

Becoming-Critical with/out Deleuze and Guattari: Three Anarchies Beyond Post-Critique

by Lukas Meisner

Meisner is a PhD Student between the ERC project *EarlyModernCosmology* (Horizon 2020, GA: 725883), section *Political Epistemology*, Università Ca' Foscari Venezia, and the Max Weber Centre for Advanced Cultural and Social Studies, Universität Erfurt. Contact: lukas.meisner@unive.it ; lukas.meisner@uni-erfurt.de.

Abstract

Usually, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophies are understood as an alternative to allegedly "ressentiment"-laden approaches of Critical Theory. The present essay, however, seeks to distil Deleuze and Guattari's critical potential from an angle critical of post-critical endeavours. By bringing them together with two of their main influences, Nietzsche and Kafka, their concept of becoming gets connected to that of becoming-critical. The essay's orienting questions thus are (a) what understanding of critique is involved in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming, and (b) how useful is it to address the political-economic dynamics of the 21st century? After "three anarchies" are traced as the critical potential in Deleuze and Guattari, Manfredo Tafuri helps to problematise their relationship with anarcho-capitalist ideologies, and to show how to differentiate them from each other. In between, affirmative immanence gets subverted in a Geistergespräch with the main philosopher of affirmation and anti-transcendental thought, Friedrich Nietzsche. Finally, the essay argues that, due to the world's state, affirmation can only be upheld if reconciled with critique: especially in times of crises, critique becomes necessary. At least if re-read together with Nietzsche and Kafka, a critique of what is murderous follows from the Deleuzian affirmation of life; as much as embracing the earth in a Guattarian manner necessitates to transcend the plane of (political) immanence. All in all, to whole-heartedly affirm singularity, as Deleuze and Guattari do, one needs to go beyond post-critique's resentments against utopia.

Introduction

Usually, Deleuze and Guattari's philosophies are understood as an alternative to allegedly “ressentiment”-laden approaches of Critical Theory. Beyond this understanding, the present essay seeks to distil Deleuze and Guattari's critical potential from an angle critical of post-critical endeavours. By bringing them together with two of their main influences, Nietzsche and Kafka, their concept of becoming gets connected to that of becoming-critical. The essay's orienting questions thus are (a) what understanding of critique is involved in Deleuze and Guattari's concept of becoming, and (b) how useful is it to address the political-economic dynamics of the 21st century? We will concentrate our approach on close readings of the text “1730: Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible...” from *A Thousand Plateaus*. After “three anarchies” are traced as the critical potential in Deleuze and Guattari (I), Manfredo Tafuri helps to problematise their relationship with anarcho-capitalist ideologies, and to delineate how to differentiate them from each other (III). In between (II), affirmative immanence gets subverted in a *Geistergespräch* with the main philosopher of affirmation and anti-transcendental thought, Friedrich Nietzsche. Finally (V), the essay argues that, due to the world's state, affirmation can only be upheld if reconciled with critique: especially in times of crises, critique becomes necessary. At least if re-read together with Nietzsche and Kafka (IV), a critique of what is murderous follows from the Deleuzian affirmation of life; as much as embracing the earth in a Guattarian manner necessitates to transcend the plane of (political) immanence. All in all, to whole-heartedly affirm singularity, as Deleuze and Guattari do, one needs to go beyond post-critique's resentments against utopia.

Regarding the style of the essay, a note may be helpful. Our attempt was to construct a textual collage which translates close reading directly into close writing. This textual

contamination also allows to detach from some of Deleuze and Guattari's content precisely by pestering their wordings or conceptualisations. This double-move is one of taking their semantic material serious but rearranging it in the syntax of other found voices, like that of Nietzsche, Tafuri or Kafka. Generally, we have tried to stick to the conceptual toolkit given by Deleuze and Guattari, and this toolkit was sometimes used more and sometimes less strictly. In some occasions, our procedure resulted in a rag rug of text, in an almost too close reading, indeed in coming *too close* to a language that is that of an other, thereby becoming-awkward (opening academic speak to minor literatures). At other times, the provocative *approximation resulted in friction, and by deviating, specific problematisations and alternative readings could be developed*. Hence, the alternation between these two uses of the given toolkit made it possible to haul out as much from Deleuze and Guattari – whereas it also demarcated where we needed to get beyond them to bring them nearer to some of their own consequences. In this manner, Nietzsche was consulted as the fiercest critic of Deleuze and Guattari exactly because he constantly lurks in their background. With this, we hope we could voice some harsher critiques without opening an unbridgeable line of confrontation. Indeed, the goal was to *mutually contaminate diverging positions sufficiently enough to arrive at succinct results regarding the main topics*. These ranged from critique and post-critique, transcendence and immanence, anarchy and capitalism to affirmation and negation, singularity and difference, utopia, becoming and (bare) life. The only danger of the method we applied may be a textual outcome too dense or too complex to be easily followed. Yet, we think that – at least when being able to count on some basic knowledge about Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy in the readers – this danger can be circumnavigated.

I.

Outline of the Potential Critique Involved in D\G's Notion of Becoming:

Three Anarchies

Let us start with an immanent reading of Deleuze and Guattari (from now on abbreviated as D\G¹). To begin with, D\G's notion of becoming is critical towards what no longer becomes but what hinders, restricts or imprisons the production of differences. Yet, since becoming leads to the crisis (κρίσις) of the established, it is less the /notion/² of becoming than becoming itself that is critical (κριτικός). In this way, D\G-becoming is a direct or unmediated critique of the Establishment. Such critique *as* becoming can be grasped less philosophically than as the pre-philosophic liberation of a κρίνειν or of "differentiating (from)". Critique as differentiating from is an infinite flow of "Connect-I-cut"³, or of connecting and cutting. This "Connect-I-cut" entails, as will be elaborated in a bit, a critique of hierarchies because hierarchies cut without connecting; and a critique of identities because identities connect without cutting. Beyond both, already D\G's way of writing is less a description of becoming and its conditions than becoming itself⁴: following the lines of flight that become the pollution and "contagion"⁵ of non-identitarian and non-hierarchical differentiations (κρίνειν). What such creation of becoming engenders is an opening of grammars towards what D\G call *x n event infinitive*⁶, this is towards setting the ever-next new free again and again. In

¹Since Deleuze and Guattari's writings cannot be internally separated without separating what belongs together (perhaps "schizophrenically"), we will write about their literatures as of "one" kind of symbiotic multitude of differences: D\G. In the last paragraph of the essay, the use of the "\ in "D\G" will get a second twist.

²Cf. For the use of "/" in linguistics see Jameson 1991, 260.

³D\G 2012, 51.

⁴Cf. D\G 2003: "Singing or composing, painting, writing have no other aim: to unleash these becomings".

⁵ibid., 239.

⁶Cf. 265.

short, D\G.'s critique is not a negative but an affirmative κρίνειν, a distinguishing from, a successive liberation, or proper becoming.

Since “[b]ecoming is a verb with a consistency all its own it does not reduce to, or lead back to, ‘appearing’, ‘being’, ‘equalling,’ or ‘producing’.”⁷ Proper becoming, thus, is a processual critique not only of that which has become and no longer becomes *but of all which came just as a succession*, inferred from its past, “fall[ing] back on something else, echo[ing] other forms.”⁸ Hence, most importantly, “[b]ecoming is never imitating”⁹: it cannot be found in the “mnemonic conditions of frequency and resonance”¹⁰, neither in history of philosophy nor in philosophy of history, nor indeed in any ideal of learning. Since “[b]ecoming is an *antimemory*”¹¹, its creative practises go beyond memory and remembering. Instead of the *capturing* of time in thought¹², becoming could be described as the release of thought as time into a kind of radically open future. Or as haunting futures without any foundationalist or determining Past but with a “presence of the poetic under the historical.”¹³ From this follows that D\G.'s philosophy is inevitably “transhistorical”¹⁴: it is a critique of Hegel's always belated wisdom of Minerva's owl, and of all its collapse of freedom into necessity. Yet, if history up to now was prehistory (Marx), then becoming-transhistorical means to get outside of the continuum (Benjamin) of history. This quite non-immanent move reveals D\G as an an-archic intensity of implodings that explodes not only state apparatuses but any

7239.

8271.

9305.

10293, cf. 294.

11294.

12Cf. Hegel 1964, 35.

13Deleuze 2004, 130.

14D\G 2003, 296.

security of secured or securitised (indebted) presents. As such, D\G are moving within the lines of flight of *three an-archies*, of (A), (B) and (C):

- (A) They are an-archists with a pragmatist *propagande par le fait* not only infiltrating the state and Stasi but any stasis, static, or status quo. As already mentioned, this entails a critique (*κριτικός*) of hier-archies which, in the process, get flattened or resolve into the horizontality of a plane of immanence without top and bottom.
- (B) If the hierarchy that D\G are critical of is translated not just into “holy dominion” (*ἱερ-αρχία*) but *gleichursprünglich* into “holy origin” (*ἱερ-αρχία*), then D\G.’s becoming equals a crisis (*κρίσις*) already of the foundations of “the Church”. It does not matter, here, what the name of this church is, nor how much it poses as “secular”. In that sense, D\G may be described as post-anarchists¹⁵ whose undermining of the very idea of *arché as origin* dissolves both: sociological and naturalist legitimising tales (ideologies) of teleology, from progress to evolutionism.
- With such an “anti-oedipal” move away from the father figure (Nietzsche’s death of God), we have arrived at (C), or at the always-fleeing “\” (diagonal) D\G. This diagonal gets rid not only of God but of the want to belong to any church or, indeed, to any sect. In such a move, however, resides as infinite speed¹⁶ the micro-¹⁷ and trans-political escape-route of D\G away from any policing Polis. This route is one of self-differentiation or of *κρίνειν*.

15Cf. Newman 2016.

16For “infinite speed” cf. esp. D\G 1994.

17Cf. 2013, 243-270.

This existential exilism¹⁸ of constantly transgressing the borders and walls of poleis, of constant deterritorialisations, and thus of “attacks from the inside” is the most an-archic action of nomadology. With it, D\G are becoming-nomads, or *barbarians from within*. Following this line (of flight), their anti-statist “war machine”¹⁹ may be read critically as a radical (radix) crisis (κρίσις) infesting the very roots (radices) of the family tree. By denucleating its trunk, D\G especially embrace (unlike Heidegger) becoming-plant and becoming-stone.²⁰ It is meanwhile irrelevant to such infestation whether the family to infest has been abstracted into “nation” and “state”, or whether it holds its members captive within the abstract identities of sex, race, or species.

At this point, the concrete anti-philosophy of D\G is becoming-virus in the system, becoming-vermin for the ideal State originating philosophically from Plato. In other words, D\G become, as becoming, a critiquing (κρίνειν) of totality and identity, of totality and identity whose idea and ideal is and remains the Polis (πόλις). The problem D\G have with the Polis, however, mirrored in Foucault’s introductory remarks on fascism in *Anti-Oedipus*, may best be grasped with Wilhelm Reich’s succinct view on the Polis, and thus on the realpolitik at hand: “Hitler as a political genius was a huge unmasking of the essence of the political in general. With Hitler, the political has reached the pinnacle of its development.”²¹ If Reich was correct, plunging the Polis into crisis (κρίσις) qua barbarism from within – nomadology and deterritorialisation – is a radically anti-fascist move. All in all, since consistent anarchy subverts not only states, the status quo, hierarchies and their origins but

18For “existential Territory” cf. Guattari 1995.

19Cf. on “Nomadology” D\G 2013, 409-492.

20Cf. 275; and Heidegger 2010, where the ontologisation of Polis-hierarchies can be inspected at their most obvious. In Heidegger, man is “weltbildend”, the animal is “weltarm”, whilst both, the stone and the Jew, are “weltlos” (cf. Trawny 2014). Cf. furthermore Agamben 2003 and Derrida 2006 on the topic.

21Reich 1971, 347. Of course, W. Reich has been of major influence on D\G (especially on their *Anti-Oedipus*).

also identities and their idealised totality (the “Polis”), the “an(ti)-poli(tic)s” of D\G can be called properly an- or anti-archic.

In such a reading, the assemblage D\G is bursting with critique: not only with a critique of institutionalised politics but of all power politics, however microscopic they may be.²² This is the case because the Tree²³ of the Polis has not only a trunk but a whole delta or radiation of off-shoots and spin-offs. More precisely, it is not the trunk but the branches and bifurcations that compose the Tree’s *Crown* – or its *Monarchy*. Hence, beyond D\G – or at least beyond the hegemonic interpretation of them –, monism (One-ism) is to be read as *a metaphysics of Mon-archy* (the rule of the One). Consequentially, an-archic monism is a *contradictio in adiecto*. This is because monism must conceptualise the ramifications of a Tree as its (dis-)solution, thereby remaining immanent or on the *plane of Treeness*, which thus commences “irradiating the entire universe”²⁴. After all, the crown of a tree is not a rhizome. Its cosmology of fake-earth in heaven inhibits us from heaven on earth: the crown is an inverted set of roots. Rhizomes as practises of anti-archy need to strive not towards immersions in Treeness but towards differentiating from Trees' flat ramifications. The no-body drowned in the Tree's delta is not the absence of ruling but its omni-presence. What an-archic practices need are not no-bodies but singularities. Singularities, however, are no agents of death drives. They cannot naively embrace their own loss as the freeing of nothingness. Rather, they want to live under their own rule. Singularity as that which is closest to the absence of ruling means to be able to rule over oneself.

22Cf. D\G 2013, 243-270.

23Cf. on the Tree vs. the rhizome *ibid.*, 1-28.

24D\G 2003, 309

Unfortunately, D\G seem to “prefer not to”²⁵ be able to rule over themselves.

Consequentially, they seem to agitate for the rule of the no-body, the cosmology of immanence, the metaphysics of Monism. Such a strategy, however, is simply heterogenising Monarchy, bifurcating the trunk, quantifying the offshoots, unfolding the Tree crown. This reading of D\G is indeed not entirely un-grounded. Even more, it seems to *be grounded in their plane of immanence*: especially in the second half of “Becoming animal...” (in “A Thousand Plateaus”), D\G proclaim as *desirable* “to be like everybody else”, to “go unnoticed”²⁶, this is: to become-nobody. In turn, this strategy explains why D\G may be said to end up where Badiou puts them:

“Deleuze arrives at conceptual productions that I would unhesitatingly qualify as *monotonous*, composing a very particular regime of emphasis or almost infinite repetition of a limited repertoire of concepts, as well as a virtuosic variation of names, under which what is thought remains essentially identical.”²⁷

This may be so because D\G conceptualise “becoming *on the same plane of pure immanence*” – namely on a “pure plane of immanence [...] *upon which everything is given*”²⁸. The sameness and purity of immanence thus resembles a kind of speculative or *spectacular neopositivism of givenness* from which nothing and no one can hide or escape, and that no one can fight or transcend. Such neopositivism may eventually be inferred from D\G.’s metaphysically expressed realpolitik of a “[t]ranscendental empiricism [...] which determines the conditions of real rather than possible experience”²⁹. In effect, “Deleuze tends to

²⁵Cf. Beverungen/ Dunne 2007.

²⁶D\G 2003, 279.

²⁷*Clamor of Being* cited in Bryant 2008, X.

²⁸D\G 2003, 255, our italics.

²⁹Bryant 2008, 3.

advocate a sort of fatalistic stoicism”³⁰. The spectacular neopositivism of fatalistic stoicism, obviously, would radically call into question the an-archic stance of D\G. This an-archic stance is incompatible with a kind of naïve anarchism that reduces the political problem to the state and the family – forgetting about the growing, dynamic, emerging, *becoming* capitalist markets as realms of dominion. And indeed: “Nowhere, perhaps, is the field of immanence more manifest than in capitalism.”³¹ If D\G really just reproduce naïve anarchism on their plane of immanence, then only philosophic principles and ways of reasoning are subverted – instead of their contents, like f.e. the Hobbesian claim of fallen nature and man (from homo homini lupus to bellum omnium contra omnes). As a result, there would not be much left of D\G’s an-archic stance. Rather, their anti-Enlightenment, anti-humanist, anti-Marxist *propaganda of the deed* could even border on French (and Italian) theories of fascism³² – some of which are retrieved by the aggressive anarcho-capitalism of our post-welfare societies (like by figures such as Steve Fuller or Nick Land³³).

Obviously, this reading of D\G is antipodal to the one we have arrived at above. Still, the present paper is not concerned with right or wrong but with critique and becoming. In the same book we just cited to support the second reading, there is a quote in which Deleuze states: “I am an empiricist, that is, a pluralist”.³⁴ What this reveals is the not too surprising fact that there are at least two readings or two dimensions of D\G – a note that should not entice us to get lost in philosophical debates on which reading to prefer, nor in the respective ivory tower's architectures. Instead, after having spent some pages on elaborating

30Ibid., 12; for the internal connection between capitalism and fatalism, cf. Tafuri 1976, 141.

31Zayani 2000, 102.

32Cf. Sternhell (et al.) 1994.

33 On Fuller, see Omodeo 2019.

34*Dialogues* cited in Bryant 263.

the critical potential of D\G's becoming, in the following we mainly deal with the arguably uncritical in D\G. For taking seriously their self-critical self-“image” as pluralists, radicals, and anarchists demands criticising that which is potentially uncritical in their writings. And at the end of the day, not every self-contradiction is a line of flight. At least, some lines of flight end up in dead ends.

II.

Transcending D\G:

Becoming-Critical with a Nietzschean Ethics

Non-critical theory's³⁵ social function is to serve either as a protecting ideology or as the cultural engine of an avant-gardist paradigm shift.³⁶ It is not hard to guess, then, what post-critical or affirmative theory is about. How would D\G evaluate the rhizomatic team spirits of lean hierarchies, or the abundantly creative hyper-active event-intensities we know since the end of the 20th century? Are they not the result of capitalism? And is capitalism not itself an “immense abstract machine”³⁷, a “real abstraction”³⁸ – originally made of “English fabric”³⁹? Isn't the “speedup of the abstract machine”⁴⁰ identical to technological acceleration? If yes, can the anti-capitalist Deleuze really *affirm* capital's transgressive dis-embeddings (Polanyi) –

35 For Critical Theory, by contrast, cf. Horkheimer 2011.

36To the most famous Marxist critiques mainly belong Jameson 1992, Eagleton 1996, 2003 and Žižek 1993. Polemically amusing remains Kurz 2013 (1999). Of major importance is: Boltanski/ Chiapello 2007; informed by them and of interest regarding Deleuze: Albertsen 2005.

37D\G 2003, 256.

38Sohn-Rethel 1977.

39D\G 2003, 279.

40Ibid., 272.

or colonising (Habermas) deterritorialisations? Can an eco-philosopher like Guattari *affirm* an economic system to collapse the environment into its consuming immanence?

In the reading proposed in chapter I, they can't. Their *undifferentiated* (uncritical) affirmative is in the way of their radically an-archic stance. Consequentially, in most of their writings, D\G insist that this world is not theirs. They know that “capitalist power has become delocalized and deterritorialized both in extension, by extending its influence over the whole social, economic and cultural life of the planet, and in ‘intension’, by infiltrating the most unconscious subjective strata.”⁴¹ Bearing such insights in mind, any critique of the uncritical in D\G must go beyond immanent affirmation in order not to betray the an-archic.

In what follows, the great “affirmer” himself – Nietzsche – will help us as an interlocutor with D\G’s philosophy. In this *Geistergespräch*, /Nietzsche/ may transcend Deleuze’s re-writings of *Nietzsche et la philosophie*. This procedure will unfold, instead of a reproduction of Deleuze’s Nietzsche, a Nietzsche exactly *unlike* Deleuze’s (although partially close to D\G). In fact, any other approach would allow no interlocutions but, say, only schizo-solipsist monologues on the monotonous – monist – plane of immanence. Apart from that, we resist to ruminate a persiflage of Nietzsche reduced to his least alive *and least becoming* concepts – like the “eternal return” or the “will to power”. We resist it mainly because Nietzsche's creative yet critical, indeed polemical style demands to read him *against* the current (instead of academically).⁴²

41Guattari 2014, 33.

42Surely, Deleuze *did* read Nietzsche against the current when he wrote *Nietzsche et la Philosophie*. Nonetheless, his former intervention has meanwhile become a canonic authority, being transformed into a catechism especially via the influence of Foucault in the humanities. The effects of Deleuze introducing *his* Nietzsche to French philosophy – further igniting poststructuralism – cannot be overestimated. Since then, it is mainly the “third” or late Nietzsche who is studied and known, which underrepresents especially the “second” or intermediate Nietzsche of crisis (κρίσις) and of critique (from *Human, All Too Human* to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* – books that are beyond the catchwords of academic recycling). Deleuze called this second phase “the age of the lion” (Deleuze 2001, 57) – see the penultimate chapter on how we deal with this concept of Nietzschean camel, lion, and child.

Having said enough about that, for Nietzsche, becoming for becoming's sake – becoming stuck in becoming; or some kind of *willing all, indiscriminately* – would have been as empty as its opposite, as nihilism or the “will to nothing”.⁴³ In fact, Nietzsche was an intensity of becoming not due to the stimulations of abstract concepts, systems or drugs (in these concerns he was an ascetic) but due to his sober affirmation of life. Such affirmation can only dwell in the *living becoming of embodiment*. The concept of the body as life's “great health”⁴⁴, however, encompasses not only intensity, creativity, movement and implosion. Rather, it also includes suffering, silence, solitude and distance. Since concrete life, seen from the angle of the all-constraining imperative of perfected idealism, is *failure*, what Nietzsche's “body” and D\G affirm together, is life as essentially non-essential, confusing, and imperfect.⁴⁵ On the other hand, in Nietzsche (as in Marx), this affirmation is linked to a “philosophy of suspicion” (Ricoeur). Nietzsche's suspicion, however, is – next to that against theologians and “pure metaphysician[s]”⁴⁶ – a suspicion against the “way too many”⁴⁷. This “good taste”⁴⁸ of those who are the (self-acclaimed) best (ἄριστοι) is summarised in Nietzsche's always maintained *esprit* he himself called “pathos of distance”⁴⁹. Whereas D\G

43“Wille zum Nichts”, see Nietzsche's *Genealogie der Moral*, last paragraph. All Nietzschean citations are translated by the author and can be found freely in the original (edited by Colli and Montinari) on <http://www.nietzschesource.org/>. Since I use this source, too, the paper's citation style for Nietzsche will differ slightly from the other footnotes.

44“Große Gesundheit”, see Nietzsche's *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (Gay Science), § 382.

45Cf. D\G 2003, 269

46Somers-Hall 2013, 1.

47“Die Viel-zu-Vielen”, in *Also Sprach Zarathustra's* chapter *Vom neuen Götzen* („About the new idol“).

48For “guter Geschmack” (good taste) in Nietzsche, see especially *Fröhliche Wissenschaft* (Gay Science) and *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* (Beyond Good and Evil) – in the latter f.e. §§ 216-245, within which Nietzsche uses his notion of “Geschmack” 15 times.

49“Pathos der Distanz”, see f.e. *Der Anti-Christ* § 43 and § 57. Importantly, „pathos” literally translated means *suffering and bearing*: this will become especially telling when we deal with Nietzsche's concept of “the child” (including “the camel”) that is quite differently conceptualised than in D\G.

identify “pack affects” with becoming itself⁵⁰, for Nietzsche, they belong to a re-actionary slave morality with all its concomitant “ressentiments” leading, eventually, into the end of becoming as “der letzte Mensch”.⁵¹ Against this arch enemy, Nietzsche famously proclaimed the antipode to the last man as the *Übermensch*. If carefully read, this “Übermensch” is not to be confused with a trans-humanist super-man but rather delineates a living being that *becomes as being overcoming (überwindend* – transcending also D\G.’s “devenir”). At this point it gets clear what the main difference between Nietzsche and D\G is: it is the role of transcendence and negativity; the role of that which lies *outside of what already is*.

Nietzsche’s critical pathos differentiates what to be affirmed not only quantitatively but normatively – even *wertesetzend*. He is definitely for becoming-animal but not for becoming sheep, dogs, or swarms – and rather for becoming serpent or lion.⁵² With Nietzsche, affirmation is no longer that of any and all becoming but of the very special singular living being that oneself is – it is the affirmation of “becoming what one is”⁵³; the becoming of singularity. Such a more differentiating, more *critical* notion of becoming transcends the position of “being for any and all becoming”; it transcends the indistinguishability of the absolute⁵⁴, asking instead: which becoming; the becoming of what? The Nietzschean ethics that is involved in the transcending pathos of distance, thus, is transcending D\G’s becoming of immanence. Indeed, it is a pathos entirely negative about D\G.’s becoming as “find[ing]

50D\G 2003, 246 and 240ff. It is important to stress that D\G can also be read *with* Nietzsche in these respects: “Majority implies a state of domination, not the reverse.” (Ibid., 291.) They go on to argue: “all becoming is a becoming-minoritarian” (286), for “only a minority is capable of serving as the active medium of becoming, but under such conditions that it ceases to be a definable aggregate in relation to the majority.” (291.)

51“Der letzte Mensch”, usually translated as the “last man” or the “last race”, actually: „the last human“, in *Also Sprach Zarathustra, Vorrede 5* (preface 5).

52 We will return to this in the next chapter.

53“Wie man wird, was man ist” (how one becomes what one is), in the original by Pindar, is the subtitle to *Ecce Homo*.

54Cf. D\G 2003, 288: “absolute imperceptibility”.

one's proximities and zones of indiscernibility"⁵⁵. Nietzsche's Zarathustra immediately smells necrophilia – Christian morals – in such approximations and shortcuts:

“Those in more distance are the ones who pay your love to the next of kin [Nächsten]; and always when you get together as five, a sixth must have died already.”⁵⁶

Consequentially, Nietzsche's becoming goes beyond the internalisations of “love thy neighbour” (Nächsten-liebe). Those without self, the self-less (Selbst-lose⁵⁷) may like to “reduce oneself”⁵⁸, as D\G propose, to the point where “[n]othing develops”⁵⁹ but “everything reconnects”⁶⁰. Nietzsche, by contrast, could never celebrate “dying happily, being extinguished”⁶¹. Rather, Nietzschean becoming who one is becomes a pathos of distance, thereby rejecting all “process of elimination, [where] one is no longer anything more than an abstract line, or a piece in a puzzle that is itself abstract.”⁶² Indeed, Nietzsche's affirmation of life is directed first and foremost against such philosophical abstraction. His affirmation affirms singular bodies full of self, or *concrete transcendences*. Nietzsche's becoming, thus, is becoming-critique or *able to judge* (κριτική) – to judge not only beyond transcendental signifiers (Derrida) but also beyond the prisons of immanence. Critical becoming or becoming-critical, however, is *negating out of affirmation*. This is because “[i]f we want to live, we need to remember the language of resistance.”⁶³ This is the opposite of

55Ibid., 280.

56In *Also sprach Zarathustra*, chapter *Von der Nächstenliebe* (“About brotherly love”).

57Nietzsche explicitly talks against self-loss (Selbst-Losigkeit) *ibid.*, chapter *Von den Tugendhaften* (“About the virtuous”).

58D\G 2003, 280.

59Ibid., 266.

60283.

61299.

62280.

63Penny 2010, 66.

post-critical language. It is a language of distance in time and in space, towards the future and the remote. For Nietzschean ethics is brimming not with nepotism but with a *love for the stranger*, the alien and the out-sider *beyond immanence*. Embodied concrete transcendences go not only beyond family, state and their apparatuses; they transcend everything that puts pressure on singularities, whether it is constituting itself as herd, pack, ingroup, nation, property, market or capital.

In the last chapter, we will come back to the critical potential of D\G, to their an-archic stance of non-fitting, resisting, surmounting. For now, we are equipped with a Nietzschean ethics and thus able to criticise D\G.'s undifferentiated, affirmative, abstract plane of immanence more concretely. The Internet's "Cosmos as an abstract machine"⁶⁴ will serve as a real-life example through which the notion of the plane of immanence can be problematised. Indeed, its "cosmic formula" has as "the immanent end of becoming"⁶⁵ imperceptible *control* – imperceptible since it is "*secret by transparency*."⁶⁶ The next chapter, thus, makes clear why Foucault was right when he claimed that the next century would be Deleuzian.⁶⁷ Whereas the 21st century most definitely did *not* become an-archic, decade-long neoliberal deregulations made it anarcho-capitalist in unprecedented ways.

64D\G 2003, 280.

65Ibid., 279.

66D\G 2003, 290, our italics; cf. Han, 2012.

67 Buchanan 1999.

III.

The Internet, Avant-gardism, Fascism:

Re-writings of D\G with Tafuri and Nietzsche

“We are facing the emergence of a real, collective madness reinforced by the synchronization of emotions: the sudden globalization of affects in real time that hits all of humanity at the same time, and in the name of Progress.”⁶⁸

The Internet is the latest large-scale technological heir to capitalism’s globalised economy. With the Inter-net, a sudden loss of distance and thus simultaneous *identification* of everyone and everything spread over the world, leaving almost no one outside of its reach, not even those that have not yet been becoming-fish in the mainstream – and not even the peripheries or margins. Indeed, D\G's concepts of becoming are apt tools to adequately describe the phenomenon of the Internet. With its inception, the world collapsed into the Inter-net's “Planomenon”⁶⁹, being flattened down to a “planitude”⁷⁰ of “flat multiplicities”⁷¹, “defined by” – respectively reduced to – “longitude and latitude, [...] speeds and affects”⁷². Therein, everyone is “governed by another”⁷³ “made of refrains”⁷⁴, all together flowing into the “univocality”⁷⁵ of the “universal machinism”⁷⁶ which proclaims: “I am legion.”⁷⁷ Within

68Virilio 2012, 75.

69D\G 2003, 252.

70Ibid., 267.

71251.

72262, our italics.

73254.

74309.

75266.

76256.

77239.

this truly puritanist immanence of “pure relations”, “pure event”⁷⁸ and “pure affects”⁷⁹, there is no longer any “becoming in the pure state”⁸⁰. Rather, only “mutations of an abstract machine”⁸¹ or bifurcations of neo-positivist one-dimensionality are left.⁸²

What is mass-produced within this “surveillance capitalism”⁸³ and the all-invading loops of its public sphere or *agora* is first and foremost “a massive organization of the individual consciences for the sake of profit”⁸⁴ – or a self-commodifying “crowd, itself become a spectacle”⁸⁵. In short, what is mass-produced in the Internet is the perfection of Nietzsche’s *letzter Mensch*. He described him accordingly as part of a society with “no herdsman but one herd!”, within which “everyone wants the same, everyone is the same”⁸⁶ – this is, a commodity (so could be said). Is this what gets affirmed by D\G when they vote for “being just like everybody else”⁸⁷? In any case, Nietzsche's pathos of distance expressed an organic growth into height, overcoming and its outsides – not a machinic (economic) growth into flatness, repetition, and immanence. In the chapter against *der letzte Mensch*, Zarathustra speaks against all false post-humanism:

78263.

79281.

80296.

81307.

82For the concept of “one-dimensionality”, see Marcuse 2002.

83Zuboff 2015.

84Vandenberghe 2008, 893, and Stiegler 2004.

85Tafuri 1976, 83.

86See Nietzsche’s *Also sprach Zarathustra, Vorrede 5* („Preface 5“).

87D\G 2003, 279.

“It is time that humans plant the seed of their *highest hope*. Still, the soil is rich enough for that. But this soil will one day be poor and docile, and no *high tree* will longer know how to grow from it.”⁸⁸

Indeed, this Nietzschean tree is a singular tree, a vote for singularity, an embodiment of transcendence. It is a hope for humans, not for cyborgs.

Yet, what meanwhile “happens at once”⁸⁹ and “freely on the surface”⁹⁰ is the progressing petty(cy)bourgeoisification of the world population. As usually, capital’s micro-technologies were hurrying ahead of capitalism, programming new modes of subjectification before the macro-system even thought it could need them. In Tafuri’s anticipating words, through “the creation of ‘microenvironments’, the explosive contradictions of the metropolitan structures, sublimated and subjected to a cathartic irony, enter into private life.”⁹¹ The Internet’s hyper-urbanist function could not be grasped better than in this *analysis avant la lettre*.

Hence, were D\G vanguard ideologues of digital capitalism and of the last human? Were they continental philosophers of Silicon Valley’s “Californian ideology”?⁹² Were they really developing a “Pop Philosophy”⁹³ of “Californiacation” (Red Hot Chili Peppers)? Were they even reducible to being part of the community of “lava lamp saint[s] of ‘California

88Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra, Vorrede 5*; and the chapter *Vom Baum am Berge* (“About the tree at the mountain”).

89D\G 2003, 297.

90Ibid., 269.

91Tafuri 1976, 142. The metropolitan for Tafuri is „the city as a programmed network of communications”, *ibid.*, 169. “It is not just by chance that the metropolis, the place of absolute alienation, is at the very center of concern of the avant-garde”, 1.

92 Cf. Barbrook/ Cameron 1996.

93Introduction of *Anti-Oedipus* by Mark Seem, D\G 2012, 7.

Buddhism”⁹⁴? Were they really hyping Californian ideology on both of its ends: mass *and* swarm media, the cinema with all its techniques⁹⁵ (Hollywood) *and* the techno-gurus’ fantasies of omnipotence (Silicon Valley)?⁹⁶

More than that, is it possible that they themselves were technophile gurus of a proto-neoliberal ontology of *deregulated, precariously instable flows*? Are they following in that the avant-garde of the early 20th century which, as Manfredo Tafuri outlined, “was dedicated to an *ideology of permanent and programmed innovation*”⁹⁷? Aren’t D\G “teaching that one is not to ‘suffer’ that shock, but to absorb it as an inevitable condition of existence”⁹⁸ Aren’t they teaching precisely “decomposition of complex into elementary forms”⁹⁹, “ambiguity raised to an institution”¹⁰⁰, “the sublimation of automatism”¹⁰¹, and “Dadaist mechanicalism”¹⁰²? Is their “Mechanosphere”¹⁰³ not a “process of consumption [that] tends to the infinite”¹⁰⁴, namely to an “ensemble of tautological relationships that refer to themselves in a maximum of ‘negative entrophy’”¹⁰⁵? Were they, in short, just victims of the most unleashed cutting-edge spirits of the latest capitalism?

94Culp 2016, 7.

95Cf. Deleuze 1986.

96Sometimes, D\G indeed sound a bit like other drug- and techno-gurus of ‘68, especially in imperatives like “this is how we need to feel” (263): “Do not imitate a dog” (274).

97Tafuri 1976, 146. In fact, one could write a whole essay criticising D\G.’s avant-gardist moves with Tafuri – although *Architecture and Utopia* was written years before *A Thousand Plateaus*.

98Ibid, 86

9995.

100163.

10193.

10274.

103D\G 2003, 252

104Tafuri 1976, 137.

105Ibid., 161.

Undeniably, Tafuri's words sound familiar to those acquainted with D\G.'s philosophy of flat infinities on a monist plane of acceleration that, arguably, imprisons becoming in immanence. And certainly, D\G "convinced" – as Tafuri writes about the avant-gardes – a not too small "public" "that this chaos" of reality under capitalism "contains an unexplored richness, unlimited utilizable possibilities, and qualities of the 'game' now made into new fetishes for society."¹⁰⁶ Even more, D\G.'s functionalism *does* propagate that "'criticism of conservative thought' thus becomes a necessity, an instrument for liberating the dynamic functioning of the system."¹⁰⁷ Last but not least, D\G describe themselves not only with the help of 20th-century avant-gardes but impersonate the theoretical avant-gardes of their time.¹⁰⁸

Facing such resemblance between D\G and what Tafuri criticises in capital's avant-gardist culture, it seems we have to return to the question of how D\G conceptualise becoming. On the one hand, there is the highly critical trans-historical triple-anarchic philosophy of becoming developed in chapter I, embracing singularity and the new (beyond the Establishment). On the other hand, there is the "technological utopia"¹⁰⁹ of a productivist, functionalist, machinistic cosmos accelerating everything into the "absolute movement"¹¹⁰ of "Celerity against gravity."¹¹¹ In this second technophile if not technocratic version, D\G

106Ibid., 139.

10753.

108Literally, they were theoretical action painters/ performance artists of a kind of vitalist-virtualist Fluxus which Guattari proclaimed with the words: "From now on what will be on the agenda is a 'futurist' and 'constructivist' opening up of the fields of virtuality." Guattari 2014, 25. Cf. also Constantin V. Boundas on *Deleuze-Bergson: An Ontology of the Virtual* in Patton 1997.

109Tafuri 1976, 153: "The only utopia the art of the avant-garde was able to proffer was the *technological utopia*."

110D\G 2003, 255

111Ibid., 289

transform even the subconscious into a *machine désirante*¹¹² liquidated between a microphysics of particles¹¹³ and its technological devices. In turn, conscious actors are transformed into last humans “that cease to be subjects to become events.”¹¹⁴ The Internet as a techno-cosmos thus is a “composition of speed and affects”¹¹⁵ whose mathematised¹¹⁶, diagrammed, quantified “maximum number”¹¹⁷ is ruled by a division of responsibilities.¹¹⁸ It stages all-adjustable affect-“elements”¹¹⁹ or abstracted identities, an “assemblage of humans and their machines” that, as Tiziana Terranova has it, become “updateable equipment.”¹²⁰ In other words, what becomes on the plane of immanence is a “swarm of mosquitoes”¹²¹, since “the reign of birds seems to have been replaced by the age of insects.”¹²² If this post-Nietzschean trans-humanist becoming mediated by the swarm technology of the Internet would be all there is in D\G, it would be hard to see them *not* as technophile gurus of Californian ideology.

Fortunately, however, D\G themselves detect a “danger” in the insects' or swarm's musical composition – a danger “veering toward destruction”¹²³. In fact, they even give this danger the rather unambivalent name *fascism*.¹²⁴ With a “certain blindness to the erroneousness of

112Cf. D\G 2013, 11-68.

113Cf. *ibid.*, 561-572.

114D\G 2003, 262

115*ibid.*, 258.

116D\G 2003, 307: “one can only *calculate* [...] powers of deterritorialization”; and “count [...] affects”, 257.

117*ibid.*, 265.

118Cf. Arendt 2006.

119Cf. 256.

120Terranova, 2004.

121D\G 2003, 245.

122*ibid.*, 308.

123299.

124Cf. in more detail D\G 2013, 243-270. Since “the refrain itself is the content of music”, “[m]usic has a thirst for destruction”, which is “its potential ‘fascism’.” (D\G 2003, 299.)

dividing the Real into a number of discrete domains”¹²⁵ displayed by digital capital and its assemblages, “the creative line, or line of flight immediately turns into a line of death and abolition.”¹²⁶ For fascism is not only Nazism, it is not even mainly about the personal leader, the static state, strict hierarchies, nor about fear, obedience or recoding, but rather about the libidinal immersion in a “violence of affects.”¹²⁷ In short, D\G conceive of fascism as the violence of (axiomatically) flowing affective fasci or “molecular proximit[ies]”¹²⁸ whose futurist “affects circulate”¹²⁹ like machinic insects. As a result, the mosquitoes' moving swarm composes a “music” that “draws people and armies into a race that can go all the way to the abyss.”¹³⁰ Indeed, this abyss is the dead end we spoke about at the end of the first chapter. It is a dead end in which certain lines of flight may blindly end up if not directed by singularity, self-rule, or self-differentiation.

Yet, there is an alternative to this cosmos of “philofolly”, to the globalised immaterial “hyper-fascism”¹³¹ of *letzte Menschen* as molecular microfascists¹³². There is an alternative to the proto-neoliberal ontology of precariously instable flows on a technocratic plane of immanence. There is an alternative to the anatomisation of psyches or to augmented swarm-identities which are organised in musical compositions. The alternative to D\G.'s “three virtues” of “imperceptibility, indiscernibility, and impersonality”¹³³ are the three anarchies we developed in chapter I. These three anarchies are also the alternative to the

125Guattari 2014, 27.

126D\G 2003, 285. Cf. also Peters 2006.

127D\G 2003, 269.

128*ibid.*, 274.

129257.

130302.

131Virilio 2012, 76.

132Cf. D\G 2013, 251.

133D\G 2003, 280.

unholy trinity Internet, avant-gardism, fascism which we approached in the present chapter. Meanwhile, the three an-archies κρίσις, κριτικός, κρίνειν can be delineated more clearly. As in chapter II, Nietzsche will be of help to do so – this time with his concept of becoming being called the “child”.

This “child” is not a surrendered immediacy of indiscriminately becoming-anything – it is not stuck before the mirror stage. Rather, it is the *critical and consciously self-affirmative judging child* of “becoming who one is”. Thus, Nietzsche’s child is full of the joy of itself, critical because it is affirmative and affirmative because it is critical, and both due to its great “yes” towards life and its embodiment. Indeed, for Nietzsche, becoming-child includes a twofold becoming-animal: becoming-camel and becoming-lion. In this “trialectics” (Asger Jorn), we can discover our three an-archies. The child's *große Gesundheit* entails both the suffering-enduring camel (κρίσις) and the critically negative lion (κριτικός). Indeed, they meet – when grown up – exactly in the child (κρίνειν) as self-differentiation.¹³⁴ This child's ethos is a pathos of distance that loves the most what is most remote – what is outside of immanence. Hence, Nietzsche's child is *becoming-overcoming*: transcending first and foremost the tyranny of proximities. Its an-archic trialectics consists of κρίσις (camel), κριτικός (lion) and κρίνειν (child), which all are expressions of the affirmation of life. The trialectic child is the singularity, self-rule or self-differentiation in which suffering, critique and affirmation are united.

134Cf. Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra*, chapter *Von den drei Verwandlungen* („About the three metamorphoses“).

IV.

Re-writings of D\G/N with Kafka (D\G/N+K):

The Barbaric Plane of Transcendence

The time has come to read and re-write D\G and Nietzsche (D\G/N) alongside each other and beyond each as an an-archic co-operation between friends of life and becoming. Taking an-anarchy seriously in this manner, what has to be overcome are not only states and the status quo (of market, capital and technology) but also the bourgeois theodicy of the “state of nature” and the “nature of human beings”. The west inherited these entities of the theodicy from the nihilist (Christian) hatred of the earth and the body. That same hatred was *christened* “original sin” and got successively a) secularised and thereby brought back into the centre of realpolitik by Machiavelli and Hobbes; b) naturalised by the survival of the fittest Darwin; c) materialised by economics and economic expansion, making it empirical. Last but not least, “original sin” as the “state of nature” got d) fatalised by the son of a priest, late Friedrich Nietzsche. Via his lovely return to the metaphysics of the eternal called *amor fati*, the very *timely* invention of the will to power could also be proclaimed – not to speak of its infamous caricature in the “blonde beast”¹³⁵.

Unfortunately, D\G don't seem to be too critical precisely about this repression if not neurotic psychologisation of the old narrative that tells us the bellicist story of *arché* – of nature beginning with the end of paradise, or with the fall of man. Ever since, there are only two choices in nature, also for D\G: “either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it”¹³⁶. This secularised, naturalised, materialised, fatalised version of the original sin as *evil nature* equals a race to the bottom or rather into the above-mentioned abyss that “no character or

135Cf. Nietzsche, *Zur Genealogie der Moral*, book 1, § 11.

136D\G 2003, 257.

subject will survive”¹³⁷. Of course, under capitalism, the race to the abyss bears the name competition, which is a survival of the fittest disciplining everyone into adjustment. The bottom line of competition as a war of all against all (Marx), however, is well known: “from time immemorial ‘nature’ has been at war with life!”¹³⁸ So is the eco-philosopher's opinion on the subject. It is interesting to reconstruct how the secularisation of the original sin as evil nature debunks itself already in its father-figure, Thomas Hobbes. First, nature needed to be declared to be a *State* as well, so that the “state of nature” could also become a warmongering totality. In the following, the Hobbesian *State* of (human) nature as a warmongering totality needed to be projected as the “solution” – the Leviathan – back onto the beginning of times (ἀρχή) as a kind of law of life, yet without omitting to remain the original problem (war of all against all). In short, it uses ἀρχή as a circular argument to universalise the eternal power-game. In this way, markets' competition becomes naturalised, and states' sovereignty gets civilised. Hence, an-archy beyond power becomes both unnatural (non-market) and uncivilised (non-state).¹³⁹

At the latest from then on, even animals are ideologically instrumentalised and /wolves/ are supposed to be against wolves, legible – still in D\G – as the “becomings-animal” of “the man of war.”¹⁴⁰ Such affiliating, however, bring D\G back to the very contemporary of Hobbes they probably disliked the most – this is, to Descartes. Whilst the latter's rationalism, proclaimed during mercantilist times of progressions in the exploitation of nature and the colonies, declared the body of animals to be a machinic functioning (*Bête machine*), D\G.'s ir- or hyper-rationalism regards not only *some* species in this way but *whole nature*. Or, in

137Ibid., 269.

138Guattari 2014, 45.

139This reading got most of its background from MacPherson 1970.

140D\G 2003, 278.

their own words, “The plane of the consistency of Nature is like an immense Abstract Machine.”¹⁴¹ Thereby animals, nature and life are all reduced into the pseudo-neutrality of technology, and technology in turn gets naturalised. Together, they form a cyborg-like war machine of the Hobbesian nature-state, starting from the fall of man and – consequentially – accelerating into the abyss. Indeed, this is the very opposite of an-archy.

Yet, becoming-animal does not equal becoming-machine. Now preferring D\G.’s vermin, plague and contagion to Nietzsche’s master race (Herrenmensch), it must generally be stated that animals are neither machines nor packs, *neither Hobbesian wolves nor Freudian wolves in sheep’s clothing*. Rather, they are *body-beings* and thus *vulnerabilities*, as all living becomings are. Inasmuch as potency without sensitivity is not becoming but sterile-virile aggression, D\G.’s “contaminating men”¹⁴² should be embraced as an affirmation of bare life.¹⁴³ Such bare life is beyond any affiliation with the power-Polis, this is beyond all “Nietzschean” (Greek) *demos- and domestication* that define “man” either as a being capable of talking or as a political animal. In fact, bare life precisely is speechless, it is βάρβαροι (barbarians), a multitude of (unintelligible) outsiders.¹⁴⁴ Bare life is *outside* of the gates of the power-Polis, it is *outside* of political immanence – it gathers itself on the *barbarian plane of transcendence*. By embracing bare life, D\G/N would refute the political (anti-barbarian) philosophers from Plato to Hegel with their bad taste in music – namely their endless refrains of “totality was there before the particular”, “society was there before the individual”, etc. For bare life remains barbarian, and its music remains unintelligible to civilised ears. Yet, how to bring the “anti-compassion” philosopher of music and power –

141Ibid., 254.

142D\G 2003, 276.

143Cf. Agamben 1998.

144Cf. Rancière 2005.

Nietzsche – in line with an embrace of bare life? How to bring him in line with an embrace of the weak, the wormy, the vulnerable?

Here, it is fruitful to re-read Nietzsche's attitude towards compassion and pity from scratch.

This re-reading will make it fit with Nietzsche the "Schizo"; and with Nietzsche's often described actually hyper-sensitive character outside of his official writings.¹⁴⁵ Since his collapse in front of the tortured horse in Turin, Nietzsche, as Milan Kundera puts it, "was trying to apologize to the horse for Descartes."¹⁴⁶ Arguably, then and there, he wholeheartedly embraced radical vulnerability and thus broke free from his eternal return of mercilessness, letting in *the singular as the most minoritarian*. For in front of the other as singularity and vulnerability, a *becoming-humble* happens forcing us to apologise and to admit, as D\G do, that "[t]here is always a perception finer than yours, a perception of your imperceptible."¹⁴⁷

It was Franz Kafka who described this becoming-humble in front of the singular other and its profound affirmation in most beautiful lines:

"When you stand in front of me and look at me, what do you know about the pain that is in me, and what do I know about yours. And if I prostrated before you and cried and told you, what more would you know about me than about hell when someone tells you, it is hot and horrible. Already therefore, we humans should stand in front of each other as reverent, as thoughtful as *in front of the entrance to hell*."¹⁴⁸

145Cf. Wieke 2008.

146Milan Kundera in *The Unbearable Lightness of Being*, quoted by Townsend 2017.

147D\G 2003, 287.

148Our translation and italics. From a letter by Kafka to Oskar Pollak (8th November 1903), <http://franz-kafka.eu/zitate/>, accessed 7/1/18.

For indeed, there is hell, and there are possibilities of entering and leaving it. Kafka's becomings-animal are not musical compositions between two political animals, *barbaric breakdowns of the power-Polis* and of its entrances and entrance fees, not only micropolitical be-tweens¹⁴⁹ but *barbaric be-yonds*: tries and trials beyond hell. Compassion may be a sin in the naturalised fall of man into the abyss – but it is a virtue if seen from the angle of singularity, of self-rule and self-differentiation. Nietzsche the Schizo was the Nietzsche within his last ten years, the years after becoming-humble and apologising in front of the horse in Turin. And in fact, this sensitive, compassionate, perhaps even regretting Nietzsche was *more affirmative towards life and its beings* than the late official version of Nietzsche, than the pitiless *Herrenmensch* of will to power, of “non, je ne regrette rien” (Édith Piaf).

Yet, here, we seem to encounter D\G.'s incapacity to think *being*¹⁵⁰ – being that nevertheless pre-conditions becoming. A philosophy that remains merely philosophical and thinks of such a “pre-condition” as being being “western philosophy” or a hierarchy to get rid of remains precisely *within* the west – namely blind against its own *remaining in the power-Polis*. This is so because only the non-philosophic un-intelligibilised barbarian – whose *singular life as vulnerable body* is not protected from Leviathans – has *experienced* that all becoming in fact *needs being*, first and foremost, *is* being. Every contrary opinion is the liberalism of civilians demanding civil rights instead of transcending the judicial sphere into becoming-overcoming. Such becoming-overcoming would be an an-archic stepping outside the power-Polis into mutual aid and cooperation. A life, as long as it is not abstracted from itself and thus made into “the life”, “life” or “lives” (but grasped concretely) is *not* amorphous, *not*

149Cf. D\G 2003, 246 and 293 ff.; 277: “The only way to get outside the dualisms is to be-between, to pass between, the intermezzo.”

150Cf. f.e. the symptomatic, formerly criticised, here re-used structuralist notion of D\G: “There are only relations of movement and rest”, *ibid.* 266.

undifferentiated or augmented or no-body. Rather, it is embodied self-differentiating: *a* life is critical. It is *a* body that is as vulnerable as it is exactly because it *is*, because it *is a* being, one singular (non-essentialist) becoming living *being*.¹⁵¹

V.

Concluding Remarks Beyond Post-Critique:

Ways of Reconciling Critique and Affirmation, Transcendence and Immanence

We have tried to demonstrate: from becoming-humble follows becoming-critical; from the affirmation of life follows the critique of what is murderous; from embracing the earth follows to transcend the plane of (political) immanence. Since being is threatened, becoming becomes overcoming: becomes – also – negative: resistant, dissident, critical. In short, differentiated affirmation and differentiating critique can only be reconciled beyond “post-critique”. Indeed, the essay argued that critique even needs to become more radical. This is the case because there are (family) Trees whose roots (radices) should be uprooted – for the Tree's amplified crown is not the absence of ruling but its omni-presence (I). The immersion in an ontology of deregulated flows is not an-archic but belongs to anarcho-capitalism (III). Against it, we have attempted to excavate another trace in D\G: that of the three anarchies of κρίσις, κριτικός, κρίνειν (II). Within them, suffering, negating and self-differentiating unite. Such critique is the opposite of resentment: it is the most thorough (self-)affirmation of life emblematised in Nietzsche's triolectic child (IV).

¹⁵¹As such, *a* life always is *this* life. See Hägglund 2020.

On this path, D\G as an-archists became-critical of machinism, economism and war – especially of “the machines of human beings, the roar of factories and bombers.”¹⁵² Also, the dangers of fascism and “Integrated World Capitalism”¹⁵³ became-perceivable as abysses in which blind lines of flight may end up as well. Only critical singularity – self-rule and self-differentiation – can *catch this fall of wo*man*. And indeed, beyond post-critical endeavours, D\G propose critical singularity as self-rule and self-differentiation. In their opinion, there has to be “the expansion of alternative experiences centred around a *respect for singularity*, and through the continuous production of an *autonomizing* subjectivity that can articulate itself appropriately in relation to the rest of society.”¹⁵⁴ Yet, the expansion of a respect for singularity through autonomising subjectivities is conditional on singular living beings' critical self-differentiation – which, in turn, is vulnerable. This means that becoming-singular is conditional on others being sensitive. Consequentially, sensitivity is first and foremost respect for “the singular, the exceptional, the rare”¹⁵⁵. And the other way around: respect is embedded in sensitive singularity as a “secret”¹⁵⁶ whose “content is *too big* for its form.”¹⁵⁷ In this sense, D\G/N may not find together in the pathos of distance – but perhaps in the love for the concrete transcendence of irreducibly embodied singularity.¹⁵⁸ In any case, on the path proposed to be taken in the present essay, it would be ridiculous to claim D\G were trans-/anti-/post-critical – or without any outside, negativity or beyond. Arguably, nomadology is about nothing else. On the other hand, to get to this conclusion, we needed

152309.

153Cf. Guattari 2014.

154Ibid. 40, our italics.

15534.

156Cf. D\G 2003, 286 ff.

157Ibid., 286.

158Cf. footnote 51 above.

to find some lines of flight beyond D\G's affirmative immanence – for the sake of their three anarchies. The *Geistergespräche* with Nietzsche (N), Tafuri (T) and Kafka (K) were important contaminations of D\G whose result is D\G/N+T+K. The result are three anarchies beyond uncritical affirmation.

Yet, arguably, already D\G's plane of consistency is less the monist ontologisation of the world as it is than an alternative to it if not a utopia or a “faith”¹⁵⁹ in something outside of it – transcending the merely empirical or (neo-)positivist. In a way, D\G's whole style even attempts to draw the impossibility of a completely abstract picture of escape routes. In this picture, the systematic grand paradox of the “*abstract line*”¹⁶⁰ multiplies into the deviant “line of flight towards a future that remains unpredictable”¹⁶¹. On this path, liberation itself is embraced as the *emancipation of, not from* “outside coordinates”¹⁶². In sum, D\G “free the line, free the diagonal”¹⁶³ – this is what happens between D and G. Their overcoming diagonal (\) escapes also the Trees' horizontal bifurcations of flatness, and its escape route can be read as a utopian one. *Along this line*, transcendence becomes immanent in D\G.'s rhizomatic planes: since becoming has no topos, u-topos or becoming-utopian is its elective affinity.

As a result, the reconciliation of affirmation and critique is also a reconciliation of immanence and transcendence – the reconciliation of an anti-theological down-to-earth-attitude with a this-worldly utopian stance. Becoming, therein, is becoming-critical: differentiating enough to see that to affirm life, a lot of real negation, negation happening

159D\G 2003, 282.

160Ibid., 277, our italics; cf. also 298.

161Manola Antonioni cited in Dosse 2011, 509.

162D\G 2003, 297.

163Ibid., 295.

outside of the ivory tower (in the “real world”), is to be criticised. By contrast, under neo-technocratic hypercapitalism, post-critique becomes-ressentiment against utopia, if not a straightforward negation of life. After all, without transcendent critique – without “heaven on earth” – earth becomes hell: inaffirmable. Beyond such inaffirmability, D\G.'s abstract picture of lines of flight is a critical yet this-worldly utopian vision.

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Appendix with longer original quotes

Footnote 22: „Hitler als politisches Genie war eine riesenhafte Entlarvung des Wesens der Politik überhaupt. Mit Hitler hat die Politik ihre höchste Entwicklung erreicht.“ – W. Reich.

Footnote 57: „Die Ferneren sind es, welche eure Liebe zum Nächsten bezahlen; und schon wenn ihr zu fünf miteinander seid, muß immer ein sechster sterben.“ – F. Nietzsche.

Footnote 87: „Kein Hirt und Eine Heerde! Jeder will das Gleiche, Jeder ist gleich: wer anders fühlt, geht freiwillig in's Irrenhaus.“ – F. Nietzsche.

Footnote 89: „Es ist an der Zeit, dass der Mensch den Keim seiner höchsten Hoffnung pflanze. Noch ist sein Boden dazu reich genug. Aber dieser Boden wird einst arm und zahm sein, und kein hoher Baum wird mehr aus ihm wachsen können.“ – F. Nietzsche.

Footnote 149: „Wenn Du vor mir stehst und mich ansiehst, was weißt Du von den Schmerzen, die in mir sind und was weiß ich von den Deinen. Und wenn ich mich vor Dir niederwerfen würde und weinen und erzählen, *was wüßtest Du von mir* mehr als von der Hölle, wenn Dir jemand erzählt, sie ist heiß und fürchterlich. Schon darum sollten wir Menschen *vor einander so ehrfürchtig, so nachdenklich, so liebend* stehn wie vor dem Eingang zur Hölle.“ – F. Kafka.