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Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

WHAT IS A MINOR LITERATURE?

Editor's Note: Deleuze and Guattari begin their work on Kafka by wondering how to enter Kafka's work. "It is a rhizome, a burrow," they write. "The Castle has many entrances. . .The hotel in America has too many doors for us to count." Among these entrances, none seems privileged; no sign over the entrance announces that this is the way in. The reader of Kafka's work will choose an opening and map the passage he finds himself following. The map will change if a different entrance is chosen. Of importance, however, is not simply the condition of relativity to which any interpretation is subjected as a result. More important is the political strategy which "the principle of multiple entries" involves. Multiplicity "blocks the introduction of the enemy. . .the attempts to interpret a work which does not offer itself to anything but experimentation."[1]

As Jean Baudrillard remarks, there is always a desire *not* to be interpreted, not to be produced and expressed in the terms that an interpretation employs.[2] Typically the interpreter is an agent of a dominant social code; the interpretation reproduces the material it considers as instances of the code. The desire to escape such codification—for codification Deleuze and Guattari employ the word "territorialization"—the desire to de-code or to deterritorialize seems particularly crucial for minorities who want to remain minorities and affirm perspectives that are not those of the culture they inhabit.[3] At the same time, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, the problem of minorities is one in which we all share. All of us suffer from interpretation; each of us—even the interpreter—suffers what Guattari calls the "powerful signs which massacre desire."[4] What is at stake is not a matter of "liberation as opposed to submission—it is a matter of line of flight, escape. . .an exit, outlet."[5] The desire to evade interpretation is not a desire to be *against* interpretation, to negate it. To do so, after all, would be to continue to exist in its

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terms. The desire is rather to affirm an alternative which is simultaneously uninterpretable. Experimentation, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, is an alternative to interpretation.

If Kafka's work is a rhizome, then its expression does not crystalize into a unifying form; instead the expression is a proliferation of different lines of growth. The work resembles crabgrass, a bewildering multiplicity of stems and roots which can cross at any point to form a variety of possible connections. Reading can participate in these connections; a reader makes connections as he reads. He need not interpret and say what the text means; he can discover where passages in the text lead, with what they can be connected. The result is not an interpretation but a map, a tool with which to find a way. The map is the production of an experimental reading, the word *experiment* being used here as John Cage uses it, "not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as an act the outcome of which is unknown."[6] The reader becomes a nomad; to borrow a phrase from Lyotard, reading becomes "a nomadic of intensities."[7] As such it does not threaten minor perspectives; instead it entertains them, and minor literature works to produce a reading which will constitute its own affirmation.

In *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure,* Deleuze and Guattari enter Kafka's work by considering his mode of expression. What they discover is that expression in Kafka evades the linguistic models that might interpret it—in particular Hjelmslev's distinction between the form of the content and the form of the expression.[8] Kafka works toward an "unformed expressive material" which, on the one hand, leads to "less and less formalized contents" and, on the other hand, turns the most resistant formalizations into unformed contents as well. Kafka works toward a deterritorialization which cannot be reterritorialized by an interpreter: what he expresses are "states of desire independent of all interpretation," and he expresses these states not in a universal way but as a Jew in Prague, as the writer of a minor literature who finds that if expression provides an escape, it does so in connection with a specific cultural context. What follows are portions of chapter three of the Deleuze-Guattari book, a chapter entitled "*Qu'est-ce qu'une littérature mineure*?"[9]

Notes

[1]Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (Paris, 1975), p. 7. On the philosophy of rhizomes, see Deleuze and Guattari, *Mille Plateaux* (Paris, 1980), pp. 9-37.

[2]Jean Baudrillard, *Oublier Foucault* (Paris, 1977), pp. 27-28.

[3]Cf. Jean-François Lyotard, *Expédient dans la décadence,* in *Rudiments païens* (Paris, 1977), p. 116: Minorities are "not critics; they are much 'worse'; they do not *believe,* they do not believe in the identity, the coalescing, of the Law with the central power; minorities affirm another space made of a *patchwork* of laws and customs (one says cultures now)—without a center...Nothing is more difficult than the struggles of minorities who want to remain minorities, who want to be recognized as such. Societies transform them into new powers, into His Majesty's opposition(s)—or into the gas house. It *interprets* them, that is, inscribes them...and

so, it robs them of their own particular power...It is necessary to insist that the struggles of minorities do not gain their force from any critique, from being placed in relation to the center. They do not intervene as vicissitudes in the course that Empire and its idea run; they make events...[Their] reality is no *more real* than the reality of power, the reality of the institution, of the contract, etc.; it is as real. But it is minority reality and thus it is necessarily multiple or, if you prefer, singular. It does not live some place where the politics of the great does not live; it lives on the same surface, but in a different way."

[4]Mark D. Seem, *Interview: Félix Guattari, Diacritics* 4:3 (1974), p. 41.

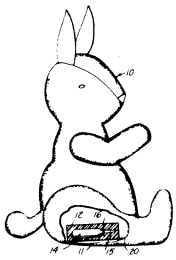
[5]Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka,* p. 13.

[6]John Cage, *Silence* (Middletown, CT, 1973), p. 13: "Where...attention moves towards the observation and audition of many things at once, including those that are environmental—becomes, that is, inclusive rather than exclusive—no question of making, in the sense of forming understandable structures, can arise (one is tourist), and here the word *experimental* is apt."

[7]Jean-François Lyotard, *Notes sur le retour et le capital,* in *Des dispositifs pulsionnels* (Paris, 1973), p. 318.

[8]See Louis Hjelmslev, *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language,* trans. Francis J. Whitfield (Madison, Milwaukee, and London, 1969), pp. 47-60.

[9]Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka,* pp. 29-50.



Only expression provides the *method*. Kafka does not consider the problem of expression in an abstract or universal manner. He considers it in connection with minor literatures—the Jewish literature of Warsaw or Prague, for example. A minor literature is not the literature of a minor language but the literature a minority makes in a major language. But the primary characteristic of a minor literature involves all the ways in which the language is effected by a strong co-efficent of deterritorialization.[1] This is the way that Kafka defines the impass which bars Prague's Jews from writing and which makes their literature an impossibility: the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing in German, the impossibility of writing otherwise.[2] The impossibility of not writing—because national consciousness, whether uncertain or oppressed—necessarily passes through literature ("The literary battle acquires a real justification on the largest possible scale"). The impossibility of writing other than in German: the irreducible distance that Prague's Jews feel from primitive Czech territoriality. And the impossibility of writing in German because of the deterritorialization of the German population itself—an oppressive minority that speaks a language cut off from the masses, a "language of paper" or artifice, and so much the more so for Jews who are at once a part of this minority and excluded from it—like "gypsies who have stolen the German infant from the cradle." In short, German in Prague is a deterritorialized tongue suitable for strange, minor uses (cf., in another context, what Blacks today can do with the American tongue).

The second characteristic of minor literatures is that everything in them is political. In "great" literatures, on the contrary, the *question of the individual* (familial, conjugal, etc.) tends to be connected to other, no less individual questions, and the social milieu serves as environment and background. None of these Oedipal matters is particularly indispensible, absolutely necessary, but all "form a unit" in a wide space.[3] Minor literature is completely different: because it exists in a narrow space, every individual matter is immediately plugged into the political. Thus the question of the individual becomes even more necessary, indispensible, magnified microscopically, because an entirely different story stirs within it.[4] It is in this sense that the family triangle is connected to other commercial, economic, bureaucratic, and judicial triangles which determine its value. When Kafka indicates one of the goals of a minor literature, "the purification of the conflict between fathers and sons and the possibility of discussing it," this does not involve an Oedipal fantasy but a political

program.[5] "Even if the question of the individual is often thought through quite calmly, one still does not reach the boundary where it connects into blocks with other, analogous arrangements: but one can reach the boundary which connects it with politics, one can even strive to see this boundary before it is there, to see its limit everywhere. . . .What goes on down below in great literature and constitutes a not indispensible cellar of the edifice, takes place here in the full light of day; what is of passing interest to a few over there is a matter of life and death here."[6]

The third characteristic is that everything has a collective value. In effect, precisely because talents do not abound in a minor literature, the conditions are not given for an *individuated utterance* which would be that of some "master" and could be separated from *collective utterance*.[7] As a result the rarity of talents is, in fact, beneficial, and makes possible a conception of something other than a literature of masters: what the solitary writer says already constitutes a communal action, and what he says or does is necessarily political—even if others do not agree with him. The political field has contaminated all statement, especially literature which finds itself positively charged with the role and the function of collective, and even revolutionary utterance; because the collective or national consciousness is "often inactive in external life and always in the process of disintegration," it is literature which produces an active solidarity—in spite of skepticism—and, if the writer lives on the margin, is set apart from his fragile community, this situation makes him all the more able to express another, potential community, to force the means for another consciousness and another sensibility. Just as the dog in the Investigations speaks in his solitude of *another science*. The literary machine functions as the relay for a future revolutionary machine—not at all for ideological reasons, but because it provides a collective utterance, missing everywhere else in this milieu: *literature is the affair of the people*.[8] This is the way that the problem is posed for Kafka. What is uttered does not refer to a subject who makes the utterance and would be its cause. It does not refer to a subject of the statement which would be its effect.[9] No doubt at one time Kafka thought in these traditional categories of two subjects: author and hero, narrator and character, dreamer and dream.[10] But he soon renounced the principle of the narrator, just as he rejected—despite his admiration for Goethe—a literature of the author or the master. Josephine the mouse renounces the individual exercise of her song in order to blend into the collective utterance of "the innumerable

crowd of her people." Passage from the individualized animal to the pack, to collective multiplicity: seven musical dogs. Or else, in the Investigations of a Dog again, the statements of the solitary investigator move toward the arrangement of a collective utterance of canine space—even if this collectivity no longer exists or is still to be given. There is no subject: *there are only collective arrangements of utterance*—and literature expresses these arrangements, not as they are given on the outside, but only as diabolic powers to come or revolutionary forces to be constructed. Kafka's solitude opens him to everything that passes through history today. The letter K no longer designates a narrator or character, it designates an arrangement all the more machinic,[11] an arrangement all the more collective because an individual in his solitude finds his connection there (it is only in relation to a subject that the individual is separable from the collective and conducts his own affairs).[12]

The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of the language, the connection of the individual and the political, the collective arrangement of utterance. Which amounts to this: that "minor" no longer characterizes certain literatures, but describes the revolutionary conditions of any literature within what we call the great (or established). Everyone who has had the misfortune to be born in the country of a major literature must write in its tongue, as a Czech Jew writes in German, or as an Uzbek Jew writes in Russian. To write as a dog who digs his hole, a rat who makes his burrow. And to do that, to find his own point of underdevelopment, his own jargon, a third world of his own, a desert of his own. There has been a great deal of discussion on: What is a marginal literature?—and also: What is a popular literature, a proletarian literature, etc.? Evidently the criteria are very difficult to define so long as we do not work first in terms of a more objective concept, that of a minor literature.[13] It is only the possibility of instituting from within a minor use of even a major language, which makes it possible to define popular literature, marginal literature, etc. Only at this price does literature really become a collective machine of expression that can sweep contents along with it. Kafka says precisely that minor literature is more fit for working the material.[14] Why? What is this *machine of expression*? We know that its relationship to language is that of multiple deterritorialization: the situation of the Jews who have abandoned the Czech language at the same time that they have abandoned the rural milieu, but the situation as well of German as a "paper language." Now one can take this further; one can push this movement of the deterritorialization in expression still further.

But two ways are possible: one can enrich Prague's German artificially and inflate it with all the resources of symbolism, oneirism, esoteric meaning, a hidden signifier—this is what the Prague School does, Gustav Meyrink and many others, including Max Brod.[15] The attempt implies a desperate effort at symbolic reterritorialization (with archetypes, the Kabbalah, alchemy); it accentuates the break with the people and only finds its political outlet in a Zionism that is the "dream of Zion." Kafka moves in another direction, or rather invents one. To opt for the German language of Prague, such as it is, in its very poverty. To push always further, intensifying the deterritorialization—soberly. Since the vocabulary is desiccated make it vibrate with intensity. To any symbolic use of language, any signifying or even significant use, oppose a purely intensive use. Arrive at a perfect and unformed expression—an intense, material expression. (In connection with these two possibilities—doesn't all this work in different circumstances for Joyce and Beckett. Being Irish, both exist in the affirmative conditions of a minor literature. It is the glory of such a literature to be minor, that is, revolutionary for any literature. The use of English and every tongue in Joyce. The use of English and French in Beckett. But Joyce constantly works with exuberance and overdetermination; Joyce constantly works to achieve global reterritorializations. Beckett works drily, soberly, in deliberate poverty, and pushes deterritorialization to the point where nothing but intensities remain.)

How many people live today in a language that is not their own? Or else, no longer even know their tongue—or do not know it yet—and know a major tongue which they are forced to use poorly? Problem of immigrants and especially of their children. Problem of minorities. Problem of a minor literature, but also the problem of us all: how to wrest a minor literature from our tongue, a literature that can hollow the language out and spin it along a sober, revolutionary line? How to become the nomad and the immigrant and the gypsy of our own language? "Steal the infant from its cradle," Kafka says, "dance on a tightrope."

Rich or poor, every language implies a deterritorialization—of the mouth, of the teeth, of the tongue. Mouth, tongue, teeth have their primitive territory in food. In devoting themselves to the articulation of sounds, they deterritorialize themselves. There is a certain disjunction between eating and speaking—still more, despite appearances, between eating and writing: no doubt it is easier to eat while writing than to eat while speaking, but writing transforms words into things capable of rivaling food. Disjunction

between content and expression. To speak, and especially to write, is to fast. Kafka has a permanent obsession with food, with meat (the essence of animal food), with butchers, with teeth—large gold teeth, unclean teeth.[16] This is one of the principal problems with Felice. Fasting is also a constant theme in what Kafka writes; it is a long history of abstention. The Hunger Artist, watched by butchers, ends his career as a neighbor of the wild beasts who eat their meat raw; he gives visitors an irritating alternative. The dogs try to keep the mouth of the dog of the Investigations busy by filling it with food in order to make him stop asking questions—and here too is an irritating alternative: "Why not drive me out instead, and forbid me from posing questions? No, this is not what they wanted; they certainly did not have the least desire to hear my questions, but for these very questions, they hesitated to drive me out." The dog of the Investigations oscillates between two sciences, the science of nutrition, which is of the earth and of the bowed head ("Where does the earth get its nourishment?"), and the science of music, which is of the "air" and the raised head, as the seven musical dogs at the beginning and the singing dog at the end show: however, the two have something in common since food can come from above, and the science of nutrition progresses only through abstention. Just as music is strangely silent.

Ordinarily a tongue compensates for its deterritorialization through a reterritorialization in meaning. No longer the organ of sense, it becomes the instrument of Sense. It is meaning as the literal sense which presides over the attribution of what sounds designate (the thing or the state of things that the word designates). It is meaning in the figurative sense which presides over the attribution of images and metaphors (the other things to which the word applies under certain conditions or aspects). Thus there is not only a spiritual reterritorialization in the "meaning," but a physical one through this same meaning. Similarily language exists only because of the distinction and complementary nature which exits between a subject of utterance (in relation to meaning) and a subject of statement (in relation to the thing designated—directly or metaphorically). This ordinary use of language could be called *extensive or representative*: the reterritorializing function of language (thus the singing dog at the end of the Investigations forces the hero to abandon his fast, a kind of re-Oedipalization).

But here, the position of the German language in Prague—a desiccated language intermixed with Czech or Yiddish—makes Kafka's invention possible. Because that is the way it is ("that's the way it is, that's the way it is," a formula dear to Kafka, the

protocol of a state of fact. . .), one gives meaning up, implies it, retains only its skeleton, its paper silhouette:

1. Since articulated sound is a deterritorialized noise, but is reterritorialized in meaning, it is sound now which is going to deterritorialize itself absolutely, without return. The sound and the word which cross this new deterritorialization do not belong to a sensible language though both derive from it; they do not belong to music or formal song though they have musical effects: Gregor's whine that blurs words, the mouse's whistling, the monkey's cough—and also the pianist who does not play, the singer who does not sing, the musical dogs, their bodies all the more musical because they produce no music at all. Everywhere formalized music is crossed by a line of abolition and meaningful language is crossed by a line of flight—to free a living, expressive material which speaks for itself and no longer needs to be formed.[17] This language wrested from meaning has no direction except in the accent of a word, an inflection: "I live only here and there in a small word in the inflection of which I loose my useless head for a moment. . .My way of feeling is related to that of a fish."[18] Children are very good at this: repeating a word whose meaning they only vaguely understand, making the word vibrate on itself (at the beginning of The Castle the school children speak so quickly that no one understands what they are saying). Kafka relates that as a child he repeated an expression of his father's over and over again, spinning it out along a line of non-sense: "end of the month, end of the month. . ."[19] Proper names, which have no meaning in themselves, are especially suited to this: Milena with the accent on the *i*, begins by evoking "a Greek or Rumanian lost in Bohemia, violated by Czechs, betrayed by the pronunciation"; when the approximation is more precise, it evokes "a woman you carry in your arms, whom you rescue from the world or save from a fire," the accent marks a fall that is always possible—or instead "you jump for joy under your burden."[20]

2. It seems to us that there is a difference (though relative, shaded) between the two evocations of the name Milena: the one still returns to an exclusive and figurative scene that is a type of fantasy; the second is far more intensive already; it marks a fall or a leap as the threshold of intensity that is included in the name itself. This is what happens when meaning is actively neutralized: as Wagenbach says, "the word reigns as master, it gives immediate birth to the image." But how do we define this process? All that remains of meaning is what is needed to direct the lines of flight. Something is no longer designated in terms of a literal sense;

metaphors are no longer assigned in terms of figured meaning. But the thing *as* images now forms only a sequence of intensive states, a scale or circuit of pure intensities that can travel in one sense or another, from top to bottom or from bottom to top. The image is the course itself, it has become becoming: becoming-dog of the human and becoming-human of the dog, becoming-monkey or beetle of the human and the reverse. We are no longer involved in an ordinary, full language in which, for example, the immediate designation for the word "dog" would be an animal, and would apply metaphorically to other things (of which we would say "like a dog").[21] Journal 1921: "Metaphors are one of the things that make me despair of literature." No less than all designation, Kafka deliberately kills all metaphor, all symbolism, all signification. Metamorphosis is the contrary of metaphor.[22] There is no longer any true meaning or figurative sense but a distribution of states in the word's fan. The thing, other things are now only intensities crossed along their line of flight by sounds or deterritorialized words. It is not a matter of a resemblance between the behavior of an animal and that of the human, even less a play of words. Now there is neither human nor animal since each deterritorializes the other in a conjunction of flux, in a continuum of reversible intensities.[23] It involves a matter of becoming which instead includes the maximum of difference as difference in intensity, the crossing of a threshold, rise or fall, sinking, or erection, accent of a word. The animal does not speak "like" a human but extracts tonalities without signification from language; the words themselves are not "like" animals but climb up—on their own—bark and swarm—being dogs, insects, or mice that are actually verbal.[24] To make the sequence vibrate, to open the word to unheard-of inner intensities—in short, an asignifying, *intensive use* of language. Here again, there no longer is any subject of utterance nor subject of statement: no longer the subject of statement who is a dog, the subject of utterance remaining like a man; no longer the subject of utterance who is "like" a may-bug, the subject of statement remaining human. Instead a circuit of states which form a mutual becoming—within an arrangement that is necessarily multiple or collective.

In what way does the position of German in Prague—desiccated vocabulary, incorrect syntax—favor this usage? In general we could call *intensive or tensor* the linguistic elements (however varied) which express the "inner tensions of a language." It is in this sense that Vidal Sephiha calls intensive "any linguistic tool which makes it possible to stretch the limit of a concept or to go

beyond it," marking a movement of the language toward its extremes, toward a reversible here and beyond.[25] Sephiha nicely demonstrates the variety of such elements: all-purpose words; verbs or prepositions which assume any meaning whatsoever; pronominal or inherently intensive verbs (in Hebrew, for example); conjunctions, exclamations, adverbs; *terms which connote suffering*. We could also mention the inner accents of words, their discordant function. It appears that a tongue of a minor literature particularly develops these tensors or intensives. Wagenbach, in his wonderful analysis of the Czech-influenced German of Prague, cites as characteristics: the incorrect use of prepositions; the abuse of the pronominal; the use of all purpose-words (like Gibben for the series "to put, sit, place, remove," which thus becomes intensive); the multiplication and succession of adverbs, the use of words which connote sorrow; the importance of the accent as an inner tension in the word; the distribution of consonants and vowels which create an internal discordance. Wagenbach stresses that all these characteristics of Czech-influenced German occur in Kafka, but that they are used creatively—they serve a new sobriety, a new expressiveness, a new flexibility, a new intensity. "Not a word or almost none that I have written is harmonized with any other; I hear consonants grating against each other with the noise of scrap iron, and the vowels sing as Negroes at the Exposition." *Language ceases to be representative in order to stretch toward its extremes or its limits.* Suffering is a connotation which accompanies this metamorphosis: words become Gregor's painful whinning; Franz cries "in a single burst and on a single note." Think of the use of French as spoken language in Godard's films. Here too an accumulation of stereotyped adverbs and conjunctions which in the end constitute all the sentences: a strange poverty which makes French a minor language in French, a creative process which connects the word directly to the image; a manner which emerges at the end of the sequence and in relation to the intensity of the limit (*c'est assez, assez, il y en a marre*); a generalized intensification—coinciding with a panorama which the camera turns and scans without being displaced—makes the images vibrate.

The comparative study of tongues is perhaps less interesting than the study of the language function which can work for a given group in different tongues: bilingualism, and even multilingualism. Only this study of the functions that can be incarnate in different tongues takes direct account of a wide variety of social factors, power relations, centers of power; it escapes the "information" myth and evaluates the hierarchic and imperative system of the

language as a transmission of orders, the exercise of power, the resistance to that exercise. Henri Gobard (relying on the research of Ferguson and Gumperz) proposes a tetralinguistic model for language functions: the vernacular, mother, or territorial tongue of the rural community or of rural origin; the vehicular, urban, state or even global tongue—the language of society, commercial exchange, bureaucratic transmission, etc., the tongue of the first deterritorialization; the referential tongue, the language of sense and culture that effects a cultural reterritorialization; the mythic tongue—at the cultural horizon—the language of spiritual and religious reterritorialization. The spatial and temporal categories of these different tongues differ summarily: the vernacular tongue is *here*; the vehicular tongue is *everywhere*; the referential tongue is *over there*; the mythic tongue, *beyond*. But above all the distribution of tongues varies from one group to another and, for the same group, from one epoch to another (for a long period Latin was the vehicular tongue in Europe before becoming referential, then mythic; today English is the global vehicular tongue).[26] What can be said in one tongue cannot be said in another, and the body of what can be said and what cannot be said necessarily varies from tongue to tongue and according to their relations with each other.[27] Furthermore, all these factors can have ambiguous fringes, divisions that move, differ in this or that matter. One tongue can fulfill such and such a function in such and such a matter and another function in another matter. Each language function in turn is divided and involves multiple power centers. A mishmash of tongues. Not a system of language at all. We can understand the indignation purists feel as they weep because the mass is said in French and Latin has been stripped of its mythic function. They mourn the forms of ecclessiasatic and scholastic power which worked through Latin and are replaced today with other forms. There are more serious examples which cross social groups. The revival of regionalisms, with reterritorialization through dialects or jargon of the vernacular tongue—by which it serves a global or super-state technology, by which it can contribute to revolutionary movements because they also carry with them archaisms into which they try to inject a current meaning. . .From Servan-Schreiber to the Breton bard to the Canadian singer. And yet this is not the frontier, because the Canadian singer can also perform the most reactionary reterritorialization, the most Oedipal Oh Mama, oh my country, my cabin, oh oh. As we said: a mishmash, a tangled history, a political affair, that the linguists do not know at all, do not want to know—because, as linguists, they are "apolitical,"

pure scientists. Even Chomsky only compensates for his apolitical stance as a scientist through his courageous fight against the Vietnam War.

To return to the situation in the Habsburg Empire: the decomposition and fall of the Empire multiplies the crises, accentuates everywhere the movements of deterritorialization, gives rise to complex archaic, mythic, or symbolist reterritorializations. Among Kafka's contemporaries we can cite at random: Einstein and his deterritorialization of the representation of the universe (Einstein teaches in Prague, and the physicist Philipp Frank lectures there—with Kafka present); the Austrian atonalists, their deterritorialization of musical representation (Maria's death cry in Wozzeck, Lulu's cry, or else the redoubled *si*—these seem to follow a path in music that is close in some ways to Kafka); the expressionist cinema, its double movement that deterritorializes and reterritorializes the image (Robert Wiene, a Czech; Fritz Lang who was born in Vienna; Paul Wegener, his use of themes that come from Prague). And of course, psychoanalysis in Vienna, linguistics in Prague.[28] What is the particular situation of Jews in Prague in connection with the "four tongues"? For Jews who come from a rural environment, the vernacular is Czech, but Czech tends to be forgotten and repressed. As for Yiddish, it is generally scorned or feared—it *frightens*, Kafka says. The vernacular tongue in the cities is German; it is the bureaucratic tongue of the state, the commercial tongue of exchange (though English has already begun to be indispensible for this). The referential and cultural function is also filled by German, this time the German of Goethe (and secondarily by French). Hebrew is the mythic tongue (with Zionism just beginning, still only an active dream). We need to evaluate for each of these tongues the coefficents of territoriality, of deterritorialization, of reterritorialization. Kafka's own situation: he is one of the few Jewish writers in Prague who understands and speaks Czech (and this language will be very important in his relations with Milena). German plays the double role of being both the vehicular and cultural tongue—Goethe on the horizon (Kafka also knows French, Italian, probably a little English). He only learns Hebrew later on. His relation to Yiddish is complex: he sees it less as linguistic territoriality for Jews than as a movement of nomadic deterritorialization for German. What fascinates him about Yiddish is less that it is the language of a religious community than that it is the language of a *popular theatre* (Kafka

serves as patron and impressario of the Isak Löwy traveling company).[29] The way that Kafka speaks of Yiddish to a rather hostile, bourgeoisie Jewish audience at a public meeting is rather remarkable: Yiddish is a tongue which arouses even more fear than disdain, "fear mixed with a certain repugnance"; it is a tongue that has no grammar and lives off stolen, mobilized, emigre words that have become nomads and have internalized "force ratios": it is a tongue grafted onto High German that works so much from within that it cannot be translated into German without being abolished; you can only understand Yiddish by "feeling it"—from the heart. In short, an intensive tongue or an intensive use of German, a minor language or use which must sweep you along: "Only then will you be able to experience the true unity of Yiddish, and you will experience it so violently that you will be frightened, no longer of Yiddish but of yourself. . . .Enjoy it as best you can!"

Kafka's way does not lead to reterritorialization through Czech. Nor to a hypercultural use of German, with the higher Hebraic—the oneiric, symbolic, and mythical—bids that we find in the Prague School. Nor does Kafka lead to an oral and popular Yiddish. Kafka goes in the direction to which Yiddish points—quite another way—he converts German into a unique and solitary writing. Because the German of Prague is deterritorialized, intensify it, but in the sense of a new sobriety, a new, unheard-of correction, a ruthless rectification. In the sense of raising your head. Schizo civility. Intoxication on pure water.[30] Spin German down a line of flight; fulfill yourself by fasting; pull out all the points of underdevelopment that Prague's German wants to hide; make it cry out—a sober, vigorous cry. Wrest from it the dog's bark, monkey's cough, may-bug's buzzing. Make a syntax of desiccated German. Push it to the point where no culture or myth can compensate for deterritorialization—absolute deterritorialization even if it is slow, viscous, coagulated. Slowly, progressively, carry the tongue away into the desert. Use syntax to cry out; give syntax to the outcry.[31]

Only the minor is great and revolutionary. To hate all literature of masters. Kafka's fascination with servants and employees (the same fascination in Proust, with servants, their language). What remains interesting is the possibility of making one's own tongue, supposing it unique, or, if a major tongue now or in the past, then supposing the possibility of a minor use. To be as a stranger *in* one's own language. Even if a tongue is unique, it is still a mishmash, a schizophrenic melange, a Harlequin suit in which different functions of language and distinct power centers act—airing what

can and cannot be said. Play one function against the other, bring the coefficients of territoriality and relative deterritorialization into play. Even if it is major, a tongue is capable of intensive use which spins it out along creative lines of escape, a use which now forms and constitutes an absolute deterritorialization. An enormous amount of invention and not only lexical—in order to write as a dog (But a dog does not write.—Precisely, precisely.); what Artaud did to French, shouts-whispers; what along another line, Celine did, the exclamative taken to the extreme. Celine's syntactic evolution: from Journey to Death on the Installment Plan to Guignol's Band (following which, Celine had nothing more to say, except about his misfortunes, that is, he no longer wanted to write, he only needed money. And that is always the way its ends, lines of flight from language: the silence, the interrupted, the interminable, or still worse. But meanwhile what a mad creation, what a writing machine. Celine was still being congratulated for Journey when he had already gone so much farther in Death on the Installment Plan, then in the extraordinary Guignol's Band where the language is nothing but intensities. He spoke "minor music." Kafka too, also minor music, another one, but always deterritorialized sounds, a language which runs head first, swaying). These are true minor authors. An exit for language, for music, for writing. Pop music, Pop philosophy, Pop writing: *Wörterflucht*. To use the polylingualism of your own tongue, to make a minor or extensive use of it, set the oppressed character of this tongue against its oppressive character, find its points of non-culture and underdevelopment, the zones of linguistic third-worlds through which a tongue escapes, an animal is grafted, an arrangement is connected. How many styles, genres, literary movements (even very small ones) have but one dream—to fill a major language function, to offer their services as the language of the state, the official tongue (psychoanalysis today which thinks that it is master of the signifier, of metaphor, of word-play). Fashion the opposite dream: know to create a becoming-minor. (Is there a chance here for philosophy, philosophy which for so long has formed an official and referential genre? Why not profit today from the moment when antiphilosophy wants to be the language of power.)

translated by Robert Brinkley

Notes

[1]See *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia,* trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York, 1977) where Deleuze and Guattari introduce the terms *territorialization, deterritorialization,* and *reterritorialization,* terms which may be defined as the creation and perpetuation of a cultural space, the dissolution of that space, its recreation. Codification, decodification, and recodification can serve roughly as synonyms. By emphasizing cultural space, however, Deleuze and Guattari can formulate as alternatives to coded behavior, a dissolution of cultural boundaries and the movement of a nomad through a territory. These formulations seem particularly appropriate to the mobile and metamorphic geographies which Kafka presents in his narratives.—Ed.

[2]Letter to Max Brod (June 1921), in *Letters to Friends, Family, and Editors,* ed. Brod, trans. Richard and Clara Winston (New York, 1977), pp. 286-89. Cf. Klaus Wagenbach, *Franz Kafka: Eine Biographie seiner Jugend 1883-1912* (Bern, 1958), in particular, the chapter *Prag um die Jahrhundertwende.*—D & G. In the letter to Brod and in reference to *Literatur* by Karl Kraus, Kafka writes that "what we have here is the product of a sensitive feeling for language which has recognized that in German only the dialects are really alive, and except for them, only the most individual High German, while all the rest, the linguistic middle ground, is nothing but embers which can only be brought to a semblence of life when excessively Jewish hands rummage through them. That is a fact, funny or terrible as you like. . .[T]here is a relationship between all this and Jewishness, or more precisely between young Jews and their Jewishness, with the frightful inner predicament of these generations. . . .Psychoanalysis lays stress on the father-complex and many find the concept intellectually fruitful. In this case I prefer another version, where the issue revolves not around the innocent father but around the father's Jewishness. Most young Jews who began to write German wanted to leave Jewishness behind them, and their fathers approved of this, but vaguely (this vagueness was what was outrageous to them). But with their posterior legs they were still glued to their father's Jewishness and with their waving anterior legs they found no new ground. The ensuing despair became their inspiration. An inspiration as honorable as any other, but on closer examination showing certain sad peculiarities. First of all, the product of their despair could not be German literature, though outwardly it seemed to be so. They existed among three impossibilities, which I just happen to call linguistic impossibilities. . . .These are: The impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing German, the impossibility of writing differently. One might also add a fourth impossibility, the impossibility of writing. . .Thus what resulted was a literature impossible in all respects, a gypsy literature which had stolen the German child out of its cradle and in great haste put it through some kind of training, for someone has to dance on the tightrope. (But it wasn't even a German child, it was nothing; people merely said that somebody was dancing) [BREAKS OFF]"—Ed.

[3]Great literatures produce "Oedipal matters" because they turn social questions and dilemmas into the problems of individuals. Freud participates in this production when he uses the Oedipus myth to interpret the agonies of family life—not as effects of the society which the family represents—but as the psychic production of the children who suffer them. "Who comes first?" Deleuze and Guattari ask in *Anti-Oedipus.* "[T]he father and the mother, or the child? Psychoanalysis acts as if it were the child (the father is sick only from his own childhood). . .The first error of psychoanalysis is in acting as if things begin with the child. This leads psychoanalysis

to develop an absurd theory of fantasy, in terms of which the father, the mother, and their real activities and passions must first be understood as fantasies of the child" (pp. 273-75).—Ed.

[4]The word *story* translates the French *l'histoire* which can also mean *history*.—Ed.

[5]Kafka, *Diaries*, ed. Max Brod, trans. Joseph Kresh (New York, 1948), December 25, 1911, I, 193. Translation modified. For Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari write, "the question posed by the father is not how to become free in relation to him (the Oedipal question), but how to find a path where he did not find one. . . .[T]he father appears as the man who had to renounce his own desire and faith (if only to get out of the rural ghetto where he was born) and who calls upon his son to submit—but only because the father himself has submitted to a dominant order in a situation which appears to have no escape. . . .In short it is not Oedipus that produces neurosis; it is neurosis, *the desire that submits and tries to communicate its submission*, which produces Oedipus." At the same time, to write as Kafka writes, to present Oedipus as a political issue, is to "evade submission, . . .to see over your father's shoulder what was in question from the beginning in this matter: a whole micropolitics of desire, of impasses and exits, of submissions and rectifications." What you notice is that the father has only become the representative of other political figures, "judges, commissioners, bureaucrats," who "are not substitutes for the father" because "the father is a condensation of all these forces to which he submits and invites his son to submit" (*Kafka*, pp. 19-22). By specifying these forces, however, the possibility of evading them also emerges, a possibility which constitutes the other half of Kafka's political program.—Ed.

[6]*Diaries*, I, 194. Translation modified.—D & G.

[7]Throughout the English *utterance* translates the French *l'énonciation* and should be distinguished from *statement* which translates *l'énoncé. L'énonciation* can be defined as the speech act; *l'énoncé,* as that which the speech act produces, as the statement which is uttered.—Ed.

[8]*Diaries*, I, 193: "Literature is less a concern of literary history than of the people."—D & G.

The diary entry which Deleuze and Guattari cite here refers explicitly to the situation of Jewish literature in Warsaw and contemporary Czech literature in Prague rather than to the situation of Prague's Jewish writers.—Ed.

[9]The subject of the statement is the subject to which a statement refers. In the sentence *I think*; *therefore, I am,* the subject is *I*. The subject of utterance is the subject who utters the statement. In the preceding example, the subject of utterance is not the *I* represented in the sentence but the writer who produces the statement and whose existence the statement indexes. Cf. Emile Benveniste, *L'homme dans le langue,* in *Problèmes de linguistique générale* (Paris, 1966), I, 258-266.—Ed.

[10]Cf. *Wedding Preparations in the Country:* "And so long as you say 'one' instead of 'I,' there is nothing in it and one can easily tell the story" (trans. E. Kaiser and E. Wilkins, in *The Complete Stories*, ed. N. N. Glatzer, New York, 1971, p. 53). The two subjects appear later ("I don't even need to go to the country myself, it isn't necessary. I'll send my clothed body," p. 55.) when the narrator can stay in bed if he

is a beetle. No doubt this is the origin of Gregor's becoming-animal in *The Metamorphosis* (also of Kafka's refusal to go and join Felice, preferring to stay asleep). But in *The Metamorphosis* the animal has the value of a true becoming and no longer merely describes the inertia of the subject of utterance.—D & G.

[11]*Machinic*, a word that does not exist, translates the French *machinique,* the adjectival form of *le machin,* a *gadget,* a *whatchamacallit.* The word of course sounds like *machine.* In *Anti-Oedipus,* Deleuze and Guattari write of desiring machines, a term which they insist is not metaphorical but which literally names the ways in which parts of the body, the world, language, or whatever work in connection with each other. *Anti-Oedipus* begins with the passage: "It is at work everywhere, functioning smoothly at times, at other times in fits and starts. It breathes, it heats, it eats. It shits and fucks. What a mistake to have ever said *the* id. Everywhere *it* is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines, machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections. An organ-machine is plugged into an energy-source-machine: the one produces a flow that the other interrupts. The breast is a machine that produces milk, and the mouth a machine coupled to it. The mouth of the anorexic wavers between several functions: its possessor is uncertain as to whether it is an eating-machine, an anal machine, a talking-machine, or a breathing machine (asthma attacks). Hence we are all handymen: each with his little machines. For every organ-machine, an energy-machine: all the time, flows and interruptions. . . .Something is produced: the effects of a machine, not mere metaphors" (pp. 1-2). In an essay entitled *Balance Sheet-Program for Desiring Machines* (the essay was included in the French but not in the English edition of *Anti-Oedipus*), Deleuze and Guattari add that "desiring-machines have nothing to do with gadgets, or little homemade inventions, or with phantasies. Or rather they are related, but from the opposite direction, because gadgets, improvised contraptions, and phantasies are the residue of desiring-machines; they have come under the sway of specific laws of the foreign market of capitalism, or of the home market of psychoanalysis. . . .Desiring-machines constitute the non-oedipal life of the unconscious. . . .What defines desiring-machines is precisely their capacity for an unlimited number of connections, in every sense and in all directions. . .[T]he machine in itself is the break-flow process. . .[T]he machine has to be directly conceived in relation to the social body. . .[D]esiring-machines are indeed the same as technical and social machines, but they are their unconscious, as it were" (trans. Robert Hurley, in *Semiotexte* 2, 1977, pp. 117-32).—Ed.

[12]On the designation of the letter K in Kafka, cf. Guattari, *Sémiologies signifiante et sémiotiques a-signifiantes* in *Psychoanalyse et sémiotique* (Paris, 1975), pp. 151-163. The letter K functions, according to Guattari, as the pronoun *it* functions. "An it can be substituted for any pronoun. . . .The it constitutes the potential articulation of links of expression whose contents are relatively less formalized. . . .*It does not represent a subject; it diagrams a grouping. It does not surcode statements, does not transcend them by manifiesting the diverse modalities of the subject of utterance.*" Rather than a subject, *it* serves as a connection, a connection that is the momentary arrangement of other connections. "Behind any pronominal function, you can always imply a *me-I.* A subject who articulates from outside language is then supposed to imprint its mark in discourse; this mark is what we call the subject of utterance. A flow of subjectivity transcends statements and treats them according to dominant social and economic norms. . . .Desiring intensities will then remain as tributaries of a world of mental representations, organized around a fictive sub-

ject." On the other hand, when we "consider the infinitive *to-go-toward,* we could also write *it-goes-toward* and thus make the diagramatic expression of multiplicity. *It-goes-toward* is the mark of a complex machine which could manifest itself independently of all subjective affectation: does it involve a person, an army, a flea, an object, a machine, an affect, an idea? It applies to all modalities of *to-go-toward*; it conserves. . .its machinic character."—Ed.

[13]Cf. Michel Ragan, *Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne en France,* in particular the discussion of the difficulties of finding criteria and the necessity of a "literature of the second zone."—D & G.

[14]*Diaries,* I, 193: "A small nation's memory is not smaller than the memory of a large one and so can digest the existing materials more thoroughly."—D & G.

[15]Cf. Wagenbach on the situation of the German language in Czechoslovakia and in the Prague school.—D & G.

[16]The insistence of the theme of teeth in Kafka. The grand-father who was a butcher; the alley of the butcher shop by the school; Felice's jaws; the refusal to eat meat except when he slept with Felice at Marienbad. Cf. Michel Carnot's article *Toi qui as de si grandes dents,* in *Nouvel Observateur,* April 17, 1972. It is one of the best texts on Kafka. A similar opposition between eating and speaking occurs in Lewis Carroll, and a comparable outlet in non-sense.—D&G.

[17]Cf. *The Trial,* trans. by Willa and Edwin Muir, rev. E. M. Butler (New York, 1968), p. 72: "At last he noticed that they were talking to him, but he could not make out what they were saying, he heard nothing but the din that filled the whole place, through which a shrill unchanging note like that of a siren seemed to ring."—D & G.

[18]*Diaries,* I, 61-2. Translation modified.—D & G.

[19]"No longer requiring an exact sense, the expression *end of the month* remains for me a painful secret," Kafka writes—all the more so since it is repeated every month. He suggests that if the expression remains devoid of meaning, it is because of laziness and "weak curiosity," a negative explanation which instances the failure or impotence that Wagenbach describes. Kafka commonly presents or hides his objects of passion in this way.—D & G.

[20]*Diaries,* I, pp. 278f.—D & G.

[21]The interpretations of Kafka's commentators are so much the worse in this regard because they are metaphoric: thus Marthe Robert reminds us that the Jews are *like* dogs. This seems to us to be a simplistic conception of the literary machine.—Robbe Grillet insists on Kafka's destruction of all metaphor.—D&G.

The phrase *like a dog* occurs in the last sentence of *The Trial*: "But the hands of one of the porters were already at K's throat, while the other thrust the knife deep into his heart and turned it twice. With failing eyes K could still see the two of them immediately before him, cheek leaning against cheek, watching the final act. 'Like a dog!' he said; it was as if the shame of it must outlive him" (p. 229).—Ed.

[22]Cf. Jacques Lacan's definition of metaphor: "The creative spark of metaphor does not spring from the conjunction of two images, that is, of two signifiers equally actualized. It springs from two signifiers, one of which has taken the place of the other in the signifying chain, the hidden signifier remaining present through its (metonymic) relation to the rest of the chain" (*The insistence of the letter in the unconscious,* trans. Jan Miel, in *Structuralism,* ed. Jacques Erhman, Garden City, NY, 1970, p. 115). Metaphor can be read as a metamorphic movement which is blocked by a return to the subject of the statement. When I use a dog to figure a man, I replace one sign with another. The second continues to represent the first. Metaphor turns a dog into a likeness of a man.—Ed.

[23]Becoming-animal (*devenir-animal*) should not be interpreted to mean *becoming an animal.* In *The Metamorphosis* Gregor does not become an insect. He remains a man who is becoming an insect. Becoming-animal for Kafka constitutes a continuing deterritorialization of the human, a continuing metamorphosis. "Every child does this, constructs and tests these lines of escape, these animal-becomings... Animal-becomings are absolute deterritorializations. . .To become animal is to make the movement, the escape in all its positiveness, to cross the threshold and reach a continuum of intensities which no longer have any value except for themselves" (Kafka, pp. 23-24).—Ed.

[24]Cf., for example, the Letter to Pollak, Feb. 4, 1902, in *Letters* pp. 1-2.—D&G.

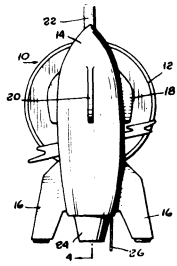
[25]Cf. H. Vidal Sephiha, *Introduction à l'étude de l'intensif*, in *Languages*. We borrow the word *tensor* from J-F. Lyotard who employs it in order to indicate the connection between intensity and the libido.—D & G.

[26]Henri Gobard, *De la véhicularité de la langue anglaise,* in *Langues modernes,* January 1972.—D & G.

[27]Michel Foucault insists on the importance of the distinction between what can be said in a language at a particular moment and what cannot be said (even if it can be *done*). Georges Devereux (cited by Gobard) analyzes the case of young Mohave Indians who speak very easily about their sexuality in their vernacular tongue but are incapable of articulating it in the vehicular language, for them English. This is not only because the English teacher has a repressive function; it is also a problem of languages.—D & G.

[28]On the Prague School and its role in linguistics, cf. *Change*, 3 and 10. (It is true that the Prague School was only founded in 1926. But Jakobson came to Prague in 1920 when there already existed a Czech school inspired by Mathesius and connected to Anton Marty, a disciple of Brentano. Marty taught at the German university and from 1902 to 1905 Kafka both attended Marty's classes and participated in reunions of Brentano's followers).—D & G.

[29]Cf. Max Brod, *Franz Kafka: A Biography*, trans. G. Humphreys Roberts and Richard Winston (New York, 1960), pp. 110-16; and Wagenbach.—D & G.

[30]An editor of a magazine says of Kafka's prose that it is "like a clean and neat child" (cf. Wagenbach).—D & G.

[31]Cf. Deleuze's account of Nietzsche's use of German: "Confronted with the ways in which our societies become progressively decodified and unregulated, in which our codes break down at every point, Nietzsche is the only thinker who makes no attempt at recodification. He says: the process still has not gone far enough, we are still only children. . .In his own writing and thought Nietzsche assists in the attempt at decodification—not in the relative sense, by deciphering former, present, or future codes, but in an absolute sense, by expressing something that cannot be codified, confounding all codes. But to confound all codes is not easy, even on the simplest level of writing and thought. The only parallel I can find here is with Kafka, in what he does to German, working within the language of Prague's Jews: he constructs a battering ram out of German and turns it against itself. By dint of a certain indeterminacy and sobriety, he expresses something within the codified limits of the German language that had never been heard before. Similarily, Nietzsche maintained or supposed himself to be Polish in his use of German. His masterful siege of language permits him to transmit something uncodifiable: the notion of style as politics. . . An aphorism is a play of forces, the most recent of which—the latest, the newest, and provisionally the final force—is always the *most exterior.* Nietzsche puts this very clearly: if you want to know what I mean, then find the force that gives a new sense to what I say, and hang the text upon it. . .At this point, we encounter the problems posed by those texts of Nietzsche that have a fascist or anti-Semitic resonance. . .We need not argue Nietzsche at the level of textual analysis—not because we cannot dispute at that level, but because the dispute is no longer worthwhile. Instead, the problem takes the shape of finding, assessing, and assembling the exterior forces that give a sense of liberation, a sense of exteriority to each various phrase. The revolutionary character of Nietzsche's thought becomes apparent at the level of method: it is his method that makes Nietzsche's text into something not to be characterized in itself as 'fascist,' 'bourgeois,' or 'revolutionary,' but to be regarded as an exterior field where fascist, bourgeois, and revolutionary forces meet head on. If we pose the problem this way, the response conforming to Nietzsche's method would be: find the revolutionary force" (*Nomad Thought,* trans. David B. Allison, in *The New Nietzsche,* ed. Allison, New York, 1977, p. 143-46).—Ed.