

On Capitalism and Desire

Guattari & Deleuze

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Actuel: In your description of capitalism, you say: “There isn’t the slightest operation, the slightest industrial or financial mechanism that fails to manifest the dementia of the capitalist system and the pathological character of its rationality (not a false rationality at all, but a true rationality of this pathology, this madness, because the machine works, there can be no doubt). There is no danger of it going insane, because through and through it is already insane, from the get-go, and that’s where its rationality comes from.” Does this mean that after this “abnormal” society, or outside it, there can be a “normal” society?

Gilles Deleuze: We don’t use the words “normal” and “abnormal.” Every society is at once rational and irrational. They are necessarily rational in their mechanisms, their gears and wheels, their systems of connection, and even by virtue of the place they assign to the irrational. All this presupposes, however, codes or axioms which do not result by chance, but which do not have an intrinsic rationality either. It’s just like theology: everything about it is quite rational if you accept sin, the immaculate conception, and the incarnation. Reason is always a region carved out of the irrational—not sheltered from the irrational at all, but traversed by it and only defined by a particular kind of relationship among irrational factors. Underneath all reason lies delirium, and drift. Everything about capitalism is rational, except capital or capitalism. A stock-market is a perfectly rational mechanism, you can understand it, learn how it works; capitalists know how to use it; and yet what a delirium, it’s nuts. This is what we mean when we say that the rational is always the rationality of an irrational. Something that has not been discussed in Marx’s *Capital* is the extent to which he is fascinated by capitalist mechanisms, precisely because, at one and the same time, it is demented and it works. So then what is rational in a society? Once interests have been defined within the confines of a society, the rational is the way in which people pursue those interests and attempt to realize them. But underneath that, you find desires, investments of desire that are not to be confused with investments of interest, and on which interests depend for their determination and very distribution: an enormous flow, all kinds of libidinal-unconscious flows that constitute the delirium of this society. In reality, history is the history of desire. Today’s capitalist or technocrat does not desire in the same way a slave trader or a bureaucrat from the old Chinese empire would have. When people in a society desire repression, for others and for themselves; when there are people who like to harass others, and who have the opportunity to do so, the “right” to do so, this exhibits the problem of a deep connection between libidinal desire and the social field. There exists a “disinterested” love for the oppressive machine: Nietzsche has some beautiful things to say about this permanent triumph of slaves, about the way the embittered, the depressed, or the weak manage to impose their way of life on us.

Actuel: What, precisely, is proper to capitalism in what you’ve just described?

Gilles Deleuze: Perhaps it's that, in capitalism, desire and interest, or desire and reason, are distributed in a totally new way, a particularly "abnormal" way. Capital, or money, has reached such a stage of delirium that there would be only one equivalent in psychiatry: what they call the terminal state. It's too complicated to describe here, but let me just say this: in other societies, you have exploitation, you have scandals and secrets, but it's all part of the "code." There are even explicitly secret codes. In capitalism, it's completely different: nothing is secret, at least in principle and according to the code (that's why capitalism is "democratic" and "publicizes" itself, even in the juridical sense of the term). And yet nothing is admissible. Legality itself is inadmissible. In contrast to other societies, the regime of capitalism is both public and inadmissible. This very special delirium is proper to the regime of money. Just look at what they call scandals today: the newspapers talk about them incessantly, everyone pretends either to defend themselves or to go on the attack; but the search for anything illegal comes up empty-handed, given the nature of the regime of capital. Everything is legal: the prime minister's tax returns, real-estate deals, lobbyists, and generally the economic and financial mechanisms of capital— everything except the little screw-ups; still more to the point, everything is public but nothing is admissible. If the left were "reasonable," it would be satisfied with vulgarizing economic and financial mechanisms. There's no need to make the private public, just admit what is already public. Then a dementia without precedent would be found in all the hospitals. Instead, they keep talking about "ideology." Ideology has no importance here: what matters is not ideology, and not even the "economic / ideological" distinction or opposition; what matters is the organization of power. Because the organization of power, i.e. the way in which desire is already in the economic, the way libido invests the economic, haunts the economic and fosters the political forms of repression.

Actuel: Ideology is smoke and mirrors?

Gilles Deleuze: That's not what I mean. Saying that "ideology is smoke and mirrors" is still the traditional thesis. On one side you put the serious stuff, the economy, the infrastructure, and then on the other side you put the superstructure, to which ideology belongs. And thus you restrict the phenomena of desire to ideology. It's a perfect way to ignore how desire works on the infrastructure, invests it, belongs to it, and how desire thereby organizes power: it organizes the system of repression. We're not saying that ideology is smoke and mirrors (or any other concept that serves to designate an illusion). We're saying: there is no ideology, the concept itself is an illusion. That's why it suits the Communist Party and orthodox Marxism so well. Marxism has given such emphasis to the theme of ideologies precisely to cover up what was going on in the USSR: a new organization of repressive power. There is no ideology, there are only organizations of power, once you accept that the organization of power is the unity of desire and the economic infrastructure. Let's take two examples. Education: the Leftists of May '68 wasted a lot of time insisting that professors publicly criticize themselves as agents of bourgeois ideology.

It's stupid, and it fuels the masochistic impulses of academics. They abandoned the struggle against the competitive examination and opted instead for polemic, or the great public anti-ideological confession. During which time, the most hard-line profs were able to reorganize their power without too much difficulty. The problem of education is not ideological in nature, it's a problem of the organization of power: the specificity of educational power makes it appear ideological, but that's a red-herring. Power in grammar school, now that means something, every child is subjected to it. The second example: Christianity. The Church is all too happy to be treated as an ideology. They want to discuss it—it encourages ecumenism. But Christianity has never been an ideology. It is a very original, specific organization of power which has taken diverse forms from the Roman Empire through the Middle Ages, and which was able to invent the idea of an international power. It's far more important than ideology.

Felix Guattari: The same goes for traditional political structures. It's always the same old trick: a big ideological debate in the general assembly, and the questions of organization are reserved for special committees. These look secondary, having been determined by political options. Whereas, in fact, the real problems are precisely the problems of organization, never made explicit or rationalized, but recast after the fact in ideological terms. The real divisions emerge in organization: a particular way of treating desire and power, investments, group-Oedipuses, group-super-egos, phenomena of perversion... Only then are the political oppositions built up: an individual chooses one position over another, because in the scheme of the organization of power, he has already chosen and hates his opponent.

Actuel: Your overall analysis of the Soviet Union or capitalism is convincing, but what about the particulars? If every ideological opposition by definition masks conflicts of desire, how would you analyze, for example, the divergence of three Trotskyite splinter-groups? What conflicts of desire, if any, do you see there? In spite of their political quarrels, each group seems to fulfil the same function for its members: it offers them the security of a hierarchy, a social milieu on a reduced scale, and a definitive explanation of the world... I don't see the difference.

Felix Guattari: Provided we recognize that any resemblance to an existing group is purely fortuitous, we can imagine that one of the groups initially defines itself by its fidelity to the rigid positions of the communist left during the creation of the Third International. Now you adopt a whole axiomatics, down to the phonological level—the pronunciation of certain words, the gesture that accompanies it, not to mention the structures of organization, the conception of the relationships to be maintained with allies on the left, with centrists and adversaries... This universe can correspond to a particular figure of Oedipalization, very much like the intangible and reassuring universe of the obsessive who loses his bearings as soon as you displace a familiar object. This identification with recurrent images and figures is meant to achieve a certain kind of efficacy that characterized Stalinism—except for its ideology, precisely. In other respects, they keep the overall framework of the

method, but they're receptive to change: "Comrades, we must recognize that if the enemy remains the same, the conditions have changed." So the splinter group is more open. It's a compromise: the initial image has been crossed out while being maintained, and other notions have been added. Meetings and training sessions multiply, but so do external interventions. As Zazie says, the desiring will has a way of harassing students and militants.

As for the basic problems, all these groups say more or less the same thing. Where they radically differ is style: a particular definition of the leader or propaganda, a particular conception of discipline, or the fidelity, modesty, and asceticism of a militant. How do you propose to account for these differences if you don't go rummaging around in the social machine's economy of desire? From the anarchists to the Maoists, the diversity is incredibly wide, analytically as well as politically. And don't forget, beyond the shrinking fringe of splinter groups, that mass of people who don't know what to choose: the leftist movement, the attraction of unions, straightforward revolt, indifference... We must try to explain the role these splinter groups play in crushing desire, like machines grinding and tamping it down. It's a dilemma: to be broken by the social system, or to fall into your preordained place in these little churches. In this respect, May '68 was an astonishing revelation. Desiring power accelerated to a point where it exploded all the splinter groups. They regrouped later on when they participated in the business of restoring order with other repressive forces: the CGT [Communist Workers' Union], the PC [Communist Party], the CRS [the riot police], or Edgar Faure. I'm not saying that to be provocative. It goes without saying that the militants were courageous to fight against the police. But if we leave the sphere of struggle, the sphere of interests, to consider instead the function of desire, you must admit that the recruiters of certain splinter groups approached the youth in a spirit of repression: they wanted to contain the desire which had been liberated to re-channel it.

Actuel: Sure, but what is a liberated desire? I see how it could work on an individual or group level: artistic creation, smashing windows, burning things, or even simply having an orgy, or letting everything go to hell through sheer laziness. But then what? What would be a collectively liberated desire on the scale of a social group? Can you give any precise examples? And what does that mean for the "totality of society," if you don't reject that term as Foucault does.

Felix Guattari: We chose as our reference a state of desire at its most critical and acute: the desire of the schizophrenic. And the schizophrenic who is able to produce something, beyond or beneath the schizophrenic who has been locked up, beaten down with drugs and social repression. In our opinion, some schizophrenics directly express a free deciphering of desire. But how does one conceive of a collective form of desiring economy? Well, not locally. I have a hard time imagining a small group which has been liberated staying together as it is traversed by the flows of a repressive society, as though one liberated individual after another could just be added on. But if desire constitutes the very texture of society in its totality, including its

mechanisms of reproduction, a movement of liberation can “crystallize” in that society. In May ’68, from the first sparks to the local clashes, the upheaval was brutally transmitted to the whole society—including groups that had nothing at all to do with the revolutionary movement: doctors, lawyers, merchants. Vested interest prevailed in the end, but only after a month of burnings. We’re headed for explosions of this type, yet more profound.

Actuel: Might there have already occurred in history a vigorous, lasting liberation of desire, beyond brief periods of celebration, war, and carnage, or revolutions for a day? Or do you believe in an end to history: after millennia of alienation, social evolution will one day turn around in a final revolution to liberate desire forever?

Felix Guattari: Neither. Not in a definitive end to history, and not in provisional excess. Every civilization and every epoch have had their ends to history. It’s not necessarily insightful or liberating. The moments of excess, the celebrations are hardly more reassuring. There are militant revolutionaries who feel a sense of responsibility and say: excess, celebration, yes—“at the first stage of revolution.” But there is always a second stage: organization, operation, all the serious stuff... Nor is desire liberated in simple moments of celebration. Just look at the discussion between Victor and Foucault, in the issue of *Les Temps Modernes* devoted to the Maoists.¹ Victor consents to excess, but only at “the first stage.” As for the rest, the serious stuff, Victor calls for a new State apparatus, new norms, popular justice by tribunal, invoking an authority exterior to the masses, a third party capable of resolving the contradictions of the masses. We come up against the same old schema again and again: they detach a pseudo avant-garde able to bring about syntheses, to form a party as an embryonic State apparatus; they levy recruits from a well-educated, well-behaved working class; and the rest, lumpen proletariat, is a residue not to be trusted (always the old condemnation of desire). These very distinctions only trap desire to serve a bureaucratic caste-system. Foucault responds by denouncing the third party, saying that if such a thing as popular justice does exist, it certainly won’t come from a tribunal. He clearly demonstrates how the “avant-garde / proletariat / non-proletarian plebs” distinction is originally a distinction which the bourgeoisie introduces into the masses, to crush the phenomena of desire and marginalize it. The whole question turns on a State apparatus. Why would you look to a party or State apparatus to liberate desires? It’s bizarre. Wanting improved justice is like wanting good judges, good cops, good bosses, a cleaner France, etc. And then we are told: how do you propose to unify isolated struggles without a State apparatus? The revolution clearly needs a war-machine, but that’s not a State apparatus. It also needs an analytic force, an analyzer of the desires of the masses, absolutely—but not an external mechanism of synthesis. What is lib-

¹ Pierre Victor was the pseudonym of Benny Levy, the one-time leader of the Proletarian Left (*Gauche prolétarienne*), which was outlawed. Cf. *Les Temps modernes*, “Nouveau Fascisme, Nouvelle démocratique” no. 310 bis, juin 1972, pp. 355—366.

erated desire? A desire that escapes the impasse of individual private fantasy: it's not about adapting desire, socializing and disciplining it, but hooking it up in such a way that its process is uninterrupted in the social body, so its expression can be collective. The most important thing is not authoritarian unification, but a kind of infinite swarming: desires in the neighborhood, the schools, factories, prisons, nursery schools, etc. It's not about a make-over, or totalization, but hooking up on the same plane at its tipping point. As long as we stick to the alternative between the impotent spontaneity of anarchy and the hierarchical and bureaucratic encoding of a party-organization, there can be no liberation of desire.

Actuel: Do you think that capitalism in its beginnings was able to subsume social desires?

Gilles Deleuze: Of course. Capitalism has always been, and still is a remarkable desiring-machine. Flows of money, flows of the means of production, flows of manpower, flows of new markets: it's all desire in flux. You just have to examine the many contingencies that gave birth to capitalism to realize how inseparable from the phenomena of desire are its infrastructure and economy, and the extent to which it is a criss-crossing of desires. And don't forget fascism. It too "subsumes social desires," including the desires of repression and death. Hitler and the fascist machine gave people hard-ons. But if your question wants to ask: was capitalism in its beginnings revolutionary, did the industrial revolution ever coincide with a social revolution? The answer is no. At least I don't think so. From its birth capitalism has been connected with a savage repression. It very quickly acquired its organization and State apparatus. Did capitalism entail the dissolution of previous codes and powers? Absolutely. But it had already set up the gears of its power, including its State power, in the fissures of previous regimes. It's always like that: there is very little progress. Even before a social formation gets going, its instruments of exploitation and repression are already there, aimlessly spinning their wheels, but ready to swing into high gear. The first capitalist are waiting there like birds of prey, waiting to swoop on the worker who has fallen through the cracks of the previous system. This is what is meant by primitive accumulation.

Actuel: In my view, the rising bourgeoisie was imagining and preparing its revolution throughout the Enlightenment. The bourgeoisie in its own eyes was a revolutionary class "to the bitter end," since it came to power by bringing down the Ancient Regime. Whatever the movements that existed among the peasantry and the working class, the bourgeois revolution is a revolution carried out by the bourgeoisie—the two terms are synonymous. So, it is anachronistic to judge the bourgeoisie by the socialist Utopias of the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries; it leads to the introduction of a category that never existed.

Gilles Deleuze: Here again, what you're saying fits the schema of a particular kind of Marxism: it supposes that the bourgeoisie is revolutionary at some point in history, and even that it was or is necessary to go through a capitalist stage, through a bourgeois revolutionary stage. That's a Stalinist point of view, but it's hard to take

seriously. When a social formation exhausts itself and begins to leak on every side, all sorts of things come uncoded, all sorts of unpoliced flows begin circulating: for example, the migrations of peasants in feudal Europe are phenomena of “deterritorialization.” The bourgeoisie imposes a new code, both economic and political, so you might think it was revolutionary. Not in the least. Daniel Guerin has said some profound things about the Revolution of 1789.² The bourgeoisie never mistook its real enemy. Its real enemy was not the previous system, but that which had escaped the control of the previous system, and the bourgeoisie was resolved to control it in its turn. The bourgeoisie owed its power to the dissolution of the old system; but it could exercise this new power only by considering the other revolutionaries as enemies. The bourgeoisie was never revolutionary. It had the revolution carried out for it. It manipulated, channeled, repressed an enormous surge of popular desire. The people marched to their death at Valmy.

Actuel: They certainly marched to their death at Verdun.

Felix Guattari: Exactly. This is precisely what interests us. Where do these eruptions, these uprisings, these enthusiasms come from? They can’t be explained by a social rationality, and the moment they’re born, they’re rerouted, captured by power. A revolutionary situation cannot be explained simply by the analysis of interests present at the time. In 1903, the Russian Social-Democratic party is discussing its alliances, the organization of the proletariat, and the role of the avant-garde. All of the sudden, while the Social-Democrats are “preparing” for revolution, they’re rocked by the events of 1905 and have to jump aboard a moving train. A crystallization of desire on a wide social scale had occurred, whose basis lay in still incomprehensible situations. The same is true of 1917. In this case, the politicians again jumped aboard, and they gained control of it. Yet no revolutionary tendency was willing or able to assume the need for a Soviet organization that would have allowed the masses to take real charge of their interests and desires. Machines called political organizations were put in circulation, and they functioned according to the model Dimitrov had developed at the Seventh International Congress—alternating between popular fronts and sectarian retractions—and they always lead to the same repressive results. We saw it again in 1936, 1945, and 1968. By their axiomatics, these mass machines refuse to liberate revolutionary energy. Red flag in hand, this politics in its underhanded way reminds one of the politics of the President or the clergy. And in our view, this corresponds to a certain position vis-a-vis desire, a profound way of envisioning the ego, the individual, and the family. This raises a simple dilemma: either we find some new type of structure to facilitate the fusion of collective desire and revolutionary organization; or we continue on the present course, heading from one repression to the next, toward a fascism that will make Hitler and Mussolini look like a joke.

² D. Guerin, *La Revolution francaise et nous* (Paris: F. Maspero, 1976). Cf. also, *Lutte des classes sous la Premiere Republique: 1793—1797* (Vans: Gallimard, 1968).

Actuel: So then what is the nature of this profound, fundamental desire that we see constitutes humanity and human beings as social animals, but which is constantly betrayed? Why is it always ready to be invested in those machines of the dominant machine, like opposed political parties which are nonetheless the same? Could this mean that desire is condemned to a pure explosion without consequence, or to perpetual betrayal? One last question: can there ever be such a thing as a collective and lasting expression of liberated desire at some point in history? If so, how?

Gilles Deleuze: If we knew the answer to that, we wouldn't be discussing it, we would just go out and do it. Still, like Felix said, revolutionary organization must be the organization of a war-machine and not of a State apparatus, the organization of an analyzer and not of an external synthesis. In every social system, you will always find lines of escape, as well as sticking points to cut off these escapes, or else (which is not the same thing) embryonic apparatuses to recuperate them, to reroute and stop them, in a new system waiting to strike. I would like to see the crusades analyzed from this perspective. But in every respect, capitalism has a very particular character: its lines of escape are not just difficulties that arise, they are the very conditions of its operation. Capitalism is founded on a generalized decoding of every flow: flows of wealth, flows of labor, flows of language, flows of art, etc. It did not create any code, it created a kind of accounting, an axiomatics of decoded flows, as the basis of its economy. It ligatures the points of escape and moves ahead. It is always expanding its own borders, and always finds itself in a situation where it must close off new escape routes at its borders, pushing them back once more. It has resolved none of its fundamental problems. It can't even foresee the monetary increase in a country over a year. It is endlessly crossing its own limits which keep reappearing farther out. It puts itself in alarming situations with respect to its own production, its social life, its demographics, its periphery in the Third World, its interior regions, etc. The system is leaking all over the place. They spring from the constantly displaced limits of the system. And certainly, the revolutionary escape (the active escape, which Jackson invokes when he says: "I've never stopped fleeing, but as I flee, I'm looking for a weapon")³ is not the same thing as other kinds of escape, the schizo-escape, the drug-escape. This is precisely the problem facing marginal groups: to make all the lines of escape connect up on a revolutionary plane. In capitalism, then, these lines of escape take on a new character, and a new kind of revolutionary potential. So, you see, there is hope.

Actuel: You mentioned the crusades just now. Do you see the crusades as one of the first manifestations of collective schizophrenia in the West?

Felix Guattari: The crusades were indeed an extraordinary schizophrenic movement. Suddenly, thousands and thousands of people, during a period that was already

³ George Jackson, a militant African-American, was imprisoned in San Quentin and Soledad, where he was murdered on August 21, 1971. Gilles Deleuze and members of the GIP collaborated on a special edition: *L'Assassinat de George Jackson* (Paris: Gallimard, coll. 'Intolérable,' 1971).

divided and troubled, were totally fed up with their life; spontaneous preaching rose up everywhere, and whole villages of men set out. It is only afterwards that a frightened papacy tried to give this movement direction by leading it off to the Holy Land. This strategy had two advantages: it gets rid of the wandering gangs, and it shores up the Christian outposts threatened by the Turks in the Near-East. It didn't always work: the Venetian Crusade wound up in Constantinople, and the Children's Crusade veered off to the South of France and quickly lost any sympathy people had for it. Entire villages were captured and burned by these "crusading" children, whom the regular armies finally had to round up, either killing them or selling them into slavery..

Actuel: Do you see any parallel here with contemporary movements, such as the road, or hippy colonies, fleeing the factory and the office? Is there a pope to co-opt them? The Jesus-revolution?

Felix Guattari: A recuperation by Christianity is not out of the question. It's already a reality, to a certain extent, in the United States though much less so here in France or Europe. But you can see a latent recuperation beneath the naturist movement, the idea that we could withdraw from production and reconstitute a small society out of the way, as though we weren't all branded and corralled by the capitalist system.

Actuel: What role can still be attributed to the Church in a country like ours? The Church was at the center of power in Western society well into the eighteenth-century; it bound and structured the social machine before the nation-State emerged. The technocracy has deprived it today of its old function, so the Church, too, appears adrift, a rudderless ship divided against itself. One can ask whether the Church, pressured by currents of progressive Catholicism, is not becoming less confessional than certain political organizations.

Felix Guattari: What about ecumenism? Is that not the Church's way of landing on its feet? The Church has never been stronger. I don't see any reason to oppose the Church to technocracy; the Church has its own technocracy. Historically speaking, Christianity and positivism have always gotten along quite well together. There is a Christian motor behind the development of the positive sciences. And you can't really claim that the psychiatrist replaced the priest, nor that the cop replaced him. Everyone is needed in repression! What has become outdated in the Church is its ideology, not its organization of power.

Actuel: Let's address this other aspect of your book: the critique of psychiatry. Can one say that France is already under surveillance by psychiatry at the local level? And just how far does this influence extend?

Felix Guattari: Psychiatric hospitals are essentially structured like a state bureaucracy, and psychiatrists are bureaucrats. For a long time the State had been satisfied with a politics of coercion and did nothing for almost a century. It was only after the Liberation that any signs of anxiety appeared: the first psychiatric revolution, the opening of the hospitals, free treatment, institutional psychotherapy, etc. This

led to the great Utopian politics of “localized” care: limiting the number of internments, and sending teams of psychiatrists out into the population like missionaries into the bush. But not enough people believed in the reform, and without the will to carry it out, it got bogged down. Now you have a few model services for official visits, and a few hospitals here and there in the more underdeveloped regions. Still, we’re headed for a major crisis, on the scale of the university crisis, a disaster at every level: equipment, personnel training, therapy, etc.

The institutional surveillance of children has been, on the whole, undertaken with greater success. In this case, the initiative escaped State structure and financing, falling instead under diverse associations, such as childhood protection agencies or parental associations... Because they were subsidized by social security, the establishments proliferated. The child is immediately taken in charge by a network of psychiatrists, tagged at an early age, and followed for life. One can expect solutions of this type for adult psychiatry. Faced with the current impasse, the State will try to denationalize institutions and replace them with institutions governed by the law of 1901 and most certainly manipulated by political powers and reactionary family groups. We’re indeed headed toward the psychiatric surveillance of France, if the present crisis doesn’t liberate its revolutionary potentials. The most conservative ideology is spreading everywhere, an insipid transposition of the most Oedipal concepts. In the children’s wards, they call the director “uncle,” and the nurse “mother.” I have even heard things like: game groups follow a maternal principle, and workshops a paternal principle. The psychiatry of surveillance looks progressive because it opens up the hospital. But if that implies a surveillance of the neighborhood, we will quickly come to regret the closed asylums of yesterday. It’s like psychoanalysis: it functions beyond the confines of walls, but it’s much worse as a repressive force, it’s much more dangerous.

Gilles Deleuze: Here is a case. A woman comes in for a consultation, explaining that she’s taking tranquilizers. She asks for a glass of water. Then she says: “You see, I’m a cultured woman, I’ve done graduate work, I love to read, and all of a sudden I can’t stop crying. I can’t stand the subway... And then I start crying as soon as I read anything... I watch TV, I see those images from Vietnam: I can’t stand it.” The doctor doesn’t say too much. The woman continues: “I’ve been working a little for the Resistance: I act as a mail-box.” The doctor asks her to explain. “Of course, I’m sorry, you don’t understand, do you? I go into a cafe and ask: is there anything for Rene? Then they give me a letter to send.” When the doctor hears ‘Rene,’ he wakes up: “Why did you say ‘Rene’?” This is the first time he has asked a question. Up to this point, she has been talking about the subway, Hiroshima, Vietnam, and the effect it has on her, on her body, how it makes her feel like crying. But the doctor only says: “Well, well, ‘Rene.’ What does ‘Rene’ mean to you?” The name ‘Rene’ implies someone who is reborn [re-ne]. A renaissance. Resistance?—forget about it, he passes that over in silence. But renaissance, that fits the universal schema, the archetype: “You want to be reborn,” he says. The doctor has found his bearings:

at last he's on track. And he forces her to talk about her mother and her father. This is an essential aspect of our book, and it's totally concrete. Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts have never paid attention to delirium. All you have to do is listen to someone in a state of delirium: the Russians worry him, and the Chinese; I've got no saliva left, I was sodomized in the subway, there are microbes and spermatozoa everywhere; it's Franco's fault, the Jews' fault, the Maoists' fault. Their delirium covers the whole social field. Why couldn't this be about the sexuality of a subject, the relation it has to the idea of Chinese, Whites, Blacks? Or to whole civilizations, the crusades, the subway? Psychiatrists and psychoanalysts have never heard a word of it, and they're on the defensive because they're position is indefensible. They crush the contents of the unconscious with pre-fabricated statements like: "You keep saying Chinese, but what about your father? —He's not Chinese. —So your lover is Chinese?" It's like the repressive work by the judge in the Angela Davis case, who assured us: "Her behavior is explicable only by the fact that she was in love." But what if, on the contrary, Angela Davis's libido was a revolutionary, social libido? What if she was in love because she was a revolutionary?

This is what we want to tell psychiatrists and psychoanalysts: you have no idea what delirium is; you've got it all wrong. The sense of our book is this: we've reached a stage where many people feel that the psychoanalytic machine no longer works, and a whole generation is beginning to have had it with all-purpose schemas: Oedipus and castration, the imaginary and the symbolic —they systematically efface the social, political, and cultural content from every psychic disturbance.

Actuel: Your association of capitalism with schizophrenia is the very foundation of your book. Are there cases of schizophrenia in other societies?

Felix Guattari: Schizophrenia is indissociable from the capitalist system, which is originally conceived as an escape, a leak: an exclusive illness. In other societies, escape and marginality exhibit other aspects. The asocial individual of so-called primitive societies is not locked up; prisons and asylums are recent notions. They're chased away or exiled on the margin of the village and die there, unless they can be integrated into a neighboring village. Each system, moreover, has its own particular illness: the hysteria of so-called primitive societies, the paranoid-depressives of great Empires... The capitalist economy functions through decoding and deterritorialization: it has its extreme illnesses, that is, its schizophrenics who come uncoded and become deterritorialized to the extreme, but it also has its extreme consequences, its revolutionaries.

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Desert Islands and Other Texts by Gilles Deleuze.

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This uses the editor's title. The original is "Gilles Deleuze, Felix Guattari" in *C'est Demain la veille*, ed. Michel-Anroine Burnier (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1973), pp. 139–161. This interview was initially supposed to appear in the magazine *Actuel*, one of whose directors of publication was M.-A. Burnier.

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