucial to clarify that the importance of the slogan lies not in an enunciation of pre-existing content, nor in a conception of the constitution of objects by language. Rather, the political body as such does not pre-exist the moment of its enunciation, given that the enunciation is inseparable from the statement and from the body that it enters into composition with. To say that language intervenes is to say that signs connect with things prior to representation: that is to say, it opens passages of direct connection with material and content components that are not based on signification or interpretation. In this sense, drawing on the case of Lenin, what is crucial to note is that the operational impact of the slogan does not depend on the word or language in itself, but precisely on its capacity to connect to a collective assemblage.

As such the pragmatic reorientation or the operational impact a certain statement has cannot be predicted, and nor is its effect replicable since it depends on the specific pragmatics in place. This is the existential dimension of the statement, that, as we saw in Chapter Two, Deleuze and Guattari share with Foucault.

> Only putting into place an assemblage that is specific and singular in its enunciation allows for the possibility of a practice that will serve both analysis and change.[65]

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[65] Félix Guattari, 'Institutional Intervention', *Soft Subversions: Texts and Interviews 1977–1985*, p. 53.

Recovering the Hjelmslevian-Guattarian semiotic framework, collective militant analysis can be described as an attempt to create components of passage between *the* semiotic and the material unmediated by representation. But neither physical or semiotic variables, nor content and expression, are stable entities. By being able to establish a matter of content and a matter of expression, but also *a form of content* and a *form of expression*, the Hjelmslevian-Guattarian semiotic model, claims precisely this pluralisation, and the contingent character of formalisation. This supports the idea that expression does not merely represent or signify the object it refers to, but rather that it interacts with the body it refers to. For example: when speaking, we do not necessarily say what we do, or do what we say. This has been posed in terms of a micro-politics that runs at the most basic level of the production of signs and statements: that is, the level of matter–substance interactions. Thus, along these lines, in the collective analytic framework of enunciation statements are not replicable because of the intrinsic connection they hold with a particular existential pragmatics. This pragmatics is both semiotic and political: that is, it refers to both socio-political features as much as physical and semiotic variables, and this is the reason why a statement is unpredictable. It is unique to a concrete situation.

These arguments are similarly stated by Maurizzio Lazzato in *Signs and Machines*. Lazzarato criticises Judith Butler, in *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative*,[66] for her focus on the performative and its political promise of emancipation. For Lazzarato, not only did Butler reduce enunciation to language (as if the performative would perform by itself alone) but she also missed Austin's move away from the performative and towards the illocutionary, i.e. to a conception of

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[66] Judith Butler, *Excitable Speech: A Politics of the Performative* (New York: Routledge, 1997), p. 12.

language where even constantives performed a speech-act. Instead, Lazzarato prefers Foucault: 'If one seeks a politics of emancipation, it is here [*parrhesia*] and not in the appropriation and reversal of the performative that we will find it'.[67] When referring to Sarkozy's utterance 'You are scum', Lazzarato argues, contra Butler, that:

> We are in no way dealing with a performative but rather with a 'strategic' utilisation of enunciation within the given power relations. The former minister was attempting to modify to his advantage. 'Hate-speech' ought not to be understood, as Americans understand it, as a force accomplishing what it says, but rather as an 'action upon possible actions' – an action opened to the unpredictability, to the indeterminacy of the response-reaction of the other (of others) (...) The space-time opened by the enunciation is not that of the performative; it is the space-time of indetermination, of unpredictability, the dialogic event, the 'battle discourse', which seeks to hold sway over others, over their behaviour, by restructuring their field of action. The effects are not predetermined as with performatives, where the speaker, the utterance and the listener are already instituted.[68]

Referring to the free radio phenomena in France in the end of the 1970s, Guattari explains that what was at stake then was a questioning of the monopoly of radio broadcasting, the use of media and the absence of democratic expression in the media. The power of radio as a process of collective semiotisation had immediate and direct repercussions in the social field, such as capturing the attention of the unions, or generating a broader discussion. However, he also argues that the relevance of the free radio movement was not so much the possibility of making this or that kind of radio (and subjecting it to the dominant systems of valorisation in the media field, of good or bad radio), but the way it changed people's relation towards

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[67] Maurizio Lazzarato, *Signs and Machines*, p. 175.
[68] Ibid., p. 184.

what was being communicated. Guattari was interested in reflecting on what it was that triggered the process that led to free radios having such an effect on people: 'What was the breaking point that operated in a processual manner?'[69] The practice of analysis was concerned with an operative processual dynamics.

From A-signifying Semiotics to a New Political Language

In the framework of militant analysis the use of language is underscored by a-signifying semiotics or a post-signifying semiotics, which we examined in the previous chapter. Although it may seem paradoxical at first, the clarification of this point offers a crucial key to understanding the political practice of language that I argue is being put forward in the conception of collective militant analysis.

The principle is the same as that we see in Kafka. According to Deleuze and Guattari, in the writings of Kafka signification was reduced to only the minimum amount required for expression to enter into contact with non-formalised content. The writer's work was one of operating connections with matter before the substance–form coupling: that is, before the translation into a signifier. A-signifying semiotics are, as was shown in Chapter Two, Guattari's conceptualisation of a type of semiotics that connects the category of matter with substance. Guattari defines this type of relation of signs with things as that of operating diagrammatic connections between the semiotic and the material, and thus involving an existential production of the referent. These are opposed to semiological redundancies that represent and offer 'equivalents' of realities. For Guattari, examples of collective assemblages working directly with realities include, for instance, theoretical physics, where the system of signs is part of the material production (*part-signes*).

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[69] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, p. 379.

The collective enunciation of theoretical physics... continuously composes and recomposes a gigantic signifying machine in which machines themselves and the signifier are indissolubly intertwined. This signifying machine is capable of intercepting and interpreting all theoretically aberrant manifestations of elementary particles. These particles not only reveal an inability to plausibly explain their behaviour, but, in the most recent cases, it seems that their coming into existence depends on the technical-theoretic enterprise itself.[70]

These are semiotics that may present themselves in a semiological register, but that create relationships between matter, substance and form that are not *primarily* signifying. In the text 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', along with examples of musical notation or theoretical physics that are used to illustrate a-signifying semiotics, Guattari adds as an example the 'revolutionary analytic machine'. The question of the intervention of language is thus posed from the angle of a capacity to communicate with a specific experience prior to the formalisation of the real by social and institutional machines. The question of the intervention of language is, then, one of adequacy to a political body.

Writing about political militant groups in *Lignes de Fuite*, Guattari explains that what is to be avoided at all costs is for positions of leadership to be coupled with attempts at interpreting the activity of the group, because this will cause the subjective unity of the group to be dissolved. Imposing a narrative of signification will also inevitably make it more difficult to work at the level of substance and pre-conceptualised content: that is to say, outside the sphere of the dominant social institutional modulations. It is this avoidance of interpretation that constitutes an a-

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[70] Félix Guattari, 'D'un signe à l'autre', Recherches 2 (1966): 33–63. Translation by Jannel Watson, 'Schizoanalysis as Metamodeling', The Fibreculture Journal, 12, 2008. Accessible at http://twelve.fibreculturejournal.org/fcj-077-schizoanalysis-as-metamodeling/

signifying use of language, and it is also in this sense that Guattari advocates a policentrism of expression in the context of analytical practice, so as to avoid a use of language that translates all other modes of expression.

> The important thing is to never want to guide or interpret actions. When the collective enunciation does not work, when the group closes in on itself or takes a leadership position, then such groups prefer to dissolve! Their rule of conduct, in effect, is to never replace collective processes of enunciation of desire, so as to not exclude themselves from any mode of semiotisation playing an important role in the economy of desire and the social field social intervening at the level of the individual, the body, a process of ideation, of perception, etc. Either it is transparent or not, usable or not, for their cause.[71]

In this context, Guattari conceives processes of institutionalisation and organisation within the general framework of enunciation-analysis-intervention. For Guattari, the important thing is not just improving the statements that were produced, but the social assemblages that produced them, as well as the conditions for the realisation of the singularity of any militant collective process. Collective analysis implies putting into place a social pragmatics that involves organisation and institutional means in its realisation. This is why the groups were so important at La Borde, and why the grid occupied such a central role - because it triggered a process of collective restructuring of modes of work. Likewise, research groups such as CERFI were also constantly seeking more adequate collective work strategies and institutional restructuring for the research that was being produced. It is in such a manner that, for

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[71] My translation of: 'L'important est de ne jamais prétendre guider ou interpréter les actions. Quand l'énonciation collective se dérègle, quand le groupe se referme ou prend une position de leadership, alors de tels groupes préféreront se dissoudre! Leur régle de conduite, en effect, est de ne jamais se substituer aux processus d'énonciation collectifs du désir et, pour cela, de ne se couper d'aucun mode de sémiotisation jouant un rôle important dans l'économie de désir, du champ social, qu'il intervienne au niveau de l'individu, du corps, d'un processus d'idéation, de perception, etc., qu'il soit "comprehensible" ou non, utilisable ou non pour "la cause".' Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*, (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011), p. 84.

Guattari, there is not a single analytic strategy, but, rather, each assemblage demands its own analytic methodology. In this regard the figure of the researcher and the militant, or the intellectual and the militant, are coupled, to give origin to a form of militant researcher. The very conception of analysis proposed in Guattari's sense involves a rejection of the figure of the intellectual as the interpreter of the social, in favour of the militant who, through a practice of collective analysis, makes a use of theory that is adequate to the purpose of the elucidation of the problems affecting the social.[72]

> A discussion of the process of institutionalization has nothing to do with pre-established organization charts and regulations; it has to do with the possibilities for change inherent in collective trajectories.[73]

4.5 – A New Politics of Language

In this chapter two lines of research were opened to elaborate a politics of language: namely, first, Deleuze and Guattari's conception of a minor treatment of language, which was pursued from the literature of Kafka to its definition in contrast to the semiotic operation of capital in *A Thousand Plateaus*; and, secondly, Guattari's conception of a collective militant analysis developed in the context of minoritarian institutions and militant and research groups.

With Deleuze and Guattari the question of language is posed from the very beginning as a problem that concerns the presumed legitimacy of language as a means to translate every other mode of expression and to reduce it is own terms the heterogeneity of the social experience. As noted for Deleuze and Guattari the problem is not universal formalism in itself but how a system of power gets to use a

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[72] Félix Guattari and Suely Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, p. 140.
[73] Ibid., p. 376.

signifying formalisation to unify all other means of expression, forcibly obscuring the political origins of the articulation between expression and content. This is problematic because any dominant use of language is associated with a structure of identity and normative values that imposes a grid of signification over what is said or written. Hence a politics of language concerns first of all the use one makes of language, whether to reinforce a structure of identity (major), or to open breaches to the heterogeneity that falls outside it. The political move Deleuze and Guattari make through Kafka is to put literature – through a minor use of language – in contact with its social and political outside and to align it with the particular struggle for the enunciation of minorities. Not restricted to the domain of literature, - in which case we could ask how the political achievement of literature extends to expression in a more general sense, beyond its literary circulation, and how it impacts the minority status of the minorities concerned - *A Thousand Plateaus* develops the concept of the minor outside the domain of literature and yet another major treatment of language – that of the capitalist axiomatic. The capitalist axiomatic represents a mode of semiotisation that is reductive in nature since it produces an axiomatic semiotisation of language and enunciation. It quantifies the statement, transforming it into a translatable semiotic substance, according to a logic of generalized equivalence, rather than analysing it from the perspective of how it exists: or, in other words, from the perspective of the assemblage of enunciation that produces it. The effect of which, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, is the separation of the statement from its political reality, its concrete and existential pragmatics. The consequences for language and enunciation are therefore a separation between the semiotic and the material, and the reification of formalised states of expression (syntax and grammatical rules that determine the 'correct' use of language) and content (social

norms, distributions of what can be said and what cannot, equivalences of values, dominant interpretations). It is crucial to note that in the attempt to formulate a practice of resistance to the axiomatic of capital, Deleuze and Guattari turn towards minorities again. The connection between Deleuze and Guattari's theorisation of the capitalist axiomatic with their political critique of language is striking. Feeding the understanding of capitalism as a semiotic operator back through Deleuze and Guattari's political critique of language as *langue* and the claim that 'linguistics cannot arise from an autonomous axiomatization'[74] demonstrates this foundation of their argumentation.

By virtue of the pragmatic and semiotic component of language, language escapes in all directions and cannot be accounted for by an autonomous, self-sufficient axiomatization, but only by putting in practice a pragmatic analysis. In a similar reading of the capitalist axiomatic, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that the effect of the axiomatic's semiotization is that of a formal reduction of reality to what can be axiomatised, in other words, on what is denumerable or axiomatisable. That which is characteristic of the minories is the power of the non-denumerable or the non-axiomatisable and thus they also tend to escape. However, this is not because they lie on the margins of society, but because they demand to create alternative modes of valorisation (based on different axioms) to deal with the problems they introduce.

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[74] 'As Hjelmslev has forcefully underscored, linguistics cannot (anymore than the other semiotic systems) arise from an autonomous axiomatization'. Félix Guattari, 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Gnosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996 [orig. 1977]), p. 163.

'Speech and writing, for example, are never powerless in themselves but always due to a syntagmatization and a paradigmatization that overcodes them. Nevertheless, this powerlessness is always in some part secretly defeated because of what deterritorialized machines of expression - on the level of the "profound" articulations of their figures of expression - themselves tend to escape'. Guattari, Félix, *The Machinic Unconscious: Essays in Schizoanalysis*, trans. Taylor Adkins (Los Angeles, CA: Semiotext(e), 2011 [orig. 1979]), p. 53.

Taking my lead from this idea, I have found in Guattari's conception of a collective analytic practice a way to further develop what would be a politics of language.

The militant collective analysis is the practice of analysis extended beyond the psychotherapeutic context to other contexts of society, such as research groups or militant groups and enacts an articulation of political practice as language to daily life. It defends a semiotic policentrism that furthers the 'formation of relatively autonomous and untranslatable semiotic substances, by accommodating the sense and non-sense of desire',[75] and the singularity of the statement produced. In Guattari's terms, what militant analysis does is to instigate a 'semiotisation *en acte* adjacent to social processes, for the construction of new outlines of reality'.[76] The understanding of minorities as the different nature of the problems produced - that show the inadequacy of the dominant expression - can be thus be better discerned in the light of what was described as processes of autonomous semiotisation. The nature of the problems of minorities and their demands to formulate the terms of their solution – which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, defy the capitalist axiomatic – result from the autonomy of processes of semiotisation. Their struggle takes place at the level of the capitalist axioms, but also at the level of the very axiomatic itself. Thus, a politics of *minorities* would thus have to follow from the creation of new universes of reference and valorisation.

Thus there is a role for language to intervene politically that regards the adequacy of a communicative action with regard to the particular and the concrete realities it refers to. But, the preservation of this political potential of language lies

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[75] Félix Guattari, 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Gnosko (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1996 [orig. 1977]), p. 153.

[76] Félix Guattari, *Lignes de Fuite. Pour un autre monde de possibles*, (La Tour d'Aigues: Éditions de L'aube, 2011), p. 137.

precisely in the suspension of a semiological - signifying- use of language. The crucial point that arises here is the clear understanding that any political intervention by language has to operate in an a-signifying manner – a pragmatic, operative use - to enter into direct contact with the realities it refers to. In this way, a revolutionary perspective of language should start by promoting a new form of relation between things, signs and processes of autonomy.

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