The Dark Precursor

Deleuze and Artistic Research

Edited by Paulo de Assis and Paolo Giudici

Volume I
Sound and Writing

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Volume I

The Dark Precursor in Sound and Writing

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The Executing Machine

Deleuze, Boulez, and the
Politics of Desire

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> The question is not: is it true? But: does it work?
>
> Brian Massumi (1987, xv)

MUSICAL ANTI-CAPITALISM, BOULEZ'S SYNTHESISER

It is a curiosity of historical reception that Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's two-volume theoretical work *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* written in the 1970s should have become a central referent decades later for theorists of a different era—the era of digital and post-digital networks.[1] Authored at a time when struggles against social and economic exploitation became imaginatively associated with those against sexual and psychic repression, Deleuze and Guattari formulated an argument that abandoned the dialectical analytics of nineteenth-century figures such as Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud (no less than their twentieth-century counterparts, Foucault, Derrida, and Lacan) in favour of an anti-dialectical thought, which they termed *schizoanalysis* or *rhizomatics*. Theirs was a politics of resistance that brought class struggle into contact with libidinal energies: "The connection of desire to reality," proclaimed Foucault ([1977] 1983, xiii–xiv) in his preface to the first volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, fittingly subtitled *Anti-Oedipus*, "possesses revolutionary force." Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy was an attempt to *synthesise* what were formerly regarded as independent spheres and circuits of productive activity into interactive and interruptive flows of "desiring-machines"—a conception to displace and replace the Freudian *id*. "The Desiring-Machines"—the title of the first chapter of the first volume (Deleuze and Guattari [1977] 1983)—tracks opportunistic "couplings and connections" of "desiring-production" (ibid., 1): "an ongoing process of becoming that is the becoming of reality" (ibid., 35). For Deleuze and Guattari, desire was an emancipatory category; it had the capacity to transform reality.

It is a further curiosity that the figure and function of *music*—notably high modernist music of the Cold War—should have played such a prominent role in the philosophers' map for a new politics of desire. For example, the stylistics of modernist music, in particular that of French composer Pierre Boulez, served as an important conduit for the conception of time in the second volume of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, subtitled *A Thousand Plateaus*. Deleuze met Boulez in 1977 after the composer returned to Paris following his five years as music director of the New York Philharmonic. A year later, Deleuze participated in an event organised by Boulez at the *Institut de Recherche et Coordination Acoustique/ Musique* (IRCAM) along with Roland Barthes and Michel Foucault. Deleuze's position paper ("Making Inaudible Forces Audible") considered the notion of "pulsed" and "nonpulsed" time, and demonstrated how the composer's music renders audible these duelling temporalities (Deleuze 2007a). In 1986, Deleuze then contributed a philosophical reflection on musical time, primarily drawing on Boulez's writings on Wagner (notably the essay "Time Re-explored"), which was published in Boulez's sixtieth-birthday anthology ("Occupy without Counting: Boulez, Proust, and Time") (Deleuze 2007b). The most sustained engagement with Boulez's ideas, however, appears in *A Thousand Plateaus* (first published 1980) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). Here, Deleuze, in collaboration with Guattari, creatively adopted serial musical structures as a philosophical trope for temporalised concepts of identity that cut across sedimented taxonomic strata. Although the philosophers engage the music of a diverse array of composers (from Robert Schumann to Luciano Berio), the primary philosophical terms employed were largely borrowed from Boulez's technical writings on music written nearly twenty years earlier.

It is possible to identify four prominent instances in which Boulez's early ideas about musical time and space take up residency in *A Thousand Plateaus*. These include the philosophers' discussion of (1) the concept of the "dividual" (a liminal concept of agency suspended between the radical autonomy of the "individual" and the unified homogeneity of the "collective"); (2) the philosophical figure of the "synthesiser" (a model for combining elements and modules that resists "dialectical" thought); (3) the workings of "deterritorialisation" (a notion of "diagonal becoming" that eschews points of origin and completion); and (4) the twin concepts of the "smooth" and the "striated" (distinct modes of production that occupy contrasting temporalities). On the "diagonal" aspect of deterritorialisation, for example, Deleuze and Guattari drew on Boulez's discussion, first, of how modernism abolished the distinction between music's "vertical" and "horizontal" aspects of pitch; and second, of how modernism opened into new non-metric temporalities. The philosophers' arguments refer obliquely to the compositional techniques of Anton Webern (notably his distributions of pitch fields), on the one hand, and Olivier Messiaen (notably his manipulations of duration), on the other. But it is Boulez's peculiar modernist reading of these composers' respective innovations (in his discussion of polyphony in *Penser la Musique Aujourd'hui* [Boulez 1971]) that takes on genuine argumentative relevance for a philosophical conception of time. The terms capturing the distinction between smooth and striated space and time

are likewise borrowed from Boulez's chapter in *Penser la Musique Aujourd'hui*. For Boulez, smooth time is filled "without counting"; striated time is filled "by counting" (Boulez 1971, 94). In a personal discussion with Boulez, the composer explained to me that the concept refers primarily to a kind of music temporality modelled on the unique sustain and decay of specific instrumental timbres (Boulez, pers. comm., December 2010). For Deleuze and Guattari, in contrast, smooth time paradoxically opens to the heterogeneity of limitless connection and thus mutation. Far from registering a technical relationship between sounding instrumentalists, the philosophers' thereby advance Boulez's "non-pulsed time" for a "floating music" as an exemplary instance of *schizoanalysis/ rhizomatics* (the realism in serialism?) (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 267).

Of the four primary instances of Boulez's thought taken up by Deleuze and Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the philosophical figure of the *synthesiser* is perhaps the most coherently translated from the region of music theory to that of philosophy. The synthesiser figure has less to do with the actual contemporaneous instrument (which, by the 1980s had become central to the evolution of new fashions and stylistics in popular music) than it has to do with Boulez's imaginative reflections on new musical frontiers almost two decades earlier. Boulez's essay ". . . Auprès et au loin," for example, refers to the synthesiser-to-come as a kind of "hyperinstrument"—an instrument comprising "electronic sinusoidal sounds" that has the capacity to integrate traditionally distinct timbre-palettes into "conjugations of existent instruments" (Boulez 1968, 197). Boulez's imagined synthesiser became an imagined musical thought in Deleuze and Guattari's account of it; a theoretical mode of assembling "modules, source elements, and elements for treating sound (oscillators, generators, and transformers), by arranging microintervals"—in short, groundwork for a project displacing Kant's outmoded mechanism for distinguishing-and-then-integrating analytic levels, known as the synthetic *apriori* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 343).

Deleuze and Guattari's descriptions of the synthesiser gradually metamorphose from musical instrument to a productive methodological orientation for philosophy itself throughout *A Thousand Plateaus*. The synthesiser, for example, "places all of the parameters in continuous variation, gradually making 'fundamentally heterogeneous elements end up turning into each other in some way.' The moment this conjunction occurs there is a common matter. It is only at this point that one reaches the abstract machine, or the diagram of the assemblage" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 109). Elsewhere, they describe how the synthesiser "unites disparate elements in the material, and transposes the parameters from one formula to another" (343). When thinking is animated by metamorphoses of this sort, the philosophers argue, it resembles a *rhizome*: "the rhizome connects any point to any other point, and its traits are not necessarily linked to traits of the same nature; it brings into play very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states" (21). The rhizome is a kind of musical synthesiser—a proliferating machine—intermingling a variety of practices, materials, and forms (both signifying and non-signifying) into qualitatively new constellations. This kind of thinking on the model of the musical synthesiser distances itself from

the dialectics of "form and matter," embracing instead the *synthesis* of "the molecular and the cosmic, material and force" (343), a rhizome-like thought process that cuts across traditional demarcations for conceptual inquiry. Thus, we find in *A Thousand Plateaus* a conceptually destratified *plane of consistency*—whereby heterogeneous elements of an analytic scenario are conceived on a *continuum*. In other words, taxonomic distinctions are freed of their hierarchic *aprioristic* ontological selections, and rewired to plug into the same machinic *assemblage*: "Philosophy is no longer synthetic judgment; it is like a thought synthesizer functioning to make thought travel, make it mobile, make it a force of the Cosmos (in the same way as one makes sound travel)" (343).

Although he addressed himself to music alone, Boulez understood new electronic media, such as the synthesiser, as an avenue for liberating sound from the technology of the score that had hitherto enjoyed a monopoly on musical sound (re)production. The electro-acoustic machine was an important element of Boulez's technological imagination. In "Directions in Recent Music," for instance, Boulez (1968, 213) raises the question, "if . . . we want to introduce a notion of total freedom of the rhythm, what can we do but address ourselves to the machine?" As with the dual concepts of "smooth" and "striated" time, Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 73) *expand* the synthesising sound machine into a philosophically abstract machine: "The abstract machine exists enveloped in each stratum, whose Ecumenon or unity of composition it defines, and developed on the plane of consistency, whose destratification it performs (the Planomenon)." Deleuze and Guattari elaborate their analysis of "planes of consistency" to include not only the sonorous material of Boulez but the building material for contemporary skyscrapers—"increasingly rich and consistent material [like 'reinforced concrete'] the better to tap increasingly intense forces" (ibid., 329). This is the synthesising hermeneutics of abstract desiring machines.

Consequences of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: assemblage and affect

It is a noteworthy mutation of thought to consider what was once an imaginative description of a future musical instrument in the mind of a modernist composer as a catalyst for a philosophical conception that maps plateaus of political production itself. It is particularly striking that Deleuze and Guattari's relatively narrow focus on musical modernism of the Cold War period (Boulez in particular) should thereby produce a philosophical platform whose theoretical consequences have registered so capaciously in the *post*-Cold War period—the age of networked computation, on the one hand, and an epoch increasingly conscious of the anthropocene, on the other. What is striking about this transformation of twentieth-century musical thought into a model for political production today is that the latter paradoxically omits certain politically relevant aspects of the former. In other words, by freely proliferating and synthesising distinct analytic categories—drawing post-serialism toward rhizome, musical intervals toward philosophical *intermezzi*, music's smooth time and

space toward planes of consistency, and so on—Deleuze and Guattari set adrift their grasp of politics from Boulez's more dialectically-inflected dodecaphonic thinking.

The consequences of an anti-dialectical politics today can be mapped in terms of two neo-Deleuzian concepts that now seem to dominate the humanities—from political philosophy to literary studies—namely, the concepts of (1) *assemblage* and (2) *affect*. First, assemblage theory, most prominently associated with the new realist philosophy of Manuel DeLanda (2016), emerges from Deleuze's transcendental empiricism—a brand of realism resistive to the Freudian/Lacanian subject, on the one hand (hence, *Anti-Oedipus*), and, on the other, resistive to the notion that either the natural world (science) or the social one (governmentality) are adequately grasped by systematic structures or formal laws. Instead, realists—without lapsing into theocentrism—regard the world as radically independent of human thought. Far from the postmodern idea that the world is to some extent an emanation of thought, or somehow imbricated in and co-constituted by it, DeLanda advances the posthuman *assemblage* as a central analytic referent. The assemblage covers entities of the real world, ranging from natural ones (rocks, humans, diseases, weather) to social ones (corporations, wars, concerts, nation states), without committing to their *apriori*stic distinction. Assemblages are irreducible; they cannot be further analysed into abstract or ultimate layers of reality. Elaborating upon Deleuze and Guattari's *planes of consistency*, Delanda advances a *flat* ontology; one that blurs the lines of traditional taxonomies. In this account of realism, the atoms of quantum physics have no more claim to reality than do sporting events, say, or the movements of the market. Instead, these diverse phenomena coexist in asynchronous parallel worlds—*a thousand plateaus*!—interacting only in ways that are Argus-eyed and multi-capillaried. Relations between plateaus are mediated less by *causes* than they are by *catalysts*. There are neither overarching laws nor predetermined structures, even if there is a degree of interaction and collision between worlds.

What distinguishes assemblage theory from theories associated with the linguistic turn of the mid-twentieth century is the dislocation of the human subject as the central ontological referent. This dislocation is different from the decentring of subjectivity we find in post-structuralism (notably deconstruction). For the realists, the subject is not regarded as a condensation of language and power (as in Foucault and Derrida), but as a transient (ever evolving, multi-layered) crystallisation of larger and longer processes (as in Deleuze and Guattari). "In a Deleuzian ontology," writes DeLanda (2002, 9–10), "a species (or any other natural kind) is not defined by its essential traits but rather by the *morphogenetic process* that gave rise to it." As it is with species, things too are not radically distinct. The turn to this kind of realism-without-essentialism is reflected in the concerns of a wider philosophical milieu today. For Graham Harman (2002), the objects of his *object-oriented ontology*, for instance, are both withdrawn (specific, definable) *and* interacting in a Deleuzian *multiplicity*—a constant flux of environmental encounters. Things—rather than linguistic-historical signifiers—determine realities in dynamic processes of *pulsion* (asymp-

totic vectors, or "attractors [that] are never actualized," in the words of DeLanda [2002, 29]). Likewise, for Bruno Latour (2005), actor networks proliferate on hybrid planes of immanence in a way that suspends the traditional human agent as a central referent. In actor–network theory, for example, human and non-human actants coexist in simultaneous, often discontinuous, temporal networks. The macro-temporalities of gradual ecological transformation, say, coincide with the micro-temporalities of algorithmically driven decisions in high-frequency trading on Wall Street or editing cluebots on Wikipedia. These new realities exacerbate temporal poly-cycles. As in actor networks, encounters between things and processes in assemblages are less law-governed than they are "chance encounters" in the context of "capacities." This is the social science of *mess*, as John Law (2010) might say. Sugar intake, for example, does not cause diabetes, even if it is a *catalyst* for it. In other words, sugar intake has the capacity to result in diabetes, but the relation is neither consistent, on the one hand, nor completely erratic, on the other. Assemblage theory maps the constituent *aleatoricism* of the multiple and refractory relations between ontological plateaus.

The advantage of thinking transformation (social, natural, industrial, ecological, etc.) on the model of the assemblage lies in the emphasis it places on dynamic production/construction (instead of deconstruction). If traditional subjects, laws, forms, and systems are sterile sedimentations artificially grafted onto dynamic process of pre-individuated virtuality, then assemblage theory, with its emphasis on capacities, could become productive. In contrast, quotidian human life is lived *as if* incrementally ordered, disciplined, and rule-governed; it perpetually *suspends* belief in outliers—phenomena that fail to line up with this order of things—in service of routine functionality. For example, educational institutions, sanitation systems, prisons, electric grids, musical instruments, and medical interventions all *work*, even if their effects are often inadequate, violent, or incomplete. For the new realists, to intervene in this environment is not to de- and re-vise overarching laws or determinative cognitive maps but to strategically constellate partial systems as catalysts of change. Assemblage theory, as a theory of productive constellation, encourages the quest for what hackers call the "klurge"—knotted, imperfect, but highly *functional* systems of operation. The capacity for the self-organising assemblage/constellation/klurge thrives on fluidity (over fixity), exchangeability (over organicism), and poly-functionality (over systematicity). It is a kind of dynamic systems theory for material functions.

The second prominent concept to emerge from the musicalised philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari is the concept of *affect*. In contrast to assemblage theory, affect theory tends not to *disperse* analytic constellations but rather to *localise* its analytics to the human subject as a principal site of investigation. Drawing on both cognitive psychology and neuroscience, for example, Brian Massumi articulates an aspect of non-linguistic communication—perhaps even non-communication—attendant specifically to human psychic/physiological subjectivity, which he calls *affect*. Massumi simultaneously repurposes the protocols of neuroscience and cognitive psychology to philosophical ends,

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deftly bringing insights and results from the former fields into alignment with the libidinal intensity of "desiring-production" found in Deleuze and Guattari ([1977] 1983, 1, 35). The subject, in Deleuze and Guattari, has the capacity to affect or be affected by constellations no less than other functional systems of operation.

At first glance, the focus on affect (localised more or less in the subject) appears diametrically opposed to the focus on assemblage (delocalised constellations of a rhizomic sort), but the shared allegiance to Deleuze and Guattari reveals the deep affinity between these philosophical positions. For example, while it may be physiologically localised to some extent, affect (in Massumi's lexicon) actually gauges a *displacement* of the subject in a manner that recapitulates the displacement of formal systems into assemblages (in DeLanda's lexicon). In much the same way that DeLanda's assemblage comprises not systematic but *aleatoric* interactions within a functional constellation, Massumi's affect does not emerge in the context of "logically connected" sensory reception, but rather "according to a logic that does not admit the excluded middle" (Massumi 2002, 24). By invoking the principle of syllogistic non-contradiction, Massumi thereby distances the workings of affect from the protocols of mathematics; contradiction is reconfigured as a "productive paradox" (ibid. 38). At the same time, Massumi does not relinquish the idea that agonistic "parallel operations" are nonetheless *linked* in some way.

Using a cognitive psychology experiment headed by Hertha Strum as an example, Massumi (2002) argues that the subject is "physiologically split" (24). The experiment involves the various mismatches between the self-reporting, on the one hand, and the bodily responses, on the other, of children reacting to a short film. On the one hand, we find conventional meanings associated with intersubjective contexts—the level of content and convention. On the other hand, we find nonconscious, autonomic reactions—the level of sheer effect and intensity. Massumi shows how the relation between these two levels is indeterminate and yet inextricably linked: "intensity . . . vaguely but insistently connects what is normally indexed as separate" (24). He thereby invokes the aleatoric thematics associated with assemblage theory in the context of his theory of affect. The "chance operations" of assemblage theory are allied with the "autonomization of relation" in affect theory (36). Affect is multi-tracked— "the simultaneous participation of the virtual in the actual and the actual in the virtual" (35). In short, affect is a kind of pre-conceptual intensity imbricated in this "two-sidedness:" it is *autonomous* (35).

Massumi (2002) argues that because affect emerges in a "feedback" loop between what Deleuze and Guattari call the *virtual* and the *actual*, it is a potentially disruptive and progressive category as well. By partaking of the virtual— radically open, by definition—affect also eludes capture by the (hegemonic) taxonomies of the actual. It is therefore in a recalcitrant relation to narrative; it *suspends* and *disrupts* the selective hierarchies of narrative (26). The inadequacy of symbolic systems—linguistic, logical, narratological, ideological—is best understood in relation to the difference between *structure* and *event*. Structure, for Massumi, is inert—"nothing ever happens"—for it is ensnared in "invariant

generative rules" (27). Structure disavows event. In contrast, affect is "unassimi-lable"; it disassembles rules into paradox. Just as assemblage theory emphasises the value of dynamic production, we find in the lateral, unexpected, asignify-ing potential of affect an opening of empiricism into ethical experimentation. For Massumi, affect unleashes potential; it is where idealism and empiricism become *productive*—"a midwifery of invention" (33). As in Deleuze and Guattari, desire is thereby set adrift from the systematic modes of higher organisation, and registers instead a site of dynamic emergence. In Massumi's words: "The implied ethics of the project is the value attached—without foundation, with desire only—to the multiplication of powers of existence, to ever-divergent regimes of action and expression" (34).

Deleuze defended against his devotees

This chapter has so far sketched the curious way musical thought (primarily exemplified by the modernism of Pierre Boulez) inflects philosophical thought about *non-musical* phenomena in the work of Deleuze and Guattari. The sec-ond section of the chapter then reflected briefly on the impact of this curiously *musicalised* body of work on recent political philosophy. In particular, the previ-ous section shows how the concepts of *assemblage* and *affect* take up residency in the writings of DeLanda and Massumi respectively. It is perhaps non-coin-cidental then that Deleuze and Guattari, in a kind of reverse feedback, have exerted considerable influence on various writings about music in more recent times. David Toop's prophetic *Ocean of Sound* (1995), for example, is anchored in tropes from Deleuze and Guattari. For Toop, musical production is marked by flows of desire, energy, intensity, and sensation that unsettle the rigidities of forms and genres. Reflecting the aesthetics of global electronic remix culture of the 1990s, for example, Toop detects in sonic affect an opening into produc-tive flows, flux, and flexibility. Musical production in this period proceeds by way of leitmotifs, samples, beats, fluctuations, and intensity, a dream-like logic of onwardness and endlessness instead of the narrative logic of previous eras. Similarly, Steve Goodman (Kode 9) deploys concepts derived from Deleuze and Guattari (planes of immanence, destratification, rhizome, schizoanalysis, etc.) to elaborate a generalised ontology of vibrational force (Goodman 2010). Goodman is particularly interested in the militarisation of affective interpel-lation—the actualisation of virtual planes of amplitude and frequency—in diverse contexts (ranging from long-range acoustic devices to camouflage sound). As resistance, Goodman advances new modes for mobilising bodies in rhythm, or what he calls *bass materialism*, which he associates with dubstep and other crowd-based popular musics. Finally, in *Infinite Music: Imagining the Next Millennium of Human Music-Making* (2011), Adam Harper elaborates a theory of music as a kind of inherently Heraclitan flow. With Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (1994) as a central referent, Harper argues that musical repetition, in particular, is a kind of difference-producing machine. He writes, "All music can be thought of as perpetual difference of information"; and even, "repetition thus equates to difference" (Harper 2011, 156, 157). Harper supports his argu-

ment about the virtual field of musical possibility with examples from dubstep, hyperdub, and grime music.

How productive is the allegiance to this kind of Deleuzian thought in this context? And why are affect and assemblage invoked at this moment in Western academic history? Why does the model of Deleuze loom large in an era when sexual revolutions are no longer productive anti-capitalist forces; an era in which libidinal energies and affective intensities are arguably weaponised *against* economic justice? Could it be that the philosophical turn to Deleuze and Guattari does less to undermine than to underwrite a new era of capitalism? Already in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari ([1977] 1983, 35) are acutely aware of the dangers attendant to desiring-production—"an ongoing process of becoming that is the becoming of reality." In fact, the philosophers recognise that the processes of deterritorialisation are synonymous with those of capitalism itself, and that it is the state that attempts to contain them: "The more the capitalist machine deterritorializes, decoding and axiomatizing flows in order to extract surplus value from them, the more its ancillary apparatuses, such as government bureaucracies and the forces of law and order, do their utmost to reterritorialize, absorbing in the process a larger and larger share of surplus value" (ibid., 34–35). Of the *proximity* of productive becoming to capitalist deterritorialisation (by way of erratic renewal and endless cycles of production-destruction) however, the devotees of Deleuze and Guattari above are notably silent.

On the other hand, these moments of self-reflection in Deleuze and Guattari are mostly not central to their overarching argument. As a result, desiring-production is generally inflected with emancipatory capacity. Strikingly, the figure of desiring-production in *Anti-Oedipus* practically reads like a thick description of contemporary networked *habiti*, which produce affect as a binding technique, layering and interconnecting millions of digital communicative platforms and devices. "A connection with another machine is always established, along a transverse path, so that one machine interrupts the current of the other or 'sees' its own current interrupted ... Producing is always something 'grafted onto' the product; and for that reason desiring-production is production of production, just as every machine is a machine connected to another machine" (Deleuze and Guattari [1977] 1983, 6).

For Deleuze and Guattari ([1977] 1983), desire is not to be identified with "expression" but with "production" (6). Is Deleuze and Guattari's "schizophrenic" not precisely the code-shifting contemporary online producer, set adrift from standardised body techniques of the past, plugged into a multiplicity of flow-producing machines? "It might be said that the schizophrenic passes from one code to the other, that he deliberately *scrambles all the codes*, by quickly shifting from one to another, according to the questions asked him, never giving the same explanation from one day to the next, never invoking the same genealogy never recording the same event in the same way" (15). Do the proliferated digital traces of constantly shifting activity not testify to the value of Deleuze and Guattari's analytics today—the "heterogeneous chains"

of desiring-production (Deleuze and Guattari [1977] 1983, 39)? And could it not be argued that there is a connection between this new context of desiring-production and the *anti*-exploitative non-proprietary ethos of volunteer production online—in the form of mash-ups, remixes, wikis, uploads, tweets, petitions, massive collaborative projects (ranging from the tightly-scripted protocols of Wikipedia, say, to the erratic subculture-building and feral activism on 8chan)? Is it not the case that new efficiencies in digital distribution and search functionality, combined with globally oriented peer-to-peer connectivity, have ushered in an era of widespread collaborative volunteerism, hosted by what could be construed—*from the perspective of its productive functioning*—as decentralised, disintermediated, and arguably even democratic digital architectures?

It is tempting to extend the scope and reach of these Deleuzo-Guattarian themes even further to map a contemporary digital culture that almost literalises the postmodern rhetoric of the 1960s: free culture, the death of the author, communalism, irreducible intertextuality, and, above all, reception construed as productive act (or *prosumption*). Is this the newly proliferated production characterised by interruptions and interactions of machinic flows? Is the subjectivation process under these conditions not the *opposite* of what was feared by many philosophers and theorists of the past century? Following Deleuze and Guattari, one may conclude that the subject of contemporary networked *habiti* is *no longer* the standardised pseudo-individual of Theodor W. Adorno's post-competitive capitalism (Adorno and Horkheimer [1972] 1997); neither is it any longer Louis Althusser's (1971) cautious and compromised subject of interpellation, nor even the subject of Foucault's discipline (1977). Updated to our times, one might further conclude that the contemporary subject is *not* in fact the distracted, weak ego imagined by Sherry Turkle (2008); nor is it the customised one imagined by Nicholas Carr (2010), who describes how viewpoints become Balkanised when they are hitched to ever-narrowing vectors of search.

Indeed, is not the *opposite* the case? Do we not find in contemporary subjectivation a kind of *ballooning of desire*, unsanctioned by traditional modes of socialisation? Do we not find here the emergence of a kind of inflated self, whose every obsession and fixation, every fetish and dream, paranoid or perverse theory, is technically *externalised*? Is the instant availability of proliferated audiovisual forms and content—from Saddam Hussein's dead body to the Nazi salute, from any song you ever heard to fake stories about Hillary Clinton's association with a paedophile ring—not the annulment of the ego itself? In Deleuzian terms, one may speak here of the rapacious self, shattering older networks of collectivity and endlessly forging new ones, capriciously ballooning and contracting identities in proliferating rhizomes of production and cycles of erratic self-renewal. Are these the desiring-machines—the peculiar contemporary actualisations of the virtual—that literalise the *Anti-Oedipus* itself?

The executing machine: coiled dressage or dark precursor?

With this model of production/subjectivation in mind, Massumi's use of Deleuze and Guattari is arguably at once too nominalist/ontological *and* too potentialist/vitalist. First, the ontological thrust of Massumi's argument can be detected in its heavy reliance on evidence from neuroscientific work on emotion. Ruth Leys (2011) detects a cultural "turn to affect," which extends beyond Massumi to humanities-oriented fields in general. The geographer Nigel Thrift, for example, believes that political decisions are contingent upon a set of "inhuman or pre-subjective forces" (ibid., 435). Eric Shouse, a cultural critic, argues that messages have a dimension of "nonconscious affective resonance" that is the match of any meaning (ibid., 435). Leys illustrates how the claim that affective intensities and reflexes occur independently of intention and meaning is wholly compatible with the psychological and neuroscientific construal of basic emotions as "rapid, phylogenetically old, automatic responses" (ibid., 437). These reflexes, or biological "tripwires," are often genetically inscribed, or cognitively hardwired, producing (often lightning-quick) effects before the intervention of conscious intentional thought (ibid., 438).

The paradoxical point for Leys (2011, 442) is that where neuroscientists and cognitive psychologists posit these reflexes as basic *givens,* Deleuze and Guattari, along with Massumi, posit them as a "formless, unstructured, non-signifying force." In fact, as if to echo Nietzsche's distinction between will and emotion in his essay "On Words and Music" ([1978] 1980), Massumi (2002, 28) resists the very "sociolinguistic fixing of the quality of an experience" that characterises *emotion* as a subjective content. In contrast, affect is regarded as *a*signifying intensity. The paradoxical reason such a radically open conception of affect actually recapitulates the innate emotions posited by Silvan Tomkins, Paul Ekman, Antonio Damasio, and others—emotions "subserved by neural circuits in the brain, such as the subcortical group of neurons known as the amygdalae"—is that in both cases they are rooted in the body, but below the threshold of consciousness (Leys 2011, 438). In other words, the embodied prepersonal intensities of Massumi's paradigm are construed by these scientists as *absolutes*—irreducible, reflexive, and archetypal. Basic emotion, like affect itself, functions independently of intention, signification, and meaning. Despite the non-deterministic emancipatory character of Massumi's affect, as against the totalising determinism of those of Damasio and others, both paradigms equivalently demonstrate determined incuriosity toward *interpreting the meaning and limit of their guiding terms*. In fact, both positions engage acts of *non*-naming, albeit for opposite reasons. The act of non-naming is allied to the act of total naming. The radical specificity of the irreducible neuroscientific archetype eludes the problematics of the signifier just as much as does the radical potentiality of affect. Instead, Massumi construes affect as simply inadequate to the terms aimed to describe it; signifiers are wholly suspended in service of drastic pre-personal presence. This is the surrogate ontologism of affect theory.

Massumi's emancipatory theory of affect thereby not only borrows evidence from the neurosciences of emotion but recapitulates their radically detemporalised theories of body, paradoxically in service of a philosophy of "virtual perspectives fading out in all directions to infinity" (Massumi 2002, 43). For example, Massumi's riff on Benjamin Libet's experiment in the 1990s emphasises the uneven responsiveness of the body and the brain to stimulation by cortical electrodes (28–34). Massumi reaches the conclusion that intensity is *incipience*: "For the present is lost with the missing half second, passing too quickly to be perceived, too quickly, actually, to have happened" (30). What is the truth that lies in the preconscious? Could it be that, far from eluding all signification, the reflexive stimulation partakes of submerged habituation and body technique? If we attach the ethical value of the project to "desire only—to the multiplication of powers of existence, to ever-divergent regimes of action and expression," do we not miss the role played by the training of the body, the cultivation of the senses, the immersion of the body in textures of social networks, technical interfaces, economic systems, and so on (34)?

In a televised broadcast in March 2007 in Baghdad, the then UN secretary general Ban Ki-moon—holding a press conference with Iraqi prime minister Nuri al-Maliki—suddenly, and quite unbidden, hunkered down under the podium. A rocket had just landed fifty meters away, setting off an explosion. Al-Maliki, in striking contrast to Ban, did not flinch throughout the event. Indeed, while the shell-shocked Ban was taking cover, the prime minister blithely completed his sentence about how Iraq was gradually returning to a state of stability. What accounts for the difference? The divergent qualities of reaction to the sonic blast—however autonomic in their momentary unfolding—differed on account of their dissimilar hermeneutic scan of the degree of danger involved in the moment. The senses, it appears, had evolved differently; more precisely, the senses had been cultivated under unlike social, geographical, and technical conditions. Their respective reflexes differently scanned the same soundscape. Although the reactions were clearly a mode of pre-conceptual intensity, it is an aspect of *prior experience* that, on the one hand, launched Ban into the drastic catapult of a potentially short life, and, on the other, left al-Maliki unphased.

Massumi (2002, 30) acknowledges that intensity is asocial but not pre-social—"it *includes* social elements but mixes them with elements belonging to other levels of functioning and combines them according to different logic." This genuflection toward the social is too abbreviated to weigh upon the content of his analytics, even if it betrays a desire to have it both ways. Indeed, Massumi mostly exaggerates the *differentness* of the "different logic" that ostensibly blends "levels of functioning" (ibid.). In other words, even if the "different logic" legitimately involves irreducibly *un*nameable, *non*-social elements, is it not rather the experiential ones—socio-technical, geo-cultural, and so on—that afford opportunities for redirection? Radicalising the openness of a "different logic," in contrast, loses sight of this capacity, and in a complicated rhetorical move, paradoxically recapitulates the fixity of its inhuman hardwiring. If this were not the case, then by what means is the "different logic" available for scrutiny? In the wayward potentiality of incipience as such, do

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we not miss the important social capacity for intervention that is, at least in part, the *condition for the possibility* of the preconscious reflex? In other words, for a philosophy interested in embodiments of social transformation, is it not crucial to engage the *foreknowledge* that guides the variable reflexes of the body? What body training—*dressage*—lies in wait (as if in a compressed coil) in the half second before the second half? Is this coiled dressage not, in fact, the *dark precursor* of the preconscious?

In the context of ubiquitous biotechnification and artificial intelligence today, it behoves us to consider carefully the contents of autonomic sensory *habiti* in relation to their capacity for *adaptation*. To the extent that neuroscientific and cognitive models routinely inform this research tradition, the humanities play a part in critically reflecting on their social, historical, cultural, geographical, political, and economic underwriting. The information provided by these research traditions to forge new amalgams between body and machine frequently posit *a*temporalised theories of the body. The point is that a philosophical position that insists on the radically nonsignifying openness of the body cannot summon sufficient evidence to accept, resist, or even redirect the disembodied rationalist terms massaged into the algorithmic model of experience to come.

Stakeholders abound. The military-industrial complex, for example, is paying increasing attention to human affect, in this nonconscious sense. A new generation of militarised prosthetics, for example, seeks to mobilise computing in conjunction with electrochemistry at the cellular level. Here the quest is to improve reaction times in the handling of ballistic weapons in contexts of combat. These technologies deploy human thought alone—recorded and graphed by an electroencephalogram (EEG), and then formatted according to encoded characteristics of brainwaves—to circumvent the neurological feedback between hands and brain. The extracted brainwave patterns are transformed into various domain signals (frequency, etc.) to facilitate a series of calculations and characterisations, which in turn are digitally encoded for analysis. In other words, brainwave signal analysis is recruited for technologies whose task it is to accelerate the instinctive galvanic response time for human agents in high-stakes military contexts of decision-making.

These calibrated microseconds constitute what I call the *nanochronemics of human embodiment* in an age of networked computation. Instead of giving free reign to the meticulous and declarative language construction of software—a language of anti-literature—the humanities could *theorise* the experimental modalities mapping neural circuits in the brain (down to the cortical lobes and amygdalae neurons) to demonstrate the precise ways engineers and scientists institute ontological commitments about the body in the terms of criteria absolutised by the industrial demands of specific technologies. As computing is increasingly brought into the body, can one afford to set affect adrift of all signifying? The answer is: No. For all its promise as desiring-production of an abstract machine, the retreat into radically embodied *openness* is, in fact, rendered a poor leveraging platform for productive intervention. Whether we like it or not, affect will be programmed by those for whom it will not remain

"autonomous," in Massumi's sense. In other words, left unsupervised in an inarticulate "different logic," our affective arousal stands to be colonised by all manner of militarised adaptation, just as our interactive instincts stand to be colonised by all manner of industrial interpellation. After all, the automated instructions in the software program will trigger sequences unabated in human subjects. This is the feedback production of the executing machine.

Pornofication of the capitalist library

This previous section described the surrogate *ontologism* of Massumi's reading of Deleuze and Guattari. But what of Massumi's exaggerated potentialism/vitalism? What if we assume Massumi is correct, and somehow find in the non-signifying intensity of affect a space for resisting the brain-doubling of neuroscience, the brainwashing of fixed-message propaganda, the brain-acceleration of software engineering? How then does the radically open productive potential of affect described by Massumi tally with the critical impulse he detects therein? In other words, what if Massumi is correct about the radical potentiality of affect: that in its *autonomia* we detect a swerve into a radically unguessed-at future, a relinquishing of structure for event, and so on? Spontaneity, incipience, potentiality, reflexivity, event, intensity: Can this kind of construal of the productive libido be regarded as a progressive category today? Or does the subject of capital already—of increasing necessity *enjoined toward* erratic potential—reflect a new reservoir of libidinal surplus for expropriation?

There is a scene in Gary Ross's iconic film *The Hunger Games* (2012), a science-fiction thriller based on the novel by Suzanne Collins, in which the protagonist Katniss Everdeen displays her talents before an audience of gossiping, indulged, and powerful adjudicators in the Capitol (of a society sharply stratified into districts). Katniss, a skilled sharpshooter from the poorest district, has volunteered herself as a contestant for the deadly annual Hunger Games, a high-stakes game show enforced by the nation of Panem as retribution for a past rebellion. The scene is grounded in a series of surprises. First, against the odds (well understood by the cinema audience at this point in the film), Katniss, under the gaze of her judges, actually *misses* the centre of the target. Perhaps nerves interfered with her reaction time. Perhaps the interpellations of performance disrupted the innocent ease with which she honed her skill set. In contrast, of course, her failed shot appears as wholly predictable to her onscreen aristocratic audience, who laugh and jeer in ridicule and contempt. Taken aback by her own misfire, Katniss lines up the target in the crosshairs once more. This time, true to form, she strikes the bull's eye. However, there is an unexpected problem. The judges, at this point wholly absorbed in dismissive distraction, are no longer looking; they fail, once again, to bear witness to the protagonist's extraordinary skill. The second surprise comes next. Perplexed by her unreactive audience, Katniss lines up her target a third time; and, in a feat of clarity and determination, she fires another perfect shot. But this time she has taken aim not at the official competition target but at the apple wedged in the mouth of the roast pig on the table encircled by the judges of the Capitol.

The apple is deftly dislodged from the dead pig's mouth. There is a thwack and then there is silence. The aristocrats, dumbstruck, stare down in shock.

The massive box-office success of *The Hunger Games*—the largest-grossing film released outside a summer or holiday period—is often attributed to its resonance with millennial anguish in the context of a technologically automated, post-recession period. The film's themes are paradoxically marked, on the one hand, by a ubiquitous entertainment apparatus riveted to spectacle and, on the other, by new realities of structured economic inequality. The gladiatorial deathmatches—hunger games—align these paradoxical themes by broadcasting *for consumption* the very struggle for survival. In the standard interpretation of her, Katniss represents a kind of indignant resistance to the rigged institutions of government and employment, struggling for what is fair and just. In short, Katniss embodies the kind of rebellion of a moral outsider ensnared in the brutal rules of an immoral dystopia. This official script, however, fails to register the texture of the signifying associations implicit to her characterisation. Katniss, *unofficially* but perhaps more precisely, represents not the outsider at all, but the paradoxical *heroic insider* in the era of ubiquitous computation. What is fascinating about the scene painted above is that her wealthy adjudicators from the Capitol do *not*, it turns out, recoil in alarm at her menacing act of rebellion. They do not punish her. The intensity of their horror instead registers—in a filmically extended split second—*sheer delight*. This is pure affect—"a state of suspense, potentially of disruption" (Massumi 2002, 26)—that signals a swerve toward the virtual. In other words, the moment embodies a swerve from official signification (an act of dangerous rebellion) to asignifying intensity (a performance of embodied spectacle) (ibid.). One may even say that the reaction of the aristocrats is physiologically split.

The paradox of affect is that it is said to be simultaneously *autonomic* (it "cannot but be experienced" [Massumi 2002, 33]; it "cannot but be perceived" [36], etc.) *and* radically *incipient* (it is "an unleashing of potential" [33]); it "escapes confinement in the particular body whose vitality, or potential for interaction, it is" (35). This raises a question: What aspect of affect does this moment in the film prominently signal? Does it signal the potential of affect to "veer off in another direction," to register *delight in danger* (40)? Does it thereby register a mode of embodiment that opens "empiricism into ethical experimentation" (33)? Or does it, on the other hand, register "a nonconscious, never-to-be-conscious" remainder, the production of a kind of autonomic presence (25)? Massumi of course *allies* the agonic relation of these parallel levels of affect. Official signification simply persists—at odds—with embodied intensity.

But what if the autonomic reaction of the adjudicators is less *non*conscious than it is *un*conscious? In other words, what if Katniss's risky manoeuvre actually signals the deeper *unwritten rules of the game* in contemporary society? Katniss thinks outside the box. She innovatively breaks official rules. In this way, she acts the part of the master-entrepreneur in a hyper-connected world. Katniss, it turns out, eventually both wins the brutal competition to the death *and* simultaneously stakes out the ethical high ground. In fact, by forging an unholy conceptual alliance between love and ethics, on the one hand, and sav-

agery and contest, on the other, the movie phantasmically suggests that it is her very loyalty, love, and strong ethical standing that somehow delivers her to victory in the deadly game. This is victorious savagery cloaked as ethics; heaven made in hell. She *seizes the moment* in the age of the moment—"every second is the ultimate *zeitgeist*" says Josh Ostrovsky, the Internet sensation known as the "Fat Jew" (in Ronson 2015)—with a perfect sense of timing. In a fleeting flash of insight, she performs a gamble that *officially* challenges institutional authority, but *unofficially*, and more importantly, *obeys* the "post-Fordist" injunction toward innovation and entrepreneurialism (Virno 2007). She rewrites the rules—blending "fundamentally heterogeneous elements"—to produce the obligatory "new": the obedient innovation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 109). Katniss is the true subject of contemporary capitalism—the visionary that sees in the pig's apple a bull's eye.

I narrate this scene from a recent box-office hit in some detail to illustrate that affective production has no inherent link to progressive politics. In fact, in the context of contemporary cultures of computing and consumption, desublimated energies are a condition for the possibility of data capture and harvest. In other words, the capitalist surveillance economy requires specific subjects for its efficient functioning. Digital interfaces and architectures are designed to enjoin externalisations of personalised desire. Desire is put in the service of rich (personalised, customised) data sets for search engines, content providers, and (more recently) service providers. This is the goal of the third-party trackers, the surveillance networks, and the ubiquitous spyware that instantly connects every visit to almost every site to several third-party servers. (While Google and Facebook don't directly sell user information [yet], sites frequently offer reader information to data brokers like Experian and Acxiom). This is the age of the Internet as dragnet. The online user has metamorphosed into a producer—surplus labour.

One may speak here of a kind of digital Taylorism, or what I call *enforced deterritorialisation*—a mandatory subjectivity to perfect the digital Taylorism of contemporary work (Scherzinger 2010). The subject of capitalism in the developed nations of the twenty-first century is no longer simply disciplined by state apparatuses. The adjustments and attunements of human bodies to the standardised interfaces of the industrial production line has morphed into its antithesis. Today, we find the adjustment of the machine—that is, the self-learning adaptability of the increasingly wearable microcomputer—to the erratic productions of the body. No longer materialising the objectified psyche in technological form, this is a case of technologising the psyche by externalising the *id*. Spyware no longer bears the marks of a Foucauldian panopticon. Rather, it has morphed into an *inside-out panopticon*! It is no longer the case that the contemporary subject experiences the *possibility* of being watched, and therefore comports its behaviour accordingly. Rather, the contemporary subject *knows* it is being watched and is nonetheless enjoined to act, adopt, and produce in an *un*-comported manner. This can be characterised as a new form of *digital entrapment*—the instrumentalisation of our non-instrumental capacities—in a sustained, but stealthy, attempt to financialise desiring production.

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Data doubles are best built of *de*standardised data—personalised cookies, banners, scripts, and clicks that lie both inside *and* outside the symbolic box (custom, convention, decorum). The world's data double is both memetic and secret, neurotic and orgiastic, civilised and uncivilised, true and fake. The Internet—at once the de facto information library of today *and* a "giant weird orgy" (in the words of Josh Ostrovsky [in Ronson 2015])—connects platforms, devices, and networks in what can be described as the algorithmic clustering of *affect*—the pornofication of the library.

Could it be that a technological condition characterised by a fantasy universe of affects and decontextualised subjects, enables *affective habiti* forged by naked spectacle, charismatic personality, and outright mythology? Could it be that the reign of the affective register plays a role in crowding out any notion of political reality? In other words, could it be that the era of big data—assemblages interlinked by affects—is at once the condition for the possibility of a generalised *post-truth*? Perhaps the desiring-machine, no longer desirable today, has become the true picture. Once more, the epigram: *The question is not: is it true? But: does it work?*

Afterword: the hammer without a master

This essay has suggested that the recent turns to affect and assemblage owe a curious, but considerable, debt to the musical thinking found in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. Globs of thought found in the music of Boulez, Cage, and others are transformed via the writings of Deleuze and Guattari into a pragmatics of incipient capacities and desiring production. This hidden genealogy betrays a strange repurposing of music in service of politics. This is a fascinating fate for a brand of music-theoretical reflection once grounded in modernism. I have further argued that the politics that emerge from this transplanted body of theory may do less to undercut than to underwrite the ideological demands of contemporary capitalism. At first glance, this political weakness may appear constitutively linked to its origin in music. As a final thought, however, I want to suggest that, paradoxically, the weakness emerges from a less than rigorous deployment of the musical ideas upon which the philosophy draws in the first place.

Could it be that we find in the figure of John Cage, for example, an approximation of the philosophical status of the rhizome? After all, Cage is considered a forerunner of rhizomic transformation in the thought of Deleuze and Guattari: "It is undoubtedly John Cage who first and most perfectly deployed this fixed sound plane, which affirms a process against all structure and genesis, a floating time against pulsed time or tempo, experimentation against any kind of interpretation, and in which silence as sonorous rest also marks the absolute state of movement" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 267). Deleuze and Guattari hereby equate the aleatoricism found in Cage's work with a music of radical becoming. By planning its own chance encounters, this music falls outside the coordinates of all hegemonic stratification. Citing Cage, Deleuze and Guattari

write "it is of the nature of the plan(e) that it fail" (ibid., 269). It is precisely Cage's detachment from "organization" and "development" that produces a musical scene of "nonvoluntary transmutation"—a "strange machine . . . of . . . contagion-proliferation-involution"; a rhizome (ibid.). Perhaps.

On the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari emphasise the aspect of becoming (development, transmutation) and non-intentionality (failed plan, nonvoluntary) and downplay the constitutively linked aspect of the *plan* in Cage's work. This disavowal is particularly acute in the context of Boulez's conception of serialism. In Boulez, we find a two-tiered dialectical dimension that cannot be reconciled with the rhizome-like "multiplicities or aggregates of intensities" found in the transplanted thought of Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 15). Although the dodecaphonic work must project itself toward the "unforeseeable," the "unexampled," the "unperceived," and so on, it is not achieved by the opportunism of deterritorialisation (Boulez 1968, 172, 174). It is true that Boulez opposes the "free play" of serialism from the "bookkeeping" of the twelve-tone system—with its emphasis on combinatorial properties, and so on (172, 181). Instead of this *obligatory* patterning of notes, Boulez emphasises the antithesis: "There is no creation except in the unforeseeable becoming necessity" (183). On the one hand, this is music that deploys the series against its own inertial tendencies: a kind of calculated shifting of goalposts to produce arrays that elude simple decoding. To this extent, therefore, the music's temporal and spatial coordinates can be said to recapitulate a kind of machinic generation of unpredictability, like a rhizome.

On the other hand, where deterritorialisation "burgeons into a rhizome" in Deleuze and Guattari, Boulez's proliferating production is constitutively linked to an elusive algorithm. Uncertainty and opacity are maximised in Boulez by a hidden hand. In fact, the distribution of serial arrays requires, as a condition for its possibility, this fundamental non-human actant. As I have argued elsewhere: "Boulez's quasi-mathematical multiplications (by definition unhearable) are the condition for the possibility of post-serial 'rhizomic' flight. These serial structures involve two-tiered modalities of construction: on the one hand, the generative multiplication processes and, on the other, the unpredictable fields of finely proliferated networks proffered thereby; the pre-emptive, and highly centralized, algorithmic engine on the one hand, and the beautifully dispersed, but incoherent, arrays on the other; the inner workings versus the outer appearances: in sum, the technical structure of *magic*" (Scherzinger 2010, 124).

In contrast, for Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 15), the rhizome is set adrift from the "hegemony of the signifier." Indeed, for these philosophers, politics recapitulates the beauty of unfettered proliferation: "Nothing is beautiful or loving or political aside from underground stems and aerial roots, adventitious growths and rhizomes" (ibid.). In the philosophers' view, the multiplicity produced by any structure always amounts to a reduction of combinations; in the composer's contrasting view, the laws of combination are multiplied precisely by the mobile serial *structure* (ibid., 6). In short, where Boulez's transformational operations depend on it, Deleuze and Guattari's lines of flight are detethered from the territory of the algorithm—the hammer without a master.

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Could it be that Deleuze and Guattari's disavowal of the two-tiered formation of the compositional works upon which they draw is less resistant than it is consistent with the ideological demands of late capitalism? The music elaborates a constitutive dialectic between chaos and control, randomness and authority—"for the insiders, an algorithm, a plan; for the outsiders, a rhizome, blind fate"—while the philosophical reception of Deleuze and Guattari betrays assemblages-without-plan and affects-without-technique (Scherzinger 2010, 186). The music's two-fold (techno-political) production is paradoxically flattened in the context of the political concepts twice-derived there from. In the process, the dialectics of subjectivity are diluted and annulled. *Oedipus* is cut down to size!

As if from opposite directions, affect and assemblage make the same fatalistic swerve away from human signification and experience. Broadly speaking, affect theory brings a microscopic gaze to subjective human experience while assemblage theory brings a telescopic gaze away from human experience. Both encounter the posthuman—the first, by way of the autonomic and the nonconscious; the second, by way of the hybrid and the rhizome. Is the true desire of their apparently antithetical stances to finally downplay, or even eradicate, the traditional human referent of political analysis? The anthropocene is cut down to size! With this same end in mind, the dual turning toward affect and assemblage keeps intact an appearance of productive antithesis. The former directs (or better *diverts*) attention toward the singular in its irreducible ultra-singularity, while the latter diverts attention toward the multiple in its ever-elusive excess. What results is a blocked dialectic—the *nonconscious rhizome*—that is resistant to all intentionality and planning. In the wake of the human we are left with a new ecology of affects and assemblages beyond repair.

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Appendix

Online materials

As further illustration to the chapters "Deleuze's Fold in the Performing Practice of Aaron Cassidy's *The Pleats of Matter*" (pp. 56–66) and "Alone/ Together: Simulacral 'A-presentation' in and into Practice-as-Research in Jazz" (pp. 167–73), an online repository of audio and video examples has been created and hosted within the website of the Orpheus Institute, Ghent. These examples, which should be viewed in connection with a reading of the relevant articles, may all be accessed under the URL: http://www.orpheusinstituut.be/ en/the-dark-precursor-media-repository.