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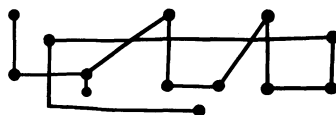
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MUSICAL MODERNISM IN THE THOUGHT OF *MILLE PLATEAUX*, AND ITS TWOFOLD POLITICS



MARTIN SCHERZINGER

PHILOSOPHY ON THE MODEL OF THE SYNTHESIZER

MILLE PLATEAUX, the second volume of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie*, is an elliptical and somewhat anarchic work. The book advances with clear-sighted urgency and a confidence of tone that lends it the character of a manifesto; indeed, the two-volume work *Capitalisme et Schizophrénie* is widely understood as a call to political engagement following the student uprising in Paris in May 1968. Yet, for all this, the formal and narrative elusiveness of the book's argument, with its gamboling gamut of references and resonances that range from geological formations to musical temporalities, and its fragmentary and inconsistent taxonomies of analysis, has produced an unruly array of conflicting critical commentaries both *pro* and

contra. Arguably, the main thread of the book is a philosophical story precisely of changing plot, that is, of metamorphic synthesis. While the informing social context for *Mille Plateaux* may have been the uprising in Paris a decade earlier, the book's informing technical principle was a new electronic instrument, a piano keyboard-based musical apparatus popularized at the time of the book's writing in the 1970s, commonly known as the *synthesizer*. For Deleuze and Guattari, this relatively easy to use (and then newly affordable) technological invention becomes a metaphorical model for a way of thinking that replaces Kant's outmoded *a priori* synthetic judgment. The synthesizer operates on the basis of *amalgamation*, creating a variety of sounds by generating and blending signals of different frequencies. In the words of the philosophers, the synthesizer "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 synthesizer "unites disparate elements in the material, and transposes the parameters from one formula to another" (343). In short, the synthesizer becomes a philosophical entry point into the "immense mechanosphere" characterizing a new era: "the age of the Machine" (343).

The advantage of thinking on the model of the musical synthesizer is that philosophical discourse disentangles itself from the dialectics of "form and matter," opting instead for the synthesis of "the molecular and the cosmic, material and force," an unpredictable mode of thinking that blends traditionally stratified zones of conceptual inquiry into a destratified *plane of consistency*. "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). Deleuze and Guattari label thought mobilized by metamorphoses of this sort 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 the very different regimes of signs, and even nonsign states" (21). Like the musical synthesizer, the rhizome is a proliferating machine intermingling diverse signifying practices no less than nonsignifying ones—"artificial" perhaps, but qualitatively new. Indeed, *Mille Plateaux* gains considerable traction precisely on its preoccupation with the latter "nonsign states," exemplified by music and sound. Thus Deleuze and Guattari unite changing mechanical techniques of sonic production and reproduction and (to a lesser extent) sonic reception with modern modes of

knowledge formation, culture, and social organization. Theirs is the synthesizing hermeneutics of an abstract machine.

POLITICAL COLLECTIVISM EVERYWHERE

Scholars have long attempted to disentangle an array of problems posed by this strange book, particularly the problem of finding stable points of identification and meaning in an argument that seems, at bottom, to accept the prospect of conceptual hybridization (synthesis) and rhizomic mobility (endlessness) with equanimity. How does a rhizome elude sedimented categories of thought? Alternatively, how do lines of diagonal flight confront their limit? And what are the imagined politics of striated space yielding to smooth space? Does the book present us with firm points of identity *plus* deviations, masks, and revisions of these points, or is the very notion of identity it embodies more complex and fluid? Answers to questions like these, on which the reception of and debate about *Mille Plateaux* tends to cohere, depend on both establishing significations for the central concepts of the argument (rhizome, plane of consistency, body without organs, deterritorialization, line of flight, abstract machine, striated and smooth space, to name a few) and examining the way they signify in the book's shifting narrative flow. Predictably perhaps, the reception of *Mille Plateaux* in the last two decades is quite uneven.

Across the terrain of the text's engagement with music alone, we find *Mille Plateaux* enlisted to bolster (or undermine) a growing list of wildly divergent aesthetic practices. Thus we find in Ronald Bogue's "Violence in Three Shades of Metal: Death, Doom and Black" an argument that grants various sub-genres of heavy metal the capacity to "deterritorialize" patterns and processes of "contemporary electronic, industrial machine culture" by way of distorting musical conventions of popular music. "By deliberately adopting a limited musical idiom and pushing its elements to an extreme," argues Bogue, "death, doom, and black metal develop inventive deformations of standard popular music practices, concentrating especially on timbre and rhythm rather than melody and harmony" (Bogue 2004, 114). Through manipulations of musical *speed*, more precisely, these metal genres evoke "the experience of the body without organs," which in turn conditions "new possibilities for life" (115). In contrast, Drew Hemment focuses his attention on relations between movement and rest in recent forms of popular electronic dance music, figured here as a "*sonic machine*" (Hement 2004, 78). Hemment's sonic machine amounts to "thinking music in

terms of *event*, where event is not understood as the single instance in which it is played or heard, but rather a dispersed terrain that includes multiple, mobile nodes" (78). A musical genre popularized at the turn of the twenty-first century thus subtends an argument about philosophical lines of flight (86). And Eugene Holland argues for a "nomad" model of music-making, with yet another musical genre in mind: improvisational jazz. In such musical practice, argues Holland, "order would emerge 'from below,' from the interaction of a multiplicity of social agents on the market, rather than being imposed or constrained from above by institutions of power and accumulated wealth" (Holland 2004, 31).

Despite these shifting musical referents, most of these writings nonetheless elaborate the same basic argumentative shape, essentially elaborating different modes of musical behavior in terms of *rhizomatics*. In the words of Jeremy Gilbert, rhizomatics involves "music made through a non-hierarchical process of lateral connections between sounds, genres and musicians, which aims always to open onto a cosmic space" (Gilbert 2004, 124). These writers emphasize the qualitatively new sonic characteristics opened up by various musical practices, which in turn transpose into new material possibilities in the political world ("new possibilities for life," "[un]constrained . . . by institutions of power and . . . wealth," etc.). To elaborate the political dimension of his argument, Holland for example draws on the political aspirations of *Mille Plateaux*, in particular the discussion about political agency in contemporary society—"the people"—which Deleuze and Guattari understand as a *musical* problem. Political practice is thereby conceptually linked to a musical one. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari: "The problem is a truly musical one, technically musical, and all the more political for that" (1987, 340–1). At this point in *Mille Plateaux*, Deleuze and Guattari attempt to negotiate the antagonistic demands placed on traditional analyses of political agency which all too often are determined, on the one hand, by the concept of the "individual" and, on the other, the "universal."

To elude the programmatic limits posed by these opposed (but mutually reinforcing) terms, the authors posit the *Dividual* (a term synthesizing the divisible and the shared) "to designate the type of musical relations and the intra- or intergroup passages occurring in group individuation" (341). Taking their cue from Claude Debussy, the authors reproach Richard Wagner for failing to "do" a crowd or a people: "The people must be individualized, not according to the persons within it [*sic*], but according to the affects it experiences, simultaneously or successively. The concepts of the One-Crowd and the

Dividual are botched if the people is reduced to a juxtaposition, or if it is reduced to a power of the universal" (341). Instead of grounding their analysis of agency in the dualistic terms either of dissociated multiplicity ("juxtaposition") or coalescent unity ("universal"), Deleuze and Guattari take recourse in a musical model: "In short, there are two very different conceptions of orchestration, depending on whether one is seeking to sonorize the forces of the Earth or the forces of the People" (341). Musical composition thus functions in *Mille Plateaux* as a model for political praxis. In light of the recent prominence in political theory attributed to the concept of *multitude*, especially its Deleuzian reinterpretation (along the tracks of the Dividual) in recent work of Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, Donna Haraway, and others, the synthesized musical basis for such politics in *Mille Plateaux* is no minor point.

MULTITUDE IN MUSICAL MODERNISM

Commentaries on Deleuze and Guattari are correct, therefore, to detect a crucial political component at the core of *Mille Plateaux's* analytic excursions in music. But where these commentaries concomitantly sound a triumphal note on account of this insight, the arguments become less plausible. How do such diverse music genres engender such similarly articulated progressive politics? In fact, the compositional practices Deleuze and Guattari have in mind in *Mille Plateaux* are tied to a quite specific subset of music-making, associated primarily with the central preoccupations of modernist concert music from the 1940s to the 1960s. Not all music is capable of productive rhizomic flight in *Mille Plateaux*; Wagner is denounced, for example, popular music is regarded with doubt and skepticism, and non-Western music is ignored. In relation to political agency, that is, Deleuze and Guattari do not focus their attentions on the collectivist anti-establishment promise of the then prevalent rock 'n roll scene, choosing instead to praise the compositional efforts of established European modernists. For example, the authors value Luciano Berio's quest for a "multiple cry, a cry of the population, in the dividual of the One-Crowd" in the piece *Coro* (1975–6, for orchestra and chorus) (342). Berio's own description of *Coro* resonates with many central motifs of *Mille Plateaux*: "It is like the plan for an imaginary city which is realized on different levels, which produces, assembles and unifies different things and persons, revealing the collective and individual characters, their distance, their relationships and conflicts with real and ideal borders" (Berio 1980, 7). Pairing the

metaphors, we find in *Coro* a music that issues a “map” (Deleuze and Guattari) / a “plan” (Berio), entirely oriented “toward an experimentation in contact with the real” (Deleuze and Guattari) / “an imaginary city” (Berio), realized on various “plateaus” (Deleuze and Guattari) / “different levels” (Berio), which “unites disparate elements in the material” (Deleuze and Guattari) / “assembles and unifies different things and persons” (Berio) to reveal “the One-Crowd and the Dividual” (Deleuze and Guattari) / “the collective and individual characters” (Berio) in a utopian political collective (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 12, 343, 341). Berio’s *Coro*, under this reading, becomes a Deleuzian performance of the multitude.

For all its concern for “ghetto languages,” for a “minor” music, and so on, *Mille Plateaux* is finally less concerned to use either popular music or the actual music of minorities as sites for articulating the philosophical ambiguities of the collective than it is with a particular political/aesthetic technique: “making [the major language/music] minor . . . (the opposite of regionalism)” (103, 105). Even in matters of the political collective, the philosophers reserve their highest praise for the high modernist music of Pierre Boulez, whom they regard as “a genius for passing from one pole to the other in his orchestration, or even hesitating between them: a sonorous Nature *or* People” (342). Boulez’s malleable orchestral technique is thus figured as an exemplary metaphor for the becoming of the Dividual. This emphasis on technique alone probably permits Deleuze and Guattari to overlook the often disarmingly patronizing tone of Boulez’s actual understanding of the behavior of collectives. On the topic of African “tribes,” for example, Boulez vividly contrasts group mentality with individual musical thought:

The tribe of epigones . . . hurl themselves greedily on a chosen method, obviously having no notion of either its origin or its suitability since they isolate it from all guiding logical thought; they use it according to standard models and having exhausted its more obvious charms, incapable of grasping its internal rigour, they must find a new oxygen supply at all costs: the ant-heap waits for the shock which will galvanise it into moving house again. Such a practice, to put it crudely, suggests a brothel of ideas, and can hardly be considered composition.” (1971, 21)

Here Boulez contrasts the instinctual behavior of the animalistic mob with the rigorous thought of the reasonable composer. In Boulez’s lexicon, the latter embodies the unique subject position necessary for the

production of an aesthetics grounded in creative deviations from standardized models. Although Boulez's casual cultural attitudes are quite different from those of Deleuze and Guattari, the respective politics of the composer, on the one hand, and the philosophers, on the other, is not. As it is for Boulez, political praxis in *Mille Plateaux* ultimately rests on analogously creative lines of flight from stratified modes of thought. Recall that in *Mille Plateaux* politics are intertwined with "technical musical" matters, and are "all the more political for that." In the final analysis, politics here is less concerned with the basic organization of social relations (in its civic, governmental, corporate, academic, etc., dimensions) than it is with technical aspects of contrarian modes of thinking and doing *per se*.

PIERRE BOULEZ, MUSICAL INTERLOCUTOR

In light of the value placed on the compositional techniques of a relatively rarified brand of European musical practice in *Mille Plateaux*, the ubiquitous "applications" of Deleuzian philosophy to heavy metal, electronic dance music, improvisational jazz, and so on, should give us pause. Instead of offering yet another example of rhizomatic music, then, I will turn now to Deleuze and Guattari's specific use of modernist musical aesthetics in *Mille Plateaux*, particularly the music and writing of Pierre Boulez. According to Robert Piencikowski, Boulez and Deleuze were acquainted since the early 1950s (personal communication, June 2008). They were mutually supportive of one another, occasionally appearing in public together. On February 23, 1978, for example, IRCAM hosted a public roundtable under the auspices of *Le Temps musical* at the Centre Georges Pompidou. Speakers included Boulez, Berio, Roland Barthes, Michel Foucault, and Deleuze. Although such joint appearances were rare, it is clear that Deleuze comprehensively read Boulez's writings and attended numerous concerts of the composer's music. Even the philosophical figure of the synthesizer derives its argument less from the actual instrument (or from the then emerging popularity of a new movement in popular music, known as "new romantic"—Duran Duran, Spandau Ballet, etc.—which granted the keyboard synthesizer pride of place onstage), than it does from Boulez's writings on musical modernism nearly two decades earlier. In ". . . Auprès et au loin," for example, Boulez discusses refinements of our perception of timbre with reference to a "hyperinstrument," understood here as a kind of synthesizer-to-come; an instrument comprised of "electronic sinusoidal sounds," or as "conjugations of existent instruments" (Boulez

1968, 197). In short, it was Boulez's imagined synthesizer, at least as much as the actual musical instrument, that had the capacity to "assembl[e] modules, source elements, and elements for treating sound (oscillators, generators, and transformers), by arranging microintervals," in the philosophical work of *Mille Plateaux* (343).

For Boulez, the synthesizing potential of these new electronic media has the potential to liberate sound by realizing what scores alone cannot. In his discussion of rhythm in "Directions in Recent Music," for example, he asks, "if, then, we want to introduce a notion of total freedom of the rhythm, what can we do but address ourselves to the machine?" (1968, 213) Boulez's embrace of the technical promise of the electro-acoustic machine is elegantly expanded into a philosophical trope in *Mille Plateaux*, now figured as an 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)" (73). As it is with Boulez's synthesizing machine, the abstract machine opens philosophical thought to concrete new forms; it deterritorializes strata to generate a plane of consistency (or body without organs). For Deleuze and Guattari, planes of consistency elude the traditional dichotomy between form and content, "elaborating" instead "an increasingly rich and consistent material [like reinforced concrete] the better to tap increasingly intense forces" (329). Deleuze and Guattari thereby proffer a theory of subjectivity on the model of a machine (synthesizer, concrete mixer), a kind of *mélange* of flesh and technics (Cybernetic Organism? Body Beyond Organs?) set adrift from the stable coordinates of a unified identity; a synthetically expanded subjectivity, nomadically pursuing multiple becomings that constitute qualitatively altered modes of possibility. In the words of Ian Buchanan, the abstract machine "enables the assemblage to become other than it is"; in short, deterritorialized (2004, 14). Not surprisingly, Deleuze and Guattari's distancing from the dialectics of form and content in the name of transcendental empiricism echoes Boulez's conviction that "in music there is no opposition between form and content, between abstract on the one hand and concrete on the other" (1971, 32).

VERTICAL, HORIZONTAL, DIAGONAL

To demonstrate and dramatize the workings of deterritorialization, Deleuze and Guattari draw on Boulez's discussion, first, of how modernism abolished the strict distinction between music's "vertical" and

“horizontal” aspects; and second, of how modernism opened into new non-metric temporalities.

When Boulez casts himself in the role of historian of music, he does so in order to show how a great musician, in a very different manner in each case, invents a kind of diagonal running between the harmonic vertical and the melodic horizon. And in each case it is a different diagonal, a different technique, a creation. Moving along this transversal line, which is really a line of deterritorialization, there is a sound block that no longer has a point of origin, since it is always and already in the middle of the line . . . and no longer forms a localizable connection from one point to another, since it is in ‘nonpulsed time’: a deterritorialized rhythmic block that has abandoned points, coordinates, and measure, like a drunken boat that melds with the line or draws a plane of consistency (1987, 296).

While this passage refers obliquely to the compositional techniques of Anton Webern (especially his distributions of pitch fields), on the one hand, and Olivier Messiaen (especially his manipulations of duration), on the other, it is Boulez’s peculiar modernist reading of these composers’ respective innovations that interests Deleuze and Guattari. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari’s words closely follow the logic of Boulez’s discussion of polyphony in his *Penser la Musique Aujourd’hui*. Boulez writes, “From now on the two dimensions of classical (horizontal and vertical) polyphony are linked by a kind of diagonal dimension, whose characteristics figure in each of them, in varying degrees” (1971, 119). For Boulez, “polyphony can also be described as the diagonal distribution of structures: ‘parts’ or ‘voices’ no longer exist, strictly speaking: the organisms are to be analysed as distributed structures; a morphological example [is] the organisation of a durational block” (1971, 119). As it is for Deleuze and Guattari, Boulez describes the blending of vertical (harmonic) with horizontal (melodic) dimensions of musical composition into a “sound block”/“durational block,” whose parts, for Deleuze and Guattari, “no longer ha[ve] a point of origin,” and, for Boulez likewise, “no longer exist.” As if to elaborate a philosophical paraphrase of Boulez’s “cross polyphony” (as found in his early works; *Polyphonie X*, for example) Deleuze and Guattari here construe philosophical thought in analogous musical terms: “Deterritorialization” in *Mille Plateaux*, one might say, incorporates Boulez’s “diagonal” polyphonic thinking.

Deleuze and Guattari’s creative paraphrase of Boulez takes the figure

of the “diagonal” still further, analogously positing the *interval* as that which remains in the wake of the etiolated vertical/horizontal dimensions. With Webern in mind, for example, Boulez repeatedly discusses the emergence (and hence the autonomy) of the interval when harmony and line are linked by a diagonal dimension: “Independently of any dimension, intervals are developed among themselves in a context whose coherence is assured by complementary chromatic principles” (1971, 28). Boulez is here referring to the carefully crafted internal symmetries Webern embeds in the partitioning of row forms. In his *Concerto for Nine Instruments*, op. 24, for example, the row (B, B \flat , D, E \flat , G, F \sharp , A \flat , E, F, C, C \sharp , A) is comprised of four [014] trichords, which can reappear in different orders under various transformational operations. For Boulez, Webern’s achievement is of immense historical and philosophical importance: “Webern was the only one . . . who was conscious of a new sound-dimension, of the abolition of horizontal-vertical opposition, so that he saw in the series only a way of giving structure to the sound-space. . . . That *functional redistribution of intervals* toward which he tended marks an extremely important moment in the history of the language” (1968, 149, emphasis mine). For Boulez, Webern’s “way of thinking,” which “transcends notions of vertical and horizontal” introduces a qualitatively new conception of the musical *interval*, understood as a movement, which ultimately issues forth “a new mode of musical *being*” (1968, 227, emphasis in the original). Deleuze and Guattari likewise emphasize how, in “smooth space” (a musical space free of striation, about which more below), the interval becomes ubiquitous; “everything become[s] interval, intermezzo” (1987, 478). Smooth space enables a qualitative shift in perception: instead of mapping a trajectory from fixed points, here “the stop follows from the trajectory; . . . the interval is substance . . . the line is therefore a vector, a direction and not a dimension” (478). For Deleuze and Guattari, the interval inhabits a kind of “middle, between things, interbeing, *intermezzo*” (25), producing a line that “breaks free of the vertical and horizontal as coordinates . . . a block-line passes amid [*au milieu des*] sounds and propels itself by its own nonlocalizable middle [*milieu*]” (297). The very movement outside of points and localizable coordinates forms a sound block, which, analogously with Boulez, ushers a qualitatively new mode of being: “The sound block is the *intermezzo*. It is a body without organs” (297).

By way of Boulez’s text then, Webern’s new conception of the musical interval, unleashed by his unique twelve-tone practice, is performatively mapped here onto a theory of rhizomatics. The interval becomes the interbeing, musical movement becomes the body without

organs. This is a noteworthy philosophical revision of Webern's compositional endeavor as it had been assessed in light of dialectics a few years earlier. For Theodor W. Adorno, the problem with Webern's finely constructed rows is that they produce motivic unity automatically: "The ripest fruits of canonic imitation fall, as it were, of their own will into the lap of the composition" (Adorno 1973, 110). The pre-compositional situation of op. 24, for example, destroys the conditions for the possibility of dialectically driven development: The motivic unit, already mirrored on all sides, lacks the distinctiveness to issue an authentic synthesis with an independent formal logic. The music, altogether too consistent, becomes static. Adorno writes: "Thematic working-out extends itself over such minimal units that it virtually cancels itself out. The mere interval—functioning as a motivic unit—is so utterly without individual character that it no longer accomplishes the synthesis expected of it" (1973, 111). Adorno emphasizes the shrunk dimensions of motivic activity by drawing attention to the unexceptional sound of Webern's motives. In Adorno's hearing, the abundance of thirds and minor seconds (interval classes 4, 3, and 1) in the music of opus 24 would count as a willed denial of other motivic possibilities. By compressing the music's field of motivic play to fewer intervals than that of the music of the past, Webern proffers motives that, for Adorno, sound impoverished and mechanical, like "mere intervals." In so doing, Webern's pre-composition forecloses the genuinely historical antithesis between harmony and line required for dialectical overcoming. In contrast, for all their resistance to pre-compositional structures, to "any idea of pretraced destiny," Deleuze and Guattari paradoxically detect in the Webernian musical interval a destratified line of flight, a de-linking from punctual coordinates and an opening into a plane of consistency (1987, 13). (Not surprisingly, *Mille Plateaux* freights a stinging critique of dialectics.)

STRIATED, SMOOTH

Mille Plateaux creatively adopts serial musical structure as a philosophical trope for thinking identity across strata—creating planes of consistency. Stratified systems resemble traditional tonal musical forms; they are coded whenever "horizontally there are linear causalities between elements; and, vertically, hierarchies of order between groupings; and, holding it all together in depth, a succession of framing forms" (1987, 335). Deleuze and Guattari unsubscribe from the very dialectical *agon* between succession and simultaneity upon which

Adorno insists. In contrast to the dialectician, for Deleuze and Guattari, “consistent, self-consistent aggregates” resemble high modern serial music; they “consolidat[e] . . . heterogeneous elements . . . as if a *machinic phylum, a destratifying transversality*, . . . freeing matter and tapping forces” (335, emphasis in the original). Deleuze and Guattari label conceptual spaces that transcend the hierarchies implied by dialectical oppositions (vertical, horizontal, etc.) *nomad*, or *smooth*. They offer a number of “models,” to elaborate the contrast between “the smooth” and “the striated”: technological, musical, maritime, mathematical, physical, aesthetic (474–500). The terms themselves, however, are borrowed from Boulez’s chapter in *Penser la Musique Aujourd’hui* discussing smooth and striated spaces in music (83–98).

In this chapter Boulez explores the “variable spaces, spaces of mobile definition capable of evolving (by mutation or progressive transformation) during the course of the work” (1971, 84). The variability of musical space leads Boulez to redefine the concept of the *continuum* as a kind of proto-plane of consistency. The continuum “is certainly not the transition ‘*effected*’ from one point in space to another (successive or instantaneous). The continuum is *manifested* by the possibility of partitioning space; . . . the dialectic between continuity and discontinuity thus involves the concept of partition; I will go so far as to say that continuum *is* this possibility, for it contains both the continuous and the discontinuous” (85). Instead of identifying the continuum with some kind of musical continuity, Boulez here construes the continuum as the very possibility of partitioning musical space in various ways; the ability to gather heterogeneous elements (continuity, discontinuity, etc.) in a plane of consistency. Deleuze and Guattari likewise refer to music’s capacity to partition its components in continuous variation as a “virtual cosmic continuum” (95). Analogously, the “continuum,” for Deleuze and Guattari, a “placing-in-variation . . . without beginning or end,” should “not be confused with the continuous or discontinuous character of the variable itself” (94–5). The difference between striated and smooth space thus depends on the space’s mode of partitioning. For example, “frequency space may undergo two sorts of partition: the one, defined by a standard measure, will be regularly repeatable, the other, imprecise, or more exactly, undetermined” (Boulez 1971, 85). Striated partitioning can be effected in various spheres: temperament, for example, “striates” the music’s pitch space, as does pulsation “striate” its temporality, thereby offering localizable reference points for the ear. In contrast, where partitioning is undetermined, resulting in reference-free smooth space, the ear loses its bearings. Boulez likens this auditory condition to the eye’s failure to gauge distances on completely smooth surfaces. As a result, smooth space is less easily categorized than striated

space. Smooth space can only be classified “in a more general fashion”; smooth space is known only by “the statistical distribution of the frequencies found within it” (1971, 87). In contrast, striated space can be additionally categorized into fixed and variable, straight and curved, focalized and non-focalized, regular and irregular, etc.; and these categories furthermore can intermingle with each other to various degrees. It is important to note, finally, that Boulez’s analysis of musical spaces privileges music’s mode of production/partitioning over either its sounding result or its social reception. Thus, even if smooth space actually resembles striated space in some specific musical context, its mode of partitioning, and hence of musical being, is qualitatively different.

A similar perceptual ambiguity exists between smooth and striated time. Although striated time is “pulsed” (grounded in a “referential system” that is a “function of chronometric time of greater or lesser delimitation, breadth or variability”) its actual sounding can be taken for smooth time (Boulez 1971, 88). And although smooth time is “amorphous” (without either “partition” or “module”) its actual sounding can be taken for striated time (88, 93). For example, “a static distribution in striated time will tend to give the impression of smooth time, whereas a differentiated and *directed* distribution in smooth time, especially when based on adjacent values, may easily be confused with the usual results of striated time” (94). Again, the technique of music’s production ultimately defines the difference between smooth and striated time: “in smooth time, time is filled without counting; in striated time, time is filled by counting” (94). As it is with Deleuze and Guattari’s plane of consistency, it is smooth time that paradoxically opens to the heterogeneity of limitless connection and thus mutation. In their discussion of the “technological model,” for example, Deleuze and Guattari develop an analogous contrast between, on the one hand, knitting and embroidery (both striated) and, on the other, crochet and patchwork (both smooth), on the basis of their respective modes of production. Embroidery, for instance, operates on the basis of “a central theme or motif” (476). For all its complexity and variability embroidery nonetheless remains an inmate of a striated back-and-forth. Patchwork, in contrast, uses “piece-by-piece construction, . . . successive additions of fabric” (476). Thus patchwork relates to the “fabric of the rhizome” with its limitless conjunction “and . . . and . . . and . . .,” which Deleuze and Guattari elaborate in the opening pages of *Mille Plateaux* (25). Analogously, knitting needles interweave, producing striated space, while crochet produces a smooth space running in all directions (476).

We find in the smooth spaces of patchwork and crochet the “logic of the AND,” which ultimately overthrows ontology and nullifies endings and beginnings (25). As “an amorphous collection of juxtaposed pieces that can be joined together in an infinite number of ways” (476), patchwork thus eludes the “false conception of voyage and movement” implied by “making a clean slate, starting or beginning again from ground zero” (25). This being “between things, interbeing,” a transversal always and already *en route*, defines smooth space. The philosophers summarize their discussion of smooth and striated musical space and time thus: “The smooth is the continuous variation, continuous development of form; it is the fusion of harmony and melody in favor of the production of properly rhythmic values, the pure act of the drawing of a diagonal across the vertical and the horizontal” (478). And, in the final analysis, it is music in *Mille Plateaux* that time and again proffers such planes of consistency. In “Memories of a Plan(e) Maker,” Deleuze and Guattari advance Boulez’s “nonpulsed time for a floating music” and John Cage’s “fixed sound plane” as exemplary instances of rhizomatics. Such a plane “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 and sonorous rest also marks the absolute state of movement” (267). This is music as rhizomatics.

PLANE OF CONSISTENCY, RHIZOME

On the face of it, Deleuze and Guattari’s interpretations of certain strands of modernism in music do not line up with widespread views about it. In particular, the curious way in which Webern’s twelve-tone technique, albeit mediated by a Boulezian optic, is enlisted to buttress a philosophy of heterogeneous rhizomatics, which in turn is linked to a politics of multiplicity, is far from obvious. In recent musicological commentaries, for example, Webern’s radical musical abstractions are figured as willfully denying music’s irreducible social component; the music’s structural autonomy is figured as dogmatically repressing interpretative plurality; the patterned unity of his row forms is said to constrain the music’s subjective dimension; and, to the extent that it is linked to the political sphere, the music is linked to totalitarianism. Thus, Rose Rosengard Subotnik demonstrates how the music’s radical autonomy fails to “reintegrate [its] values with some larger and present [social] context” (1991, 271). Likewise, Alan Street shows how Webern’s particular brand of “aesthetic unity” sustains an unswerving, but false,

commitment to “the cause of formal integration” in music analysis today (1998, 57, 59). Adorno, as briefly discussed above, associates the hyper-integration of Webern’s brand of twelve-tone music with reified and undialectical thought (1971). And Richard Taruskin draws attention to “Webern’s enthusiastic embrace of Hitler” (1993, 299). Under these readings, the “smoothness” of Webern’s musical spaces (“drawing a diagonal across the vertical and the horizontal”) would be the smoothness of compressed homogeneity instead of that of expanding heterogeneity; the “consistency” of its musical planes would be the consistency of unity and uniformity instead of the consistency of thickening intensities and destratified multiplicities. How can this be?

Arguably the shift in Boulez’s conception of serial technique after 1951 accounts at least in part for this curious alliance between Webern and Deleuze and Guattari. In other words, Webern’s compositional endeavor is represented in *Mille Plateaux* as a function of Boulez’s peculiar mediation of it in the context of post-war Europe. In Boulez’s post-*Structures* serial works, that is, the row no longer functions as an integral structure but rather as a proliferating machine. Instead of deferring to the unifying internal elements of the series, Boulez employs the row as a source of smaller cells, which burgeon along independently conceived trajectories. Here we find an asymmetrical and fragmentary partitioning of the basic row forms, dispersed by diverse “multiplications” (pitch and/or rhythmic cells infused with the properties of other cells), which in turn proffer musical networks further modified by “elisions,” “tropes” and “parentheses.” In the manner of Deleuze and Guattari, Boulez employs a kind of “coalescent” logic, “linking rhythmic structures to serial structures by common organizations, which will also include other characteristics of sound: intensity, mode of attack, timbre. Then to enlarge that morphology into a coalescent rhetoric” (1968, 151). Boulez thereby argues for musical transformations in terms of coalescing characteristics of sound; transformations of musical strata, one might say, on a plane of consistency; a “hyperinstrument” (197). On the principle of coalescence, Deleuze and Guattari, likewise describe Boulez’s music as the “*fusion* of harmony and melody . . . drawing . . . a diagonal across the vertical and the horizontal” (478), and Messaien’s music as the presentation of “multiple chromatic durations in *coalescence*”; “a diagonal for a cosmos” (309, emphasis mine).

In Boulez’s lexicon, serial syntheses should resist “the aspect of a reflex” encouraged by the pre-compositional apparatus; it should seek out instead the “unforeseeable,” the “unexampled,” the “unperceived” (1968, 172, 174). Boulez distinguishes between composition as

“bookkeeping” (carefully observing the demands of the row) and composition as “free play” (which “projects itself toward the unperceived”) (172, 181). This is why Boulez pluralizes the serial schemata organizing his music by applying the intervallic structure of subsets of a row to the pitch classes of different sets. This “multiplication” produces a wealth of set combination which can be further modified by transposition. Likewise, as if to enact analogously unpredictable turns in the flow of his own writing, Boulez’s *Notes of an Apprenticeship* are frequently interspersed with unexpected turns, revisions, and reversals. For example, in his essay “Eventually . . .” (1952) Boulez interrupts his formal descriptions of pitch/duration structures and their multiplication processes with sentences that veer away from the guiding logic of the argument. In mid-essay he writes, “After this theoretical essay, which will appear to many as the glorification of intellectualism as against instinct, I shall finish. The unexpected again: there is no creation except in the unforeseeable becoming necessity” (173). Boulez’s insistence on harnessing the unforeseeable maps readily onto the “unthinkable, invisible, nonsonorous forces” harnessed by the music of *Mille Plateaux* (343). Under Boulez’s creative gaze, the row has been re-conceptualized as Deleuzian “patchwork” (476); the musical series has become rhizome, a “generalized chromaticism” (97).

MAPPINGS: LESS AND MORE NOMADIC

Nonetheless, Deleuze and Guattari’s concept of a generalized chromaticism—“placing elements of any nature in continuous variation [in] an operation that will perhaps give rise to new distinctions, but takes none as final and has none in advance” (97)—is not without its paradoxes when placed alongside the music upon which it is modeled. While Boulez’s music and Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy both elaborate the coalescence of vertical and horizontal dimensions in terms of diagonal lines of flight, the unhinging of the interval (as interbeing) from historically sedimented coordinates, and the destratification of planes in quest of smooth space/time, their respective attitudes to heterogeneity are in fact vividly contrasting. Deleuze and Guattari would place elements “of *any* nature” in continuous variation, Boulez seeks out strictly “*musical*” elements for such variation. “This, then is the fundamental question,” writes Boulez, “the founding of musical systems upon exclusively musical criteria, rather than proceeding from numerical, graphic or psycho-physiological symbols to a musical codification (a kind of tran-

scription) that has not the slightest concept in common with them” (1971, 30). Here Boulez emphasizes the radical autonomy of music, its non-reconcilable difference from externalities: number, graph, psychology, physiology. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari’s work is radically inter-disciplinary, almost anarchic in its diverse mappings (from Sylvano Bussotti to Noam Chomsky, from geometric fractal to Dogon egg), its thousand plateaus of inquiry. Far from rejecting them on grounds of non-reconciliation, Deleuze and Guattari encourage mappings across non-identical fields (conceptual stratum as lobster’s pincer; Messiaen’s music as becoming-bird): “[The map] fosters connections between fields, the removal of blockages on bodies without organs, the maximum opening of bodies without organs onto a plane of consistency. It is itself a part of the rhizome. The map is open and connectible in all of its dimensions, it is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification” (1987, 12). For Deleuze and Guattari, the map modifies the content of the mapped—“becoming-child . . . is not . . . the becoming of the child” (344, emphasis in the original). The map is the rhizome, the metamorphosis produced by a line of flight.

It is an irony that Deleuze and Guattari’s description of the map as rhizome precisely derives from Boulez’s descriptions of high modernist serial procedure, operating on the basis of detachable partitions that can be individually modified, reversed, multiplied. Yet Boulez emphasizes the importance in musical composition of “mak[ing] sure that all forks, twists and turns are integrated into the context” (1971, 20), ensuring that musical lines of flight are recouped in some kind of unified structure. This is a subtle point, for, on the one hand, it insists on the unity of experience (not unlike Deleuze and Guattari’s planes of consistency), and yet, on the other, it seems to constrain its operational field of referents aprioristically to purely musical elements: a policed nomadism? It is possible of course that Boulez’s musical mappings are less unified (and his “purely musical” elements less pure) than the rhetoric to support them suggest. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari’s distinction between “map” and “tracing” accurately captures the contrast between the more obviously unified twelve-tone practice of Webern (at least as Adorno conceives it) and the more nomadic post-*Structures* serialism of Boulez (at least as Deleuze conceives it): “The map has to do with performance, whereas the tracing always involves an alleged ‘competence.’ . . . Schizoanalysis rejects any idea of pretraced destiny, whatever name is given to it—divine, anagogic, historical, economic, structural” (1987, 12–3). Where Webern’s carefully structured twelve-tone rows arguably predestine wall-to-wall motivic unity, “always com[ing] back ‘to the same,’” Boulez’s serial

transformations annul unity by splitting in several diverse directions, ever-relocating, nomadic (12).

Still, Boulez repeatedly insists on a certain non-coalescent purity of musical language. In his critique of early integral serialism, for example, Boulez protests the nomadic blending of disciplinary spheres: “When the serial principle was first applied to all the components of sound, we were thrown bodily, or rather headlong, into a cauldron of figures, recklessly mixing mathematics and elementary arithmetic” (1971, 25). Boulez’s desire for non-mixed, purely musical, material leads him to posit a musical logic of “over-all and hierarchic neutrality”: He writes, “If . . . one gives each sound an absolutely neuter *apriori*—as is the case with serial material—the context brings up, at each occurrence of the same sound, a different individualization of that sound” (1968, 175). For Boulez, transformation and proliferation thus *depends* on neutralizing sound pre-compositionally. This is why he regards Webern’s absolute musical interval, unhinged from the coordinates of tonal harmony and counterpoint, as a moment of such signal historical importance: the diagonal not as rhizomic multiple but as eviscerated neuter. And, in Boulez’s view, this *aprioristically* non-aligned sound (premature plane of consistency?) sponsors the music’s ability to voyage into unguessed-at dimensions.

Is this the refrain required for deterritorialization? Probably not exactly. Webern’s historic achievement was, for Boulez, to annul history. Boulez’s exclusively musical material lays the foundation for a kind of utopian composition from nowhere. Boulez aspires to “strip music of its accumulated dirt and give it . . . structure”—he states: “It was like Descartes’ ‘Cogito, ergo sum.’ I momentarily suppressed inheritance. I started from the fact that I was thinking and went on to construct a musical language from scratch” (in Peyser 1976, 63). Here we find the Boulezian dream of a neutralized, non-historical sound of multiplications, as against the historically “bastardized” sound of nomadic mergings and mappings (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 105). Schoenberg is dead (1968, 268).

Boulez’s language of absolutes (history annulled, sound neutered, Schoenberg deceased, composition *ex nihilo*) tarries awkwardly with the nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy. The very idea of “making a clean slate” is regarded from the start with hostility and contempt by the latter: “starting or beginning again from ground zero, seeking a beginning or a foundation—all imply a false conception of voyage and movement (a conception that is methodical, pedagogical, initiatory, symbolic)” (1987, 25). For Deleuze and Guattari, the rhizome is “always in the middle, between things, interbeing,

intermezzo”; it establishes a logic of conjunction (“and . . . and . . . and . . .”) that aims to “overthrow ontology, do away with foundations, nullify endings and beginnings” (25). It is noteworthy that both Boulez and Deleuze and Guattari seek to abolish sedimented historical modes of thought from their respective projects, but where Boulez posits the diagonalized interval as neutral starting point (a monad), Deleuze and Guattari posit the same as always-already *en route* (a nomad). This is Boulez’s particular “freedom . . . through discipline” (1971, 15); a carefully regulated antimemory—as against the hybridized nomadism of Deleuze and Guattari (1987, 21, 297).

A SECOND MOMENT, DETERRITORIALIZATION

Of course Deleuze and Guattari also repeatedly call for moments of discipline in *Milles Plateaux*, but these are of a quite different sort, sharing little with the neutralized thrust of Boulez’s brand of discipline. “Sobriety, sobriety,” they write, “that is the common prerequisite for the deterritorialization of matters”; and elsewhere, “sobriety in the use of a major language [is needed] . . . to place it in a state of continuous variation” (1987, 344, 105). In fact, *Mille Plateaux* repeatedly obtains a certain patterned closure in its otherwise very distinctive chapters from a maneuver in which the philosophical excursions end up restraining, denouncing, or downplaying themselves. I will call this characteristic maneuver a “second moment” of *Mille Plateaux*. The retractions that infuse the chapter “November 28, 1947: How Do You Make Yourself a Body without Organs?”—“Mimic the strata. You don’t reach the BwO, and its plane of consistency, by wildly destratifying” (1987, 160), for example—are rhetorical maneuvers to achieve closure by introducing a split between “productive” BwO, on the one hand, and “empty,” and “cancerous” BwO, on the other. The problem Deleuze and Guattari identify here is that, on the metaphor of philosophy as proliferating machine, the shift from productive, creative flow to destructive, unfettered multiplication requires but the smallest tilt of logical angle. The absolute BwO risks reifying movement as such; it risks becoming “nothing but a scribble effacing all lines” (344). Looking back, does the opening figure of *Mille Plateaux*, zigzag scribbles across five musical staves, which themselves veer from their parallels (page one of Sylvano Bussotti’s piano piece for David Tudor), gradually becoming ironic as the book unfolds?

The difference between productive and destructive BwOs hinges not on “ideological” considerations as much as “pure matter”: “That is why

the material problem confronting schizoanalysis is knowing whether we have it within our means to make the selection, to distinguish the BwO from its doubles: empty vitreous bodies, cancerous bodies, totalitarian and fascist” (165). Schizoanalysis, in this second moment of the text (i.e. now freighted connotations of psychological aberration), must rein in the excesses of becoming, the mad proliferation of cancerous cells, no less than all-too-violent modes of destratification, the suicidal evisceration of all cells. Schizoanalysis now engages a more cautious, strategic, tempered deterritorialization: “It is through a meticulous relation with the strata that one succeeds in freeing lines of flight,” Deleuze and Guattari write, “gently tip the assemblage, making it pass over to the side of the plane of consistency” (161). In this second moment, ossified strata, outdated dualisms, etc. are not destroyed, neutered, or annulled, as much as they are tactically deployed: “Staying stratified,” the philosophers now suggest, staying “organized, signified, subjected—is not the worst that can happen” (161). Stratified dualisms become an “entirely necessary enemy, the furniture we are forever rearranging” (21). Rhizomatics, in its second moment, is more revision and less revolution, more deconstruction than destruction, more postmodern than modern.

At first glance, the more “disciplined” sobriety of *Mille Plateaux*’s second moment closely resembles Boulez’s *Penser la Musique Aujourd’hui*: “There is no imagination outside of technique,” the philosophers claim (345), as if imitatively to echo Boulez’s valorization of “vulgar technical considerations”—“freedom can only be found through discipline!” (1971, 11, 15). But the sobriety of Boulez’s more modern (than postmodern) musical discourse is not in fact of the same order as that advanced in *Mille Plateaux*. For Deleuze and Guattari, deterritorialization is tactical, irreducibly tethered to territory from which it takes flight, and toward which it tends: “The fact that there is no deterritorialization without a special reterritorialization should prompt us to rethink the abiding correlation between the molar and the molecular: no flow, no becoming-molecular escapes from molar formation without molar components accompanying it” (303). Deterritorialization, or becoming-molecular, is thus an impure operation; it traffics in the accumulated dirt of residual historical components, sediments, molar formations. Deleuze and Guattari’s sobriety involves a clear-sighted reckoning with these strata of irreducible impurity.

In contrast, Boulez insists on purely musical structures, assembled from neutralized components (shorn of all historical traces and residue), and multiplied by abstract functions along endlessly morphing trajectories. For example, the composer banishes from consideration

“any sound . . . with . . . anecdotal connotations [‘any sound which has too evident an affinity with the noises of everyday life’]; . . . it could never be integrated, since the hierarchy of composition demands materials supple enough to be bent to its own ends, and neutral enough for the appearance of their characteristics to be adapted to each new function which organises them” (1971, 22). Here Boulez imagines a pliant sound that is always-already molecular, free of “noise,” like Webern’s neutralized musical interval, which in turn feeds a proliferating machine that is always-already a body without organs, detached from all molar components, or “traditional solutions” (22, 27). In its most immediate interpretation, Boulez’s music of ecstatic becoming, liberated from all historical constraint, is a rhizome *par excellence*, a BwO; but, in its second moment, its mobility risks becoming absolute (*pure excellence?*), both empty (“paranoiacally” staving off the threat of all anecdotal sonic traces), and cancerous (despotically “blocking” the non-functionalized “circulation of signs”) (Deleuze and Guattari, 163). Webern’s interval, in its Boulezian incarnation, now becomes an empty vitreous BwO (shorn of the territorial traces that sponsor and enliven deterritorialization), which in turn is caught in a proliferating machine that is a cancerous BwO (submitting wholesale to the “hierarchy” of an organizing principle), ultra-nomadic, totalitarian: the “new logic,” in Boulez’s words, “of a final solution” (1971, 27).

REPETITION, DIFFERENCE

The gentle shift in *Mille Plateaux* from rhizomic excess to strategic re-constellation can, as I suggest above, be characterized as a philosophical shift from high modernism to postmodernism. We hereby witness a return to some concept of *negation* in Deleuze’s philosophy, deterritorialization figured more as “*deviation* from a model” than as the affirmative synthesizer (105, emphasis mine). As Slavoj Žižek might say, this philosophical shift in emphasis—from unfettered flow to enabling obstacle (model, stratum)—is an inversion of the figure of the “body without organs,” becoming instead an “organ without a body” (Žižek 2004, 99). This a noteworthy turnaround for a philosophy fiercely opposed to the dialectical limits that characterize a “hermeneutics of suspicion.” Indeed, Deleuze’s book *Différence et Répétition*, written without Guattari over a decade before *Mille Plateaux*, is far less attuned to the strategic swerve from pure becoming, the second more postmodern moment, of *Mille Plateaux*. In *Différence et Répétition* Deleuze’s philosophical idea of repetition awkwardly inverts our commonplace

understandings of the term. In fact, the difference between Deleuze's repetition and the ordinary understanding is itself an instructive guide to Deleuze's argument, which puts a high premium on creative destabilizations: in this case the term seems to undergo the very "transverse metamorphosis" Deleuze prizes.

At first glance, Deleuzian repetition is the opposite of the traditional view, which grasps repetition as the recurrence of something equal or equivalent, or the appearing-again of an identical element whose identity is regulated by some conceptual order or other. In musical parlance, for instance, we might (without undue difficulty) construe the recurrence of the inner voice E4, which opens the first movement of Mozart's piano sonata, K. 331, as a repeated element in the context of parallel voice-movement. Here repetition comes as a mode of re-appearance regulated by the conceptual metaphor of "pedal point." For Deleuze, in contrast, while we "are right to speak of repetition when we find ourselves confronted by identical elements with exactly the same concept," we must "distinguish between these discrete elements, these repeated objects, and a secret subject, *the real subject of repetition*, which repeats itself through them" (23, emphasis mine). Deleuzian repetition sets out in quest of this secret subject, an ever-incomplete effort to seek out the infinite series of "unrepeatable" networks, intensities and processes that count as repetition in the first place. (What must be presupposed for E4 to appear as pedal point?) "Difference inhabits repetition"; in repetition only pure difference actually returns (76). One might call this kind of repetition (inscribing difference instead of identity) as anti-repetition except that Deleuze's thought does not proceed by way of logical or dialectical antipodes. Even antipode, opposition, and contradiction, in Deleuze's lexicon, presuppose identity and negation, and thus work against experiencing real difference.

Rather than stressing equivalence between elements, Deleuze defines repetition in terms of variation, which is understood in terms of pure difference. "To repeat is to behave in a certain manner, but in relation to something unique or singular which has no equal or equivalent" (Deleuze 1994, 1). Deleuze describes the process as a "struggle against an elusive adversary" (28)—like playing a game with "changing rules" and "an infinitely adaptive opponent" (in Williams 2003, 91). James Williams describes the elusive concept of repetition thus: "The most important definition of repetition for itself is that the 'for itself' of repetition is difference—there is no repetition of the same thing for any other thing, only an open variation that occurs with an individual" (92). Like "the particular pattern of waves forming a sea in turmoil" an experience of difference in repetition momentarily combines "perpetual-

ly shifting wave heights, lengths, colours and shapes . . . into something more fixed before disappearing into new combinations” (76). Unlike the Hegelian movements of evolving contradiction, which must presuppose fixed points that allow contradictions to emerge, “the movements in the wave are not contradictory but merely other” (77). For Deleuze, any attempt to distill these movements in terms of fixed definitions, values, identities or objective facts damages and distorts our proper relation to repetition. Even the self that is actively forgetting through repetition is destabilized: “Selves are larval subjects; the world of passive synthesis constitutes the system of the self, under conditions yet to be determined, but it is the system of a dissolved self” (in Williams 2003, 78).

Deleuze’s critique of representation (in contrast to movement) in *Différence et Répétition* occasionally appears to pre-empt the post-modern turn in *Mille Plateaux*. He writes, “Representation fails to capture the affirmed world of difference. . . . Movement, for its part, implies a plurality of centres, a superposition of perspectives, a tangle of points of view, a coexistence of moments which essentially distort representation: paintings or sculptures are already such ‘distorters,’ forcing us to create movement . . .” (55–6). As it is with the logic of the “and . . . and . . . and . . .” (25), the endless “collection of juxtaposed pieces” in patchwork (476), the “furniture we are forever rearranging” (21), the “devia[tion] from the model” (105), and so on, in *Mille Plateaux*, Deleuze here seems to acknowledge the irreducible stabilizations, however “plural” (fabric and furniture and model and . . .), that ground the possibility of multiplicity, distortion, movement (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 25, 476, 21, 105). But Deleuze pushes through this point of view in *Différence et Répétition* to open into the radical movement of difference/repetition as such. “Is it enough to multiply representations in order to obtain . . . effects [of movement]?” he asks. The answer is No. “The immediate, defined as ‘sub-representative,’ is . . . not attained by multiplying representations and points of view. On the contrary, . . . the identity of the object as seen by a seeing subject disappears” (56). For Deleuze, difference/repetition does not thread metamorphosis from a fixed coign of vantage. “Difference,” he writes, “must be shown *differing*” (56). Like modern art, Deleuze maintains, difference/repetition is “a theatre where nothing is fixed, a labyrinth without a thread (Ariadne has hung herself)” (56); in short, difference/repetition expresses “an instantaneity opposed to ‘variation.’” (56). As it is with Boulez’s rhizomic conception of serial structure, then, Deleuze’s conception of becoming in *Différence et Répétition* is more modern than postmodern. It recognizes no model from which it might deviate. There is no fabric for patchwork

there, no furniture to rearrange. There is no refrain to deterritorialize; Ariadne is dead.

ARIADNE UN-HANGS HERSELF

"Sobriety, sobriety"—the key refrain in *Mille Plateaux*—captures the shift from modernism (in *Différence et Répétition*) to postmodernism (in *Mille Plateaux*): the return of the repressed "*fabric* of the rhizome"; the un-hanging of Ariadne (344, 25, emphasis mine). In the chapter "1730: Becoming Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible . . ." Deleuze and Guattari now offer a modified Boulezian view of music. They write "Music . . . submits the refrain [or the "block of content proper" to itself] to [a] very special treatment"—to a treatment "of the diagonal or transversal, it uproots the refrain from its territoriality. [In this way] music is a creative, active operation that consists in deterritorializing the refrain." (300, 368, 299). At first glance, this resembles the music of modernism. With obvious reference to Boulez, especially his praise of Webern (notably, his ability to dissolve the contrast between "horizontal and vertical phenomena of tonal music," thereby creating "a new dimension"), Deleuze and Guattari rehearse a conception of *becoming* consistent with that found in *Différence et Répétition*. In his "Items for a Musical Encyclopedia," Boulez describes this new dimension as a "diagonal, a sort of distribution of points, or blocs, or figures no longer on the flat space, but in the sound-space" (1968, 383). Boulez's musical "block"—issued by the movements of a "diagonal" dimension, and thus no longer operative within codified coordinates—becomes, in the philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari, a body without organs.

Drawing on the writings of Boulez, the philosophers write: "In a multilinear system, everything happens at once: the line breaks free of the point as origin; the diagonal breaks free of the vertical and the horizontal as coordinates; and the transversal breaks free of the diagonal as a localizable connection between two points. In short, a block-line passes amid sounds and propels itself by its own nonlocalizable middle. The sound block is the *intermezzo*. It is a body without organs, an antimemory pervading musical organization, and is all the more sonorous [for it]" (297). Music's active Nietzschean forgetting here becomes a body without organs, "delivered from all . . . automatic reactions and restored to . . . true freedom" in the words of Antonin Artaud, from whose radio play ("To Have Done with the Judgment of God") Deleuze and Guattari borrow the idea. Like a hammer without a master, music's body without organs is especially given to opening

flight-lines into the Virtual—an infinite reservoir of possibility out of which reality is ultimately actualized. Music is grounded in deterritorialization: It offers a flow of pure becoming in a field of pure intensities, resistant to all interpretation. It opens into a “plane of consistency” whereby heterogeneous elements of any configuration can be conceived on a continuum, drawn into the same analytic level, free of aprioristic ontological selection, organization, or hierarchy. (Žižek recalls in this regard the marvelous inconsistent taxonomies of Jorge Luis Borges, “brown dogs, dogs who belong to the emperor, dogs who don’t bark, and so forth—up to dogs who do not belong to this list” (Žižek 2004, 54).) Music, in this philosophical conception, has the subversive power to assemble such divergent elements into a single plane of consistency, thereby creatively deterritorializing the refrain, and instead becoming child, becoming animal, becoming molecular. . . .

And yet, this refrain, albeit deterritorialized by way of a diagonal “line of flight,” is the paradoxical thread that *composes* (in the triple sense—comprises, creates, stabilizes) the musical philosophy of *Mille Plateaux*. The notion of the refrain, in the first attempt to sketch its field of operation, is likened to a song in the dark; a nervously uttered point of orientation, which sketches “a calming and stabilizing, calm and stable, center in the heart of chaos” (311). It is music’s proper task to deterritorialize this point of stability and order, of course, raising its sonority to a higher degree paradoxically by harnessing its “unthinkable, invisible, nonsonorous forces” (343). Nonetheless, the refrain becomes Ariadne’s sonorous thread—that whistling in the dark—to keep the chaos of ultra-molecularization at bay in *Mille Plateaux*. With John Cage in mind, Deleuze and Guattari put in doubt the value of concerts comprised of “noise”: “Sometimes one overdoes it puts too much in, works with a jumble of lines and sounds, . . . a scribble effacing all lines, a scramble effacing all sounds” (343–4). While this specific example actually gains considerable traction on arguments made by Boulez in *Penser la Musique Aujourd’hui* and elsewhere, down to a skepticism about Cage—“a material that is too rich remains too ‘territorialized’: on noise sources, on the nature of the objects”—the overall thrust of Deleuze and Guattari’s argument in this chapter points in another direction, toward the dangerous “black hole” of absolutized “irruptions” (344). By the end of the chapter on the refrain, Deleuze and Guattari’s skepticism of radical becoming (jumble, scribble, scramble, black hole) yields into a call for “a new chromaticism” that does not ultrathematize as much as place melodies “*in communication*,” thereby creating ‘themes’ bringing about a development of Form, or rather a becoming of Forces” (349–50, emphasis mine). Drawing on

Friedrich Nietzsche's infamous endorsement of Bizet over Wagner, Deleuze and Guattari write: "We . . . say long live Chabrier, as opposed to Schoenberg" (350). The concluding paragraphs of *Mille Plateaux*'s 'musical' chapter clearly menace the annulling tendencies of Boulez's brand of serialism: "We do not need to suppress tonality, we need to turn it loose," Deleuze and Guattari write, we need to "slip . . . through its net instead of breaking with it" (350).

CONTINUUM, OR THE POLITICS OF POSTMODERNISM

Thus *Mille Plateaux* gains its peculiar elegance of closure—slipping through the net of its own methodological commitments—by intermittently interrupting its argument with a postmodern ambivalence about unqualified becoming. Here one is tempted, along with the commentators mentioned above, to update the musical examples of *Mille Plateaux*; to offer a music that better reflects its postmodern turn. Such music would operate on the mechanism of affirmative negation (instead of negated affirmation); it would operate on the basis of slipping through the net of its own devising (instead of devising lines of slipping by way of an invisible net), it would deterritorialize its refrain (instead of refrain from territorializing).

To end then with a musical example, let me turn to György Ligeti's 1968 harpsichord piece *Continuum*, in which we encounter a music becoming molecular. Ligeti's *Continuum* is not the continuum of smooth musical space/time, but a strategically mobilized striation grounded in continuous music. On the one hand, *Continuum* offers the performance of an impossible task (Ligeti calls for about 6500 notes in less than four minutes) so that, in the words of Ligeti, "the individual tones can hardly be perceived, but rather merge into a continuum." It is precisely the paradox of producing a continuum on a mechanism notable for its *non*-continuity—the short "twang" of the string, the loud additional and belated noise of the plectrum, "followed by silence" in Ligeti's words—that dramatizes the work's diagonal line of flight. In the astute words of Seth Brodsky: "*Continuum* revisits its instrument's archetypal obstacle and reenacts the archetypal means of overcoming that obstacle" (2007, 18). For Brodsky, the genuine overcoming is reserved for the lengthy "lunga" that closes the work ("wie abgerissen"). It is in the silent measure, argues Brodsky—"in the self-nullification of means"—that we are "at last given the . . . continuum," which thereby serves to expose the error on the part of the illusory perception of it hitherto.

I would add to this, on the other hand, that Ligeti simultaneously deterritorializes the perception of continuity in the opposite sense as well. By articulating short scalar fragments within the same registral span on upper and lower manuals, the illusionistic resulting rhythms between parts (which, years later, Ligeti will call “inherent patterns”) are disassociated from their motor function. Where traditionally we would hear lines fingered in ascending and descending stepwise motion as continuous melodic flow, the peculiar interaction of these simple melodic shapes are now heard as shifting instants and lopsided pulsations: a thousand malfunctioning clocks? In Deleuze and Guattari’s terms, one might say, the music “reaches the ultimate regions of a *Continuum* inhabited by unnameable waves and unfindable particles” (1987, 248, emphasis mine). The inherent patterns are tricks of perception at odds with the kinesthetic actions employed to produce them. Deleuze and Guattari speak of music’s ability to “submit . . . its forms and motifs to temporal transformations, augmentations or diminutions, slowdowns or accelerations, which do not occur solely according to the laws of organization or even of development” (270). This is exactly what happens here. It is as if *Continuum* ushers not only continuity by way of a traditional instrumental timbre of plectral discontinuity, but also *discontinuity* by way of a traditional construction of melodic *continuity*. A double paradox; another plane of consistency. Deleuze and Guattari’s descriptions of musical phenomena could count as a description of *Continuum* itself: “It is as though an immense plane of consistency of variable speed were forever sweeping up forms and functions, forms and subjects, extracting from them particles and affects. A clock keeping a whole assortment of times” (271). This is music taking vivid flight from its molar field of operation; this is music becoming molecular.

Like this molecularized *Continuum*, the music of *Mille Plateaux*, in its second moment, therefore gains more traction from its capacity to dance against the gravitational force of its own territory than it does from swimming in the ocean of its endless eddies and currents. Politically speaking, *Mille Plateaux*, in its second moment, thus issues more of a critique of society through negation than it offers the promise of a swarming multitude.

This is the deconstruction of the dancing plectrum, not the destruction of the pulverizing hammer.

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