The body and mind thereupon become dissociated; the subject crosses the boundary of his own skin and stands outside of his senses. He tries to see himself, from some point in space. He feels that he is turning into space himself—dark space into which things cannot be put.

Roger Caillois, “Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia”

0. CRITICAL/CLINICAL

“On the 20th Lenz went through the mountains.”

On the 20th of which month?
On the 20th of which month of which year?

Already with the first sentence in his unfinished 1836 novella, Lenz, Büchner points not only to the closure of an abyss presumed since Plato to be yawning between two topo-

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graphically “indeterminable” edges—between mimesis and diegesis—but also to the difference between the surface and the depths, between the *critical* and the *clinical*. For if it doesn’t matter anymore which month of the which year it is, there’s only a minimum concern left for the temporal, which, together with the spatial, are the primary constitutive principles of the subject of Enlightenment (a forgetting of remembering, which Adorno and Horkheimer traced even in *The Odyssey*³). What this means is that the presumed abyss between mimesis and diegesis, the rejection of which has always been the main concern of the “political” (the repression of which would be the mission of *psychoanalytical* discourse towards the end of the 19th century), is now at stake, as is the constantly upsurging problem of the distinction between the conscious and the unconscious. The distinction between the *immediate* (as in the Kantian problem of the thing-in-itself) and the *mediated* has already found a novel way of expression in *Lenz* as regards the audibility of this “terrible voice which is usually called silence.”⁴ It is this undecidable question of audibility that I believe raises once again the ungoing question of the political as it is handled by psychiatry in the second half of the 19th century. As will be argued in this chapter, the disappearance of the political, far from being only metaphorical, is basically related to the rise of psychoanalysis (or, rather, psycho-politics) and, being based upon a certain notion of “perversion,” it can be re-distributed along Deleuzian distinctions (such as surface and depth, critical and clinical, oedipal-incest and schizo-incest). This could then lead us to a re-evaluation of what Deleuze and Guattari might have meant by “homo-sexual-effusion” in their book on Kafka,⁵ which could then


⁴ Büchner 1991: 159.

also point us toward the possibility of the deterritorialisation of the political under a new concept: namely, “critical perversion.”

1. Somnambulism, Hypnosis, and Psychasthenia

Ekphrasis 1: Now Lenz is outside in nature, wandering as if under the spell of a fugue, looking for a leak through which he can sneak into space. Knock knock! No phonemes, only their traces ... sonorous but only insofar as the surrounding hum of the world prevents the tympan from shattering. And yet …

The peaks and high slopes in snow, gray rock down into the valleys, green fields, boulders and pine trees. It was cold and damp, water trickled down the rocks and sprang over the path. Pine branches hung down heavily in the moist air. Gray clouds moved across the sky, but everything so dense, and then the fog steamed up, and trailed, oppressive and damp, through the bushes, so sluggish, so shapeless. He went on indifferently, the path did not matter to him, sometimes up, sometimes down. He felt no fatigue, but at times he was irritated that he could not walk on his head.6

On the 20th of which month?
On the 20th of which month of which year?

Already with the first sentence in Lenz, Büchner deterritorialises the presumed emotions of the reader into various levels of intensities on the body, without the organs of literature; Lenz is located at a crossroads between psychasthenia and schizophrenia, deterritorialising the politico-topological by playing on the border between the conscious and the unconscious.

If the question is whether the landscape is available as a

6 Büchner 1991: 139.
distinct field of inspection as separate from the traveller, the way Büchner produces an answer to the dichotomy of man and nature offers a strange operation of separation—a separation from a “self” with the intention of melting into landscape—thereby confusing the boundaries between topological and atopological, almost as opposed to, say, Freudian psychoanalysis in the latter part of the 19th century, where the division within the “self” will be attributed to an illness (named “schizophrenia”) that unproblematically determines the place where a possible division might have taken place. Or, as the psychotherapists of the the time, Jean-Martin Charcot and Pierre Janet, would have it, it’s a case of dementia, the symptoms of which are made visible in Lenz’s attacks of hysteria and his attempts at self-mutilation, reminiscent of Artaud’s, almost a century later. What I will propose here is to unthread Lenz as a possible case of Janet’s theory of psychasthenia under a non-psychoanalysing and/or non-Oedipalising light, in order to be able to foreground how the inherent question of the atopological was appropriated by psychoanalysis and transformed into psycho-politics as a result of which perversion is clinicalised. It will also be interesting to note how the profound question of transference was dealt with by Janet and Freud so as not to disturb their theorisation of a self-identical subject—as a failure in the first case, and a success in the latter.

But first of all, let us see briefly what a certain psychological disorder, “psychasthenia,” means for Janet, who coined this term for some patients who had symptoms similar to those suffering from “fugue” and “dei paralysis progressiva” (Nietzsche’s illness, as diagnosed by Doctor Wille) in the 19th century. Psychasthenia, being a form of dementia or dissociation (the earlier names for schizophrenia), represents a disorder in one’s spatio-temporal perception, through which one locates oneself in time and space.

As his first book *L’Automatisme Psychologique*\(^8\) clearly demonstrates, for Janet there is a profoundly elemental and structural state of mind which is regular and predetermined. In this model there are two basic activities: one preserving and reproducing the past, and the other directed towards synthesis and creation (integration). In other words, the integrative activity organizes the present with its capacity to produce a synthesis that will enable one to readjust one’s past experiences within a given changing environment. Such a view on mind led him to a view on hysteria where integrative activity is diminished and can be restored during a hypnotic séance; if such integrative functions are dissociated from the hysteric mind and cause uncontrolled behaviour or perception during crisis, then such dissociation could be cured by way of looking into the causes of trauma in hypnosis. Moreover, for Janet, the patient’s suggestibility is in direct proportion to the degree of dissociation, which makes the patient less resistant in hypnosis.

As can be observed from even such a short introduction, Janet’s model of mind is basically a Kantian one (which even recalls Hume on the matter of taste), where, given the sound state of well-integrated categories working in harmony, there should be no room for deficiency, especially with regard to a certain, deterministic notion of temporality and spatiality. This is especially evident in Janet’s second book *L’État Mental des Hystériques*:\(^9\) “hysteria is a defect of the unity of the mind, manifesting itself on the one hand in a diminishing of the personal synthesis, and on the other, in the preserving of past phenomena which reappear in amplified manner.”\(^10\) Although such states of deficiency make patients liable to suggestion,

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Janet also finds that in cases which are ruled by some fixed ideas, patients can experience a lowered state of suggestibility. In his further researches on the causes and neuroses of fixed ideas, one of the fundamental things he discovers is related to what Freud will later call “transference”: an already known state during his time, described as “rapport magiletique” by magnetizers, it involves not only a patient’s deep involvement with the therapist but also a keen interest to be hypnotised by the therapist. Soon realising that this can easily turn into an addiction, Janet calls it “la passion somnambulique,”\(^\text{11}\) and despite the erotic elements present in this rapport, he prefers to see it in terms of attachment theory: “Such patients not only crave to be hypnotised, but have a permanent need to confess to the psychiatrist whose picture they keep constantly in their subconscious mind, and to be scolded and directed by him.”\(^\text{12}\) Apparently, Janet, having no concern to psychoanalyse or Oedipalise this problem, turns to a solution that will restore a delicate balance between the patient and the therapist by gradually withdrawing from the guidance process. In a later book, *The Major Symptoms of Hysteria*, he follows the same idea of the human mind being an automaton, complete and well structured at the beginning: “Things happened as if an idea, a partial system of thoughts, emancipated itself, became independent and developed itself on its own account. The result is, on the one hand, that it develops far too much, and on the other hand, that consciousness appears no longer to control it.”\(^\text{13}\) If, in former research, somnambulism appears as a state of the patient in hypnosis, here it grows into a general symptom of hysteria in which people are so absorbed in their inner experience—caused by an earlier trauma—that a proper contact with external reality is lost. When they rarely


respond to something in the external world, it is perceived as role-playing within the domain of the inner experience. In other words, when compared to “la passion somnambulique,” somnambulism as a symptom of hysteria is ruled by a rejection of mimesis, whereas in the case of treatment by hypnosis, it turns into a passion for obeying a higher voice—that is, playing the role dictated by the therapist. In other words, a somnambulistic tendency, which is regarded as a symptom of an earlier trauma, turns later on into a means of healing under the guidance of a hypnotist-therapist. If dissociation is marked by the absence of such a guidance—that is, with no role to imitate—in hypnosis the situation is reversed by the presence of the hypnotist/therapist as a model figure. Although this figure proves to be helpful in awakening the somnambulist from his dream world, in the end it leads to some complications in the rapport established between the two. We will look into the nature of this rapport later on and especially into how this will lead Freud from hypnosis to free association (“the talking cure”) as a method, but first let us see how Janet defines “psychasthenia,” and how its zoological and philosophical implications are worked out by Roger Caillois.

2. Becoming Space

Ekphrasis 2: Nature, described in Lenz is shrinking into a keyhole, and it is as if all the distances disappear, and no in-between is left. Will he be able to be absorbed into space without carrying the flag of mom and dad, state and nation, citizenship and religion, human and all too human? Everything seemed to him to be so small, so close, so wet, he would have liked to set the earth behind the stove, he could not understand why he needed so much time to climb down a steep slope, to reach a distant point; he felt he should be able to cover any distance in a few steps …

He thought he must draw the

14 Büchner 1991: 139.
storm into himself, contain all within him, he stretched out and lay over the earth, he burrowed into the cosmos, it was a pleasure that hurt him ... but these were only moments, and then he rose, calm, steady, quiet, as if phantoms had passed before him, he remembered nothing.\(^\text{15}\)

According to Janet, if the hysteric’s fixed ideas (as in somnambulism) developed completely outside of the individual’s personal perception and memory, the obsession of a psychasthenic would take place in collaboration with one’s whole personality. Furthermore, it does so without developing itself completely as a fixed idea. Instead, the psychasthenic is continuously doubting his idea. As we stated formerly, Janet’s model of mind is based on a certain notion of automatism where all the mental categories work in harmony and produce a perfect synthesis between past and present events. As his work progressed, his experience led him to expand his conceptual model and he developed the ideas of psychological force and tension\(^\text{16}\) as well as a hierarchy of mental functions on five levels, each of which had a coefficient of reality. The highest level of mental activity was the reality function; this is the function of reality in which one grasps the maximum reality of a situation. With respect to this principle of reality, psychasthenia is characterised by a complete loss of reality, or the loss of reality as an idea, where, such a loss becoming the arche-fixation, the psychasthenic refuses to engage with reality in an integrative way, and resisted producing a synthesis between past and future.

If psychasthenia in Janet is an ultimate form of dissoc-

\(^\text{15}\) Büchner 1991: 140.

iation, the main symptom of which is somnambulism where the patient is in a state of hypnosis with no one to mime, no model to imitate, or, better, where any form of role playing or imitation which establishes “reality” as such is out of question, I’d like to claim at this point, together with Caillois, that what is at stake here is a certain relationship to the “spatial.” As I will have more opportunity to stress later on, our understanding of time and space is still conditioned within Kantian approaches, according to which time and space are a priori mental categories. Seen in a line of continuity with the Descartian and Kantian subject, Janet’s model of mind is based on an autonomous subject who is supposed to locate him/herself according to these a priori mental categories if this subject wants to stay away from the fallacy of reason, if it has to construct a reality as such, if it has to stay away from the clinical. In contrast, I will argue an understanding of time and place not as a priori mental categories but as those whose construction is experienced as always-at-stake and requires a critical mind (rather than “clinical”) which has a special relationship with the spatial (one of the underlying definitions of “perversion” by Freud). Moreover, I will claim that, with regard to Lenz, Freud’s theorisation of perversion is aware of the fact that perversion is what dislocates a certain sense of spatio-temporal relationality, which balances the social, the psychological, and the political, and, therefore, the measures taken against this threat start with the question of the “homo-sexual.”

First, in order to open this mimetic subjectivity to a critique, we might turn to Roger Caillois’s essay, “Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,” where he suggests an anti-mimetic, or, rather, an ultra-mimetic moment that rejects the distinction between mimesis and diegesis. Discussing the Darwinian postulation of the survival of the fittest with respect to “adaptation,” Caillois argues that, due to an absolute, ultramimetic representation of the environment, of the space where the same species become their own predators, mimetic adaptation in the insect world does not always lead to survival
and can instead lead to death.¹⁷ Basing his argument on the fact that the insect world works on smell rather than sight, Caillois claims that mimicry does not function as a means of the survival of the fittest, working instead as a means of absorption into space on the basis of an “attractio similium of magic: like produces like.”¹⁸ Caillois refers to sympathetic magic, thereby evoking shamanism where the possessed shaman passes from imitating the spirit he’s representing to becoming the spirit itself. If, in other words, nature is the shaman, the insects go back to it as if to catch “the sorcerer in his own trap,”¹⁹ realising a complete “depersonalisation through assimilation into space.”²⁰ In this atopological topography where any concern for spatio-temporal concern disappears, “Matters become critical with represented space because the living creature, the organism, is no longer located at the origin of the co-ordinate system but is simply one point among many. Dispossessed of its privilege, it quite literally no longer knows what to do with itself.”²¹

3. PERVERSION CLINICALISED

Ekphrasis 3: Oberlin the Father is also possessed with nature, and possession takes the form of a voice heard at night; he tells Lenz how he had heard a voice, how it had spoken to him at night, and how God

It had grown dark, heaven and earth melted together. It seemed as if something were following him, as if something horrible would overtake him, something that humans cannot endure, as if insanity were

¹⁷ “We are therefore dealing with a luxury and even with a dangerous luxury, as it does occur that mimicry makes the mimetic creature’s condition worse”: Roger Caillois, “Mimicry and Legendary Psychasthenia,” The Edge of Surrealism, ed. Claudine Frank, trans. Claudine Frank and Camille Naish (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 91–103, emphasis in original.
²⁰ Caillois 2003: 100, emphasis in original.
had entered him so completely that he took his Bible verse upon which Lenz is struck—how close nature came to this people.\textsuperscript{22} pursuing him on horseback.\textsuperscript{23}

The urge in him, the music, the pain shattered him. For him there were wounds in the universe; he felt deep, inexpressible grief because of it. Now, another existence, diving, twitching lips bent over him and sucked his lips; he went up to his lonely room. He was alone, alone!\textsuperscript{24}

Do animals have moral codes with respect to perversion? Is perversion a rejection of being foregrounded as a species—with “species” here understood as a moral concept?

I ask these question immediately at the beginning of a section named “perversion” not only because they are, for the time being, dimly related to our ongoing discussion in this chapter, but also because they reflect the underlying core postulations, or the mentalité, of the people working on psychiatry in the 19th century. Despite the Cartesian dictum according to which man is distinguished from the animal on the basis of an ability to speak, 19th-century psychiatric research was riddled with comparisons between man and the animal, especially where the question of sexuality was concerned. For example, on the basis of its presumed presence in both man and animal, what is called the “sexual instinct” was considered during that time as natural or normal if and only if it yielded in the end to “propogation,”\textsuperscript{25} and anything that

\textsuperscript{22} Büchner 1991: 143.
\textsuperscript{23} Büchner 1991: 140.
\textsuperscript{24} Büchner 1991: 144.
deviated from this pathos would be named “perversion.” In other words, the “naturalness” of the animal world, where there is supposed to be no perversion, and sexual instinct has only the natural function of propagation, was taken as a model of normality for the man; meanwhile, it is forgotten that perversion as a clinical term is applicable only to those who have a sense of a norm, a normality. If 19th-century psychiatry formulated perversion with regard to reproduction, it did so not only within a framework of moral codes (highly determined by rigid concepts of religion, humanity, and normality), but also in an easily maintained series of comparisons between man and animal with respect to the Descartian “rational man.” So, given such a stronghold of “naturalness” and “normality” in 19th-century psychiatry, it does not come as a surprise to see Freud referring to this widely appreciated view already in the first two paragraphs of the first essay in *Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*:

The fact of the existence of sexual needs in human beings and animals is expressed in biology by the assumption of a “sexual instinct,” on the analogy of the instinct of nutrition, that is of hunger.26

However, in just the next paragraph he merely states the following caution:

We have every reason to believe, however, that these views give a very false picture of the true situation. If we look into them more closely we shall find that they contain a number of events, inaccuracies and hasty conclusions.27

Given this conclusion, one immediately wonders whether


Freud is not quite convinced with the popular opinion of the time, and therefore will challenge this aforementioned “normality” where the animal is appropriated into a model after the application of human moral codes. What happens instead is the introduction of two technical terms, “the sexual object” and “sexual aim,” which determine the route of the sexual instinct directly from one to another; if the sexual object is “the person from whom sexual attraction proceeds,” the sexual aim is “the act towards which the instinct tends.” Yet, as the next sections of the first essay bear witness, Freud doesn’t stop there. After a discussion about the choice of children and animals as sexual objects, he introduces a shocking novelty into the widely held beliefs of the 19th century, and changes his position as follows:

It has been brought to our notice that we have been in the habit of regarding the connection between the sexual instinct and the sexual object as more intimate than it in fact is. Experience of the cases that are considered abnormal has shown us that in them the sexual instinct and the sexual object are merely soldered together—a fact which we have been in danger of overlooking in consequence of the uniformity of the normal picture, where the object appears to form part and parcel of the instinct. We are thus warned to loosen the bond that exists in our thought between instinct and object. It seems probable that the sexual instinct is in the first instance independent of its object; nor is its origin likely to be due to its object’s attractions.

What has happened in between? Has Freud realised now the dangers of appropriation of the animal as a model, and therefore he is trying to devise some way of getting rid of this model? Or, given the exact correspondence between sexual object and sexual aim based on propagation, does he think he

won’t have enough space for speculation for his upcoming psychoanalytical theory where the norm will be established on the self-identical individual who becomes what he is via eliminating each and every possible tie to nature/animal, especially on the basis of diegesis, and thus embraces an identity free of the animal—a purely restricted Oedipal economy of man as against the non-mimetic, unlocalisable general economy?

Of course, things do not happen in one night, and before seeing how this concern about the self-identical subject of psychoanalysis will lead Freud to a shift from hypnosis to association as a method of treatment, let us see what happens later on in Three Essays. Now, if the sexual instinct is declared to be independent of its object, Freud had to invent a normalising process—that is, the Oedipal family—that will shift the focus from natural/animal to the boundaries of the family. As is well known, one of the main contributions of Three Essays is that that “perversion” was present even among the healthy, and that the path towards a mature and normal sexual attitude began not at puberty but at early childhood. Looking at children, Freud claimed to find a number of practices that looked innocuous, but were really forms of sexual activity, among which thumb sucking was a primary example. Such a consideration, therefore, would lead Freud to the conclusion that “the sexual instinct itself may be no simple thing, but put together from components which have come apart again in the perversions.” These components, then, will be said to function anarchically until the primacy of the genital zone is established. If, for example, practices like thumb sucking and kissing are thought to be perversions in previous sections, it is mainly because such diverse components of the sexual instinct present since early childhood will be normalised in time, and will leave their places to the constitution of more proper erotogenic zones, which are the male and female genital organs. As Freud put it:

If a perversion, instead of appearing merely alongside the

30 Freud 1953: 162.
normal sexual aim and object, and only when circumstances are unfavourable to them, and favourable to it—if, instead of this, it ousts them completely and takes their place in all circumstances—if, in short, a perversion has the characteristics of exclusiveness and fixation—then we shall usually be justified in regarding it as a pathological symptom.  

This is all to say that perversions present since early childhood are negligible until they become the determining factor of a presupposed normality, which is supposed to constitute its erotogenic zones via an Oedipal education of genital organs. This move spectacularly explains why Freud detaches sexual instinct from its object first, if only be able to give it to the service of a guiding principle of topologically determinable erotogenic zones. Hence, perversion, though untied from a certain sexual object, will now become *clinical* per se.

As will be seen in the next section, Freud will draw the boundaries between mimetic and diegetic with his theory of transference, where the Oedipal determinations, achieved by a shift from hypnosis to association, will foreground *representation* as the essential form of the subject and the unconscious. It is with this shift that Freud will be able to clinicalise perversion as a question of localisability, visibility, and audibility. In contrast, the distribution of the genital zone over the whole body, transforming the whole body into a force field of intensities, would undoubtedly undo the question of localisability.

Freudian determinations are therefore Kantian ones, where temporal and spatial determinations constitute the subject in conformity with a certain notion of the *Gestalt*. But what if, as Roger Caillois has shown, there are not only some animal species but also some particular cases in human species that consider *Gestalt* as redundant? In other words, what if psychasthenia is not only a symptom of an illness, but presents a liberative, critical moment which can be considered

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31 Freud 1953: 161, emphasis in original.
as psychosis only within a general economy of bourgeois psychoanalysis?
Will transference be eliminated so that the constitutive critical perversion will be clinicalised?
Will Lenz be absorbed into psychasthenia, or, being clinicalised, will he efface the critical position he raises in the history of literature?

4. Schizo-Incest, Homosexual-Effusion, and Critical Perversion

Ekphrasis 4: Lenz rejects his father’s calls. He does not want to go back home, to the house of Oedipus. Instead, hovering above the clusters of realism, he invents schizo-incest and Oberlin simply responds with kisses.

... he believed it must be boundless ecstasy to be touched in this way by the unique life of every form; to commune with rocks, metals, water, and plants; to assimilate each being in nature as in a dream, as flowers take in air with the waxing and waning of the moon.\textsuperscript{32}

When he was alone, or reading, it was even worse, at times all his mental activity would hang on one thought; if he thought about or visualised another person vividly, it seemed as if he were becoming that person, he became utterly confused, and at the same time he had a boundless urge to internalise everything around him arbitrarily.\textsuperscript{33}

\textsuperscript{32} Büchner 1991: 145.
According to Mikkel-Borch Jacobsen, although Freud rejects hypnosis with a preference for free association, he never succeeds in eliminating the question of transference. What is decisive about this rejection is the distinction between mimesis and diegesis, which can be separated along the lines of enactment/catharsis and narrative. However, what comes to the fore as his analysis of hysteria develops is the impossibility of undermining “the emotional tie,” and thus the question of

Yet this ‘emotional tie,’ which certainly remains very close to the ‘hypnotic tie,’ still cannot be represented or remembered, if only it precedes the ego, the-subject-of-the-representation . . . . “Identification,” Freud says in Group Psychology, “is the original form of emotional tie with an object,” and this means that the ego forms itself or is born in this devouring identification with the
“transference” as the emotional tie is the pivot which pre-conditions one’s relation to the Other and is pre-psychoanalytical and pre-representational at the same time. In other words, transference is elusive because it both constructs and deconstructs the subject of psychoanalysis. As will be seen below, transference, making the subject hear the voice of the silence—that is, as in Lenz’s case—brings along an invitation to a psychasthenic universe where one no longer knows where one is.

At this juncture, I’d like to go back to the question of the audible in Lenz we mentioned at the beginning of this chapter and suggest that it is actually against this becoming-audible of silence—that Lenz has heard—that 19th-century psychiatry and psychoanalysis slowly developed a tendency to put a ban on the voice of the analyst. If in Charcot and Janet the question of transference is negligible to a certain extent, it is because they, unlike Freud, do not have an overall theory of the subject or psyche based on Oedipal norms. For Freud, the voice of the analyst in a hypnotic séance opens the doors towards making the patient hear the voice of the silence;37 in a hypnotic séance, the voice of the analyst, replicating the voice of the Other, reaches the innermost boundaries of the subject, and then violates and shakes them down to their foundations.

other … This first “emotional tie” to another, which is also the unrepreentable event of my “own” birth, can never be remembered, never be recalled to memory. This is also why it can never be “dissolved,” as Freud would have it. But (and this is what happens all the time, if it happens) it can be repeated—for example, in hypnotic trance, or in the oblivion of transference. In the end, in this strange rite of passage that today we call ‘psychoanalysis,’ perhaps the only stake is this: repeating, repeating the other in oneself, dying to oneself—to be reborn, perhaps, other. (Borch-Jacobsen 1993: 60–61)

37 As Mladen Dolar discusses, for Freud, the drives are silent, and it is only the libido which can speak in the face of an attempt on the part of the analysand who restructures a language of his/her own during the therapy where the analyst adopts a stance of silence: Mladen Dolar, A Voice and Nothing More (Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 2006).
In contrast, during the “talking-cure,” the Freudian subject should reintegrate his/her fallen boundaries if s/he has to reconstruct his/her integrity along the lines of the Oedipal family.

Discussing the availability of transference in the matter of distinguishing analysis from hypnosis, Jacobsen draws up a framework for Freudian psychoanalysis where the traces of the emotional tie can be found in any kind of relationship, which is basically hypnotic per se. Furthermore, hypnosis calls for a cathartic enactment which debases any notion of the self-identical subject by opening it to an invasion by the other. In other words, the analysand enacts the traumatic scene by re-living it in a mimetic (not diegetic) fashion—he or she becomes someone else at the moment of enactment—and this state is induced by the voice/suggestions of the analyst. This double invasion disturbs all the spatio-temporal relationship of the self to itself: first as letting oneself be invaded by the voice/suggestion of the analyst, and then as becoming someone else in enactment under hypnosis. The supposed cure is the enactment of the very scene initiated by this double invasion, where the analysand’s relationship to time and space is interrupted with a concern for treatment.

The emotional tie, for Jacobsen, is thus a “rapport without rapport”38 where a concern for the topological is undermined by the de/constitutive role it plays in the attainment of the subject as such. The emotional tie, in this sense, triggers an understanding of perversion as a sexual instinct which does not have any a priori object of love. But before that, we should ask if there are possible ways of approximating the emotional tie with perversion on the basis of mimesis. If mimesis is opposed to diegesis (for not being a narration or representation but becoming one with the one that one identifies with), then there arises a situation where the “I” or ego as such does not exist. Not having an “I” means not only not being introduced to time and space, but also a moment of “becoming-mimesis” itself where the object of love is put at stake,

38 Borch-Jacobsen 1993: 42.
never being able to appear as such. It is a desire not only with no fixed object, but also with no object where the boundaries between object and subject have disappeared.

When hypnosis is understood as Mikkel Borch-Jacobsen understands it (as a destructive strategy for Freudian psychoanalysis based on the self-preservation of the subject), “perversion” present in a hypnotic séance or in la passion somnambulique (as for Janet) becomes constitutive; although it yields to an unceasing transference between the analyst and the analysand during the séance, it can be tolerated until the “sound” state is maintained. It is right here at this moment (what Deleuze and Guattari call “schizo-incest” in their book on Kafka39) that the sound state becomes central in our ongoing discussion on constitutive/critical perversion. What if such a sound state is never maintained, and the analysand is given the freedom of enjoying his/her perversion critically before s/he is captured by the machine-clinique?

Schizo-incest, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is the distribution of a relationality, not on the basis of Oedipal ties but as an alliance of brothers and sisters against the mom and dad. Eventually, it is not based on a mimetic model-copy relationship but rather, if we may say so, on a simulacral relationship where identity is always at stake or fails to produce identifications. It is a state that precludes Freudian psychoanalysis, where the emotional tie is not yet captured by, and is not yet invested in, an Oedipal machine … no identification occurs there (in the absence of an ego)—or, better, there is an identification, but since the model cannot be remembered and represented, it never reaches the point of an aufhebung where it will produce “mother” and “father” as exact figures of identification. We have seen formerly how the “enigmatic signifier” of Laplanche40 is taken by Bersani41 to

39 Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 68.
force a celebration of failure. What I propose here is to insert Bersani’s non-relational relationality (obtained as a result of the affirmation of failure—the “masochistic pleasure,” if you like) into *la passion somnambulique*, where the emotional tie, given the freedom to fail, establishes a rapport without a rapport in the absence of fixed identites. This ultimately gives the lie to any theory of self-identity that works on the gestalt of Kantian spatio-temporality. Without doubt, here we are talking about a Deleuzian desiring-machine with no fixed object on which it invests its love, but also about the affirmation of psychasthenia as a critical position that can only be obtained by an affirmation of perversion as the de/constitutive principle of the “ego.”

If heterosexual love is possible only where identites are fixed or distributed along the lines of Oedipalised genders, what Deleuze and Guattari describe as “homosexual effusion” most likely delineates a horizontal expansion saturated with sound (noise? clamour?), only—as against the specular—a surface effect with no depth, as Deleuze explains so well in *The Logic of Sense*. Moreover, as it is construed in their Kafka book, “homosexual effusion” is an expression-machine that connects singularities on the basis of a perversion-machine: a critique of identity that centres around expression rather than aesthetics. Yes, the voice/sound/noise still exist here, but having denied any transcending transcendental, they can never be tied to a composition, a song, or a melody orchestrated by the voices of god, or mom, or dad. Critical perversion appropriates only the clusters of a vague rhythm that date back to a primary “emotional tie,” whose clamorous echoes of refrain can never be heard in the dark corridors of identity. It has no relation with the specular nor with the speculative insofar as the maintenance of the “political” is concerned. All because, 0) the critical perversion is rooted in psychasthenia, and, n–1) to hear the voice of the silence is the failure to remember the

primary emotional tie, the remembrance of which territorialises and reterritorialises “politics” over and over again today. What we need today is to deterritorialize politics.

Clinical perversion topologically connects one only to the one and single machine—the Oedipal-machine—whereas critical perversion, having multiple connection points, is atopo-logical. It starts with schizo-incest and homosexual effusion, yet the ultimate point is the bachelor-machine. In fact, nothing describes critical perversion better than the “bachelor-machines” that Deleuze and Guattari talk about at the end of their chapter, “The Connectors,” in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*:

In fact, these connector characters, with their connotations of desire, incest, or homosexuality, receive their objective nature from the machine of expression, and not the other way around … . No one knew better than Kafka to define art or expression without any sort of reference to the aesthetic. If we try to sum up the nature of the artistic machine of Kafka, we must say that it is a bachelor machine, and, as such, plugged all the more into a social field with multiple connections. Machinic definition and not an aesthetic one. The bachelor is a state of desire much larger and more intense than incestuous desire and homosexual desire … . His trips aren’t those of the bourgeoisie on an ocean-liner … but the schizo-voyage … . His voyage is a line of escape … . He doesn’t flee the world; he grasps it and makes it take flight on a continuous and artistic line … . With no family, no conjugality, the bachelor is all the more social, social-dangerous, social-traitor, a collective in himself …. The highest desire desires both to be alone and to be connected to all the machines of desire. A machine that is all the more social and collective insofar as it is solitary, a bachelor, and that, tracing the line of escape, is equivalent in itself to a community whose conditions haven’t yet been established.  

Now, have we fallen outside psychoanalysis?

I have only tried to foreground a new constellation—that is, clinical perversion with a clinically perverted desire for schizo-incest, homosexual effusion, and bachelor-machines.


Deleuze, Gilles. “Letter to a Harsh Critic.” In Gilles Deleuze,


Laplanche, Jean. Seduction, Translation, Drives, ed. Martin Stanton and John Fletcher, trans. Martin Stanton. London: