Capitalism, psychiatry, and schizophrenia: a critical introduction to Deleuze and Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*

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Abstract

Published in 1972, *Anti-Oedipus* was the first of a number of collaborative works between the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, and the French psychoanalyst and political activist, Felix Guattari. As the first of a two-volume body of work that bears the subtitle, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *Anti-Oedipus* is, to say the least, an unconventional work that should be understood, in part, as a product of its time – created as it was among the political and revolutionary fervour engendered by the events of ‘May 1968’. However, this paper will suggest that *Anti-Oedipus* – as a critique of psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex, as well as being a study of the relationship between capitalism and schizophrenia – should also be understood in a less ‘time-bound’ fashion. In particular, the paper will examine Deleuze and Guattari’s formulation of a concept of ‘desire’ and its employment in relation to subjectivity, time, capitalism, representation, and the radical ‘therapeutic’ practice that they refer to as ‘schizoanalysis’. Moreover, nearly 40 years after the events of May 1968 and against possible doubts concerning the contemporary relevance of psychoanalysis, it will be suggested that psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex are to be understood as symptomatic of a wider ‘malaise’ that can be discerned within psychiatry, psychotherapy, and contemporary capitalist society itself, and that it is this that forms the broader target of the book’s critique. Accordingly, by providing an accessible and critical introduction to *Anti-Oedipus*, the paper also hopes to stimulate further discussion and research regarding both the critique and the contribution that the work can make to contemporary psychiatry, psychotherapy, and mental health nursing generally.

*Keywords:* capitalism, desire, psychiatry, psychoanalysis, schizoanalysis, schizophrenia.
Introduction

Published in 1972, *Anti-Oedipus* was the first of a number of collaborative works between the French philosopher, Gilles Deleuze, and the French psychoanalyst and political activist, Felix Guattari (see Deleuze & Guattari, 1986, 2002, 2003). As the first of a two-volume body of work that bears the subtitle, *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, *Anti-Oedipus* is, to say the least, an ‘unconventional’ book; indeed, it has been suggested that anyone accustomed to ‘conventional’ academic discourse is likely to find ‘the shape and tenor’ of *Anti-Oedipus* both ‘unsettling and perplexing, if not downright maddening’ (Holland, 1999, p. 1). Unfamiliar terms such as ‘desiring-machines’ and ‘desiring-production’ are employed as if their meaning was unproblematic, while what we may consider to be unproblematic terms such as ‘schizophrenia’, ‘paranoia’, and ‘desire’ are employed in unfamiliar ways. Moreover, puzzling and ‘sweeping’ claims – such as: ‘Everything is a machine’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 2), and: ‘The schizophrenic is the universal producer’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 7) – are made with seemingly little or no preparatory argumentation, while throughout the book there are allusions to, and references from, a wide variety of disciplines. Accordingly, it seems appropriate to suggest that *Anti-Oedipus* might well be described as an ‘experiment in delirium’, albeit ‘a carefully constructed and executed experiment’ (Seem, 2000, p. xviii). Possible reasons for its distinctive discursive style aside, however (see Holland, 1999, pp. 2–3), *Anti-Oedipus* has been referred to as an ‘extraordinary’ book and a singular component in what makes up, along with Deleuze and Guattari’s other joint collaborations, a body of work that should be considered one of the 20th century’s ‘truly audacious experiments in thought’ (Patton, 1997, p. 1).

As a singular and significant component in that experiment, and as a result of the events of ‘May 1968’ (Deleuze, 1995, p. 15), Deleuze (1995) suggested that ‘Anti-Oedipus was from beginning to end a book of political philosophy’ (p. 170). In particular, he suggested that the work could be understood as ‘both a criticism of the Oedipus complex and psychoanalysis, and a study of capitalism and the relations between capitalism and schizophrenia’ (Deleuze, 1995, p. 20). However, nearly 40 years after the suggested ‘failure of the student “revolution” of May 68’ (Joughin, 1995, p. 184), and the declining influence of psychoanalysis (Dufresne, 2005; May, 2005, p. 146), one may be tempted to doubt the contemporary relevance of *Anti-Oedipus*. In an attempt to address such doubts, as well as the difficult nature of the work, this paper will aim to provide an accessible, critical introduction to *Anti-Oedipus*, and thereby stimulate further discussion and research regarding both the critique and the contribution that the work can make to contemporary psychiatry, psychotherapy, and mental health nursing generally. In particular, the paper will examine the concept of ‘desire’, and its relation to subjectivity, time, capitalism, representation, and the radical ‘therapeutic’ practice that Deleuze & Guattari (2000) refer to as ‘schizoanalysis’. Moreover, against doubts concerning its contemporary relevance, it will be suggested that psychoanalysis and the Oedipus complex are to be understood as symptomatic of a wider ‘malaise’ that can be discerned within psychiatry, psychotherapy, and contemporary capitalist society itself, and that it is this that forms the broader target of the book’s critique. Thus, although the work should be understood as ‘a product of its time’ – created as it was among the political and revolutionary fervour of May 1968 – it will be suggested that *Anti-Oedipus* also has a less ‘time-bound’ significance, and in terms of not only its critique, but also its ‘schizoanalytic’ ‘treatment’ of society’s ‘malaise’. Indeed, in accordance with the memorable assessment of *Anti-Oedipus* that Foucault (2000) made in the book’s preface, this paper will attempt to highlight how *Anti-Oedipus* can be understood as ‘a book of ethics’ and, in particular, as ‘an Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life’, not just ‘historical fascism’, the fascism of Hitler or Mussolini, ‘but also the fascism in us

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1The difference between the conventional use of these terms and their deployment in *Anti-Oedipus* will be explained in detail below.
Desire and the production of the real

For Deleuze & Guattari (2000): ‘Everything revolves around desiring-machines and the production of desire’ (p. 380). Accordingly, a productive place to begin to gain an understanding of Anti-Oedipus is with the notion of ‘desire’, not only because it is one of Deleuze and Guattari’s most important concepts, connected as it is to their notions of ‘desiring-machines’ and ‘desiring-production’, but also because it is potentially one of their most easily misunderstood terms (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 219). In Dialogues II, however, ‘desire’ is explicitly identified with Nietzsche’s notion of ‘the will to power’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 91) and therefore, in order to understand the concept of ‘desire’, it is necessary to briefly elucidate Nietzsche’s notion of ‘the will to power’. Thus, ‘the will to power’ can be understood as ‘the fundamental principle’ of ontology, that which ‘underlies’ the world itself and all of existence, and which operates ‘through’ us as human beings (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 550). This is not to suggest, however, that ‘the will to power’ is the conscious desire of a person, the conscious intention to obtain and exercise power (Goodchild, 1996, p. 28); as Deleuze (2002a) makes clear: ‘It is in no way anthropomorphic’ (p. 51). Indeed, consciousness is said to be a consequence of ‘the will to power’ (Grosz, 2004, pp. 127–130), where ‘the will to power’ is understood as an ‘unconscious’ and ‘impersonal’ ‘sea of forces flowing and rushing together, eternally changing, eternally flooding back’ (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 550). Importantly, as an unconscious and dynamic ‘play of forces’, a ‘becoming’ that constitutes life itself (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 148), ‘the will to power’ is to be understood as the ‘instinct’ of all living things for ‘growth and expansion’, the unconscious drive ‘to become more’ (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 367). Against Freud, ‘life’ does not merely strive for ‘pleasure’ (Nietzsche, 1968, p. 366) and neither, in contrast with Spinoza and Darwin, is it to be understood merely as a drive for ‘self-preservation’ or a ‘struggle for existence’ (Nietzsche, 1974, p. 292); rather, for Nietzsche (1974): ‘The great and small struggle always revolves around superiority, around growth and expansion, around power – in accordance with the will to power which is the will of life’ (p. 292).

In so far as it is explicitly identified with ‘the will to power’, ‘desire’ is to be understood as the principle that ‘underlies’ the world, existence, life, and hence the ‘real’ itself. As Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear: ‘The objective being of desire is the Real in and of itself’ (pp. 25–26), a ‘desire that produces – real desire, or the real in itself’ (p. 379). Rather than a ‘play of forces’, however, ‘desire’ is said to be ‘composed’ of ‘desiring-machines’: a term which not only implies the ‘impersonality’ of ‘desire’, but also highlights its dynamic, ‘machinic’ or ‘productive’ nature. Thus, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that ‘desire is a machine, a synthesis of machines, a machinic arrangement – desiring machines’, such that: ‘The order of desire is the order of production’ (p. 296). It is important to note, however, that in suggesting that ‘desire is a machine’, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) reiterate that they are using the word ‘machine’ in a literal, and not a metaphorical sense (pp. 1–2), and in doing so they can be understood as highlighting a central characteristic of ‘desire’. In order to understand this characteristic, however, the word ‘machine’ should not be identified with, or reduced to, ‘mechanism’; ‘mechanism’ is a term that serves to designate a specific, ‘closed’ process within a technological machine, or else a specific organization of a living being, which is organized as such in order to achieve a given end (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 219). In contrast, Deleuze (2004a) suggests that his use of the term ‘machine’ and ‘machinism’ ‘goes beyond both the mechanism of technology and the organization of the living being, whether in nature, society, or human beings’ (p. 219; 232). This is to say that ‘desire’, understood as a ‘machine’, as a multiplicity of ‘desiring-machines’, ‘is nothing more than its connections; it is not made by anything, it is not for anything and it has no closed identity’ (Colebrook, 2003, p. 56).

Accordingly, ‘desire’ is not the becoming of some identifiable being. Rather than possessing a fixed identity or organization, ‘desire’ is always ‘striving’ to ‘become more’, to ‘become other’ or to ‘become different’, than it currently is: an interminable becoming without being, ‘an ongoing process of
becoming that is the becoming of reality’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 35). To express this in the terminology of *Anti-Oedipus*, there is said to be no distinction within ‘desire’ between ‘producing’ and its ‘product’; as Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest: ‘The rule of continually producing production, of grafting producing onto the product, is a characteristic of desiring-machines or primary production: the production of production’ (p. 7). This is to say that the ‘desiring-machines’, as ‘elements’ of ‘desire’, are not to be thought of as identifiable ‘products’ or ‘objects’ that enter a process of production while maintaining a fixed identity or organization; rather, the identity of those ‘objects’, and indeed the identity of ‘desire’ itself, is ‘caught up’, as it were, in the process of production, constantly changing in the drive to make new connections, and to grow and expand (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 7). Thus, rather than identifiable, distinct or ‘discrete’ ‘objects’, ‘desiring-machines’ are said to be ‘partial-objects’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 308): ‘objects’ in so far as they can be distinguished from one another, but ‘partial’ because they are in no way separate or distinct. As the ‘elements’ of ‘desire’ therefore ‘desiring-machines’ are not to be understood as a collection or a ‘multiplicity’ of ‘distinct’ ‘objects’ that form a ‘composite unity’, or what Deleuze (2002b) refers to elsewhere as a ‘discrete multiplicity’ (pp. 38–39): a multiplicity characterized by ‘juxtaposition, order, quantitative differentiation, and difference in degree’ (p. 38), a multiplicity which can be separated, counted, quantified, and reduced to numbers. Rather, ‘desire’ is to be understood as a ‘continuous’, or a ‘qualitative multiplicity’; a multiplicity that is characterized by: ‘Degrees of difference itself, and not differences of degree’ (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 43), whereby the ‘partial-objects’ ‘fuse’ into one another to form such a ‘multiplicity’. Thus, as Deleuze (2002b) memorably suggests, within a ‘continuous multiplicity’, and hence ‘desire’ itself: ‘There is other without there being several; numbers exist only potentially’ (p. 42).

In so far as ‘desire’ possess no fixed identity or organization, then Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that ‘desire’, and therefore ‘reality’ itself, is to be understood as ‘schizophrenic’ (p. 24). As such, *Anti-Oedipus* does not begin from a psychiatric understanding of the words that have traditionally fallen within the province of psychiatry (most notably, ‘schizophrenia’ and ‘paranoia’), but rather from their social and political [and indeed, their ontological] determinations, from which their psychiatric application follows only in specific circumstances’ (Deleuze, 1995, p. 24). Thus, in a manner analogous to the way that schizophrenia as a psychiatric condition is commonly understood to ‘dissolve’ or ‘fragment’ a person’s ‘identity’, ‘desire’ is said to be characterized by an on-going and productive ‘dissolution’ of any fixed identity or organization; as Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest: ‘There is no sort of evolution of drives that would cause these drives and their objects to progress in the direction of an integrated whole, any more than there is an original totality from which they can be derived’ (p. 44). Accordingly, ‘schizophrenia is the process of the production of desire and desiring-machines’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 24), such that at ‘man’s most basic stratum’ we find ‘the schizophrenic cell, the schizo molecules, their chains and their jargons’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 289); indeed, there is said to be ‘a whole biology of schizophrenia; molecular biology is itself schizophrenic – as is microphysics’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 289).

Thus, in so far as ‘desire’, a dynamic and productive becoming without any fixed being, is to be understood as the principle that ‘underlies’ the world, existence, life, and hence the ‘real’ itself, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that ‘schizophrenia is the universe of productive and reproductive desiring-machines, universal primary production as “the essential reality of man and nature”’ (p. 5).
Subjectivity and the passive synthesis of time

In order to more fully illustrate the ‘dynamic’ and ‘schizophrenic’ characteristics of ‘desire’, as well as expanding upon the suggestion that it can be understood as a ‘continuous multiplicity’, it is productive to examine the manner in which human subjectivity can be understood as a consequence of an ‘expression’ of ‘desire’. Thus, as Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear: ‘Desire is not in the subject, but the machine in desire – with the residual subject off to the side . . . a parasite of machines, an accessory of vertebro-machinate desire’ (p. 285). Specifically, subjectivity can be understood as a consequence of the ‘synthesis’ of ‘desiring machines’ or ‘partial objects’, which, in turn, can be identified with what are also referred to variously as ‘preindividual and prepersonal singularities’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 324), ‘impersonal singularities’ (Deleuze, 2003, pp. 102–103) or, perhaps most clearly, ‘larval subjects’ (Deleuze, 2001, p. 78). As the phrase suggests, however, a ‘larval subject’ is not to be understood in terms of the ‘mature form’ of our lived experience of subjectivity; instead, a ‘larval subject’ is said to be ‘ineffectual, fleeting, and strictly localized’ (Masmumi, 1999, p. 73). Despite this, however, a ‘larval subject’ is ‘a lived state’, although not the ‘lived state’ of a subject; rather, it is, as it were, a moment of consciousness without a subject (see Sartre, 2004, p. 2): ‘the lived state coming first, in relation to the subject that lives it’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 20). Accordingly, a multitude of ‘larval subjects’ are said to ‘underlie’ our sense of subjectivity, so that: ‘Underneath the self which acts are little selves’, and: ‘We speak of our “self” only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses’ (Deleuze, 2001, p. 75), these thousands of ‘larval subjects’, ‘partial objects’, ‘prepersonal singularities’ or moments of consciousness without a subject. Central to the process by which subjectivity ‘emerges’ from these thousands of ‘larval subjects’, however, is the manner in which those ‘larval subjects’ are ‘brought together’ or ‘synthesized’ by time; indeed, for Deleuze (1991) ‘the subject, at root, is the synthesis of time’ (p. 93). Therefore, in order to elucidate the manner in which ‘desire’ is said to produce subjectivity, it will be necessary to briefly elucidate his account of time.

For Deleuze (2001), we are never simply given the present moment; rather, the aspect of the ‘mind’ that he refers to as the ‘imagination’ is said to ‘contract’ or ‘synthesize’, and thereby retain, the past within the present, thereby creating an ‘expectation’ of a time beyond this present; namely, the future (pp. 70–71). Therefore, to the present ‘belong both the past and the future: the past in so far as the preceding instants are retained in the contraction; the future because its expectation is anticipated in this same contraction’ (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 70–71). Accordingly, each and every past ‘larval subject’ is contracted and retained along with the present ‘larval subject’, thereby creating an ‘expectation’ of a future ‘larval subject’, and it is this on-going ‘contraction’ and ‘retention’ of the past within the ‘living present’, thereby creating an ‘expectation’ of the future, that Deleuze (2001) refers to as the ‘synthesis of time’ (p. 70). Importantly, however, this ‘synthesis of time’ is not to be understood as an operation that we ‘consciously’ or ‘actively’ carry out; as Deleuze (2001) makes clear: ‘It is not carried out by the mind, but occurs in the mind . . . prior to all memory and all reflection’ (p. 71). Moreover, the term ‘mind’ is not to be thought of in terms of a pre-existing subject; for Deleuze (1991): ‘The mind is not a subject, nor does it require a subject whose mind it would be’ (p. 88). Therefore, the ‘synthesis’ of the past into the present to create an ‘expectation’ of the future should be understood as an ‘unconscious’, or what Deleuze (2001) refers to as a ‘passive synthesis of time’ (p. 71). Moreover, ‘desire’ is said to be nothing other than this ‘passive synthesis’, a temporal dynamic that ‘brings together’ the thousands of ‘larval subjects’, ‘prepersonal singularities’, ‘desiring-machines’ or ‘partial objects’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, pp. 324–325); as Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear: ‘Desire is the set of passive synthesis that engineer partial objects’ (p. 26), bringing those ‘partial objects’ together to form our ‘lived experience’ of subjectivity so that it is precisely ‘the world of passive synthesis [that] constitutes the system of the self’ (Deleuze, 2001, p. 78).

In particular, the lived experience of subjectivity is said to ‘spontaneously emerge’ from desire’s ‘passive
synthesis’ of ‘larval subjects’, and it is from this on-going, ‘low-level’ ‘synthesis’ of the ‘given’ that the ‘higher level’, ‘sophisticated’ property of subjectivity ‘emerges’; as Deleuze (1991) suggests: ‘The given is no longer given to a subject; rather, the subject constitutes itself in the given’ (p. 87). Therefore, while an important ‘theory of subjectivity’ runs through Deleuze and Guattari’s work, it has been suggested that this theory is, in particular, an account of ‘the autopoietic or self-referential production of subjectivity’ (Bains, 2003, p. 102) in which ‘larval subjects’ undergo ‘a process of auto-unification’ (Deleuze, 2003, p. 103) that is brought about by the passive synthesis of time. Consider, for example, the way in which the continuity of a melody ‘emerges’ from the manner in which every past note is ‘contracted’ and ‘retained’ along with the present note, thereby creating an ‘expectation’ of a future note and the on-going continuity, the on-going ‘identity’, of the melody (Roberts, 2006). While ‘transcending’ the series of individual notes, the enduring continuity of a melody remains ‘immanent’ to that series, emerging from the manner in which the notes that have passed are continuously ‘contracted’, and therefore ‘virtually’ contemporaneous, with the ‘actual’ present note, thereby creating the ‘passive expectation’ of future notes, and the on-going continuity of the melody. Similarly, while ‘transcending’ the series of ‘larval subjects’, our enduring sense of continuity, our enduring sense of ‘self’, emerges from, but remains ‘immanent’ to that series, a continuity that, as it were, ‘traverses’ that series. Moreover, while our lived experience of subjectivity as an on-going continuity, as a ‘whole’, emerges from the ‘synthesis’ of the series of ‘larval subjects’, or ‘parts’, it does not – analogous with the ‘individual’ notes of a melody – ‘absorb’ and ‘homogenize’ those ‘parts’; this is to say that the ‘system of the self’ is to be understood as a ‘continuous’ or ‘qualitative multiplicity’, where ‘multiplicity must not designate a combination of the many and the one, but rather an organization belonging to the many as such, which has no need whatsoever of unity in order to form a system’ (Deleuze, 2001, p. 182).

Therefore, against the traditional, philosophical conception of an ‘immutable self’, of an ‘immaterial substance’ or a ‘soul’ that somehow exists ‘over and above’ time (see Descartes, 1993), Deleuze’s (2001) work suggests that our sense of subjectivity, ‘identity’ and on-going continuity does not exist in spite of time, but precisely because of time (p. 86). Accordingly, his work also suggests that rather than being ‘stable’ or ‘fixed’, subjectivity should be understood as ‘dynamic’ and in a continual state of ‘evolution’; indeed, one needs to understand a ‘continuous multiplicity’, and therefore subjectivity, in terms of ‘the verb in the infinitive as pure becoming’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. ix). Importantly, however, his work suggests that this ‘dynamism’ is ‘unconscious’ or ‘passive’, in so far as each new present ‘passively’ modifies, to a greater or lesser degree, the whole of one’s subjectivity; this is to say that subjectivity, understood as a ‘continuous multiplicity’, ‘necessarily changes in nature as it expands its connections’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2002, p. 8). Consider, for example, the impact of new notes on a melody: new notes are not ‘simply added’ to the notes that have passed in a way that leaves the identity of that melody the same as it was before the occurrence of those new notes; rather, the new notes produce a qualitative change in the ‘nature’, in the whole identity, of that melody, so that we hear an on-going melodic progression or ‘evolution’. In an analogous manner, the continual series of ‘larval subjects’ or ‘lived states’ does not leave one’s identity the same, but produces an on-going ‘qualitative’ change in, and ‘evolutionary’ progression of, one’s whole identity. Thus, for Deleuze & Guattari (2000), ‘the subject is born of each [lived] state in the series, is continually reborn of the following state . . . consuming-consummating all these states that cause him to be born and reborn’ (p. 20).

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Both ‘desire’ (conceived as the fundamental and dynamic ontological principle) and subjectivity (understood as a ‘product’ of the passive synthesis of time that characterizes ‘desire’) are to be understood as ‘schizophrenic’, or as a becoming without a ‘fixed’ identity. With reference to Bergson’s (1988) *Creative Evolution*, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) memorably suggest that ‘the whole, of the world as of the living being, is always in the process of becoming, develop-
ing, coming into being or advancing, and inscribing itself within a temporal dimension that is irreducible and nonclosed’ (p. 96). However, it is not only the world and the living being that are to be understood as ‘schizophrenic’, but capitalism itself is also said to display a fundamental ‘schizophrenic tendency’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 361). In order to understand what is meant here, it is instructive to recall the memorable description of capitalism that Marx & Engels (1978) gave in the Communist Manifesto in which: ‘All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable prejudices and opinions, are swept away, all new formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air . . .’ (p. 476). This is to say that one of the defining characteristics of capitalism is an interminable, and dynamic tendency for all established ‘identities’ to become ‘fragmented’ or ‘broken up’; from the replacement of traditional belief systems and meaning-structures to the transformation of geographical territories, and from large-scale demographic upheavals to the continual production and promotion of ‘new and improved’ products, capitalism’s drive for profit, and ever-renewed profit, is said to have entailed such transformations (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 259).

Capitalism, therefore, can be said to display a fundamentally ‘schizophrenic’ tendency in so far as it is characterized by the continual ‘dissolution’ of established ‘identities’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 250). For Deleuze & Guattari (2000), it is this tendency of capitalism to ‘break up’ ‘identities’, ‘dissolve’ established ‘codes’, and transform ‘territories’ – a tendency that they therefore refer to as ‘decoding’ and ‘deteritorialization’ – that constitutes ‘a schizophrenic process’, ‘the pure schizophrenic process of deteritorialization’ (p. 283). Importantly, however, although capitalism breaks up all existing identities, it immediately imposes a ‘new’ identity, an identity fashioned in the image of capital (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 259). This is to say that although capitalism breaks up all existing identities, it immediately refashions everything in the form of a ‘commodity’ or ‘private property’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 303); as Lukacs (1971) suggested, capitalism displays a tendency to ‘reify’, or transform everything in the world – including our own qualities and attributes – into ‘commodity-things’ that have an ‘exchange-value’, and which can therefore be bought and sold, owned as ‘property’ and made use of as ‘resources’ (pp. 83–103). Moreover, capitalism’s tendency to ‘re-identity’ everything anew in the image of capital – a tendency that Deleuze & Guattari (2000) refer to variously as ‘reterritorialization’, ‘recoding’, and ‘axiomatization’ – is not to be thought of as distinct from capitalism’s tendency to ‘break up’ established identities; as is made clear: ‘It may be all but impossible to distinguish deteritorialization from reterritorialization, since they are mutually enmeshed, or like opposite faces of one and the same process’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 258).

Both ‘desire’ and capitalism, therefore, display a fundamentally ‘schizophrenic’ tendency, a tendency to ‘dissolve’ established ‘identities’. More than a commonality or a superficial resemblance, however, there is said to be a ‘deeper’ relationship between the ‘productivity’ of ‘desire’ or ‘desiring-production’, and the productivity of capitalism or ‘social production’; as Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear, ‘desiring-production is one and the same thing as social production. It is not possible to attribute a special form of existence to desire, a mental or psychic reality that is presumably different from the material reality of social production’ (p. 30). Of course, a distinction between ‘social production’ and ‘desiring-production’ can be made, but this is said to be ‘merely a distinction of regime’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 31), where the ‘disjunction’ between the two realms is said to be a relation of ‘included disjunction’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 340). In discussing this relation, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) employ the distinction drawn from physics between classical and quantum mechanics, what they refer to as ‘macrophysics’ and ‘microphysics’, or simply the ‘molar’ and the ‘molecular’ realms, respectively (p. 280). In particular, they suggest that the distinction between ‘social production’ and ‘desiring-production’, between the ‘molar’ and the ‘molecular’ realms, is a distinction between ‘two kinds of collections or populations: the large aggregates and the micromultiplicities’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 280), which can be understood in terms of the previously discussed distinction that
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Deleuze (2002b) draws between discrete and continuous multiplicities (pp. 38–39). Thus, a molar multiplicity, that which belongs to the realm of ‘macrophysics’, is to be understood in terms of a multiplicity of elements that can be counted or quantified, ‘the province of large numbers’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 279). In contrast, a molecular or a micromultiplicity is a multiplicity of elements that are not separate or discrete; this is the realm of ‘microphysics’, of ‘waves and corpuscles, flows and partial objects that are no longer dependent upon the large numbers’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 280).

Accordingly, the ‘molar’ realm, the realm of social production, is amenable to quantification, calculation and therefore to the emergence and intensification of capitalism. As Weber (2005) noted, the defining characteristic of capitalism is not an unlimited greed for gain, but ‘the pursuit of profit, and forever renewed profit, by means of continuous, rational, capitalistic enterprise’ (pp. xxxi–xxxii). In particular, this ‘rational enterprise’ is characterized by *calculations* in terms of profit, a ‘calculating’ or ‘instrumental rationality’ (Taylor, 2003, p. 5), that is said to constitute the very ‘irrationality’ of capitalism; as Deleuze (2004a) suggests: ‘Everything about capitalism is rational, except capital or capitalism’ (p. 262). Indeed, for Deleuze & Guattari (2000), capitalism ‘is mad from one end to the other and from the beginning’, a madness that is attributable to ‘the pathological character of its rationality: not at all a false rationality, but a true rationality of this pathological state, this insanity’ (p. 373). Moreover, this ‘rationality’ is said to lead to ever greater ‘exploitation’, ‘terror’, and ‘cruelty’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 373), and its ‘remorseless logic’ comes to ‘absorb’ and constrain every member of society. In tones reminiscent of Weber’s (2005) exposition of the ‘iron cage’ (pp. 123–124), and in contrast to a ‘class analysis’ of capitalism, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that ‘there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves’ (p. 254); this is to say that all members of society become subject to capitalism’s ‘insane rationality’, whereby the pursuit for ever greater efficiency and forever renewed profit is no longer even a means to some other end – for example, enjoyment – but becomes the end in itself (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 254). As Deleuze & Guattari (2000) emotively suggest: ‘The bourgeois sets the example, he absorbs surplus value for ends that, taken as a whole, have nothing to do with his own enjoyment: more utterly enslaved than the lowest of slaves, he is the first servant of the ravenous machine, the beast of the reproduction of capital . . . “I too am a slave” – these are the new words spoken by the master’ (p. 254).

**Lack and paranoiac repression**

Importantly, while Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that there is an ‘identity’, although a difference in *regime*, between ‘social production’ and ‘desiring-production’, the former, understood as the ‘molar’ realm, the quantifiable realm of ‘large numbers’, calculation, and social production, is said to commonly ‘subordinate’ the molecular, qualitative realm of ‘desiring-production’ (p. 287). Accordingly, the ‘molar machines’ of capitalist social production are to be understood as attempting to ‘arrest’ the molecular dynamism of desiring-production (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 258). Importantly, however, while capitalism displays its own ‘schizophrenic tendency’, in so far as it ‘decodes’ or ‘deterritorializes’ established ‘identities’, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make it clear that ‘it would be a serious error to consider the capitalist flows and the schizophrenic flows as identical, under the general theme of a decoding of the flows of desire’ (p. 255). That is, although the schizophrenic process of desiring-production is said to have a ‘great affinity’ with capitalism’s process of deterritorialization, it must be noted that capitalism only functions in so far as it inhibits this ‘schizophrenic process of deterritorialization’, ‘reterritorializing’ everything in the image of quantifiable capital. Thus, as Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear, ‘schizophrenia is the *exterior* limit of capitalism itself or the conclusion of its deepest tendency, but that capitalism only functions on condition that it inhibit this tendency’ (p. 246); while inseparable from it, ‘schizophrenia is not the identity of capitalism, but on the contrary its difference, its divergence, and its death’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 246). As such, desiring-production is to be understood as ‘revolutionary’, pushing capitalism’s process of deterritorialization.
beyond its counter-tendency to reterritorialize everything in the image of capital; indeed, for Deleuze & Guattari (2000), ‘desire is revolutionary in its essence . . . and no society can tolerate a position of real desire without its structures of exploitation, servitude, and hierarchy being compromised’ (p. 116).

For its continued survival therefore capitalism must continually find, create, and employ means to ‘deter- ritorialize’ its own ‘deterritorializing’ tendency, and it is the ‘reactionary’ ‘arrest’ of this deterritorializing process that Deleuze & Guattari (2000) refer to variously as ‘paranoia’ (p. 260), ‘fascism’ (p. 341), or a ‘paranoiac fascising’ tendency (p. 277). As such, they suggest that: ‘The paranoiac engineers masses, and is continually forming large aggregates, inventing heavy apparatus for the regimentation and repression of the desiring-machines’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 364), such that the means by which capitalism attempts to ‘repress desire’ are said to be ‘extremely complex and varied’, but they are often ‘artificial, residual [and], archaic’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 257). Accordingly, capitalism is to be understood as fundamentally ambivalent; modern, capitalist societies are ‘torn’ between a revolutionary and ‘schizophrenic tendency’ of deterritorialization, and a reactionary and ‘paranoid tendency’ of reterritorial- ization. As Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear:

The social axiomatic of modern societies is caught between two poles, and is constantly oscillating from one pole to the other. Born of decoding and deterritorialization . . . these societies are caught between the Urstaat that they would like to resuscitate as an overcoding and reterritorializing unity, and the unfettered flows that carry them towards an absolute threshold. They recode with all their might, with world-wide dictatorship, local dictators, and an all-powerful police, while decoding – or allowing the decoding of – the fluent quantities of their capital and their populations. They are torn in two directions: archaism and futurism, neoarchaism and ex-futurism, paranoia and schizophrenia. (p. 260)

While it is important for a society to ‘repress desire’, however, modern societies are said to engineer more efficient and subtle forms of repression than ‘dictatorships’ so that ‘repression, hierarchy, exploitation, and servitude are themselves desired’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 116). For Deleuze & Guattari (2000), the means by which ‘desire’ is said to be seduced into desiring its own repression is by way of ‘ideological forms’ (p. 297) or ‘objective representations’ (pp. 307–308), where ‘objective representations’ can be understood in terms of ‘grand eschatological narratives’ or what we might call ‘salvation myths’; thus, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that, ‘in order to keep an effective grip on the zones of production, representation must inflate itself with all the power of myth and tragedy’ (p. 297).

Objective representations are said to function by effecting ‘a unification’ or ‘a totalization’, whereby ‘an organism, social or living, is composed as a whole, as a global or complete object’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 342). For example, the complete object posited in an objective representation might be ‘the Kingdom of God’ (see Debord, 2004, p. 99), one’s ‘authentic’, ‘fixed’, and ‘final’ identity or one of the many images of completion and perfection promoted by consumerism (Baggini, 2005, pp. 102–103). As Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest, however: ‘It is in relation to this new order that the partial objects of a molecular order appear as a lack, at the same time that the whole itself is said to be lacked by the partial objects’ (p. 342). If, for example, a ‘fixed self’ or ‘subject’ is posited as the ‘complete object’, then one’s subjectivity, ‘caught up’, as it were, in a temporal process of becoming, comes to be understood in terms of a ‘lack’, because its successive ‘lived states’ or ‘partial objects’ ‘are referred to a totality that can appear only as that which the partial objects lack’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 306). Accordingly, it is precisely this ‘welding of desire to lack’ that engenders the notion that ‘desire’ strives for ‘collective and personal ends, goals or intentions’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 342), and that we should succumb to the ‘powers that be’ that claim to be able to assist us in achieving those goals and fulfilling those intentions (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 61). For Deleuze & Guattari (2000), however, this is a repressive distortion of ‘desire’ that fails to appreciate ‘the real order of its production, which behaves as a molecular phenomena devoid of any goal or intention’ (p. 342); ‘desire’ has no external goal because, as they insist repeatedly: ‘Desire does not lack anything’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 26). Desire does not, for example, strive for a missing ‘self’
or long for its completion in the form of a ‘fixed subject’: ‘It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 26). Importantly, however, while modern societies seek to continually establish and install such objective representations, capitalism’s own deterritorializing tendency is said to engender their collapse (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 303). Thus, resonant with Lyotard’s (1997) famous assertion that the ‘postmodern condition’ is characterized by an ‘incredulity toward metanarratives’ (p. xxiv), Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that: ‘We have repudiated and lost all our beliefs that proceeded by way of objective representations. The earth is dead, the desert is growing’ (p. 308).

For Deleuze & Guattari (2000), however, it is precisely within this climate that psychoanalysis is propagated and proliferates. With a growing incredulity towards objective representations as mere mythological narratives, psychoanalysis takes mythological representations from the ‘objective’ realm – in particular, the Oedipal and Electra myths – and seeks to install them into the ‘subjective’ realm, placing them there as a feature of the subject’s ‘unconscious’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 304). Psychoanalysis resurrects belief in mythological representations, but rather than being conscious beliefs, such representations are now said to be held by the ‘subconscious’, a welter of ‘unconscious’ material that is suppressed and denied by consciousness; thus, psychoanalysis takes up mythology ‘but only in order to raise it to the condition of a denial that preserves belief without believing in it’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 304).

That is, in an age of incredulity towards mythological representations, psychoanalysis preserves them by making them ‘unconscious’ beliefs, ‘causing beliefs to survive even after repudiation; causing those who no longer believe in anything to continue believing; reconstituting a private territory for them, a private Urstaat’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 314). For Deleuze & Guattari (2000), however, the ‘unconscious’, understood as ‘desire’ itself, is a ‘subrepresentative field’ (p. 300) of machinic desiring-production that has nothing to do with mythological representations: ‘The unconscious is not figurative . . . It is not structural, nor is it symbolic, for its reality is that of the Real in its very production, in its very inorganization. It is not representative, but solely machinic, and productive’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 311).

In the terminology of Anti-Oedipus, the ‘unconscious’ is said to be a ‘factory’ or a ‘workshop’, and to introduce mythological representations, eschatological narratives or salvation myths into the unconscious is to ‘disfigure’ its machinic nature by turning it into a ‘theatre, a scene and its staging’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 55). Thus, Deleuze & Guattari’s (2000) central critique of psychoanalysis is that it ‘stifles’ the productive unconscious by ‘shunting’ it into representation (p. 296) so that: ‘The whole of desiring-production is crushed, subjected to the requirements of representation, and to the dreary games of what is representative and represented in representation’ (p. 54).

**Schizoanalysis and the liberation of desire**

Against the traditional and enduring notion that ‘clinical’ schizophrenia is characterized by a ‘loss of reality’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 123), Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that: ‘Far from having lost who knows what contact with life, the schizophrenic is closest to the beating heart of reality, to an intense point identical with the production of the real’ (p. 87); however, they do suggest that the schizophrenic encountered in psychiatric hospitals is indeed often little more than a ‘limp’ and ‘autistic’ ‘rag’ (p. 5, pp. 19–20) separated from reality, but who has only become so as a consequence of ‘psychiatric practice’ (p. 20). As such, they consistently make a distinction between ‘schizophrenia as a process’, the process of desiring-production or reality itself, and the ‘schizophrenic as entity’, ‘the schizophrenic encountered in hospitals’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 379), and return repeatedly to the question: ‘what reduces the schizophrenic to his autistic, hospitalized profile, cut off from reality? Is it the process [of desiring-production], or is it rather the interruption of the process’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 88). Now, while Deleuze & Guattari’s (2000) specific answer is detailed and complex (pp. 362–363), their general
answer is that ‘the more the process of production is led of course, brutally interrupted, the more the schizo-as-entity arises as a specific product’ (p. 136). As regards psychoanalysis, for example, they suggest that, in both its diagnostic procedures and its ‘therapeutic’ interventions, psychoanalysis ‘biunivocalizes’ the productive unconscious (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 54), substituting the ‘polyvocal real’ for a representational structure whose ‘magic formula’ becomes ‘so that is what this meant’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 101). In particular, psychoanalysis is said to be an ‘interpretative machine’ (Deleuze, 2004a, p. 274) that ‘transforms’ whatever a ‘patient’ says by ‘passing it through the filter’ of the Oedipal complex, and in doing so purges the ‘patient’s’ speech of all socio-political content (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, pp. 88–90; Deleuze, 2004a, p. 235, pp. 271–273). In contrast, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that the productive unconscious ‘makes it entry with the general collapse of the question “What does it mean?”’ (p. 109), rejecting ‘the very form of interpretation’, in so far as the ‘material’ that the ‘interpreter’ encounters is reduced to merely ‘representing’ that which a ‘repressive apparatus’ permits the ‘material’ to represent (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 339).

Against ‘psychoanalysis’, its repressive representational structure and its practice of interpretation, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) introduce ‘schizoanalysis’; importantly, however, ‘schizoanalysis’ should not be seen merely as a clinical alternative to psychoanalysis and its repressive Oedipal structure. For Deleuze & Guattari (2000), the employment of the Oedipus complex, and its reduction of everything to the tripartite formula: ‘daddy-mommy-me’ (p. 23), is symptomatic of that wider ‘paranoia’, that deeper tendency of reterritorialization, which characterizes contemporary society; as they stress: ‘Oedipus is first the idea of an adult paranoiac, before it is the childhood feeling of a neurotic’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 274). Accordingly, schizoanalysis can be understood as a practice that seeks to ‘destroy’ all forms of representation in order to liberate and affirm the process of desiring-production. Thus, its ‘negative’ or ‘destructive’ task demands the undoing of ‘the representative territorialities and reterritorializations through which a subject passes in his individual history. For there are several layers, several planes of resistance that come from within or are imposed from without’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 318). Schizoanalysis can be understood therefore as not only demanding the renunciation of the objective representations that we may consciously hold, rejecting them as ‘myth and tragedy . . . as conscious beliefs or illusions’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 299), but also a removal of the subjective representations that we may ‘unconsciously’ retain, so that there is a need for ‘a scouring of the unconscious, schizoanalysis as a curettage of the unconscious’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 299). Elsewhere, Deleuze expands upon the nature of these representative territorialities, these ‘segments’ or ‘lines’ which ‘run through societies and groups as much as individuals’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 124), and which depend on what he refers to as ‘binary machines’: ‘Binary machines of social classes; of sexes, man-woman; of ages, child-adult; of races, black-white; of sectors, public-private; of subjectivations, ours-not-ours’, and which imply ‘devices of power’, and normative standards (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 128). Importantly, these segments are said to be ‘not roughly dualistic’ but ‘dichotomic’, and which can ‘operate diachronically’, so that ‘dualism’ ‘no longer relates to simultaneous elements to choose from, but successive choices’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 128). So now, for example, the binary machines demand that ‘if you are neither black nor white, you are a half-breed; if you are neither man nor woman, you are a transvestite’ so that each time the machine ‘will produce binary choices that are not present at the first cutting-up’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 128).

For Deleuze & Guattari (2000), therefore, capitalism is relentless in its paranoiac repression of desire; to its members, it warns ominously that ‘we’ll always find a place for you within the expanded limits of the system, even if an axiom has to be created just for you’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 251). Against this, schizoanalysis engages in the on-going ‘destruction’ of all territorialities, undoing any notion of a fixed identity, essential characteristics, and fundamental or authentic being in order to affirm and ‘work with’ the productive process of becoming; to ‘release desire
from Being so it can enter more freely into Becoming’ (Holland, 1999, p. 11). Importantly, however, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest not only that one can never undo all territorializations, achieving an ‘absolute deterritorialization’, but that ‘territorializations’ are necessary for the ‘positive’ or ‘affirmative’ task of schizoanalysis; as they make clear: ‘Even the schizo’s stroll or voyage does not effect great deterritorializations without borrowing from territorial circuits’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 315). One way to begin to consider and develop this affirmative task may be in terms of a productive encounter between Deleuze’s (2001) account of the passive synthesis of time, and Nietzsche’s (2005) work on ‘the unhistorical and the historical’ (see Grosz, 2004, pp. 113–125). For Nietzsche (2005), the ‘health of an individual, of a people and of a culture’ is said to necessitate the ability to find a balance between ‘forgetting’ and ‘remembering’ (p. 63): not only to forget the past so that it no longer encumbers the present and restricts its future possibilities, but also to remember and appropriate the past as a present ‘horizon’ that can be employed to create new possibilities for the future. Accordingly, the positive task of schizoanalysis can be understood as the attempt to resist past, but coexistent territorializations, from encumbering the present (and being passively projected into the future) by employing those territorializations as preconditions from which to create or ‘become’ something new: to become ‘Untimely’, or to create an ‘Untimely becoming’. As Deleuze (1995) makes clear: ‘Becoming isn’t part of history; history amounts only the set of preconditions, however, recent, that one leaves behind in order to “become”, that is, to create something new. This is precisely what Nietzsche calls the Untimely’ (p. 171).

Schizoanalysis, therefore, is not about engineering and directing desire towards some pre-existent goal, and neither is it about establishing a ‘majoritarian model’ that one must ‘become’ and conform to: ‘the average European adult male city-dweller, for example . . . ’ (Deleuze, 1995, p. 173). Rather, it seeks to undo the territorializations that repress desire in order to facilitate the maximal degree of movement in accordance with desire’s interminable tendency of deterritorialization; in doing so, schizoanalysis ‘coincides with the completion of the process of desiring-production, this process that is always and already complete as it proceeds, and as long as it proceeds’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 382). Moreover, while it is certainly political, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that: ‘No political program will be elaborated within the framework of schizoanalysis’ (p. 380); thus, it does not call for the overthrow of capitalism and the positing of a new ‘social order’ in so far as this new social order would itself constitute another ‘majoritarian model’, another repressive territorialization (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 258). Accordingly: ‘Schizoanalysis as such does not raise the problem of the socius to come out of the revolution . . . [rather] . . . Given a socius, schizoanalysis only asks what place it reserves for desiring-production’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 380). Deleuze (1995) does suggest, however, that there may be reasons for ‘a minority’ to set goals, establish models or political programmes for itself, but when it does this ‘it’s because it wants to become a majority, and probably has to, to survive or prosper (to have a state, be recognized, establish its rights, for example). But is power comes from what it’s managed to create’ (p. 173). Moreover, there is no underestimation of the individual, social, and political demands that schizoanalysis necessitates; with reference to Blanchot (1971), Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that the schizophrenic, ‘revolutionary escape’ from the capitalist, ‘paranoiac counterescape’ demands ‘courage’, where courage consists ‘in agreeing to flee rather than live tranquilly and hypocritically in false refuges’, to renounce the territorialities ‘that our vanity and our complacency bestow upon us’ and which have ‘as many deceptive sojourns as the world arranges for those who think they are standing straight and at ease, among stable things’ (p. 341).

**Conclusion**

In disclosing the productive, ‘schizophrenic’ and revolutionary nature of desire, *Anti-Oedipus* has the potential to sensitize us to the ‘fascistic’ nature of objective and subjective representations. As ‘modern archaisms’, such representations serve to introduce lack into desire, to introduce lack into life itself,
thereby regimenting and repressing its dynamic productivity, and arresting its potential to challenge the strictures of capitalist society, itself only possible in so far as it reterritorializes its own schizophrenic, deterritorializing tendency. Thus: ‘The tyrant, the priest, the captors of souls need to persuade us that life is hard and a burden. The powers that be need to repress us no less than to make us anxious’, and they do so by perpetuating a ‘long universal moan about life: the lack-to-be which is life’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 61). In contrast, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) reject any such ‘moan about life’, seeking to affirm the productive and creative dynamism of desire through the practice of schizoanalysis, a practice that can be understood as ‘the opposite of a morality of salvation, teaching the soul to live its life, not to save it’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 2002, p. 62). In particular, schizoanalysis can be understood as an analysis of, and intervention within, the passive synthesis of time that characterizes desire and which constitutes the continuity of subjectivity. Practically, this demands a judicious ‘destruction’ and ‘forgetting’ of the repressive power of those past representations, those territorializations, that coexist with, and encumber the present, by remembering to appropriate and employ past representations as the present preconditions from which to create or become something new.

Highlighting the urgency as well as the dangers of this procedure, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest that ‘schizoanalysis must proceed as quickly as possible, but it can also proceed only with great patience, great care’ (p. 318), and with the employment of great skill. Moreover, there is no suggestion here of ‘romanticising’ schizophrenia, of positing the clinical schizophrenic as some sort of ‘revolutionary’ that we are to somehow ‘imitate’ or become; as Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear: ‘The schizo is not revolutionary, but the schizophrenic process . . . is the potential for revolution’ (p. 341).

In addition, by affirming the productivity of desire, schizoanalysis has the potential to engender a productive dissolution of all seemingly ‘fixed’ and repressive ‘territorializations’ that operate throughout all ‘levels’ of life. Within psychiatry, for example, Deleuze & Guattari (2000) suggest ‘undoing all the reterritorializations that transform madness into mental illness’ and, more generally, revealing how the schizophrenic tendency of deterritorialization ‘can no longer qualify as a particular residue as a flow of madness, but affects just as well the flows of labour and desire, of production, knowledge, and creation in their most profound tendency’ (p. 321). At the personal level, schizoanalysis not only suggests the ongoing ‘destruction’ of those ‘segments’ that are continually produced by the diachronic movement of binary machines, those territorializations that striate us and that we pass through in our individual histories, but more fundamentally the destruction of any notion of a fixed self, subject or ego. As Deleuze & Guattari (2000) make clear, ‘schizoanalysis would come to nothing if it did not add to its positive tasks the constant destructive task of disintegrating the normal ego’ (p. 362). Again, this does not entail that we somehow adopt or engender that state of ‘disordered and fragmented selfhood’ that is said to characterize clinical schizophrenia, but that we ‘struggle’ for a subjectivity ‘beneath’ the notion of a fixed identity; a struggle for subjectivity understood as an ‘emergent property’ of the passive synthesis of time, and therefore as a ‘continuous multiplicity’; a struggle that ultimately asserts ‘the right to difference, variation and metamorphosis’ (Deleuze, 2004b, p. 106). Accordingly, Anti-Oedipus can be understood, as Foucault (2000) suggested, as ‘a book of ethics’ (p. xiii); as a book that presents us with an on-going ethical challenge to joyfully affirm, within ourselves and others, ‘a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, [and] a name that no longer designates any ego whatsoever’ (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 131).

References


