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BODY|THEORY|POLITIC

Body|Theory

THE LAST TWO decades have witnessed a boom in Body|Theory. In cultural studies, the market value of ‘the body’ has risen to immense heights: the body has become one of the most analyzed topics of postmodern thought. Particularly in the field of feminism, the body has become a contested site of analysis and political struggle, mainly revolving around the gender|sex issue. After gender had been established as a cultural category, as socially constructed rather than biologically or ‘naturally’ given, sex posed a threat, being something like an essentialist residue in the equation. Almost hand in hand with that field of study goes a skepticism and criticism of the tradition of Western philosophy and its ‘grand narratives.’ Feminists—but not only feminists—have become wary of the often misogynist and patriarchal conceptions mainly connected with the two traditions known as Platonism and Cartesian dualism. Equating the body with nature and femininity, Plato and Descartes stand for an essentialism that has to be categorically rejected. In addition, with the growing rise of both ‘the leisure class’ and consumption during the 1980s, the social sciences also saw a need to address ‘the body,’ which had so far been conspicuously absent.

Books dealing with the body from various angles and disciplines attest to the variety within the field of Body|Theory.¹ The heterogeneity of it—almost too vast to comprehend—has led Terry Eagleton to claim that “there would no doubt soon be more bodies in literary criticism than on the fields of Waterloo” (17). This outcry, maybe inadvertently, captures a relevant aspect of these postmodern bodies: in a way, they are all dead, turned into corpses for the sake of theory. The bodies of postmodern thought—and I am aware of the danger of generalizing here—are by default culturized, semiotic bodies, the bodies of social and/or linguistic constructivism, connected mainly with the theories of Foucault, Lacan, Derrida, and Butler. Postmodern body theory writes “a history of ‘body building,’ of the different modes of construction of the human body” (Feher 159), but it is not concerned with the body’s materiality. Whereas Merleau-Ponty saw the body as a site “wherever

there is something to be done” (250), Foucault, Butler, and others—the “new somatics,” as Eagleton calls them—see “the body [as a place] where something—gazing, imprinting, regulating—is being done to you” (Eagleton 71). Such a shift implies a move away from essentialism, however defined—something postmodern body theory fears most. There is no natural and originary body; at least, there is no access to such a chimera, since it is always already outside of culture and language. Although the alternative cannot be to go back behind the findings and analyses of postmodern body theory, it should be nevertheless noted that the dominant version of post-structuralism in the guise of culturallinguistic constructivism has ultimately dismissed the category of the body—the materiality of the body—by aiming to translate it without remainder [or only as negativity, as the impossible real] into the realm of representation.

According to the Lacanian dictum that “the unconscious is structured like a language” (*Four Fundamental Concepts* 20), one can know about the impossible real [which denotes the strategic place of the unconscious, the body, pure materiality, and the referent] only through representation. According to Lacan, the speaking human subject qua signifier is always already inscribed in the symbolic, so that the body is always more than just a biological given or natural fact — “nature provides . . . signifiers, and these signifiers organize human relations in a creative way, providing them with structures and shaping them” (ibid.), and a human being’s body is one of the most libidinally invested signifiers nature provides. In fact, for Lacan, “the symbol manifests itself first of all as the murder of the thing” (*Écrits* 104). To describe the ontological structure of the subject’s reality, Lacan uses the topology of the Möbius strip: the two sides represent the imaginary and the symbolic, with the real functioning as the cut. As an effect of the torsion of the strip, the real becomes structurally inherent to the figure, rather than ‘having a place.’ The cut designates the impossibility that the imaginary and the symbolic will meet the real, while at the same time the real is inherent in representation as negativity.

Derrida also evokes the topology of the Möbius strip, claiming that “the outside is the inside” (*Of Grammatology* 44). Along with his claim that “*there is nothing outside of the text [il n’y a pas de hors-texte]* . . . there has never been anything but writing; . . . that what opens meaning and language is writing as the disappearance of natural presence” (158–59), Derrida indicates that even if outside the text there are material conditions, these outside conditions are always already represented, materialities turned into mere *context*. These versions of poststructuralism have exorcised bodily materiality out of representation and have closed representation in on itself. The body in much of postmodern gender theory is “a product of discourse or

intersecting textualities, as the world becomes a ceaseless play of interlocking and conflicting texts, spoken from different locations and negotiated across different perspectives” (Zita 89). Thus, “postmodernism brings into focus first of all the ‘locatedness’ of one’s body as a place from which particular viewpoints on reality can be generated” (88). “Locatedness” here has to be read as referring to the body’s [re-]construction|representation in language, as a belated effect of discourse, since the body’s materiality—the *real* body—is situated outside of and is inaccessible to language. As a consequence of such textualization, Susan Bordo observes, “if the body is a metaphor for our locatedness in space and time and thus for the finitude of human perception and knowledge, then the postmodern body is no body at all” (229).²

In *Bodies That Matter*, Judith Butler responds to the criticism of her earlier work. Summarizing those critiques that accused her of dissolving the body into speech acts and discourse, Butler asks: “What about the materiality of the body?” (ix). Yet even Butler, who professes to reincorporate materiality into representation, ultimately fails to escape the exclusionary logic of belatedness, according to which materiality is always already a function of discourse. Her theory of gender performativity is ultimately an updated version of cultural|linguistic constructivism, a construction understood here as a process of materialization constituting types of bodies by means of the repetition of gender norms. Butler goes so far as to acknowledge that matter has a certain dynamism, but this dynamism is a product of the discursive powers that matter is subjected to and that impose [symbolically constructed] forms from the outside, “a regulatory practice that produces the bodies it governs” (1). Butler’s materiality is ultimately one suspended in quotation marks: “It must be possible to concede and affirm an array of ‘materialities’ that pertain to the body, that which is signified by the domains of biology, anatomy, physiology, hormonal and chemical composition, illness, age, weight, metabolism, life and death. None of this can be denied. But the undeniability of these ‘materialities’ in no way implies what it means to affirm them, indeed, what interpretative matrices condition, enable and limit that necessary affirmation” (67).

For Butler, then, *material* amounts to *factual*, to a materiality that matters, that is always already cited: it is a result of the one-way influence of discourse that [in]forms materiality. This concept does not allow for the reverse operation of materiality affecting discourse. As she admits: “I am not a very good materialist. Every time I try to write about the body, the writing ends up being about language” (*Undoing Gender* 198). In this self-generating circularity, matter for Butler is ultimately what “we call matter” (*Bodies That Matter* 9), what we perceive as matter, “a process of material-

ization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface” (9). For Butler, matter is its own cultural script.

Although she is referring to the natural sciences in the above quotation, Butler regards them to be in a dangerous proximity to an essentialist position: since her theoretical approach is closely linked to a political agenda, she fears that such a position would lead her straight back to Freud’s claim in “The Dissolution of the Oedipus Complex” that “anatomy is destiny” (320). Butler’s ultimate aim is to liberate the category of sex—not only that of gender—from essentialism, to deconstruct the “material irreducibility of sex” (*Bodies That Matter* 28). Rather than an essentialist bedrock of identity, sex is discursively constructed by hetero-normative rules, norms that pose as ‘the law,’ or even as ‘natural,’ but are not. And in contrast to biological givens, norms can be challenged and changed. Butler eschews essentialism [which she equates with biologism], but does the fact that the ‘biological argument’ serves patriarchal and sexist ideologies ‘codify’ once and for all that ‘biology’ exclusively denotes the discursive result of these ideologies?³ On the other hand, culturallinguistic constructivism—or culturalism—is as much of a reductionism, only into the opposite direction. As Richard Morris has observed, “in order to dispose of bigoted essentialist notions . . . , Butler virtually discards the physical human body and those connections to and interactions with human culture” (15). Closely comparable to a speech-act, sex—and with it the material body—for Butler is a praxis of citation, “a process whereby regulatory norms materialize ‘sex’ and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms” (*Bodies That Matter* 2). It becomes clear that Butler cannot think the powers and forces constructing sex and the material body are other than social and discursive.

In *The History of Sexuality*, Foucault discusses the question of who should have the power of life and death. Yet, even though he makes the point that “bio-power” (143) has in modern times increasingly been wielded by discourses rather than individuals, he still stresses that “it is not that life has been totally integrated into techniques that govern and administer it; it constantly escapes them” (ibid.). Foucault’s notion that “bio-power” emanates from discourses and discursive practices has laid the conceptual foundation for the culturallinguistic constructivism that Butler and others have developed. However, the adoption of Foucauldian concepts has also lead to an ‘adaptation,’ a transformation, since Foucault’s own considerations of the importance of a material grounding have not yet been properly taken into account. He explicitly and decisively gives a negative answer to the question of whether “the analysis of sexuality necessarily impl[ies] the elision of the body, anatomy, the biological, the functional” (151). Similar to Louis Althusser’s claim that “ideology has a material existence” (112), Foucault

states that “the deployments of power are directly connected to the body—to bodies, functions, physiological processes, sensations, and pleasures” (*History of Sexuality* 151–52).

This intricate and complex connection between the material body and the realm of representation might be argued to be the blind spot of a constructivism that, as Deleuze has observed, is “directed at rendering . . . representation infinite (orgiastic)” (*Difference and Repetition* 262). Thus, a new perspective that allows for the incorporation of the workings of the ‘repressed’ of representation [namely, of the real, nature, the body, matter] is needed to “make it [the body] visible through an analysis in which the biological and the historical are not consecutive to one another, as in the evolutionism of the first sociologists, but are bound together in an increasingly complex fashion in accordance with the development of the modern technologies of power that take life as their objective. Hence I do not envisage a ‘history of mentalities’ that would take account of bodies only through the manner in which they have been perceived and given meaning and value; but a ‘history of bodies’ and the manner in which what is most material and most vital in them has been invested” (Foucault, *History of Sexuality* 152). How, then, can materiality—the body—be thought differently? Or, to put the question in Butler’s words: “How can there be an activity, a constructing, without presupposing an agent who precedes and performs that activity?” (*Bodies That Matter* 7).

The intelligent materialism⁴ of Deleuze does not fall into the ‘trap of essentialism’ of which culturallinguistic constructivism is so scared—simply because ‘essence’ in itself does not exist in Deleuze’s account of things. What we see as essences are in fact machinic aggregations. Deleuze and Guattari categorically state that a machine is “at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said *the id*. Everywhere *it* is machines” (*Anti-Oedipus* 1). The concept of the machine neither proceeds from nor leads to an organic whole, a unity—an essence. Yet, the Deleuzian machine is not a machine in the sense of a mechanical apparatus or tool. It starts in the middle of things—neither at the beginning, nor at the end—to think and describe an immanent production, without intention or end, with neither subjectivity nor other outside controlling agency. The machine is nothing more—and nothing less—than the connections and assemblages it consists of, and its productions. Matter is machinic in the sense that the world is a multiplicity, consisting of a variety of machines, such as self-organizing machines, ordered and static machines, dynamic machines, biological machines, and also the discursive and cultural machines of representation—but this last type of machine is only one among many, and not the overriding machine

that culturallinguistic constructivism wants it to be. It has no access to language or the ‘outside.’ There are various machines, and there are the feedback loops between them. Accordingly, for Deleuze, “neither do . . . differences pass between the natural and the artificial since they both belong to the machine and interchange there. Nor between the spontaneous and the organized, since the only question is one of modes of organization” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 143). For Deleuze|Guattari, matter is “molecular material” (*Thousand Plateaus* 342), equipped with the capacity for self-organization—matter is alive, informed rather than *informe* [formless]: “matter . . . is not dead, brute, homogeneous matter, but a matter-movement bearing singularities or haecceities, qualities and even operations” (512). True to the chaos and complexity theories, two scientific notions that underlie much of Deleuze’s thought,⁵ matter’s autopoietic capacities reveal themselves at states ‘far from equilibrium,’ when matter crosses thresholds [e.g., phase states]. These capacities are hidden at a state of equilibrium, and yet it is exactly this state of equilibrium that in traditional science is regularly taken as the characteristic and essential feature of matter. Thus, strategies of slowing down, stabilizing, and homogenizing matter result in an account of matter as passive, chaotic, and ‘stupid’—a mere ‘mass’ or object to be ‘informed’ by an outside spirit, force, subject, or God.

‘Intelligent materialism’ is so designated not because it is supposed to be a more intelligent version of classical materialism, but because it is preoccupied with ‘intelligent matter’ and supports a belief in the force and richness of matter itself: one that is not dominated by form, one that does not need form to be imposed on it to become alive, but is in and of itself animate and informed. Matter engenders its own formations and differentiations because it carries them in itself, as potentialities, so that form|soul|mind is not something *external* to matter, but *coextensive* with it. Deleuze’s intelligent materialism claims that matter is not [only] an effect of representation—matter is *productive*, and this productivity must be accounted for by its own, immanent criteria. Deleuze’s “transcendental empiricism” [as he himself called his position in an early phase of his thinking] is an empiricism that thinks of experience as having no foundation outside itself—for example, in a subject, in a consciousness that is there first, and then experiences, reflects, and categorizes the world. For Deleuze, it is not so much that the conscious subject explains the world—it is more a question of accounting for how a subject is formed from experience, from a singular affect or perception, from a preindividual relation to materiality. The subject thus aligns itself with views such as realism, materialism, and pragmatism, but without the specter of ‘essentialism.’ All these ‘practices’ simply denote a turn toward matter and materiality, and a move away from the constructivist, impoverished

concept of matter as passive and chaotic, where an organizing and transcendent agent is needed to make matter work, make it live—if matter is passive, it cannot by itself account for the emergence of newness; if matter is chaotic, it cannot by itself account for order. Deleuze’s intelligent materialism *can* account for the world’s order and creativity without resorting to essentialism or determinism, nor to any ‘transcendent vitalism,’ since life for Deleuze is the very property of matter itself.

Whereas culturallinguistic constructivism is concerned with representation, the symbolic, and ultimately ‘psychic reality,’ an intelligent materialism widens the spectrum by being concerned with production, the real, ‘lived reality.’ In the question concerning nature *or* nurture, such a position obviously claims that there is no *either/or*—all that exists are feedback loops. Materiality—the unconscious, the body, ultimately life—is productive and autopoietic; the culturally|discursively constructed body|materiality|unconscious is only one small part of the whole, and not even the most important one, more like the tip of the iceberg. As Serres has stated:

At this point the unconscious gives way from below; there are as many unconsciousnesses in the system as there are integration levels. It is merely a question, in general, of that for which we in generally possess no information . . . Each level of information functions as an unconscious for the global level bordering it . . . What remains unknown and unconscious is, at the chain’s furthest limit, the din of energy transformations: this must be so, for the din is by definition stripped of all meaning, like a set of pure signals or aleatory movements. These packages of chance are filtered, level after level, by the subtle transformer constituted by the organism . . . In this sense, the traditional view of the unconscious would seem to be the final black box, the clearest box for us since it has its own language in the full sense. (*Hermes* 80)

Thus, below the socially|linguistically constituted reality, there is the noise of the nonhuman, of chemical, biological, and other energy transformations. According to Serres, “our body integrates the noise of minute perceptions into sensible signals” (*Genesis* 20)—the organism serves as a translation machine and an integrative filter. Both Serres and Deleuze refer to Lucretius, Spinoza, Hume, and Leibniz in their work, uncovering a tradition of materiality and the body quite at odds with the Platonic model that Butler equates with Western philosophy *per se*.⁶ In this ‘materialist tradition,’ natural sciences and politics—the body and the body politic—are closely connected and related to an ethics not derived from any presupposed transcendent model of morality, but an ‘ethics of immanence.’ In their development of complex machinic interactions between bodies—and also their

redefinitions of the body—these philosophers point in a direction that Deleuze’s concept of the machinic is clearly indebted to.

The machine in the Deleuzian sense encompasses both culture and nature—both are parts of the same continuum. Thus, it would seem somewhat one-sided to concentrate on culture, psychic reality, and representation only. If Lacan, Derrida, and Butler deal with nature, materiality, and the ‘real’ body at all, they do so as a belated effect of language, the symbolic. The very resistance to seriously engage with the ‘outside’ of language is revealed in their distrust of and lack of interest in the natural sciences. Although Butler concedes the importance of “the domains of biology, anatomy, physiology, hormonal and chemical composition” (*Bodies That Matter* 67), she ultimately shies away from discussing the ‘real’ workings of matter—her insistence on the discursive formations of matter does not allow her to consider working on the non- or prediscursive level on which, for example, hormones, chemicals, and genetic coding operate. The same holds true for Derrida. Alan Sokal and Jean Bricmont, the self-appointed policemen safeguarding the disciplinary border between the ‘two cultures’ turn Derrida’s neglect of the sciences into a badge of honor when they state that “since there is no systematic misuse of [or indeed attention to] science in Derrida’s work, there is no chapter on Derrida in this book” (7). In this way, important and necessary as their work is, the analyses of Lacan, Butler, and Derrida cannot be more than “of propaedeutic value in the reflection on and intervention into the convergent fields assuming the highest importance in the material structuring of the current global system of bodies politic: recombinant genetics, cognitive science, dynamical systems theory and others,” as John Protevi has argued in *Political Physics*.⁷ The title of Protevi’s study should serve as the fundamental and programmatic figure of thought of my study—which is a political physics in the sense of a systemic dynamics underlying history and politics, with both politics and physics conceived as a science of [power] relations. Protevi’s invaluable study is the only one, as far as I can see, that develops a Deleuzian materialism in its relation to politics. While Protevi’s book is concerned both with a reading of political ‘founding texts’ by Plato, Aristotle, Heidegger, and Kant and with a double transversal—“crossing the transversal of Derrida and Deleuze with that of philosophy and science” (1)—my study, while sharing Protevi’s interest and premises and being indebted to his approach, differs in its focus on examples of a Deleuzian Body|Politic in an American context.

While culturallinguistic constructivism—in particular, its questioning of the ‘grand narratives’ and its showing the constructedness of ‘presences’ and ‘essences’—is immensely important, it does not go far enough. By default, it leaves out the field of materiality and the body, and the sciences that most

prominently deal with these issues. Against Derrida's [and culturallinguistic constructivism's] agenda of deconstructing the metaphysics of presence, Deleuze decidedly poses an ontology of difference: instead of pointing out the impossibility of grounding *Being* in a transcendent or unitary entity or structure [God, or the signifier], Deleuze develops a *differential metaphysics*, focusing on *becoming* and multiplicities. In an interview with Raymond Bellour and François Ewald, Deleuze stated, "I've never been worried about going beyond metaphysics or any death of philosophy. The function of philosophy, still thoroughly relevant, is to create concepts" (*Negotiations* 136). This affirmative function of philosophy is also a call to transdisciplinarity, so that even when Deleuze was working on "painting and cinema: images, on the face of it . . . [he] was writing philosophy books" (137).

In a defense of Deleuze against Sokal/Bricmont's attempt to control and regulate the limits of the disciplinary fields, Paul Harris points out that Deleuze's work in contrast shows "how productive it is to work with and think through material from others and other fields . . . , working with ideas cooked up in geology and geography, zoology and ornithology, archeology and paleontology, and even mathematics and physics" (24–25). According to Deleuze, the philosophical practice of 'creating concepts,' as a creation of 'newness' as well, requires philosophy to enter into manifold relations with the arts and sciences, since philosophy "creates and expounds its concepts only in relation to what it can grasp of scientific functions and artistic constructions . . . Philosophy cannot be undertaken independently of science or art" (*Difference and Repetition* xvi). It is these resonances and exchanges between philosophy, science, and art that make philosophy creative, not reflective. Since from the perspective of philosophy these relations are vital, for reasons internal to philosophy itself—that is, vital for the creation of 'concepts' [in contrast to the functions of science, and the percepts and affects of art]—Deleuze is also aware of "the dangers of citing scientific propositions outside their own sphere. It is the danger of arbitrary metaphor or of forced application. But perhaps these dangers are averted if we restrict ourselves to taking from scientific operators a particular conceptualizable character which itself refers to non-scientific areas, and converges with science without applying it or making it a metaphor" (*Cinema 2* 129).

The body and the human organism have always offered metaphors for the cultural, social, and political realms. As the sociologist Bryan Turner states, "the body is a material organism, but also a metaphor" (7). True enough. However, in most of postmodern Body|Theory, *only* the metaphorical side of the equation has been analyzed in detail. But a reversal of that sentence—"the body is a metaphor, but also a material organism"—is valid as well, and from a Deleuzian context, the interesting and important ques-

tion is how these two fields interrelate, how we can develop a way of folding nature and the physical into culture and the psychic—and vice versa—rather than having culture *represent* nature, a materiality, and a body seen as passive and ‘uninformed.’ In fact, Deleuze’s intelligent materialism aims at the “abolishing of all metaphor; all that consists is Real” (*Thousand Plateaus* 69). Another way of putting it amounts to a rethinking of the concept of writing, in a more radical way than Derrida’s opening up of the concept of text. Extending the field of writing into the fields of materiality and the body, “writing now functions on the same level as the real, and the real materiality writes” (141). Adding material differences to a Derridean difference might also explain why Deleuze [in contrast to Derrida and Butler] is so interested in the natural sciences, most notably in chaos and complexity theory and the new physics.⁸ Deleuze accommodates the paradigm shift that has taken place in the sciences. From traditional physics, traditional metaphysics takes generalizations and abstractions and turns them into immutable givens—transcendence, it can be argued, is in fact produced from material immanence and then posited as an overcoding system of truth. A ‘new metaphysics’ [or ontology] in the Deleuzian sense is inextricably linked to the material sciences, the natural sciences, the life sciences. In contrast to the positivistic approach of the traditional sciences, the ‘modern sciences’ call for a different ontology—an ‘ontology of difference.’ A new metaphysics for the new physics—this is part of the Deleuzian project: “I consider myself a Bergsonian, because Bergson says that modern science has not found its own metaphysics, the kind of metaphysics that it would need. It is this metaphysics I am interested in . . . I consider myself a pure metaphysician.”⁹ The new physics—in particular, chaos theory—also has a specific relation to the field of possibilities and multiplicities, the field of the *virtual* that philosophy is so engaged with. In fact, philosophy, [the new] science[s], and art are involved in what Deleuze|Guattari call a “struggle against chaos” (*What Is Philosophy?* 203)—or “chaotic virtuality” (155)—that “does not take place without an affinity with the enemy” (203), that is not aimed at reducing the dynamic differences to a conceptual identity. And it is this engagement with the virtual, with chaos, that attracts Deleuze|Guattari to chaos|complexity theory, a science that “is inspired less by the concern for unification in an ordered actual system than by a desire not to distance itself too much from chaos, to seek out potentials in order to seize and carry off a part of that which haunts it, the secret of the chaos behind it, the pressure of the virtual” (156).¹⁰

Deleuze’s metaphysics puts the focus on immanence [versus transcendence], on production [versus representation], on materiality [versus language]. In contrast, the Lacanian ‘real,’ the realm of the unconscious, the

body, and materiality [in semiotic terms, the referent] is structured like a language. Lacan ultimately equates materiality with the materiality of the signifier, the body with the body of language, the machine with the symbolic: “The most complicated machines are made only with words . . . The symbolic world is the world of the machine” (*Seminar II* 47).¹¹ Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage, however, where the realm of the imaginary [visual perception] most intimately touches, even emerges from, the field of the real, simultaneously shows the indebtedness to the representational logic of belatedness, and points in the direction of a way out.

In “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I,” Lacan reveals the ego to be not a prereflexive entity, a stable core of the self which gradually evolves. Instead, the ego is already based on reflection. Constructed within visual space, the ego is the result of various identificatory processes, of the constant oscillation between ‘self’ and ‘other’: there is no chance of perceiving one’s own identity as separate from what is exterior to it. The ego is not so much the source of self-knowledge but the result of a fundamental “*méconnaissance*” (*Écrits* 6). As a dialectical movement, the mirror stage can be roughly subdivided into three substages. The first substage is the alienating moment. There exists what Lacan calls a “primordial Discord” (4), the effect of that physiological “prematurity of birth” (*ibid.*) characteristic of the human newborn that shows itself in its “motor incapacity and nursing dependence” (2). The child experiences its own body in terms of incompleteness, insufficiency, and lack of motor coordination. The next step is the anticipatorial identification with the image of one’s own body in the mirror, with “the whole form of the body by which the subject anticipates in a mirage the maturation of his power . . . , in an exteriority in which this form is certainly more constituent than constituted” (*ibid.*). This “Ideal-I,” because it situates the ego in a *virtual* and therefore “fictional” space, functions as a lure that seems to promise autonomy. The ego is an ego only insofar as it is a “coming-into-being” (*ibid.*), an unstable result of the oscillation between those two substages, and—as a provisory synthesis of this dialectical movement always at play—can find its ‘place’ only in an *alienating identity*. The promised and illusory totality of the ego is always threatened by phantasmatic returns of images of the incompleteness experienced in the first substage. Thus, the mirror stage is “a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation—and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the *succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality* that I shall call orthopaedic—and, lastly, to *the assumption of an alienating identity*, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject’s entire mental development” (4, my emphases).

Lacan shows how identity is constructed, is an *effect* rather than a *cause*, and is forever situated at a precarious balance between the whole body and the fragmented body, the *corps morcelé*. Every identity is a fictitious invention and rests on a fundamental misconception. By the child's "jubilant assumption" (2) of and identification with the imaginary mirage of the whole body, the 'real' fragmented body is repressed. However, this sense of unity is very frail, and the images of the fragmented body haunt and subvert any illusion of wholeness: "This fragmented body . . . appears in the form of disjointed limbs, or of those organs represented in exoscopy, growing wings and taking up arms for intestinal persecution—the very same that the visionary Hieronymus Bosch has fixed, for all time, in painting . . . But this form is even tangibly revealed at the organic level, in the lines of 'fragilization' that define the anatomy of phantasy, as exhibited in the schizoid and spasmodic symptoms of hysteria" (5).

Deleuze|Guattari see Lacan's fragmented body under opposite signs—not as a fiction of belatedness, not as a state of regression, and most important not *as an image*. In fact, Lacan himself later disengages the *corps morcelé* from its mere iconicity by stating that the human subject is "originally an inchoate collection of desires—there you have the true sense of the expression *fragmented body*" (*Seminar III* 39). Yet, according to Deleuze|Guattari, "it is not at all a question of a fragmented, splintered body, of organs without the body (OwB). The BwO is exactly the opposite. There are not organs in the sense of fragments in relation to a lost unity, nor is there a return to the undifferentiated in relation to a differentiable totality . . . The error of psychoanalysis was to understand BwO phenomena as regressions, projections, phantasies, in terms of an *image* of the body. As a result, it only grasps the flipside of the BwO and immediately substitutes . . . part-objects for a worldwide intensity map" (*Thousand Plateaus* 165).

What Lacan sees as a negativity, as "fragilization," Deleuze|Guattari see from the opposite perspective of the Body without Organs as a positive capacity for growth, dynamic openness, and new connections—as *potentiality*, a capacity for creating possibilities. The BwO—in contrast to any unified and stable organism or organization—is "permeated by unformed, unstable matters, by flows in all directions, by free intensities or nomadic singularities, by mad or transitory particles" (40). Deleuze|Guattari quote Antonin Artaud [from whom they adopted the name and concept of the BwO]: "The body is the body/it is all by itself/and has no need of organs/the body is never an organism/organisms are the enemies of the body" (*Anti-Oedipus* 9). They later specify: "The BwO is not opposed to the organs; rather, the BwO . . . [is] opposed to the organism, the organic organization of the organs" (*Thousand Plateaus* 158).

With Artaud, Deleuze/Guattari see the “organism [as] the judgment of God” (159); in a similar way, “the strata are judgments of God” (40). The organism—the transcendent stratum that the organism is—is a “phenomenon of accumulation, coagulation, and sedimentation that, in order to extract useful labor from the BwO, imposes upon it forms, functions, bonds, dominant and hierarchized organizations, organized transcendences” (159). Instead of the body as a coherent thing, a unified and stratified organism, Deleuze/Guattari propose the BwO, which corresponds with their the notion of the body as a machine, an *assemblage*—not as a [however complex] whole that can be analyzed and reduced into components [or part-objects], and that adds up to a ‘unified structure’ again, into a stratified system the behavior of which can be fully ‘explained’ and controlled, but as a dynamic aggregate that allows for emergence and self-organization. A body is not a discrete entity but an interactive collective, not an isolated system, but a whole environment—as Deleuze states, “our body is a type of world full of an infinity of creatures” (*The Fold* 109)—viral, chemical, hormonal, informational, even technological. These ‘two bodies’ exist contemporaneously with and alongside each other—they correspond to two different states of matter, the *molecular* and the *molar*. Simply put, the dyad *molecular*|*molar* refers to dynamic and processual versus closed and massive bodies/systems. And although the first type of matter/body “is not lacking in systematic interactions,¹² it is in the second articulation in particular that phenomena constituting an overcoding are produced, phenomena of centering, unification, totalization, integration, hierarchization, and finalization” (*Thousand Plateaus* 41)—and it is exactly this overcoding that Deleuze/Guattari oppose. The body is neither a ‘container’ of self-identical personhood, of essence, nor a fixed and bounded unity, an essence in itself, but a field of forces and intensities—“pure positive multiplicities where everything is possible, without exclusiveness or negation, syntheses operating without a plan, . . . indifferent to their underlying support, since this matter that serves them precisely as a support receives no structural unity, but appears as the body without organs” (*Anti-Oedipus* 309).

These productive multiplicities are the “reverse side” of representational unity, and although they do not explicitly refer to the Lacanian [and Derridean] topology of the Möbius strip, the following critique that Deleuze/Guattari aim at Lacanian psychoanalysis can be understood only in the terms of the strip: “To trace back from images to the structure would have little significance and would not rescue us from representation, if the structure did not have a reverse side that is like the real production of desire. This reverse side is the real inorganization of the molecular elements: partial objects that enter into syntheses or interactions, since they are not partial in the

sense of extensive parts, but rather partial like the intensities under which a unit of matter always fills space in varying degrees” (ibid.). The inchoateness [or even disorganization] of the BwO is not a negativity, a lack, an absence of unity and plenitude, but a pool of potential for connections and syntheses—the Deleuzian body is not only an organism that represents [and is represented], but also a machine that produces [and is produced].

Similarly, for Deleuze|Guattari, the Body|Politic ultimately oscillates between two poles, “the paranoiac, reactionary, and fascisizing pole, and the schizoid revolutionary pole” (366). It is important to point out that, despite the origin of the terms *paranoiac* and *schizoid* in psychoanalysis, Deleuze|Guattari use the terms to refer to different logics and dynamics of social organization. Whereas *paranoia* designates an Oedipal and ultimately transcendental mode of an hierarchically structured and rigidly segmented, striated, and solid Body|Politic, controlled by an external authority, *schizophrenia* denotes liberating potentialities and ‘lines of flight,’ vectors of deterritorialization—a fluid Body|Politic constituted by openness, dynamics, self-organization, and by a constant becoming. For Deleuze|Guattari, the two poles of the Body|Politic

are defined, *the one* by the enslavement of production and the desiring-machines to the gregarious aggregates that they constitute on a large scale under a given form of sovereignty; *the other* by the inverse subordination and the overthrow of power. *The one* by these molar structured aggregates that crush singularities, select them, and regularize those they retain in codes or axiomatics; *the other* by the molecular multiplicities of singularities that on the contrary treat the large aggregates as so many useful materials for their own elaborations. *The one* by the lines of integration and territorialization that arrest the flows, constrict them, turn them back, break them according to the limits interior to the system . . . , *the other* by lines of escape that follow the decoded and deterritorialized flows, inventing their own nonfigurative breaks or schizzes that produce new flows, always breaching the coded wall or the territorialized limit that separates them from desiring-production. (366–77)

It is the idea that a body is a set of [ever changing] relations rather than a fixed form that makes the Deleuzian body exceed the concept of the ‘traditional body’—as Deleuze himself puts it, “every relationship of forces constitutes a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social, or political” (*Nietzsche and Philosophy* 40). Due to the dynamic interplay of forces, a body is ultimately “composed of an infinite number of particles; . . . the relations of motion and rest, of speeds and slownesses between particles . . . this capacity for affecting and being affected.” (Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 123). The Deleuzian notion of *a* body [because, ultimately, there

is no such thing as *the* body] refers to both *more* [groups, packs, societies—multitudes] and *less* [viruses, chemicals, hormones] than the ‘human body’ [or the ‘individual,’ for that matter], and includes ‘nonhuman’ bodies [animals, solids, fluids, etc.] as well: “A body can be anything; it can be an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea; it can be a linguistic corpus, a social body, a collectivity” (127).

Such a transdisciplinary approach and attitude not only allows a reading of ‘the body’ with Deleuze—that is, as Protevi puts it, with a “radically materialist philosophy that engages all the powers of contemporary physics and biology” (*Political Physics* 2–3)—it also calls for a reading of the political, social body, or Body|Politic, on that same conceptual level. The Body|Politic is no metaphor, since all bodies follow the same underlying diagram, the same operational logic: a body is a relational field of forces, capable of autopoietic self-organization, and the Body|Politic is as much a matter of physics and biology as it is a matter of [state] government; it is as much a question of material as of political *constitution*. Again, this study is not arguing for an exchange of one logic [the logic of materiality] for another [the logic of material production], but rather attempts to see how those different logics can be connected *without* one’s overcoding the other. As Deleuze|Guattari put it, “it is not a matter of biologizing human history, nor of anthropologizing natural history. It is a matter of showing the common participation of the social machines *and* the organic machines” (*Anti-Oedipus* 289).

In her introduction to the philosophy of Deleuze, Claire Colebrook has outlined the difference between the molar body-as-organism and the molecular body-as-machine [or a BwO as a set of relations|connections|forces] most succinctly: “An *organism* is a bounded whole with an identity and end. A *mechanism* is a closed machine with a specific function. A *machine*, however, is nothing more than its connections; it is not made by anything, is not for anything and has no closed identity” (56).

This ‘conceptual taxonomy’ also evokes a history of the concept of the Body|Politic, since the three ‘stages’—organic, mechanic, machinic—parallel the ‘developmental phases’ of the Body|Politic from Plato’s organicist model in *Republic*, via Hobbes’s “Artificiall man” in *Leviathan*, to the ‘multitudes’ that Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri described in *Empire*. Yet it should be noted that these different bodies exist side by side—the organic, mechanic, and machinic Body|Politic, like the molar and the molecular, are by no means mutually exclusive. As Deleuze|Guattari point out with regard to their universal history, as they develop it in their *Anti-Oedipus*, territorial, despotic, and axiomatic machines cannot be regarded as a linear sequence of one historical stage following another in succession. Rather, these stages

[or machines] coexist on different plateaus, like physical phase states in mutual interrelation and processes of becoming—it is the discipline and discourse of history that creates the illusion of progress: “All history does is to translate a co-existence of becomings into a succession” (*Anti-Oedipus* 430). Thus, I will focus on attempts to escape the organicist/mechanistic logic of the Body|Politic taking place even before the twentieth century [and it should be noted that Hardt|Negri owe their notion of the postcapitalist multitudes to Spinoza].

If traditionally [that is, according to the ‘image of thought’ of transcendental metaphysics], the body [as organism or mechanism] is seen in terms of wholeness, unity, and individuality [which is exactly what makes it attractive as a model for a Body|Politic], then from this perspective of organization and striation, the ‘other end’ [the BwO] cannot but stand for chaos and anarchy: every step in this direction is regarded as a regression toward disorder. Metaphysics according to Deleuze imposes the following alternative: “either an undifferentiated ground, a formless nonbeing, or an abyss without differences and without properties, or a supremely individuated Being and an intensely personalized Form. Without this Being or this Form, you will have only chaos” (*Logic of Sense* 106). This alternative is ultimately based on the “hylomorphic model” (*Thousand Plateaus* 408), a doctrine going back to Aristotle that claims that every ‘body’ is the result of an imposition of a transcendent form [or soul] on chaotic or passive matter. Protevi has succinctly articulated the consequences of the hylomorphic model for the Body|Politic: “Under the rule of the soul, the body becomes unified, a single organ . . . Any formation of a unity is always that of ruler/ruled . . . *Psychic organization entails somatic enslavement*” (“Organism” 33).

Deleuze|Guattari follow Gilbert Simondon in suggesting that the form-matter division is never absolute, since it “leaves many things, active and affective, by the wayside” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* 408). Not only does it “assume a fixed form and a matter deemed homogeneous” (408), but for Deleuze, matter is not *inert* in the first place; rather, it is *informed*, for it consistently contains and produces emergent structures and potentials. The hylomorphic model emphasizes the *constituted* individual, and ignores the very process by which the individual comes to be. In contrast, Simondon proposes to regard the individual as an ongoing dynamic: an individual constantly individualizing itself out of a preindividual field of singularities or potentialities. Thus, “instead of imposing a form upon a matter: what one addresses is less a matter submitted to laws than a materiality possessing a *nomos*” (408).¹³

I will now focus on a paradigmatic example of the difference between a hierarchically structured and a self-organizing—or between an organicist/mechanistic and a machinic—Body|Politic by contrasting the processes of social formation described by Hobbes and Spinoza. I have chosen these models as a kind of *Urszene* for what is to follow not only because of their paradigmatic character, and because of the fact that Deleuze regards Spinoza highly, but also because both political models were in the air when the Puritans left England to launch their project of the City on a Hill in America.

In a text published shortly after Deleuze's death, Paul Patton and his coauthors remark that "if, as he and Guattari suggested, Spinoza was the Christ of philosophers, then Deleuze was surely one of his saints" ("Symposium" 2). Spinoza remained one of the great and lifelong influences on Deleuze's thought. As *the* philosopher of immanence, the "infinite becoming-philosopher" (Deleuze, *What Is Philosophy?* 60), Spinoza was important for Deleuze in that he was an *anomalous* philosopher of a materialist tradition to which Deleuze was indebted, sharing such important concepts such as affirmation, immanence, affects, and ethics. For Deleuze, "Spinoza . . . showed, drew up, and thought the 'best' plane of immanence—that is, the purest, the one that does not hand itself over to the transcendent or restore any transcendent, the one that inspires the fewest illusions, bad feelings, and erroneous perceptions" (*ibid.*).

Although Hobbes is also considered a materialist philosopher, Deleuze points out that he is radically different from Spinoza.¹⁴ Both philosophers start with 'the multitude,' but in Hobbes, the multitude plays a role quite different from the one it plays in the philosophy of Spinoza. With Hobbes, the sovereign *emerges* from the multitude only to establish a break with it, and is transferred into a transcendent agency that fixes and overcodes the whole Body|Politic. And although Hobbes explicitly mentions alternatives to such a molar apparatus, he immediately discards them since they contradict his pessimistic view of man. Thus, *Leviathan* starts at the bottom but, after establishing itself, turns into a top-down organization. Spinoza, in contrast, explicitly maintains the bottom-up structure of the multitude. What aligns Spinoza with Deleuze is that while Hobbes's materialism is a *mechanic* materialism, the materialism of Spinoza is a *machinic* one. The legal political philosophy of Hobbes,¹⁵ which bases political agency in the law and its institutions, including the contract, differs from what Deleuze calls the "anti-legalist" tradition of Spinoza, and these differences are closely connected to two radically different conceptions of power and knowledge. While Hardt|Negri have explored in detail the concept of the Spinozist mul-

titude and its political impact on and in the contemporary empire, what I do not see in their account is an explanation of how this power of the multitude arises. I will try to make up for this lack by linking the power of the multitude to Spinoza's "common notions" and by showing how such affective operational rules can produce something akin to swarm intelligence.¹⁶

One of the most influential and persistent arguments for the need of a strong government has been advanced by Hobbes in *Leviathan*. In the state of nature, which means in the condition defined by the *absence* of sovereign [state] power, human beings live in "a condition which is called Warre; and such a warre, as if of every man, against every man" (185). In such a state, life of man is "solitary, nasty, brutish, and short" (186). The only reasonable way out of such a scenario of endemic violence is for people to protect themselves by forming societies and transferring all individual rights to the sovereign, who is to represent these wills *as one*. Once people surrender their power to the sovereign, they cannot take it back. Only something artificial, a *symbolic* contract, can counter the natural state of war and anarchy. Civil war for Hobbes presents a regression to such anarchy—the Behemoth that can be controlled only by an even more powerful monster, the Leviathan. In a thought experiment, Hobbes imagines this state of being as the *original* situation of man—before the advent of the civic state—out of which the emergence of such a reasonable sovereign apparatus has to be explained. In the state of nature, man is equipped with power. This power, however, is ultimately distributed more or less equally, so that "if any two men desire the same thing, which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy, they become enemies; and in the way to their End . . . endeavour to destroy, or subdue one another" (184). Since the state of nature is marked by individual power and the absence of normative restrictions on man's desire, what is needed in order to make it safe for man is "a power able to over-awe them all" (185). It is thus only rational to enter a contract, "a Covenant of every man with every man, in such manner . . . I Authorise and give up my Right of Governing my selfe, to this Man, or to this Assembly of men, on this condition, that thou give up thy Right to him, and Authorise all his Actions in like manner" (227). As a result, Hobbes argues, "the multitude [is] so united in one Person . . . that great *Leviathan*" (227) of the people.

For Hobbes, the opposition of the multitudelmany and of the peopleone is decisive. It has to be noted, however, that this clear-cut opposition is the result of a rhetorical operation and an overcoding. Hobbes concedes that "the word *people* hath a double signification. In one sense it signifieth only a number of men, distinguished by the place of their habitation . . . which is no more, but the multitude of those particular persons that inhabit those regions, without consideration of any contracts or covenants amongst them,

by which any one of them is obliged to the rest. In another sense, it signifieth a person civil, that is to say, either one man, or one council, in the will whereof is included and involved the will of every one in particular” (*Elements of Law* 124).

It is the contract that fixes and codifies the oscillation of “multitude” and “person civil”—of the many and the one—into the unanimity of the people, turning multitude and people into two mutually exclusive forces. It is this distinction that empowers the people to unanimous [and hence effective] action. For Hobbes, “the *People* is somewhat that is *one*, having *one will*, and to whom one action might be attributed” (*De Cive* 151), whereas “a *multitude . . . is . . . not any one body*, but many men, whereof each hath his owne will” (91), thus, “a *Multitude cannot promise, contract, acquire Right*” (92). It is basically the establishment of the sovereign that creates the people, the one, and not the other way round—before, there can have been only the multitude, in the natural state of anarchy and war. The contract transfers the immanent power of the multitude to a transcendental sovereign power that controls it, as it were, from the outside:

A Multitude of men, are made *One Person*, when they are by one man, or one Person, Represented; so that it be done with the consent of every one of that Multitude in particular. For it is the *Unity* of the Representer, not the *Unity* of the Represented, that maketh the Person *One*. And it is the Representer that beareth the Person, and but one Person: And *Unity*, cannot otherwise be understood in Multitude. And because the Multitude naturally is not *One*, but *Many*; they cannot be understood for one; but many Authors, of every thing their Representative faith, or doth in their name; Every man giving their common Representer, Authority from himselfe in particular; and owning all the actions the Representer doth, in case they give him Authority without stint: Otherwise, when they limit him in what, and how farre he shall represent them, none of them owneth more, than they gave him commission to Act. (*Leviathan* 220–21)

I will now turn to the philosophy of Spinoza and his different view of the multitude. Hobbes conceives of the multitude only as the regression and decomposition of the sum of the people into their disconnected parts, but for Spinoza the multitude turns out to be the central focus of his analysis. As Étienne Balibar points out, for Hobbes, the unanimity of the people is the cause, “the essence of the political machine . . . For Spinoza, unanimity is a problem” (17).

In his preface to Negri’s *The Savage Anomaly*, Deleuze points out the aspects in which Spinoza radically differs from Hobbes, aspects in which Negri’s and Deleuze’s own project of reading Spinoza intersect. The legall

contractual tradition of Hobbes, Rousseau, and Hegel implies: “1) that forces have an individual or private origin; 2) that they must be socialized to bring about adequate relationships corresponding to them; 3) that there is mediation of a Power (‘Potestas’); and 4) that the horizon is inseparable from crisis, war or antagonism that Power proposes to solve, though an ‘antagonist solution’” (“Preface” 190).¹⁷ Spinoza’s “Anti-Legalism,” his fundamental idea that there is a “spontaneous development of forces, at least virtually” (*ibid.*),¹⁸ opposes all of those aspects.

By equating the sovereign state with the contract, and with mediation and representation, Hobbes presents the transition from the state of nature to the civil state as paralleled by the transition from mere appetites to reason—in fact, it might be argued that for Hobbes, language and representation are prerequisites for contracts and covenants, since beasts, for example, “though they have some use of voice, in making knowne to one another their desires, and other affections; yet they want that art of words, by which some men can represent” (*Leviathan* 226).¹⁹ By means of egoistic calculation—a kind of instrumental reason—individuals transfer their ‘natural rights’ to a sovereign, and this contract effects a complete rupture between the “nasty” state of nature, and the ordered civil state. Ultimately, then, in Hobbes, as Deleuze points out, the sovereign is “a third party who gains by the contract made by individuals” (*Expressionism* 266). Whereas in Hobbes, the absolute power of man’s natural right is preserved only in the sovereign [whose power is enhanced precisely by amassing the powers conferred by individuals—note Hobbes’s rather essentialist notion of power], in Spinoza’s conception there is a continuum between the natural and the civil state. In the Spinozist version of the contract, then, no individual gives up his or her natural right, as that would be ultimately forbidden by the duty of self-preservation.²⁰ Spinoza himself claims that “with regard to politics, the difference between Hobbes and me . . . consists in this, that I ever preserve the natural right intact so that the supreme power in a state has no more right over a subject than is proportionate to the power by which it is superior to the subject. This is what always takes place in the state of nature” (“Letter to Jarig Jelles”). In Hobbes, the contract—the act that constitutes, and is constituted by, the rupture between the natural and civil state—produces a Body|Politic that is a mechanical apparatus, an “Artificiall man”:

NATURE (the art whereby God hath made and governs the world) is by the *Art* of man, as in many other things, so in this also imitated, that it can make an Artificial Animal. For seeing life is but a motion of Limbs, the beginning whereof is in some principall part within; why may we not say that all *Automata* (Engines that move themselves by springs and wheels as doth a watch)

have an artificial life? For what is the *Heart*, but a *Spring*; and the *Nerves*, but so many *Strings*; and the *Joynts*, but so many *Wheeles*, giving motion to the whole body, such as was intended by the Artificer? *Art* goes yet further, imitating that Rationall and most excellent worke of Nature, *Man*. For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE (in latine, CIVITAS), which is but an Artificiall man, though of greater stature and strength than the Naturall, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which the *Soveraignty* is an Artificiall *Soul*, as giving life and motion to the whole body; the *Magistrates*, and other *Officers* of Judicature and Execution, artificiall *Joynts*; *Reward* and *Punishment* (by which fastned to the seat of the Soveraignty, every joynt and member is moved to perform his duty) are the *Nerves*, that do the same in the Body Naturall; the *Wealth* and *Riches* of all the particular members are the *Strength*; *Salus Populi* (the *peoples safety*) its *Businesse*; *Counsellors*, by whom all things needful for it to know, are suggested unto it, are the *Memory*; *Equity* and *Lawes*, an artificiall *Reason* and *Will*; *Concord*, *Health*; *Sedition*, *Sicknesse*; and *Civil war*, *Death*. Lastly, the *Pacts* and *Covenants*, by which the parts of this Body Politique were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that *Fiat*, or the *Let us make man*, pronounced by God in the Creation. (*Leviathan* 81–82)

In *Leviathan*, then, the sovereign head controls the body of the community by giving laws. I would propose that in Deleuze/Guattari's conception of the "body without organs," one can read a direct response to and clear rejection of the Hobbesian organicist/mechanistic Body|Politic—"the BwO is not at all the opposite of the organs. The organs are not its enemies. The enemy is the organism. The BwO is opposed not to the organs but to that organization of the organs called the organism" (*Thousand Plateaus* 158). In fact, although it is taken from Artaud, Deleuze/Guattari's concept of the BwO owes as much to Spinoza as it owes to Artaud. In *Ethics*, Spinoza states that "no one has thus far determined the power of the body, that is, no one has yet been taught by experience what the body can do merely by the laws of nature" (86). Deleuze/Guattari in fact reformulate, develop, and contextualize Spinoza's *ethical* question in *A Thousand Plateaus*: "We know nothing about a body until we know what it can do, in other words, what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body, either to destroy that body or be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body" (257).

Because of the parallelism of mind and body in Spinoza—"the human mind is the very idea or knowledge of the human body" (*Ethics* 57)—there is no rupture between body and mind, just as there is no break between the

natural and the civic state. Matter, as Deleuze reads Spinoza, is informed, active, and dynamic—“in Spinoza, [material] forces are inseparable from a spontaneity and productivity that make possible their development without mediation [of reason]” (“Preface” 190). Deleuze notes that Spinoza, in contrast to Hobbes, is not so much interested in ‘the head’ that controls and regulates the Body|Politic as he is in the immanent affects and relations of the bodies themselves, and he opposes the liberal political tradition that focuses on the individual, be it the governor [sovereign], or the governed [subject]: “Spinoza immediately thinks in terms of ‘multitudes’ and not individuals . . . It is a conception of an ontological ‘constitution’ or of a physical and dynamic ‘composition’ that conflicts with the legal contract” (191). The transition from the natural to the civic state for Spinoza is a ‘spontaneous’ and ‘natural’ process—in Deleuzian terms, a *machinic* process—by no means at odds with natural rights and ‘affective life.’²¹

Deleuze’s description of the “ontological ‘constitution’” and the “physical and dynamic ‘composition’” of the multitude in Spinoza echoes his description of two different structural principles of the relation between bodies and forces/powers. In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze refers to “two very contrary conceptions of the word ‘plan’” (128). On the one hand, there is the “plan of organization,” which is “any organization that comes from above and refers to a transcendence” (128). This “plan of organization”—or theological plan—“always has an additional dimension; it always implies a dimension supplementary to the dimension of the given” (128).²² On the other hand, there is “the plane of immanence”—the BwO—which “has no supplementary dimension: the process of composition must be apprehended for itself, through that which it gives, in that which it gives. It is a plan of composition, not of organization” (128). In contrast to Hobbes’s transcendent reductive *one*, Spinoza and Deleuze pose an immanent dynamic *whole*.

Those two plans [or planes] echo the natural state and the civil state respectively. For Hobbes, these two states or planes are separated by a break, the break that *is* the symbolic contract, while Spinoza preserves an inseparable connection between the two. For Hobbes, then, the state of nature can be conceptualized only in negative terms, as the *absence* of constraints, as *anti*-civic state, as *anti*-reason, whereas Spinoza sees this state as immanently structured and composed of affective and machinic operations and routines.²³ To find out what a body can do—to find out about its power, agency, and activity—ultimately means to connect the body to the forces and relations that compose it, to experiment with and install oneself on the plan[e] of composition/immanence. It is there that the transition from powerless ignorance to active power takes place. Thus, for Deleuze, if “in the state of nature I live at the mercy of encounters” (*Expressionism* 260), then

the only way to make this state livable is “by striving *to organize its encounters*” (261). In contrast to the antagonistic perspective of Hobbes—“man is a wolf to man,” in his well-known phrase—Spinoza asserts that “Man is God to man” (*Ethics* 161). Since man *in principle* agrees with man, the attempt to organize encounters ultimately means “to form an association of men in relations that can be combined” (Deleuze, *Expressionism* 261). Spinoza is far from saying that there is an innate rationality in man that dictates him to do so, or an essence of goodness: Deleuze observes that activity, that is “reason, strength and freedom are in Spinoza inseparable from a development, a formative process” (262). In contrast to Hobbes, however, for whom there is an absolute break between passion/affects and reason, for Spinoza, reason is the result of experiment and good encounters: “Reason proceeds not by artifice, but by a natural combination of relations; it does not so much bring in calculation, as a kind of direct recognition of man by man” (264).

But how does reason emerge from these relations, which are still governed by passions and by what Spinoza calls “imagination,” which is rooted in bodily awareness? Spinoza’s answer is by way of the “common notions,” as he develops them in his *Ethics*. Before I turn to them in detail, I want to take a short detour and propose that complexity theory—in particular, game theory—can help in conceptualizing of how reason, or some practical kind of knowledge, can emerge from passions and affects. In his influential *Theory of Justice*, John Rawls states that a problem arises “whenever the outcome of the many individuals’ decisions made in isolation is worse for everyone than some other course of action, even though, taking the conduct of the others as given, each person’s decision is perfectly rational. This is simply the general case of the prisoner’s dilemma of which Hobbes’s state of nature is the classic example” (237–38). Rawls is referring here to one of the most discussed and analyzed puzzles of game theory, which was first formalized by Albert W. Tucker in the 1950s:

Two men, charged with a joint violation of the law, are held separately by the police. Each is told that

- (1) if one confesses and the other does not, the former will be given a reward of one unit, and the latter will be fined two units,
- (2) if both confess, each will be fined one unit.

At the same time each has good reason to believe that

- (3) If neither confesses, both will get clear.²⁴

The dominant strategy in this dilemma would be to confess, since, logically, both parties would gain by confessing if the other does not, and even if the

other does confess as well, both would lose less. Thus, the *rational* and egoistic choice would always be: confess. Yet, on a *collective* level, both would be better off by cooperating.

Hobbes's state of nature, I argue, does *not* fit the framework of the prisoner's dilemma: in the Hobbesian war of every man against every man, cooperation is simply out of the question.²⁵ In the state of nature, reason amounts to "anticipation; that is, by force, or wiles, to master the persons of all men he can, so long, till he see no other power great enough to endanger him" (*Leviathan* 184). If Hobbes's state of nature can be captured in terms of game theory, it would be what is called a zero-sum game, which categorically precludes cooperation, and which follows a logic of all-or-nothing, where one's loss is another's gain.²⁶ In fact, it is the *contract* that transforms the zero-sum game into a prisoner's dilemma by introducing the sovereign as a third player—or, rather, as a regulating central authority with the power to change the payoffs. Punishment for noncooperation becomes so great in the civil state that cooperation is enforced by law.

Although Hobbes points out that the laws of nature in fact allow for the possibility of mutual cooperation *without* enforcement, he discards this idea in the same breath. Considering the possibility of a contract based upon promise, he categorically states that "covenants, without the Sword, are but Words" (223). Even if the laws of nature allow for such notions as justice, mercy, and modesty, the laws are opposed to the natural passions and therefore can be ensured only by a greater power, or a greater passion—fear.²⁷ To keep a promise, is "a Generosity too rarely found to be presumed on" (200). In a contract based on mere promise and empty words, as a rule, "he which performeth first, does but betray himselfe to his enemy" (196). Thus, with regard to a contract, the only "Passion to be reckoned upon, is Fear" (200). Although Hobbes admits that "there are very few so foolish, that had not rather governe themselves than be governed by others" (201), Patton ultimately rules out the idea that, for Hobbes, the potential for "such self-government might extend to self-transformation" ("Politics and the Concept of Power" 151). Hobbes's dilemma is to account for an atmosphere of trust and confidence in human beings who by nature are egoistic. The only solution seems to be to capitalize on the strong passion of fear by entering into a covenant that creates an even greater object of fear—the Leviathan—which ensures the adherence of the contract.

It is exactly this problem that parallels Robert Axelrod's question in *The Evolution of Cooperation*: "Under what conditions will cooperation emerge in a world of egoists without central authority?" (3). As Axelrod acknowledges, Hobbes's answer was that it simply does not. Life in the state of nature is a zero-sum game, only the contract transfers it into a prisoner's

dilemma—a one-shot prisoner’s dilemma that immediately dissolves, since the state by force *solves* any dilemma before it arises. In 1979, Axelrod asked professional game theorists to submit iterated prisoner’s dilemma strategies as computer programs, which were then played against each other in a round robin tournament, where each program played against itself, a random strategy [which was not a strategy at all, in the common sense], and each of the other entries [with none of the submitters knowing beforehand that each game in the tournament was to last 200 rounds]. Axelrod’s option to play an iterated version of the game [that is, in principle, endless repetitions] points to the fact that Hobbes somehow does not account for time and dynamics in his bleak and static vision: “What makes it possible for cooperation to emerge is the fact that players might meet again” (12). In addition, since no player knows how long the game will last, because no player knows when the final round will be played, the future becomes uncertain.²⁸ Thus, ultimately there is no one dominant strategy, since every strategy depends on the relations to the other players, and their strategies.

The objective of that tournament was not to win each encounter, but to score the maximum number of points—that is, to do well overall. The program sent in by the game theorist Anatol Rapoport, by far the simplest of the submitted entries, won the competition. It was called *TIT FOR TAT* and was, in the 1970s, one of the most discussed strategies for playing the iterated prisoner’s dilemma. It was so simple that it consisted of only two rules: 1) start with cooperation, and 2) after that, do whatever the other player does—cooperate when he or she cooperates, betray when he or she betrays. While many of the competitors submitted programs with highly aggressive strategies that were variations of the egoistic strategy to always defect, many of the other programs that did worse than Rapoport’s were simply refinements of *TIT FOR TAT*. These versions, however, performed not a quarter as well as the original. Axelrod carefully analyzed the results of the competition and managed to identify the main characteristic of those programs that scored well: niceness, never be the first one to betray the other player. It also became clear that some other strategies would have beaten *TIT FOR TAT*, had they been entered. This important information, plus a detailed report of the tournament’s results, was sent out with an invitation to a follow-up round of the competition. Even more submissions arrived this time, and although there were no restrictions on the entries, only one *TIT FOR TAT* was submitted—again by Rapoport. Most of the participating programs were nice, except for some that tried to sneak in the occasional betrayal or that retaliated a bit harder, like *TWO TITS FOR A TAT*. The programs that Axelrod had come up with, which would have beaten *TIT FOR TAT* in the first round, were also included. But the winner again was *TIT FOR TAT*.

The key traits of *TIT FOR TAT* were: be nice, provoke and be provokable [if somebody does not respond to your offer of cooperation and betrays you, retaliate immediately . . . but just once], be forgiving [show good faith and return to cooperation if the other player does so as well], be clear [be consistent in your strategy],²⁹ and play to gain most, not to win. All these characteristics show a high degree of responsiveness, and it appears that the best way of dealing with *TIT FOR TAT* is to cooperate. Even if you follow egoistical ends, cooperation is the best means to gain the most. Individual ends equal community ends, since everybody gains in cooperation. *TIT FOR TAT* solves *Leviathan's* dilemma by generating a condition of responsiveness where mutual trust scores best, and even egoism is served. *TIT FOR TAT* is even able to stabilize itself in the long run—whereas cooperative assemblages, at least in small groups, can infiltrate and ultimately reverse non-cooperative milieus, once stabilized, they cannot be defeated by an invasion of noncooperative strategies. There seems to be a kind of pawl in the evolution of cooperation, in which a complex composition *emerges* from simple affective rules. Thus, in response to the egoistic reason that is needed to transform the Hobbesian state of nature into a static civil state, the “only ‘cognitive abilities’ *TIT FOR TAT* needs are: (1) recognition of previous partners, and (2) memory of what happened last time with this partner” (D. Hofstadter 729).

Memory as a kind of reflex is also figured by Spinoza in that way—“if the human body has once been affected at the same time by two or more bodies, when the mind afterwards remembers any of them it will straightway remember the others . . . Hence we clearly understand what is memory (*memoria*). For it is nothing else than the concatenation of ideas involving the nature of things which are outside of the human body, and this takes place in the mind according to the order and concatenation of the modifications of the human body” (*Ethics* 56). Memory is defined as a *bodily* and *affective* capacity: “The human body can suffer many changes and yet retain the impressions or traces of objects” (84). In such a “physics of action” (Deleuze, *Foucault* 72), *TIT FOR TAT* shows that a flexible and reflexive responsiveness [reflexive in the sense of a physical reflex] ultimately scores much better than Hobbes’s reflective rationality. This difference echoes Deleuze’s distinction between a “practical knowledge [*connaissance*],” which is rooted in an individual’s affective forces, and “forms of knowledge [*savoirs*]”—‘reason’ proper—that are “operating mechanisms which do not explain power, since they presuppose its relations and are content to ‘fix’ them as part of a function that is not productive but reproductive” (74).³⁰ Such a ‘molar knowledge,’ then, can be upheld only by a constant check and confinement of the affective passions and spontaneity of thought.

The key characteristics of *TIT FOR TAT* are *affective reflexes* rather than rational strategies. As in Spinoza, knowledge *emerges* from intuition, and from encounters with other people, from what Spinoza calls “imagination” and “affect.” But joyful affects—those that individuals strive for in order to organize the chance encounters in the state of nature—can easily turn into sad passions as long as man remains in the state of inadequate ideas and pure imagination. In *Ethics*, Spinoza discusses the passage from imagination to reason—and thus, the passage from passive modes of existence [suffering from affects] to active modes [action based on adequate ideas]. He does so by introducing a new type of affects—the common notions—that is not in danger of becoming sad passions: “Besides the pleasure and desire which are passions, there are other emotions which are related to us in so far as we act” (123). Spinoza goes on to distinguish force or “fortitude” [*fortitudo*], which is “all actions which follow from the emotions which are related to the mind, in so far as it understands, . . . into courage (*animositas*) and generosity (*generositas*)” (124). In these strong affects, man’s activity surpasses the ruling dictate of imagination, and connects with [a practical] reason: “For I understand by courage the desire by which each endeavours to preserve what is his own according to the dictate of reason alone. But by generosity I understand the desire by which each endeavours by the dictate of reason alone to help and join to himself in friendship all other men” (124). Spinoza’s underlying category here is that of *utility*—anything is useful that enhances my capabilities to act. Reason, for Spinoza, is not a quality transcending the affects and the body—no sovereign agency—but an immanent part of the body and the natural state:³¹ “Since reason postulates nothing against nature, it postulates, therefore, that each man should love himself and seek what is useful to him . . . and desire whatever leads man truly to a greater state of perfection” (152)—and according to Spinoza, “there is nothing more useful to a man than a man” (161). To ‘become active’ implies the active organization of affects: “As long as we are not assailed by emotions which are contrary to our nature we have the power of arranging and connecting the modifications of the body according to the order of the intellect” (201).

Cooperation arises from affective common notions such as generosity and courage—or, in terms of *TIT FOR TAT*, niceness, forgivingness, and provocability. According to Deleuze, Spinoza’s common notions are an art, the art of the *Ethics* itself: “organizing good encounters, composing actual relations, forming powers, experimenting” (*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 119). From the passions and the imagination [and also from sad passions such as egoism and self-love], active common notions arise: “There is a whole learning process involved in common notions, in our *becoming active*: we should

not overlook the importance in Spinozism of this formative process; we have to start from the least universal common notions, from the first we have a chance to form” (*Expressionism* 288). *TIT FOR TAT* and Axelrod’s *Evolution of Cooperation* provide us with a simulated model of how that formative process emerges and works ‘by itself.’ Knowledge here is a process of experimentation over time, almost a process of trial and error, and it is only the awareness of bodily ‘transitions,’ the affects of joy and sadness, that indicate what is good or bad for us, not any moral preconceptions. For Spinoza, the *conatus* of the individual, as the striving or desire for self-preservation, necessarily implies the relation with other bodies—objects or individuals, since “the human body needs for its preservation many other bodies from which it is, so to speak, continually regenerated” (*Ethics* 53)—hence the importance of the body’s capability to affect and be affected. Since the parallelism of mind and body implies that “the order of actions and passions of our body is simultaneous in nature with the order of actions and passions of our mind” (85), all the encounters with other bodies will simultaneously produce corresponding ideas. Thus, for Spinoza, “it is never we who affirm or deny something of a thing, but it is the thing itself that affirms or denies, in us, something of itself” (*Short Treatise* part 2, chap. 16, para. 5). Knowledge is a nonsubjective operation that depends on the composition of encounters between bodies—quite similar to the ‘cognitive abilities’ of *TIT FOR TAT*. The knowledge [common notions] that arises even from those chance encounters that the individual is subjected to in the state of nature is first of all the practical idea of *utility*—of all the bodies and objects we encounter, “none can be considered more excellent than those which agree with our nature. For (to give an example) if two individuals of the same nature were to combine, they would form one individual twice as strong as either individual” (*Ethics* 153). Ultimately, then, Spinoza’s experimental reason emerges from the individuals’ selection and organization of good encounters that result in an increase of power, which in turn produces adequate ideas—common notions, that is, which for Deleuze “are not so named because they are common to all minds, but primarily because they represent something common to bodies, either to all bodies (extension, motion and rest) or to some bodies (at least two, mine and another)” (*Spinoza: Practical Philosophy* 54).

The two simple rules of *TIT FOR TAT* may be regarded as equivalent to the ethology of affects that Deleuze points out—his main reference here is Jakob von Uexküll’s tick.³² And it is perhaps no coincidence that Hobbes also mentions the possibility of ‘self-government’ without coercive power in certain animals, which are explicitly defined by their lack of speech and instrumental reason—“Bees, and Ants, live sociably one with another, . . . and

yet have no other direction, than their particular . . . appetites; . . . among these creatures, the Common good differeth not from the Private” (*Leviathan* 225–26). Thus, from these “particular appetites” a kind of swarm intelligence emerges. The theory of swarm intelligence “shifts the explanation of mind away from the inner mechanisms of the individual—and especially from the brain, which is an entirely isolated piece of machinery—and out into the connections between people. The experience of thinking is contradicted by empirical evidence about what thinking really is. The prevailing myth is that of mind as an internal process, the myth of the given, the myth of consciousness, and we believe it as a fact” (Kennedy and Eberhart 419). On the contrary, with Spinoza, it can be argued that the mind is “the power, not of every individual, but of the multitude, which is guided, as it were, by one” (*Theologico-Political Treatise* 301)—a bottom-up composition, rather than a top-down organization, where simple immanent rules—common notions—that regulate local behavior result in complex compositions and formations. ‘Knowledge’ emerges from the interaction of the individual members.

Since the ‘cognitive abilities’ needed by *TIT FOR TAT* show that the “entities involved can be on the scale of bacteria, small animals, large animals, or nations” (D. Hofstadter 729) and computer programs, it can be safely inferred with Axelrod and Cohen that “social systems exhibit dynamic patterns analogous to physical, biological, and computational systems” (21)—this is precisely one of the assumptions that complexity theory is based on. Manuel De Landa has pointed out the importance of virtual environments in opening up and conceptualizing new ways of seeing, and he uses Axelrod’s experiments as a case in point (“Virtual Environments”).³³ A virtual environment in a Deleuzian sense would refer not to the computer, but to the space of the virtual, the pool of pure potentiality that makes an infinity of actualizations possible at every instant, that is ultimately responsible for—to adapt his well-known phrase—what a body (or Body|Politic) can do. Spinoza’s definition of government ultimately points in that direction:

The ultimate aim of government is not to rule, or restrain, by fear, nor to exact obedience, but contrariwise, to free every man from fear, that he may live in all possible security; in other words, to strengthen his natural right to exist and work without injury to himself or others. No, the object of government is not to change men from rational beings into beasts or puppets, but to enable them to develop their minds and bodies in security, and to employ their reason unshackled; neither showing hatred, anger, or deceit, nor watched with the eyes of jealousy and injustice. In fact, the true aim of government is liberty. (*Theologico-Political Treatise* 258–59)

The aim of government in Spinoza's vision is to provide a space of freedom in which it becomes possible to open up new ways of seeing and to synthesize these insights. *Leviathan* figures here as a negative example only. The noise of the Behemoth [the horrible monster that Hobbes saw as the embodiment of the regression into anarchy, the civil war of his time, which for him necessitated the construction of a Leviathan] might refer not to the absence of order but to the emergence of self-organization, the music of the swarm that is *one* and *many* at the same time.



This study situates itself within a larger project of a Deleuzian historiography. The last major encounter between the historical sciences and post-structuralist theory dates back to the year 1973, when Hayden White's *Metahistory* confronted the historical sciences' claim to objectivity with the poststructuralist idea of the linguistic constructedness of reality. In a seminal article on "The Historical Text as Literary Artifact," White asked the crucial question: "What authority can historical accounts claim as contributions to a secured knowledge of reality in general and to the human sciences in particular?" (277). He put the focus on the *graphein* in *historiography* and pointed the finger at the dilemma of the discipline of history, which saw itself as a science and not as part of the field of literature and fabulation. However, as interpretations of the past, White claims, historical narratives are "verbal fictions, the contents of which are as much *invented* as *found* and the forms of which have more in common with their counterparts in literature than they have with those in the sciences" (278). He stresses the fact that the historian, as historiographer, *fabulates* history by sorting, interpreting, and contextualizing it, creating structures and causal relations and constructing history: "If we recognize that there is a fictive element in all historical narrative, we would find in the theory of language and narrative itself the basis for a more subtle presentation of what historiography consists of than that which simply tells the student to go and 'find out the facts' and write them up in such a way as to tell 'what really happened'" (302). Repudiating Leopold von Ranke's claim that the historian should—and is actually able to—reconstruct the past as it actually was, White imports concepts of deconstruction and cultural-linguistic constructivism into the historical sciences, concepts closely connected to the theories of Derrida and Foucault, according to which reality—life and history—are always already regulated and constituted discursively; reality is an effect of the logic of the signifier. Thus, if the historian aims at reconstructing a reality that is not found *in* the text, but *beyond* the text, and if this *beyond* [the textual

unconscious] is always already discursive [a Lacanian unconscious], then the historical sciences become a talking [better still, a writing] cure in which history finds itself. For White, the historical is “a prose discourse that purports to be a model, or icon, of past structures and processes in the interest of *explaining what they were by representing them*” (*Metahistory* 2).

If, in general, an awareness of the vicissitudes of representation is a good thing in that it raises questions about the existence of objective truth [or objective data] and of universal laws and teleologies [and ideologies], the result is—again—the disregard of the *material constitution* of history. As in cultural studies in general, historiography—or metahistory—concentrates mainly on representation, on the culturallinguistic constructedness of reality, in order to ban essentialism. And again, the Deleuzian conception of a machinic nature/reality operating on complex and nonlinear logics bypasses the twin specters of essentialism and determinism: the concept of *production* connects nature and culture, materiality and history. History is a complex and nonlinear system, which means that between micro- and macrohistory, regional history and world history, part and whole, there are feedback loops, couplings, and interferences. In contrast to linear systems, nonlinear systems do not react proportionally to disturbances/turbulences. This is what the proverbial butterfly effect signifies, according to which a flap of a butterfly’s wing can trigger a tornado [or not]: the system’s sensitivity to initial conditions.

Deleuze ‘thinks history’ according to a completely different set of parameters, according to completely different concepts of time, event, and materiality. For Deleuze/Guattari, history is “a dynamic and open social reality, in a state of functional disequilibrium . . . comprising not only institutionalized conflicts but conflicts that generate changes, revolts, ruptures, and scissions” (*Anti-Oedipus* 150–51). Chance [the uncontrollability/indeterminacy of the event] plays a crucial role as well: history is “first of all . . . the history of contingencies, and not of necessity. Ruptures and limits, and not continuity . . . great accidents . . . and amazing encounters that could have happened elsewhere, or before, or might never have happened” (140). Thomas Carlyle, like Ranke a nineteenth-century historian, was aware of the important factor of ‘chance’ in the ‘construction’ of history, as this remarkable passage from his “On History” shows:

The most gifted man can observe, still more can record, only the *series* of his own impressions; his observation, therefore . . . must be *successive*, while the things done were often *simultaneous*; the things done were not a series, but a group. It is not in acted, as it is in written History: actual events are nowise so simply related to each other as parent and offspring are; every single event is the offspring not of one, but of all other events, prior or contemporaneous,

and will in its turn combine with all others to give birth to new: it is an ever-living, ever-working Chaos of Being, wherein shape after shape bodies itself forth from innumerable elements. (95)³⁴

Chance [the unpredictable complexity of material self-organization] is a determining factor in the overall system's production of a new macrostate. Observable phase states [historical phases/epochs] that have remained stable over a period of time can perform a relatively fast and turbulent transition into another phase state. The phase state is always just a semistable system, a complex dynamic aggregate, and not a stable unity/entity—the more so since in one phase state, other states are 'virtually' present. In such a nonlinear conception of phase transitions, all phase states exist at the same time in a continuous process of change and becoming [with different temporalities of their own]. Because of the simultaneous activity of the 'parts,' the 'whole' of such a dynamic feedback system shows properties significantly different from that of the parts. As Deleuze/Guattari observe, "all history does is to translate a coexistence of becomings into a succession" (*Thousand Plateaus* 430), to translate nonlinearity into linearity. Such a 'reductive analysis' loses sight of those self-organizing emergences that nonlinear systems in particular reveal—a [nonlinear] history has to concentrate on precisely those modalities of becoming, on the becoming of the event itself.³⁵

The historical sciences break down the continuum of time—of history—into cuts, dated/dates, historical events. These dates/events are then put into linear causal relations [this is where White's critique comes in]. For Deleuze/Guattari, however, historiography is always a history of making cuts, of creating differences, hence of a perceiving consciousness, whereas "what we make history with is the matter of a becoming, not the subject matter of a story" (*Thousand Plateaus* 347). The Deleuzian event is precisely *not* the historical event, the date that the historical sciences are so obsessed with. It is neither the big historical event on the stage of world history, nor is it the culturally produced/represented fact/date. For Deleuze, events take place on all levels of life [and history]—on the level of the molecule as well as on the level of narration, on the level of the human and the conscious level [individual and/or institutional decisions] as much as on the level of the nonhuman and the unconscious and 'non-historical' [materiality, chance] level. The historical sciences run the risk of losing sight of the facts that the *fact* is a *factum*, *made* on an infinite number of levels at the same time, that it produces/is produced autopoietically, and that it is then reduced and condensed [in physical sense] to a *date*, a *datum* [a given], before it is condensed again [this time in the poetical sense] and inserted into causal chains. In between the cuts, in between the perceivable [historical] dates of historical science, there is the nonhistorical becoming, the complex dynamics of

multiplicities. A Deleuzian historiography has to focus on these multiplicities, these becomings. The consciously perceived and discursively represented date is only the tip of the iceberg, comparable, according to Deleuze, “to a mist rising over the prairie . . . precisely at the frontier, at the juncture of things and propositions” (*Logic of Sense* 24). With his focus on the becoming of the event, however, Deleuze is more concerned with a different kind of mist, what Nietzsche in *On the Advantage and Disadvantage of History for Life* calls the “mist of the unhistorical” (111), with the differentiation [and ultimately combination] of historical fact/date and unhistorical becoming: “What History grasps of the event is its effectuation in states of affairs or in lived experience, but the event in its becoming . . . escapes History” (*What Is Philosophy?* 110). The “event in its becoming” is precisely the level of the historical fact/date that the [discursive] measuring devices of the historical sciences do not grasp. The becoming of the event “has neither beginning nor end but only a milieu. It is thus more geographical than historical” (ibid.)—geographically physical insofar as its operations follow a dynamic and nonlinear logic. Deleuze/Guattari see history as a history of intensities, where historical dates do not so much signify objective facts, but force fields like “in physics, where proper names designate such effects within fields of potentials: the Joule effect, the Seebeck effect, the Kelvin effect. History is like physics: a Joan of Arc effect, a Heliogabalus effect” (*Anti-Oedipus* 86).³⁶

For Deleuze, becoming is closely connected to geography: “Becomings belong to geography, they are orientations, directions, entries and exits” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 2). Deleuze’s concept of history as becoming reveals a close proximity to the “geohistory” (*What Is Philosophy?* 95) of Fernand Braudel: “Geography wrests history from the cult of necessity in order to stress the irreducibility of contingency” (ibid., 96). With the concept of *longue durée*, Braudel commented on the geographic aspects of [historical] time itself. According to him, “history exists at different levels, I would even go so far as to say three levels but that would be . . . simplifying things too much. There are ten, a hundred levels to be examined, ten, a hundred different time spans” (74). History—thus Braudel, and thus Deleuze—happens at “ten, a hundred” levels and time spans [at a thousand plateaus] simultaneously. This coexistent and dynamic becoming is to the static succession of being what locus is to datum, what space is to time, and by analogy regards “geography as opposed to history, . . . the rhizome as opposed to arborescence” (*Thousand Plateaus* 296). History is a rhizome that historiography aims to translate into an arborescent order, with the rhizome standing for the complex interplay of necessity and chance, human and nonhuman, culture and materiality, intention and self-organization.

A historiography according to Deleuze|Guattari elevates the differences and multiplicity immanent to the event over concepts of unity and reconciliation, and focuses on the role of materiality and its self-organizing properties. The present study links up with this approach in that it aims to analyze the role of material self-organization in the concept of the Body|Politic. In their political manifesto *Multitude*, Hardt|Negri formulate the need “to write an anti-*De Corpore* that runs counter to all the modern treatises of the political body and grasps this new relationship between commonality and singularity in the flesh of the multitude. Once again, Spinoza is the one who most clearly anticipates this monstrous nature of the multitude . . . we can recognize these monstrous metamorphoses of the flesh not only as a danger but also as a possibility, the possibility to create an alternative society” (194).

In its analysis of alternative and immanent networks of alliances and social organization that run counter to the ‘traditional’ and ‘transcendent’ Body|Politic, this book wants to play a modest part in such a rewriting—by starting not from the Body|Politic’s unity, but from its multiplicity. Since every identity [body|politic] is a reduction|abstraction from an underlying multiplicity, a merely temporal and experimental identity based on difference, as one possible actualization of the virtual field of possibilities, these segmented identities always carry within them lines of flight, the possibilities of different actualizations and modes of composition of the underlying virtuality. In folding metaphysics into physics, the body politic into the physical body [and vice versa], my readings [with Deleuze|Guattari, Serres, and others] attempt to conceptualize the Body|Politic as a coupling of psychic and physical machines, of culture and representation with material production and self-organization, and to do so in terms of art, philosophy, and science, in the transdisciplinary mode outlined above: to show instances in|of the American Body|Politic of an alternative to outside control and regulation. Such a Deleuzian Body|Politic is neither organic nor mechanistic, neither a fixed and bounded natural organism nor a carefully engineered apparatus—it is a practice, not an arrangement of identities, of self-enclosed elements, wrought into a fixed pattern. If there is a unity, it is not uniformity but an exploration of multiplicity, an experiment in diversity. The Body|Politic is not an island, isolated and with fixed boundaries, but an actualization of a virtual field; not a predicted and predictable interaction of particular [discrete and compartmentalized] identities, but a *machinic aggregation*—an experiment. Deleuze observes: “*We do not even know of what a body is capable, says Spinoza*” (*Expressionism* 226), and “politics is active experimentation since we do not know in advance which way a line is going to turn” (Deleuze and Parnet, *Dialogues* 137).