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SOCIAL-PRODUCTION AND
THE EXTERNAL CRITIQUE OF
OEDIPUS

The central function of Chapter Three of *Anti-Oedipus* is to historicize social-production's repression of desiring-production, to show that Oedipus is the specifically capitalist mode of such repression by contrasting it with other modes. The account which Deleuze and Guattari provide of three modes of social-production – savagery, despotism, capitalism¹ – is best understood not as a *history* of modes of social-production but as a *genealogy* of the Oedipus. Genealogy, in the sense of the term Foucault derives from Nietzsche, is based on the premiss that historical institutions and other features of social organization evolve not smoothly and continuously, gradually developing their potential through time, but *discontinuously*, and must be understood in terms of difference rather than continuity, as one social formation appropriates and abruptly reconfigures an older institution or revives various features of extant social organization by selectively recombining them to suit its own purposes. As Deleuze and Guattari put it, “the events that restore a thing to life [in a given form of social organization] are not the same as those that gave rise to it in the first place” (261/311). The Oedipus did not arise at the dawn of civilization (with the murder of the father in the primal horde) and evolve smoothly through Greek and Elizabethan tragedy into its modern nuclear form, as psychoanalytic legend would have it. The third chapter of *Anti-Oedipus* shows on the contrary that the modern Oedipus was cobbled together out of elements from previous social formations, in which they had very different roles to play.

Genealogical analysis will thus foreground the *differences* between Oedipal reproduction and other forms of social reproduction, revealing how unlike savage and despotic repression modern Oedipal repression actually is.² Indeed, Chapter Three will demonstrate that the Oedipus is specific to capitalism even though the incest-taboo, upon which it appears to be predicated, is universal. On the basis of the specific difference of capitalist reproduction such a genealogy will then show where the Oedipus came from – that is to say: where the bits and pieces of older forms of social repression came from, that the Oedipus assembles into its own distinctive repressive apparatus³ – and why such a reproductive apparatus so perfectly suits the requirements of capitalist social-production. At the same time, Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of capitalist production itself will show how it fosters

schizophrenia, and thus explain why schizophrenia becomes a general and pervasive tendency of capitalist society despite the counter-tendency of the Oedipus to trap free-form desire in its familial system of reproduction-representation.

The requirements, procedures, and results of genealogical analysis are quite unlike those of historiographical narrative. In Chapter Three, Deleuze and Guattari do not intend to account historically for the emergence of capitalism from older social forms, nor do they pretend to represent concretely any formerly or actually extant society. A genealogy of the Oedipus requires the reconstruction of historical modes of social-production only as “ideal-types,” logical permutations of basic social organization, as shown in Figure 3.1. Although their typology loosely resembles that developed by the American anthropologist Charles Morgan – and borrowed by Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property, and the State* (1972) – it is in fact based primarily on the interplay of two categories derived from Nietzsche and Marx, respectively: power and economics.

The first thing to note about this semantic system, or logical *combinatoire*, is that Deleuze and Guattari consider power to be a negative category and economics to be a positive one, for reasons that will become clearer in the analysis that follows.⁴

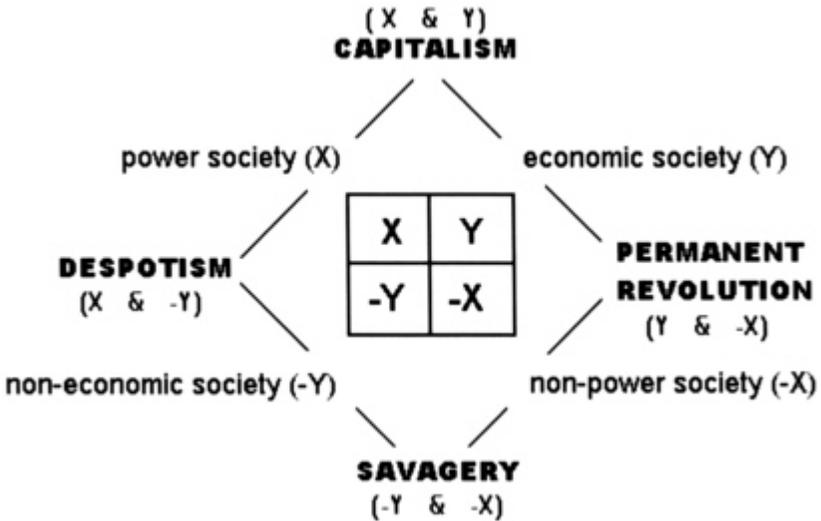


Figure 3.1 Typology of basic social organization

Briefly, savagery in this scheme represents something like “primitive communism,” a pre-caste, pre-class form of social organization where power is diffused throughout the community rather than concentrated in any one group or individual.⁵ Yet because of the absence of economics, savagery is also the social form most harshly governed by exacting codes of conduct, belief, and meaning. Under despotism, by contrast, differential codes of conduct, belief, and meaning are promulgated precisely in order to establish caste divisions and hierarchy, and are bent to the service of overt political power and direct imperial domination unalleviated by the freedoms that become possible in economic society. Despotism thus represents the worst of both worlds, in Deleuze and Guattari’s view: it is power society *par excellence*, and not economic. Capitalism, finally, is characterized by power *and* economics, which conflict with one another: the ceaselessly enhanced productivity of the capitalist economy could contribute to the general enrichment of human life-activity, but because of the capitalist power-structure it gets appropriated privately and/or devoted ascetically to increasing production for its own sake, instead. Capitalism, for schizoanalysis, is an economic society that has yet to shed its power component; the fourth term of the *combinatoire* (economics without power), which I have called “permanent revolution,” appears only on its horizon, as the end of universal history.⁶

Modes of social-production, as Deleuze and Guattari understand them, are not, however, reducible to the interplay of economics and power alone; even as ideal types they are far more complex than that. Social organization and repression in each mode of social-production also involve:

1. a “socius” as focal point or support for the social investment of desire
2. a specific mode of operation of anti-production, involving distinctive forms of
3. surplus-value and of
4. debt
5. a specific form of coding and
6. a system of inscription.

The three basic or more abstract categories – socius, anti-production, and debt – will require preliminary explanation. I will then analyze the three modes of social-production in light of these categories in order to show how the capitalist form of surplus-value differs crucially from the form of surplus-value characteristic of both savagery and despotism. I will then examine in detail the forms of coding, the relations of anti-production, and the systems of inscription specific to the modes of social-production, and the different role that Oedipus plays in each. We will then be in a position to understand why the Oedipus belongs specifically to capitalism as its characteristic mode of repression, and how schizoanalysis brings psychoanalysis at last to the point of autocritique.

Social-production in general

Just as desiring-production is organized on the body-without-organs, social-production is organized on what Deleuze and Guattari call the “socius”: the earth for savagery, the despot for barbarism, capital for capitalism.⁷ It is not only the socius, as the social focal-point for the investment of productive desire, that varies historically: so does the very nature of the relationship between desiring-production and social-production.⁸ In savagery, desire is bound so tightly to the socius that the organization of social-production almost completely determines the organization of desiring-production, as we shall see. Only under capitalism, partly because of its segregation of reproduction from production at large, does the organization of desiring-production become significantly different from the organization of social-production on the socius, thus allowing the body-without-organs to emerge from more or less complete determination by social-production. This is why Deleuze and Guattari say that the body-without-organs appears as such only *at the end* of history⁹: until capitalism, the body-without-organs is too powerfully over-determined by the socius to operate independently or appear in its own right.

Anti-production plays a central role in organizing social-production on the socius, just as it does with desiring-production on the body-without-organs. Indeed, like the term “desiring-machines,” the concept of anti-production provides for schizoanalysis a crucial link between the realms of desiring-production and social-production. As we saw, anti-production on the body-without-organs designates what Freud and Lacan called “primal” repression (*refoulement originaire*): the advent of a process of recording in the human psyche, involving repetition, memory, representation, the formation of an unconscious. In the realm of desiring-production considered in and of itself (i.e. abstractly), the recording process is *ambivalent*: the forces of anti-production free desiring-production from strict instinctual determinism by suspending organ-machine connections, but they also make it susceptible to capture in systems of representation, as we saw in Chapter 2. We can now add this: it is consideration of the relations of social-production and anti-production that enables us to evaluate the results of the recording process, inasmuch as these relations generate the systems of representation that capture and tie desire to the socius in the institution of social organization. For such systems can either contravene or confirm the dynamics of desiring-production. And it is one of the distinctive traits of the capitalist mode of anti-production-social-production that it raises the ambivalence of the recording process to a maximum, by sponsoring both decoding and recoding.

This social sense of anti-production is derived in large part from Bataille’s notion of *dépense* or expenditure. Actually, expenditure already possesses in Bataille himself both psychological and anthropological dimensions, but it is primarily the latter that will concern us here, for it provides a devastating Nietzschean critique of bourgeois political economy and utilitarian philosophy that crucially supplements

that of Marx within the schizoanalytic perspective. Bataille's insights are so important that, had he not existed, schizoanalysis would have had to invent them. No society, Bataille insists, really organizes itself around needs and the production of use-values to meet needs – as necessary as such production may be to all forms of social life. Rather, social organization is always based on the expenditure of excess, and productive activity derives its meaning and purpose from such expenditure, not the other way around. Ultimately, Bataille argues, the excess to be expended derives from the astronomical amount of heat and light energy our planet receives from the sun. Various life-forms and various social forms have different ways of embodying, appropriating, organizing, concentrating, and expending their part of the excess energy-flows transiting the planet; but in all cases it is the acts of expenditure that exercise predominant influence on the life-activity of the species or social formation. This single insight provides critical correctives for three of the perspectives on which Deleuze and Guattari draw substantially in *Anti-Oedipus*.

First of all, it confirms their critique of the metaphysics of lack that has plagued Western philosophy and psychology from Plato to Lacan:

Desire does not lack anything....[For] the objective being of desire is the Real in and of itself....Desire is not bolstered by needs, but rather the contrary; needs are derived from desire: they are counter-products within the real that desire produces. Lack is a countereffect of desire; it is deposited, distributed, vacuolized within [the] real...[when social] organization deprives desire of its objective being.

(26–7/34–5)

Desire is not based on some primordial lack; nor does it derive from needs: it is instead socially organized anti-production that superimposes needs and lack on productive desire. Without the application of this corrective to psychoanalysis (and Western psychology in general), as Deleuze and Guattari put it, “all resignations are justified in advance” (74/88). The point of comparing various modes of social-production is to understand the conditions under which, and the different ways in which, anti-production introjects needs and/or lack into desiring-production.

Second, the schizoanalytic concept of anti-production introduces the issue of power into what Marx referred to as the dialectic of the “forces and relations of production.” For Marx, the forces of production are always primary, even if the relations of production determine the form which production takes in a given society. All social activity not related to production in the Marxist framework tends to be relegated to the rather amorphous sphere of “reproduction.”¹⁰ For schizoanalysis, the forces of production remain important, and maintain their own autonomous dynamism as a locus and expression of desire, but (in line with Bataille) they are given form and purpose by the relations of *anti*-production. It is these relations of

anti-production that organize the social expenditure of surplus in ways that either inhibit or foster the institution of power relations of various kinds. To the familiar Marxist dualisms, then, schizoanalysis adds extra terms: the dialectic of forces and relations of production becomes the interplay of forces and relations of production *and* forces and relations of anti-production; the alternative between the sphere of production or the sphere of reproduction broadens to include the sphere of anti-production.¹¹

Finally, anti-production as the organization of matter- and energy-flows on the socius provides a crucial corrective to what Deleuze and Guattari call the “exchangism” of Lévi-Strauss. In fact, the concept of the socius provides a materialist basis for what Lévi-Strauss called the “symbolic order” – that is, for the codes and the systems of inscription that organize desire socially in the different modes of social-production. As Lévi-Strauss has shown, kinship terminology and myths organize desire (conduct, belief, meaning) according to the codes of a symbolic order – as do the legal codes promulgated by despots to govern the subordinate peoples of their empires, and the laws governing the sale of labor and other commodities, for example, in very different forms of symbolic order. Social coding on the socius for Deleuze and Guattari organizes bodies, practices, and objects as well as symbols and words, as it does for Lévi-Strauss. But for the founder of structuralism, social organization is ultimately everywhere the same, and always amounts to systems of *exchange* – whether of women, of words and stories, of prestige objects, or of ordinary goods. For Deleuze and Guattari, by contrast, as Chapter Three of *Anti-Oedipus* is meant to show, social organization is *not* everywhere the same: forms of coding and systems of inscription differ significantly among the three ideal-type modes of social-production they analyze, in part because desire gets organized or inscribed on the type of socius specific to each mode of social-production (as indicated above): the earth, the despot, capital. And, even more importantly, symbolic order everywhere is ultimately based not on exchange but on *debt* – which itself takes diverse forms in the different modes of social-production, as we shall see. In line with the arguments subordinating identity to difference in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze and Guattari consider the exchange of equivalents to be a subsidiary, and mostly illusory or mystifying, form of debt – which is a relation not of equivalence but of inequality, difference, or force.¹²

It may seem perplexing to have passed so quickly from the notion of “excess” in Bataille to that of “debt” in schizoanalysis. But the importance of the latter notion for analyzing different types of power relation will become clear in a moment. For now it may help to recall that anti-production is, in the social as well as the psychological realm, simply a transformation of productive energy or force whereby “a full body [here the socius] falls back on the economy that it appropriates” (248/295): it is the conversion of a portion of the superabundant forces of production into a counter-force that absorbs, distributes, or consumes already-produced

products in the name of a creditor to whom a debt is owed. Of course the debt collectively owed to the earth in savagery is quite unlike the debt subordinate peoples owe the despot in despotism, which is again quite unlike the debt owed to capital under capitalism. Indeed, more important than the figure to whom the debt is nominally owed is the *system of anti-production* the debt sustains, for the social management of excess as debt is its primary *raison d'être*: you never pay capital itself, but a bank; never a god or king, but a priest or functionary; never the earth itself, but a shaman or ancestor. Debt is thus the general name under which relations of social obligation are enforced by anti-production; it is the principal means by which “lack...is deposited, distributed, vacuolized into [the] real” (27/34). Now what anti-production always precludes, as we shall see, is the direct appropriation and complete and immediate enjoyment of the fruits of production; and what it institutes is a variety of regimes always based on deferral, on the separation of productive force from what it can produce or already has produced, on the accumulation of reserves, the constitution and maintenance of extensive social organization, and – in certain forms under certain conditions, e.g. Oedipal guilt in the nuclear family – on thoroughgoing self-denial: asceticism. Anti-production as the controlled expenditure of excess is thus for schizoanalysis co-terminous with the process of organizing social relations in systems of debt of various kinds.

Forms of surplus-value and coding

A mode of social-production/anti-production comprises a specific form of organization for flows of matter and energy. Ultimately, there are two ways such organization can be accomplished: qualitatively or quantitatively, symbolically or economically.¹³ Savagery and despotism are organized symbolically, via codes and over-codes, while capitalism is organized economically, via axioms.

The system of anti-production in savagery involves, in brief, the temporary accumulation of a surplus of specific goods – cattle, yams, or cowry shells, for instance – goods that the tribe collectively deems to be of special value or significance. Deleuze and Guattari call this a “surplus-value of code” because social codes determine what is of value and therefore worth accumulating. Extensive accumulation, however, is explicitly prohibited and actively prevented: ritual orgies of waste and expenditure (such as northwest Native American *potlatch*) prevent accumulation by obliging each clan to maintain its proper place in the symbolic order by either destroying or dispersing accumulated goods when its turn comes. Debt within the savage system of anti-production is thus sporadic and reciprocal, remains immanent to the kinship system of blood-lineages and marriage-alliances comprising savage social organization, and functions to prevent power from accruing to any one family or clan.¹⁴

Anti-production serves precisely the opposite function in the power structure of despotism: instead of a patchwork of debts and responsibilities following the

network of lineages and alliances, all obligations now focus directly on the despot himself, transforming the sporadic and reciprocal relations of savage anti-production into an infinite and uni-directional debt. This transformation has several consequences. For one thing, inasmuch as the despot sets himself up as the sole agent of anti-production over the peoples he subordinates, he becomes the target/object of universal envy: his transcendent position of power is thus inherently paranoid. It will then become possible to contrast the paranoia characteristic of despotism with the perversion characteristic of savagery, but also with the neuroses of the nuclear family and the schizophrenia of capitalism. More important for now is the impact that the infinite and uni-directional form of despotic debt has on the means of payment and on the shape of symbolic order itself.

For despotic tribute is not payable in the various locally coded “currencies” of the despot’s subject-peoples: objects of special significance to this or that group mean nothing to the despot; they are of no value outside the group. Instead, *one* single representative of value – gold – becomes the privileged signifier of universal value, and this “over-coded” form of surplus-value – expressing not local coding but a transcendent law and an *imposed standard* of value – flows continually into the bottomless coffers of the despot. From what had been a network of reciprocally constituting (Saussure would say “purely differential”) relations instituting and reflecting collective agreement, one privileged term has been extracted and superimposed as the measure and guarantor of imperial value. Here, then, is a first answer to the questions raised in Chapter 2 about the Lacanian perspective as to the historical conditions which support or require the extraction of a privileged term and the imposition of a transcendent law: the “psychological” (or psycholinguistic) function Lacan assigns (universally) to the phallus is in fact a feature of power society and its process of over-coding, not of coding (or of language) per se; it originates in the realm of social-production, not that of desiring-production; and it governs in the name of the despot, not in the name of the father. Only later, under capitalism, does it migrate into the nuclear family and govern the Oedipus complex in the father’s name, as we shall see.¹⁵

For now, it is important to note that money – which arises, Deleuze and Guattari remind us, from imperial tribute as a means of paying debt, not from barter as a means of commercial exchange¹⁶ – as tribute represents the first great deterritorialization of codes and meaning by abstract value: value is evacuated from meaningful objects and accrues instead to gold or money as universal equivalent. Under despotism, however, money is still an *imposed* standard of value; it is still a “foreign currency” to the local symbolic orders of the peoples who are bound to pay it. Tribute money is not yet the “common currency” of commercial money integrating the whole of market society economically, but a sign of political subordination; the abstract value of tribute money is not yet exchange-value, but debt-value, as it were. Money does not yet mediate voluntary contractual relations

between (formally) equal parties, does not yet beget money all by itself, as it will under capitalism: it has to be extracted by force. So, even though it is paid in money, despotic tribute nonetheless remains a *surplus-value of code* – and specifically of the over-codes that enforce and reflect the political dominance characteristic of the imperial power-structure. (This is the principal reason why, even today, taxes – the modern form of tribute – inspire revolt as a palpable instance of political oppression, while profits do not.) Despotic anti-production transforms the patchwork of short-lived debts and obligations immanent to and constitutive of savage social organization into an infinite debt owed to the transcendent figure of the despot, who superimposes a new hierarchical form of social organization “from on high,” as Deleuze and Guattari put it. But social-production is still organized in terms of local codes and imperial over-codes, so despotic surplus-value remains a surplus-value of code.¹⁷

What sets capitalism apart from the other modes of social-production, which code and over-code value, is that its social organization is based on the process of *axiomatization*. Symbolic codes and over-codes reflect or govern qualitative similarities among significant entities; symbolic social organization depends on regulating the relations among already-coded elements, as when social standing in savagery is associated customarily with the expenditure (*dépense*), the destruction or distribution, of items designated by the local code as prestige goods. The interrelation of such flows is crucially indirect, inasmuch as it depends on custom – on a symbolic system of conduct, meaning, and belief. Axioms, by contrast, directly join together heterogeneous flows of matter or energy that have been quantified. Axiomatization not only does not depend on meaning, belief, and custom, but actively defies and subverts them, giving capitalism its distinctive dynamism and modernism. Quantified flows under capitalism get conjoined solely on the estimation that this or that conjunction will produce surplus-value; such estimation involves economic calculation rather than belief: symbolic meaning has nothing to do with it. And the conjunction is direct, completely unmediated by codes; indeed, the qualities attributable to axiomatized flows *arise from* the conjunction itself, rather than pre-existing it: in commodity-production and consumption, the qualities of the product (“use-values”), as well as the qualities with which the consumer is endowed by consuming it (“taste”), and also the qualities of the labor-power (“skills”) and of the capital invested in machinery (“technologies”) required to produce it – *all* depend on the conjunctions effected beforehand in the market via the medium of money as abstract universal equivalent.¹⁸

Inasmuch as the market is its basic institution and commercial money its common currency, then, capitalism substitutes a quantitative calculus based on axioms for the qualitative codes and over-codes that organized social life in previous formations. Social relations in a coded symbolic order are qualitative and significant: women in savage society, for example, are carefully named and highly valued as

the source of life itself and the very cornerstone of meta-familial social relations in a kinship system fully charged with symbolic meanings. Much the same can be said of labor relations in an overcoded symbolic order, to take another example, for even when surplus-value derives from surplus-labor, as it usually does in despotism, the surplus-labor commanded by the transcendent law of the despot remains qualitatively distinct from the labor providing for the laborer's own subsistence, to the point that it may even occur at a different time and in a different place: overcoding retains and enforces a qualitative and fully meaningful distinction between the two kinds of labor. Indeed, all the resources of discourse and symbolic culture (notably those of religion) are mobilized precisely to endow the distinction with meaning and make it "believable" in the strong sense of the term.

Axiomatic social organization under capitalism, by contrast, is quantitative and strictly meaningless: nameless workers (regardless of gender) are valued only as abstractly quantified amounts of labor-power on the market, and no qualitative distinction between labor and surplus-labor any longer exists. (Even the quantitative difference between the two grows increasingly difficult to measure, much less directly perceive, and this contributes considerably to the capitalist mystification of this source of surplus-value.) The original and still fundamental capitalist axiom, as I have said, conjoins deterritorialized and quantified flows of liquid wealth – monetary wealth no longer embodied in landed property – with deterritorialized flows of "free" labor – workers no longer tied to specific means of production who therefore have no means to sustain life other than by the sale of their labor-power.¹⁹ And in its perpetual search for new sources of profit, capitalism continually axiomatizes other qualitatively dissimilar resource-flows, transforming them into quantitatively exchangeable commodities on the market: flows of raw materials and labor skills, to be sure, but also of scientific knowledge, consumer preferences, and so on.²⁰

Deleuze and Guattari will thus call capitalist surplus-value a *surplus-value of flow*, rather than of codes or over-codes: it arises as the quantitative differential between the flow of money invested in factors of production (including the production of consumption) – labor, materials, technology (and marketing) – and the flow of money returning at the end of the production–consumption cycle.²¹ It matters not at all *what* (qualitatively) is produced, only *that* production occurs and surplus-value is realized. Social-production is no longer organized locally in support of a network of mobile debt-relations, nor is it organized hierarchically by and for the sake of a transcendent instance of anti-production such as the despot: capitalist social-production is organized by the market and for nothing other than the continuing production of surplus-value for its own sake. So at the same time that it re-organizes social-production in a completely distinctive way, via axiomatization – rather than merely appropriating the surplus from existing systems of production as despotism had done – capital becomes, as it were, its own instance of anti-

production: surplus-value becomes an end in itself.²²

Capitalist axiomatization, then, represents the second great deterritorialization of codes and meaning by abstract value (despotic tribute having been the first). And this time, with the institution of fully commercial (rather than mere tribute) money and the market, abstract value prevails – in the form of true exchange-value: money and axiomatization now *replace* codes and meaning as the basis of social organization, rather than remaining contained and controlled by them, as was the case in despotism. “Unlike previous social machines,” Deleuze and Guattari explain, “the capitalist machine is incapable of providing a code that will apply to the whole of the social field. By substituting money for the very notion of a code, it has created an axiomatic of abstract quantities...” (33/41).

Social valuation is now quantitative rather than qualitative: exchange-value simply disregards or over-rides the concrete differences between commodities, rather than reducing them in the name of similarity and identity, as codes strive to do. Capitalist axioms conjoin quantified resource-flows to extract a differential surplus from their conjunction: whatever local codes may temporarily spring up in the process will be merely incidental and strictly subordinate to capital’s axiomatic self-expansion. And so the form of coding characteristic of capitalism involves a contradictory process of *decoding* and *recoding*, whereby extant codes of meaning and conduct are swept away by a wave of axiomatization which generates a temporary recodification of new meanings and practices, that are themselves swept away in turn by the next wave of axiomatization, and so on. It is important to note that recoding (despite its morphology) is quite unlike coding and over-coding, for capitalism provides no stable codes capable of governing the whole social field: like decoding, recoding is a mere concomitant of axiomatization, not the principal means of organizing social-production on the socius, as were coding and over-coding. This is one reason why Deleuze and Guattari distinguish capitalist surplus-value as a surplus-value of flows – it involves immanent flows of quantified factors of production and consumption conjoined by axioms rather than codes or over-codes.

The relations of anti-production and systems of inscription

Now that we have outlined the two basic types of the social organization of matter-and energy- flows – direct and indirect, symbolic and economic – we can examine the three modes of social-production/anti-production themselves in more detail. In all three, forces of anti-production institute regimes of debt and social obligation that are designed to prevent the direct appropriation and immediate consumption of the fruits of social-production, as I have already suggested – but the means instituted to do so vary considerably. At the same time, a system of social inscription executes the specific type of social repression that each mode imposes on desiring-production:

social inscription... on the socius is in fact the agent of a secondary psychic repression, or repression “in the proper sense of the term,” that is necessarily situated in relation to the desiring-inscription of the body without organs, and in relation to the primary repression that the latter already performs in the domain of desire – a relation that is essentially variable. There is always social repression, but the apparatus of repression varies...

(184/217–18)

I will examine first the relations of anti-production and systems of inscription of savagery and despotism, then turn attention to capitalism and the way it finally manages to impose its Oedipal inscription on desire.

Savagery (1): the relations of anti-production

In savage society, the forces of anti-production operate by means of kinship relations. However, what we call “kinship relations” are, under savagery, co-extensive with the organization of the social field as a whole (166/196); the nuclear family, and the reproductive functions occurring within it, are not segregated from social relations at large, as they have been under capitalism. Marriage functions not merely as a pairing of two individuals, based on personal predilection and undertaken primarily for the purpose of bearing and raising children, but as a fully social event implicated in and governed by the entire social order, undertaken so as to consolidate and/or ameliorate the positions of entire families and lineages within the savage community. Two important implications follow from the non-segregation of savage reproduction from social-production at large.

For one thing, what we know as the “incest-taboo” functions in a very different – not to say opposed – fashion in savage society. Whereas we think of the incest “taboo” as an injunction *against* sexual relations among family members, it functions in savage society, on the contrary, as an incitement *in favor of* making connections in the social field. Indeed, to speak of the incest “taboo” as a prohibition, a *proscription* bearing on reproduction, is already in a sense to impose a modern Oedipal perspective on savage social organization. For the social imperative under savagery is on the contrary pre-eminently positive: a *prescription* to form or strengthen family alliances, to share or distribute wealth, to knit social ties, by insisting that the young find their spouses exogamously, outside of their own family group or clan. By contrast, incest appears to us as a taboo – a “dirty little secret” (269/320) – because reproduction in the nuclear family has been segregated from other social relations in such a way that family members become the most conspicuous objects of desire. The Oedipus becomes a *complex* for us in a way it could not have been for societies with extended rather than nuclear institutions of

reproduction, where so much positive incentive and social importance attach to marrying outside the family group.

This is not to say that there is no taboo against incest in savage society, but rather that the negative *proscription* is merely the corollary of a detailed and all-important *prescription* to share, distribute, knit social ties. In fact – and this is the second implication of the coincidence of relations of reproduction and relations of social-production/anti-production in savage society – the *exact same kind of imperative* governs production and reproduction alike. Everyone must share or distribute the fruits of their labor; or conversely, no one may appropriate for themselves what they have produced – hunted, gathered, reaped – but must rather relinquish it to the network of debt-obligations that constitutes the very structure of the relations of savage anti-production.²³ What we call the incest-taboo thus represents a sub-category of a larger class of taboo which constitutes the law of savage anti-production and organizes both social-production and reproduction: hunters are forbidden to consume their own kill just as parents are forbidden to procreate with their own children. That the taboo bearing on reproduction seems so much more important to us than the taboo bearing on production is due to a kind of optical illusion: from our perspective, the taboo on production is moot because with specialization and the extensive division of labor characteristic of capitalism people, inevitably produce for the market, and *cannot* directly consume what they produce. Under savagery, relations of anti-production must enforce what the market system under capitalism seems able to ensure effortlessly and as a matter of course: that there will be no direct appropriation of the fruits of labor.

The general law of savage social organization, then, is that all means of life – wombs and material goods alike – must circulate. The system of savage debt-obligations and expenditures is established precisely in order to prevent desire from gaining immediate access to its object, which is life and the means of life. It is because immediate access is to be prevented by a mode of repression which turns desire away from its immediate aims that Deleuze and Guattari characterize savage social organization as “perverse.” The relation of desire to its primordial objects, the sources of life itself – to the earth (food, clothing, shelter, etc.) as well as the mother (breast, placenta, womb, etc.) – must be mediated by the laws of social organization.²⁴ The productive synthesis of connection which would make immediate (and multiple) connections with mother and earth gets interrupted by the disjunctive synthesis of recording, which establishes the network of relations of anti-production comprising the savage social order.²⁵ This is, of course, an *exclusive* use of the disjunctive synthesis, for savage social organization actively encourages some relations and discourages others.

The general syntax, so to speak, of savage social organization comprises marriage alliances and lineage filiations, the synchrony and diachrony of kinship, if you will. Unlike the nuclear family in modern society, where filiation relations involve

usually only two (or at most three) lineage generations and alliance relations go no further than one layer of “in-laws,” savage lineages are calculated many generations deep, and savage alliance relations extend throughout the social field. Indeed, under the pressure of complex alliance patterns, kinship relations combine with myth to extend savage lineages all the way back to the earth itself, while the matrix of alliances become co-extensive with social organization as a whole. Since debt and expenditure obligations under savagery remain finite, mobile, and reciprocal, they form neither a closed system of exchange nor a fixed hierarchy permanently elevating one clan or group above the others. Determinate patterns of circulation produce only differences in rank, which arise from the ebb and flow of debt obligations, and are hence always subject to change.

Savagery (2): territorial inscription

Savage social organization is actualized by a system of inscription that Deleuze and Guattari call a system of “cruelty” (184/218). The temptation of direct appropriation of the matter- and energy-flows of life is so great and so immediate, and the requirement of obedience to the social group so strong, that the laws of savage anti-production – exogamy; no immediate consumption – are branded directly into the flesh of the body. Invoking the Nietzsche of *The Genealogy of Morals*, Deleuze and Guattari suggest that an enormous amount of pain and cruelty are required to forge a collective memory powerful enough to overcome the appeal of unmediated life (144–5/169–70). The main threat to savage society arises not from incest, they insist, but from flows of matter or energy that might escape capture by the forces of anti-production that constitute savage social organization; rituals of cruelty and systems of inscription are instituted precisely to *code* all matter- and energy-flows so that they circulate throughout society and cannot escape its grasp. Savage coding is thus linked *both* to the system of debt-obligations and expenditures it enforces and makes possible *and* to a specific form of “writing” that creates and imposes a collective memory on the savage tribe.²⁶

Savage writing as a mode of inscription is distinctive in that it is characteristically performed on the body (or the body of the earth). Equally important, such writing is independent of spoken language: the voice and graphics form two formally independent sub-systems of inscription; neither serves as signifier for the other. Finally, voice and graphics are nevertheless brought together to inscribe savage law in more or less public rituals where an authoritative gaze (of a shaman, a specific social group, or the community as a whole) confirms acceptance into the community based on the pain suffered in the process of inscription. The gaze functions crucially to overcome the formal independence and to sanction the “arbitrary” conjunction of the other two components of the ritual, which Deleuze and Guattari therefore characterize as a system of *connotation* (203/241).

Deleuze and Guattari describe one such ritual, in which the clan of a young

woman and that of her husband mark her body with an excision that will confirm the legitimacy of their alliance and act as a sign of its fertility:

The calabash of...excision is placed on the body of the young woman. Furnished by the husband's lineage, the calabash serves as a conductor for the voice of alliance; but the graphism must be traced by a member of the young woman's clan. The articulation of the two elements takes place on the body itself, and constitutes the sign [of fertility].

(188–9/223)

Deleuze and Guattari go on to insist that such a sign “is not a resemblance or imitation, nor an effect of a signifier, but rather a position and a production of desire” (189/223): the sign operates less to convey a message – the woman does not learn the meaning of the ideograms during the initiation rite – than to assign reproductive organs a place and a (hopefully fruitful) function within the group. Everyone henceforth knows to whom this womb belongs – or rather, exactly what position it occupies in the network of alliances and filiations of the society, and to whom its fruits will be due, along which pathways of debt and expenditure they will have to circulate.

Several features of savage society are worth underscoring for the sake of comparison with despotism and capitalism. For one thing, savage debt is open-ended, composed of what Deleuze and Guattari call “mobile and finite blocks of debt” (190/225). While it is true that savage myth supplements the reckoning of lineages so as to ground them in the earth itself, the system of alliances that constitute the network of debt-obligations is subject to constant renegotiation, and thus never forms a closed system. “A kinship system is not a [fixed] structure but a practice, a praxis, a method, and even a strategy,” Deleuze and Guattari conclude; “[it] only appears closed [to exchange anthropologists] to the extent that it is severed from the political and economic references that keep it open” (147–8/173).

For another thing, the voice and graphics form two independent systems, which rituals bring together in an a-signifying way under the gaze of the group (or of such sub-groups as are permitted to witness this or that ritual). Crucially, savage writing does not represent speech. Moreover, rituals of cruelty assign social place and function to specific organs by marking bodies or body-parts; whole persons are not at issue. A fertility ritual assigns the womb, and the womb alone, to its place in the relations of anti-production; which foods the young woman may eat, what stories she may tell or to whom she may talk are determined by various other rituals bearing on different organs of the body. Savage organs belong to the group rather than to private egos or selves (which only emerge later). In this context, incest as we know it (or rather as we conceive of it, according to the modern “incest-taboo”)

is in an important sense simply not possible: the organs of reproduction (and production, too) are first and foremost assigned a place and function in the social order; they belong not to an individual but to the group.²⁷ One result, it is true, of such assignment – but not the one directly aimed at – is that sexual relations among immediate family members are discouraged. But the “taboo” forbidding sexual relations between whole persons within the immediate family is merely an after-effect – or better, an after-image – of the primary assignment of place and function to specific, collectively invested organs within the community.

Deleuze and Guattari therefore conclude that the Oedipus plays no role in organizing savage society: Oedipal incest is only a negative after-image of the law which does in fact organize savage society (while also determining the development of extended lineages): the law of exogamy and the system of marriage-alliances it fosters. Here again, the tripartite semiotic of the poststructuralist critique of representation is critical: it enables Deleuze and Guattari to distinguish between the alliance–debt system as the *repressing representation* of desire, on one hand, and the taboo against incest which is the *displaced represented* of desire, produced by the repressing representation itself, on the other. Equally important, it enables them to distinguish both elements of representation from the immediate object of desire, the *representative of desire*, which as I have said is life itself and the means of life. Desire does indeed get repressed under savagery, very severely repressed; however, it is not incest but the desire for life that gets repressed, by being inscribed in a determinate social system of representation:

As for Oedipus in general [under savagery], it is not the repressed – that is, the representative of desire, which is on this side of and completely ignorant of daddy–mommy. Nor is it the repressing representation, which is beyond, and which renders [whole] persons discernible only by subjecting them to the...rules of alliance. Incest is only the retroactive effect of the repressing representation *on* the repressed representative: the representation disfigures or displaces this representative....[I]t projects onto the representative [the] categories that it has itself established and rendered discernible; it applies to the representative [specific] terms that did not exist before the alliances organized...a system in extension...the representation reduces the representative to what is blocked in this system. Hence Oedipus is indeed the limit, but the displaced limit that now passes into the interior of the socius. Oedipus is the baited image with which desire allows itself to be caught (That’s what you wanted! The decoded flows were incest!). Then a long story begins, the story of Oedipalization.

(165–6/195; translation modified)

But the decoded flows were not incest: they were life itself. The primary function of

savage representation is to code the un-coded flows of life, to institute through rituals of cruelty a system of alliances and filiations in order to prevent the direct and hence anti-social appropriation of life. Far from playing a determining role in this system of repression, the Oedipus appears only as an after-image, an internalized limit. As such, it begins what we can see retrospectively as a long yet halting migration to replace life and become the very representative of desire, which it finally does only under capitalism. But first we must examine the entirely different relations of anti-production and system of inscription characteristic of despotism, to understand what they in turn contribute to the long story of Oedipalization.

Despotism (1): the relations of anti-production

In despotic society, the forces of anti-production operate via undisguised political domination. Despotism results from conquest and the formation of empires, and its mode of anti-production involves superimposing the relations of conquerors to conquered over the existing social dynamics of the latter: “the essential action of the [despotic] State...is the creation of a second inscription by which the new full body [of the despot]...appropriates all the forces and agents of production” (198/235). Remnants of the older, non-power, social relations remain in force locally and co-exist, to a greater or lesser extent, with the new power-relations of the empire, but they do so only within its limits, and so it is on these power-relations that we will focus here.²⁸ In brief, whereas savage anti-production ensured the sharing of fruits of labor, imperial anti-production enforces the extraction of tribute from its subject-peoples for the sake of glorious expenditure (*dépense*) on the part of the despot.

The general law of despotic social organization is not the savage law that anything of value must circulate in horizontal circuits of debt and obligation, but that everything is owed to the despot. The despot imposes this infinite and unilateral debt by transforming the general syntax of the savage communities beneath him, seizing its patchwork of alliances and lineages and re-aligning all of them on himself. The figure of the despot thus replaces the earth as the socius and original ground of all lineages, in direct filiation with what is characteristically a monotheistic deity, and supplements the networks of savage alliance with a new alliance from above that links him not with this or that specific family or clan, but with his subject-peoples as a whole, and as an un-differentiated mass. Rather than owe one another reciprocal and dischargeable debts, they now all owe the despot everything.²⁹ This includes their lives, for one thing, inasmuch as the power of the despot includes the power of life and death over his people: under despotism, “the debt becomes a *debt of existence*, a debt of the existence of the subjects themselves” (197/234). And it includes tribute, of course, which although paid in money, as we have said, remains a surplus-value of code in that it is extracted by seizing the existing circuits of debt and expenditure obligations and turning them all toward the coffers the

despot. But the infinite debt therefore also includes wombs and the women who bear them (e.g. the ten virgins “owed” to the Minotaur annually), inasmuch as they circulate in the very same circuits of debt and expenditure as material goods do.

Since subject-peoples now owe their despot everything, he has thereby gained the right of access to all women indiscriminately, regardless of their former lineage or erstwhile alliance obligations. The despot is in principle everyone’s father, but equally everyone’s son, brother, spouse. Hence the figure of incest, which had appeared as a mere after-image of positive marriage-inducements under savagery, now becomes in a sense ubiquitous and inevitable, if only symbolically, with the new-alliance and direct-filiation relations of despotism. But such incest is the exclusive prerogative of the despot: the right to incest is a power that sets him completely apart from ordinary mortals. One result is that incest in this “royal” or despotic form is no longer the *displaced represented* of desire, but has become the *repressing representation* itself. Imperial relations of anti-production are based on caste distinctions that separate the despot and his court retainers or state bureaucrats from everyone else. Incest now appears taboo for ordinary people precisely because it is the prerogative of the despot:

In the imperial formation, *incest has ceased being the displaced represented of desire to become the repressing representation itself...* [The] way the despot has of committing incest, and of making it possible, in no way involves removing the apparatus of social and psychic repression [*l’appareil répression-refoulement*]. On the contrary, the despot’s intervention forms part of the apparatus... a new economy in the repressive-repressing apparatus [*l’appareil refoulant répressif*], a new mark, a new severity. It would be... too easy if it were enough to make incest possible in this sovereign fashion for the exercise of psychic repression and the service of social repression to come to an end. [But] royal barbarian incest is merely the means of overcoding the flows of desire, certainly not a means of liberating them.

(201–2/238–9; translation modified)

Royal incest is still not yet the incest of everyman’s psychoanalytic Oedipus complex (though we are one step closer), for this form of incest exercises its mode of repression not by universally forbidding it but by making it licit for the despot alone within a system of rigid caste distinctions.

The position of the despot, then, is in a literal sense an enviable one. He concentrates in his person the function of anti-productive expenditure for the entire empire and all of its peoples, and exercises the right of eminent domain over everything they produce and reproduce, as well as over the very life and death of the people themselves. Inasmuch as absolutely everything is owed to the despot,

and all organs, persons, and products belong to him as parts of his full body, his transcendent position is inherently *paranoid*:

Royal incest is inseparable from the intense multiplication of organs and their inscription on the new full body. The apparatus of social repression–psychic repression [*l'appareil de répression-refoulement*] – i.e. the repressing representation – now finds itself defined in terms of a supreme danger that expresses the representative on which it bears: the danger that [even] a single organ might flow outside the despotic body, that it might break away or escape.

(210–11/249)

Given the paranoia of the despot's position, the *repressed representative* of desire under the imperial regime of infinite debt can be none other than betrayal, disobedience, eventually resistance and rebellion, and the despot musters all the powers of coercion and representation to pre-empt them all.³⁰ Indeed, having lost their capacity for self-determination after conquest, as their savage codes get over-coded by imperial representation and their alliances and filiations appropriated by the state, subject-peoples have been effectively pacified: the threat of death they now have reason to fear arises not so much from natural circumstance or the threat of ostracism from the group (as under savagery) as from the despot who wields the power of life and death over them; death no longer appears as an accident or a simple fact of life, but now has become a permanent menace from on high, inflicted by force of arms and backed by the imperial state and its system of law. Obedience to the transcendent law of the despot is enforced not through branding the flesh but by the threat of death:

There occurs a detachment and elevation of the death instinct, which ceases to be coded in the interplay of savage actions and reactions...in order to become the somber agent of overcoding, the detached object that hovers over each subject.

(213/252)

Deleuze and Guattari therefore call the imperial system of inscription a system of *terror* (211–13/250–2).

Despotism (2): imperial inscription

What is distinctive about this system of inscription is that the independence of voice and graphics characteristic of savagery disappears: writing now aligns itself on the voice, but on a voice that is crucially absent (as Derrida has shown is true for all writing). The imperial domain is too large to be governed in person, so the

state administers by written decree. The one sub-system of inscription has now become the signifier of the other: writing moves into a position of visible dominance in practice, yet becomes subordinate to the absent voice it merely represents. Deleuze and Guattari thus call imperial inscription a system of *subordination* (205–9/243–8), to distinguish it from savage connotation. Two important consequences follow from the subordination of writing to voice.

The role of the eye in appreciating inscription has diminished immeasurably: it no longer seals the voice–graphics relation, appreciates the pain and sanctions the effects of ritual inscription; it merely reads what has been written (often in the foreign language of the conquerors). Body representations, Deleuze and Guattari say, have become subordinate to verbal representations (215/255). Moreover, in order to make sense of these signifiers of a mysterious written voice that speaks from on high, state subjects must have recourse to interpretation. Writing no longer directly designates valued objects of desire (organs of production and reproduction) while allocating them within the savage community; writing now entails wanting to know what an absent Other wants. A second pacification of despotic subjects takes place, accompanying the ever-present threat of death: desire no longer desires objects, but desires another’s desire; desire has become desire of the despot’s desire. Desire no longer acts in relation to the objects of value designated by collective ritual, but merely reacts to the written law promulgated by the despot:

The complex relationship of designation...elaborated in the system of primitive connotation, with its interplay of voice, graphism, and eye, here disappears in the new relationship of barbarian subordination. How could [such] designation subsist when the sign has ceased to be a position of desire in order to become this imperial sign, a universal castration that welds desire to the law?

(214/253)

Here is a second answer to the questions raised in Chapter 2 about the historical conditions underlying the Lacanian account of desire: desire as desire of the Other’s desire is the form of desire characteristic of power societies, not the nature of desire itself. Desire takes a very different form in savage society, as we have seen – and may take yet other forms under capitalism, except to the extent that state domination continues to hold sway.

For even when the state evolves from imperial tyranny toward republican democracy, its subject citizens will have recourse to this same law in their attempts to protect themselves from despotic excesses and secure a counter-power of their own. Desire in despotism has become thoroughly reactive, in the Nietzschean sense of the term: under the regime of infinite debt, as Deleuze and Guattari put it, “the

eternal *ressentiment* of the subjects answers to the eternal vengeance of the despots" (214–15/254). The system of state terror, with its elevation of death to a permanent threat and its subordination of desire to the despot's desire, thus sponsors a massive pacification and a becoming-reactive of subjectivity – from which capitalist subjects, too, have yet to escape, inasmuch as the state survives the transition from despotism to capitalism in altered form, as we shall see.

But despotism is still not yet the domain of the Oedipus complex, although several more of its pieces are now in place. True, death has become a permanent threat; desire has indeed been severed from its object (life and means of life) only to become reactive, desire of another's desire, and to favor verbal representations over body representations: caste-enforced castration (caste-tration) has succeeded in welding desire to the law. Incest has indeed captured desire, but in a system where royal incest as repressing representation prohibits common incest as its displaced represented, and where the repressed representative of desire now appears as revolt against and freedom from the despot.³¹ Oedipal incest has still not yet become the representative of desire itself – which occurs only under capitalism. So we now turn to examine the conditions that lead the Oedipus to complete its migration from the mere displaced represented (under savagery) to the repressing representation (under despotism) to become the very representative of desire, in a system where it will come to occupy all three positions.

Capitalist relations of anti-production

In capitalist society, the forces of anti-production operate through the market; the relations of anti-production are economic rather than personal: "the alliances and filiations no longer pass through people but through money" (264/315). As in despotism, the debt remains infinite, so that filiation still predominates over alliance, but its ground, the socius, is no longer the figure of the despot: it is capital – specifically industrial capital. And inasmuch as full-fledged industrial capitalism is the sole system of social-production that always produces too much (in its own terms, at least, which take no account of glorious expenditure), the social function of the debt and of the state changes significantly as well. For the state does not disappear under capitalism, even though it no longer represents a transcendent unity imposed from above: instead, it "becomes immanent to the field of social forces, enters into their service, and serves as a regulator of the decoded and axiomatized flows" (252/300). And anti-production functions not as an external damper or limitation on consumption but as an internal stimulus to consumption in the attempt to avoid crises of over-production.

The apparatus of anti-production [under capitalism] is no longer a transcendent instance that opposes production, limits it, or checks it; on the contrary, it insinuates itself everywhere in the productive machine and

becomes firmly wedded to it in order to regulate its productivity and realize surplus-value....[C]apitalism's supreme goal... is to introduce lack where there is always too much, by effecting the absorption of overabundant resources.
(235/280)

Capitalist anti-production thus culminates not in the transcendent glory of, say, the Palace at Versailles, but in the morbid greed of what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as the “politico-military–industrial complex” (235/279), among other things. For what the production and especially the realization of surplus-value require, given the inherent tendency of capitalism to over-produce on a continually larger scale, is a vast system of anti-production installed at the heart of production itself to keep its wheels turning by absorbing over-production.³² Such was the intended effect, for example, of Keynesian economic policy and the New Deal, though it was really achieved only by the Second World War and the nuclear arms race; and such is the ongoing function, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, of “advertising, civil government [including] the State, its police, and its army, militarism, and imperialism” (235/279). It is only when people can be convinced that they are lacking something (anything ranging from “the latest” fashion trend to “national security”) that they can be induced to consume and produce at the ever-increasing rate the capitalist economy requires. The debt owed to capital remains, like that of despotism, unidirectional and infinite, but the system of anti-production under capitalism has become immanent to the system of production, and has as its motive force only further production of surplus-value for its own sake. Consumption as the realization of surplus-value is not an end in itself but merely the means of securing liquid capital for reinvestment in the next cycle of social-production.

Capitalist inscription

Given this indifference towards ends, and the replacement of coding and over-coding by axiomatization and decoding/recoding, Deleuze and Guattari will call the capitalist system of inscription a system of *cynicism* – though it does contain an admixture of (mostly false) *piety* to the extent that people continue to pretend to believe (in “progress,” “technology,” “life-style choice,” “the end of history,” or whatever), when in fact “there is no longer any need for beliefs [and] language no longer signifies something that must be believed [but] indicates instead what is going to be done” (250/298; translation modified). Cynicism and piety express the two moments of the capitalist form of coding – decoding and recoding – which in turn correspond to the two moments comprising the basic rhythm of capitalist axiomatization: deterritorialization and reterritorialization.³³

Deleuze and Guattari consider decoding to be the positive moment of axiomatization, as I have said, because it frees desire from the constraints and distortions of codification. For schizoanalysis, one corollary of the immense

productivity of capitalism admired by Marx is the freedom it grants practices from becoming fixed in established codes (the moment of cynicism). But the emancipatory effects of decoding which stem from the economic component of capitalism are accompanied by opposing processes of recoding stemming from its power component, which tie freed libidinal energy back onto factitious codes (the moment of piety) so as to extract and realize privately appropriable surplus-value. This opposition between decoding and recoding derives not so much from the classic nineteenth-century contradiction between the outright owners of capital and the dispossessed, as from the tension between the generally socialized production of surplus-value, on the one hand, and its private ownership and management, on the other. On the one hand, capitalism devotes itself to production as an end in itself, to developing the productivity of socialized labor to the utmost: this is the moment of deterritorialization. Yet, on the other hand, due to private investment in the means of production, social labor and life are restricted to production and consumption that valorize only the already-existing capital-stock: this is the moment of reterritorialization.

In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx outlines these two moments of capital's on-going self-expansion.³⁴ In a first moment, a wave of new, more productive capital-stock transforms the existing apparatuses of production and consumption; this "continual revolution of the means of production" that for Marx characterizes capitalism deterritorializes existing labor and capital in order to devote them to new forms of production and consumption, and in the process spawns decoding throughout society. But, in a second moment, this progressive movement is abruptly stopped, and everything is reterritorialized: the evolving apparatuses of production and consumption alike are tied down to what is now obsolete capital-stock, solely in order to valorize it and realize profit on previous investment. A wave of deterritorialization liberates all kinds of creative energies (in consumption as well as in production) at the same time as it revolutionizes and socializes productive forces; but then reterritorialization supervenes, yoking the relations of production and consumption to the dead-weight of private surplus-appropriation.

Reterritorialization thus actualizes the power component of capitalism, the retrograde force that hinders development of new productive forces and, more importantly, prevents the expenditure of surplus for purposes other than reinvestment in further surplus-production, while deterritorialization as the economic component represents the "constant revolutionizing of the means of production" that generates change and frees the energies of production and consumption from their existing objects and limitations. Of course, these terms express an analytic distinction between two "moments" of a single process (the process of axiomatization) that practically speaking occur simultaneously. The distinction is nonetheless crucial inasmuch as it highlights the difference between power and economics as two conflicting "moments" or components of capitalism.³⁵

The relation between decoding and recoding is similar, but in a sense reversed. Both of these “moments,” too, stem from axiomatization: decoding represents the positive moment of the process whereby desiring-production is freed from fixed codes, and recoding serves to recapture desire in factitious codes in the service of reterritorialization and capital accumulation. But whereas reterritorialization predominates under capitalism – capitalism can indeed be defined in opposition to communism simply as the containment and command of productive forces (themselves developed through deterritorialization) by private appropriation (enforced through reterritorialization)³⁶ – recoding fails in Deleuze and Guattari’s view to contain decoding, and remains a much weaker force than reterritorialization. This is because capitalism, as I have said, is basically meaningless, and axiomatization continually unleashes more decoded flows than recoding can recontain. Recoding is, to be sure, a reactive force that works to recapture and hence repress free-form desire in fixed codes, but since the capitalist socius organizes quantified rather than coded flows, sign-systems in all media play at best a secondary role.

The capitalist system of inscription therefore derives not from the interrelation of writing and voice, as in savagery and despotism, but from the dynamics of axiomatization: from deterritorialization and reterritorialization, decoding and recoding.³⁷ And at the same time as it consigns writing and voice to the subsidiary moment of recoding, the capitalist market performs a thoroughgoing demotion of the family, for capital itself now takes charge of the functions of both social-production and social reproduction, which had been the business of families and/or directly political domination by the state. Under savagery, of course, family, kinship, and social relations directly coincided; but even under despotism, relations within each caste were largely family-determined – whether by the residues of local coding for the subject-peoples, or by dynasties and the inheritance of titles for the despot and his minions – while the relation between them was patently political. Under capitalism, however, the once-dominant state, as we saw, becomes merely “the regulator of decoded flows as such, insofar as they are caught up in the axiomatic of capital” (252/299):

[The state] was first this abstract unity that integrated subaggregates functioning separately; it is now subordinated to a field of forces whose flows it coordinates and whose autonomous relations of [class rather than caste] domination and subordination it expresses. It is no longer content to overcode maintained and imbricated territorialities; it must constitute, invent codes for the decoded flows of money, commodities, and private property.³⁸
(221/261)

Now, basic social ties are knit not familiarly, interpersonally, or politically but by the

market.³⁹ Social-production and reproduction take place via the flows of money and capital. And since these decoded and axiomatized flows are governed by a purely quantitative calculus, most social roles now derive from economic functions, instead of simply coinciding with them. The important apparent exception is the family, which now occupies a “private” sphere segregated from social-production and reproduction in the “public” or economic sphere, with results I will return to in a moment.

Economic relations become dominant and largely supplant the political relations of despotism, meanwhile, through the transformation of merchant capitalism into industrial capitalism. Trade, commercial money, and exchange-value were able to co-exist with the tribute form of money within despotism, although this latter remained predominant (by definition). Merchant capitalists made profits through exchange by buying cheap in one place and selling dear in another: their operation depended on and derived from the independence of localities and differences between their price-structures. Deleuze and Guattari consider this an alliance form of capital, since it operates laterally in an open-ended and comparatively unsystematic way.

The great transformation occurs, Deleuze and Guattari agree with Marx, when abstract labor takes on real, practical existence with the commodification of labor-power: in schizoanalytic terms, capital becomes filiative. Before that, the exchange-value of commercial money represents a “mere” abstraction projected by the exchange-relation itself, and its potential dynamism could be contained by over-coding. Once industrial capital and commodified labor-power emerge, exchange-relations cease being open-ended and haphazard; value circulates through its various moments – money, commodities, means of production, labor-power as a commodity – without leaving the sphere of social-production or ceasing to be value.⁴⁰ And at the same time that the open-endedness of merchant capital gets subsumed by this completely integrated circuit of value, labor-power produces a surplus-value from within it, from within what is now a self-contained fully economic system, and industrial capital becomes the new socius at its center:

In brief, the capitalist machine begins when capital ceases to be a capital of alliance to become filiative capital. Capital becomes filiative when money begets money, or value a surplus-value....It is solely under these conditions that capital becomes the...new socius...that appropriates all the productive forces.

(227/269–70; translation modified)

Filiative capital has in effect taken the despot’s place as focus and basis of social investments, and however extensive the lateral exchange-relations of alliance (trade) become as the market continually expands, the infinite debt is still owed to capital

as the apparent source and ground of extended filiations based on the anticipated production of ever-greater quantities of surplus-value. The infinite debt owed to owners for past investment in effect mirrors the infinite production to which labor-power will be devoted, now and in the future. This is the context in which anti-production ceases being an end in itself, becomes immanent to production, functions merely to absorb excess product and insert consumption into the cycles of ever-expanding surplus-production: this is the context, in a word, in which *asceticism* – infinite labor to pay the infinite debt (akin to Weber’s Protestant work ethic) – becomes the rule of capitalist subjectivity.

Yet the capitalist *socius per se* has no means of directly inculcating such asceticism: its purely abstract quantitative calculus is incompatible with the formation of subjectivity, which involves qualities, meanings, beliefs. Under capitalism, as Deleuze and Guattari put it,

[r]epresentation no longer relates to a distinct object, but to productive activity itself. The *socius*... has become directly economic as money-capital...What is inscribed...is no longer the producers or non-producers [as person-objects] but the forces and means of production as abstract quantities that become concrete in their becoming related or their conjunction...

(263/313)

So capital delegates the formation of subjects to the family. For at the same time that the operations of social-production and social-reproduction (via commercial trade-alliances and financial debt-filiations) are completely taken over by capital as the new *socius*, human reproduction alone is for the first time completely segregated from social-production/reproduction; human reproduction, that is to say, is henceforth privatized in the nuclear family.

The effects of such segregation are decisive. For one thing, with social reproduction governed by the market and divorced from human reproduction, the “incest-taboo” becomes for the first time purely negative: the imperative no longer has anything to do with knitting basic social ties or justifying and expressing glorious expenditure: it merely prohibits biological incest. In this respect, the nuclear incest-taboo adds an internalized – psychological – form of pacification to the political pacifications of despotism. But this capitalist form of pacification may be even more virulent, because desire gets caught from the very start in a grotesque double-bind: the isolation of the nuclear family from society at large segregates desire from all possible objects *except* the very ones that are prohibited, namely family members. Desire is forbidden access to precisely those objects that are, under the circumstances, the most desirable. The nuclear family thus provides a perfect training-ground for the ascetic subjectivity fostered and required by capitalist anti-

production. What is more, the restricted and restrictive relations within the family do not just produce a generalized asceticism: *they reproduce in microcosm precisely the basic relations of capitalism itself*. For just as capital separates the worker from the means of life and defers gratification until after work, after pay-day, and after retirement, the castrating father separates the child from the nurturing mother and defers gratification until maturity and the founding of a new family:

[When] the alliances and filiations no longer pass through people but through money... the family becomes a microcosm, suited to expressing what it no longer dominates [i.e. social reproduction].... [I]nstead of constituting and developing the dominant factors of social reproduction [as in savagery], [the family] is content to apply and envelop these factors in its own mode of reproduction. Father, mother, and child thus become the simulacrum of the images of capital (“ ‘Mister Capital, Madame Earth,’ and their child the Worker”), with the result that these images are no longer recognized at all in the desire that is determined to invest only their simulacrum. The familial determinations become the application of the social axiomatic. The family becomes the subaggregate to which the whole of the social field is applied.

(264–5/315)

If social roles under capitalism are already images of economic functions, as we have said, family roles are merely “images of [these] images, derivatives of derivatives” (264/315). Capitalist subjects are trained in asceticism by an institution that is isolated from social repression, yet exactly reproduces capitalist social structure and dynamics in their most abstract terms. What is more, the capitalist family also reproduces the basic elements of social-repression from the other social formations: separation from the means of life, incarnated in the forbidden mother, and obedience to despotic law, incarnated in the forbidding father. The Oedipus *as complex* has arrived.

With the axiomatization of social-production and reproduction by capital and the ensuing segregation of human reproduction in the nuclear family, then, the Oedipus complex completely saturates the tripartite representation of the incest-taboo. Not only is incest the repressing representation and the displaced represented, as it was in despotism and savagery: it has become the very *representative* of desire, inasmuch as desire now as never before lives the threat of incest daily in the libidinally charged confines of the nuclear family.⁴¹ As repressive as the other modes of libidinal production were, at least the representative of desire in those regimes had a different aim: direct appropriation of means of life under savagery; freedom through revolt against political domination under despotism. Of course, desire still takes these (and other) forms under capitalism – we still want to secure the means of life, and would still like to end political domination – but

now the material institution of the nuclear family supplements the defiles of representation with an “objective” form in which to entrap desiring-production: the Oedipus complex.

If this last pacification of desire is indeed the most virulent and sinister of all, as I have suggested, it is because in one sense desire now no longer knows what it wants: material circumstances and repressing representations combine to offer desire the very familial objects that they simultaneously forbid: “Oedipus is the baited image with which desire allows itself to be caught” (166/195). What is more, the death instinct which first arose under despotism becomes even more pervasive under capitalism: instead of hovering over everyone as a distant threat from the despot, death now becomes immanent to everyday existence, which harbors the omnipresent threat of having insufficient money to secure food or shelter – the omnipresent threat, that is, of losing one’s job, and so losing market access to the means of life. This market-based form of the death instinct, like the other elements of capitalist asceticism, is reflected and reinforced by the dynamics of the nuclear family, with parental love functioning as money: since children are effectively isolated from other sources of nourishment and protection, if they forfeit parental love, if they break the “law of the father” and lose access to the mother, they will perish.⁴² Under both sets of conditions, the death instinct compels desire to become increasingly pacified and reactive: desire of another’s desire – but now the boss’s or the father’s rather than the despot’s.

In another and more important sense, however, desire always desires what it desires (partial-object relations), even when it does not know what it desires, or believes otherwise – as when, under determinate conditions, the institutionalized representative of desire is incest with whole-object persons:

[Even] when the requisite conditions [for the Oedipus complex] are realized in capitalist society, it should not be thought on that account that Oedipus ceases to be what it is, the simple displaced represented that comes to usurp the place of the representative of desire, snaring the unconscious in the trap of its paralogisms, crushing the whole of desiring-production, replacing it with a system of beliefs. Oedipus is never a cause: it depends on a previous social investment of a certain type...

(178/210–11)

The disparity between desiring-production and its institutional representation under capitalism is all the greater in that, while the family operates on persons, capitalist social-production operates by decoding and axiomatic conjunctions: it is not because of who they are as persons that some are destined to be the wage-slaves of others, but merely inasmuch as they are owners of some or none of the means of production, owners of capital or only of labor-power. With decoding operating at

full-throttle in society at large, as we shall see in the next chapter, desire is freed from codification and depersonalized; the family, by contrast, is a major locus (though not the only one⁴³) of recoding and the personification or “impersonation” of desire.

It is crucial to recall in this connection that although the nuclear family is segregated from society at large under capitalism, it is by no means autonomous or independent of it. On the contrary, the family is delegated its specific roles – recoding, formation of ascetic subjects, the pacification and impersonation of desire – by the mode of social-production. Deleuze and Guattari therefore insist that the Oedipus complex is not itself a cause, but a relay, entirely dependent on the mode of social investment of desire:

It will be objected that such a principle [the primacy of social investment] is perhaps valid for the adult, but surely not for the child. But in effect, Oedipus begins in the mind of the father. And [even this] beginning is not absolute: it is only constituted starting from investments of the social historical field that are effected by the father....The fact that the father is first in relation to the child can only be understood analytically in terms of another primacy, that of social investments and counterinvestments in relation to familial investments.

(178–9/211)

The Oedipus complex derives from the social formation, then, and gets delegated by it to the nuclear family as its agent for the formation of ascetic subjectivity. As noted in Chapter 2, without this crucially socio-historical perspective on the Oedipus and its program of pacification, any social repression becomes merely a “sublimation” of inevitable psychic repression, and “all resignations are justified in advance” (74/88).

The primacy of social investments of desire in relation to familial investments also explains why Deleuze and Guattari insist that psychoanalysis did not invent the Oedipus complex, that on the contrary “the subjects of psychoanalysis arrive already Oedipalized...[and] all [that psychoanalysis does] is reinforce the movement, add a last burst of energy to the displacement of the entire unconscious” (121/144). In this light, one of Freud’s most dramatic discoveries turns out to be among his most pernicious: “the transference.” For the Oedipus complex now appears as an internalized– psychologized version of subjection to despotic law and state domination: the castrating law of the father represents an internalized displacement of what I called the “caste-trating” law of the despot, carried out in circumstances of widespread decoding where political dominion no longer operates as directly in society at large. For subjects are now efficiently if abstractly disciplined, starting from birth, by the law of the

father and that of the market: abnegate, identify, defer, and work – or perish. Yet the family is never completely segregated from decoding in society at large, and especially as the insularity of the family increasingly succumbs to the forces of socialization and axiomatization through mass education, the mass media, etc., familial recoding and paternal authority weaken in their turn – and so psychoanalysis steps into the breach to shore up the Oedipus complex, instead of accepting (much less promoting) the decoding of desire. The law of the father was already a displaced substitute for the law of the despot as *his* power diminished in the face of axiomatic decoding; now, via the transference, the psychoanalyst will in turn substitute for the father as the latter's influence also wanes in the face of decoding. In effect, when the familial subjection of desire falters, psychoanalysis steps in to offer a partially axiomatized variant, aligned on and supportive of the familial Oedipus, but now based on exchanging correct beliefs and behavior for money rather than for parental love. To the (very considerable) extent, then, that its therapeutic practice and its theory are organized around transference, the nuclear family, and the Oedipus complex, Deleuze and Guattari insist that psychoanalysis must be understood as a strictly capitalist institution. For the Oedipus as complex is the specific representation that capitalist social-production offers desiring-production as the representative, the repressing representation, and the displaced represented of desire, precisely in order to repress it – and psychoanalysis serves mostly to reproduce this structure and reinforce its effects.

Schizoanalysis and Freud

By showing how psychoanalysis participates in and contributes to capitalist subjectification in these ways, schizoanalysis is able to bring psychoanalysis to the point of autocritique. But this does not constitute a wholesale condemnation of psychoanalysis; far from it. Many of the concepts, and some of the procedures, of psychoanalysis remain crucial to schizoanalysis – libido, free-association, and primal repression, most notably – even while others are rejected as misguided or self-defeating – most importantly sublimation, transference, the death instinct, and the Oedipus complex understood as universal rather than as the capitalist repressing representation of desire.

Freud's greatest discovery, as I have said, was of libido as the abstract, subjective essence of desire, free from specific objects pre-determined to be "desirable," and instead bestowing libidinal value upon its objects through fluid investments of desire: free-form libido makes legitimate use of the unconscious syntheses. But Freud then betrays his own greatest discovery, and assigns desire universal predetermined objects and aims: sex with the mother and identification with the father – the Oedipus complex. And, in doing so, Freud merely reproduces the institutional structure of capitalist reproduction:

in the nuclear family desire has, in fact, been segregated from society at large, in an illegitimate use of the conjunctive synthesis, so that libido is tied down or recoded onto family members as the principal objects of desire. No such segregation occurs, by contrast, in savage society, where desire invests the entire social field by way of the patchwork of alliances and filiations, and in the form of partial-object organs that circulate throughout that patchwork in place of whole-object persons; nor does it occur under despotism, which ultimately focuses desire on the distant figure of the despot himself, but without sealing off human reproduction from the rest of society altogether, as in the nuclear family.

The idea of free-association, similarly, implies legitimate use of the connective and disjunctive syntheses. In (truly free) free-association, opened chains of multiple signs would arise and could intersect at random with other chains, without being reducible to a single meaning or representative. Yet, under capitalism, almost all signs except those of parental figures are decoded by the market, so that illegitimate segregation combined with such decoding serves to reduce the multiplicity of signs to just a few, which resonate out of all proportion to their real importance within the confines of the Oedipal triangle. Freud reinforces this extraction and elevation of a few privileged signs from an initial multiplicity in what was referred to in Chapter 2 as the second and fourth paralogisms of psychoanalysis, the paralogisms of application and extrapolation, by constantly forcing the Oedipal interpretation on the polyvocal semiotics of free-association. Furthermore, such restriction induces an illegitimately exclusive use of the disjunctive synthesis, whereby desire must choose between two objects of attraction and identification: the same- or opposite-sex parent; the prohibitor or the prohibited. This structure of invidious distinction, where one belongs either to the elite or to the masses, first arose under despotism, but does not yet completely envelop and determine desire there, inasmuch as the local imbrication of human with social reproduction is left more or less intact. It is only when, under capitalism, this large-scale either/or structure migrates into the heart of the nuclear family that the illegitimately exclusive disjunction effectively captures desire in a double-bind, as the authority of the despot devolves onto the forbidding father, and the mother becomes the forbidden fruit of gratification. In this circumstance, Freud sees no alternatives for desire other than fixation within the original Oedipus complex or its “resolution” in the formation of another Oedipus complex in the next generation: this is the third paralogism of psychoanalysis, the paralogism of the double-bind.

The concept of primal repression (*refoulement originaire*), finally, helps explain how it is that desire both differs from pure instinctual determination and becomes susceptible to capture by representation in the first place. But

the crucial ambivalence of primal repression – which enables us to critically evaluate the effects of specific representations on desiring-production and justifies efforts to intervene in the process of representation – is betrayed when primal repression is confused with one socio-historically specific repressing representation of desire, *viz.* the Oedipus complex, which is then used to justify such repression as universal and therefore inevitable. Here Freud mobilizes the fifth paralogism of psychoanalysis, the paralogism of the afterward, which in effect reverses the direction of determination: social repression, in Freud’s view, becomes a mere “sublimation” of original Oedipal repression.

All the paralogisms are in a sense underwritten and made possible by the first one, the paralogism of displacement, whereby psychoanalysis mistakes the true nature of desire for what the repressing representations of all three modes of social-production forbid, that is, mistakes desire for the displaced represented of repressing representation, confuses the nature of libido with the Oedipus complex. In short, where psychoanalysis has gone most wrong, it has fallen prey to the ruse of representation, albeit an “objective” representation reflecting the segregative structure of capitalist society, since the Oedipus is indeed the way desire is actually lived at the heart of the nuclear family.

Schizoanalysis and Lacan

Yet here the figure of Lacan stands as an important exception: no one has done so much within psychoanalysis to call into question the strategies and effects of representation in Freud and in psychoanalytic discourse in general. For, according to Lacan, the Oedipus complex in conventional psychoanalytic discourse is an Imaginary representation of psychic structure and dynamics – to which he counterposes a Symbolic or structural version that takes into account the semiosis (or at least the linguistics) of desire. But the question remains, just how critical will Lacan’s Symbolic version of the Oedipus prove? Deleuze and Guattari invoke the story of the Resistance fighters sabotaging a bridge who place explosive charges so precisely under the pylons that the whole thing blows sky-high, only to fall right back into place exactly as they found it. Schizoanalysis, by contrast, will want to ensure that the autocritique of the Oedipus is *irreversible*.

As we saw in Chapter 2, Lacan’s structural Oedipus complex translates concrete parental roles into more abstract linguistic existential functions. For better or for worse, Lacan’s Oedipus will function regardless of whether or not the particular personalities of the parents or the culture of child-rearing conform to Freud’s rather Victorian vision of family life. Separation from the mother now means losing touch with the substance of the body or “being” as one enters the realm of language and meaning in the Symbolic Order; the castrating prohibition against incest (*le “non/nom du père”*) becomes homonymous with

the father's name, which as signifier designates both the exclusive phallic right to the mother and the position the male child will come to occupy; and so on. Yet the genealogy of modes of social-production presented in Chapter Three of *Anti-Oedipus* reveals that the elements and functions of this structural-linguistic version of the Oedipus have socio-historical origins, too. The mother's body as lost realm of substance and being derives from the lost territory of savagery, where partial-object coding remained immanent to social relations of production and reproduction, not governed from above by a detached transcendent term. The castrating law of the father, in the same vein, derives from the caste-trating law of the despot, and the role of the paternal metaphor or signifier corresponds to despotic over-coding. Desire under castration is mediated desire of the transcendent Other's desire; the infinite debt owed this intimate transcendent Other sponsors the metonymy of desire as search for substitute partial-objects through a process of recoding sanctioned by the name-of-the-father. A modern intimate form of despotic decree, the unconscious has come to resemble an oracular text without a voice, the meaning of which many a psychoanalyst, functioning as a kind of priest or elite functionary, will help decipher.

Yet for the radical therapeutic practice of Lacan himself, the unconscious text has no meaning, the place of the Other is really empty, and the therapist's role is to make sure it stays empty. This role of the therapist as "sujet-supposé-savoir" – the subject who is supposed by the analysand to know, but in fact does not – exploits an ambiguity in the functions of the Other within the Symbolic and Imaginary registers, an ambiguity that is crucial to the practice of psychoanalytic therapy as Lacan construed it. From the standpoint of the Symbolic register, the Other designates only a place; but in the transference that place is occupied by the person of the analyst, who becomes an Imaginary Other to the analysand. The aim of the Lacanian analyst in this position is not to reinforce but to dismantle the transference – to dissolve, from the *place* of the Other, the *figure* of the Imaginary Other projected onto the analyst by the patient, and thereby restore the subject to its relations in the Symbolic Order.

From the perspective of schizoanalysis, then, Lacan must be (mis?)understood as shouldering the mantle of the despot in the transference – invoking the Law, desire as desire of desire, castration, lack, loss of being, and so on – solely in order to expose its functioning and get rid of it, in order to blow it up and blow it away. And if the place of the Other in the Symbolic register is construed as empty, that is because capitalist axiomatization and decoding continually undermine all social meaning and authority (including the father's); under these circumstances, any attempt to re-establish meaning and authority through recoding and the transference appears as an Imaginary illusion, perhaps even a paranoid delusion.

The main thrust of Deleuze and Guattari's genealogical critique of the Oedipus, then, is to break out of the stifling confines of the nuclear family, and restore the analysis of desire to its full socio-historical context, "to discover beneath the familial reduction the nature of the social investments of the unconscious" (271/323). Once the Oedipus complex is understood as the application of essentially capitalist social investments to the intimate sphere of the family,⁴⁴ the tasks of schizoanalysis are to examine how axiomatization, decoding, and recoding themselves inform desire, and to explore the conditions under which the untrammelled desire of schizophrenia could be marshaled to counteract and dispel the forces of paranoia in society at large. With the genealogical critique of Oedipus now behind us, we can turn to these more general tasks.