

## **Part One: Criticism and Untruth-Machines**

### *A. Neurosis and Transcendence: the Algebra of Bad Conscience*

For Nietzsche, uncovering the peculiar logic of the unconscious, revealing the function of this or that unobserved striving, would only form part of the analysts' role. A rich, analytic transformation of the real space of mental (political) activity is the full meaning of diagnostic criticism. Any real diagnosis contains a hard criticism of declining mental (social) habits. Criticism moves towards a healthier biopolitics. Diagnosis isolates cycles, reaction-patterns, irresponsible and neurotic aspects of mental and social processes.

This selective isolation, the method of genealogical deconstruction may seem purely negative and critical; and indeed, it amounts to a profound negation of conventional modes of thinking and feeling. But there is also always a powerfully positive sense of diagnosis: to indicate and affirm the pathways which return us to health, which unhinge our bodies from habit, which bring us to a new earth.

Diagnosis is a particular intervention in an unconscious or bio-social becoming. It aims to turn the tide of decay, of decline. For the unconscious is ruled by forces beyond the macro-social, forces which mediate and decompose the social. In short, we need to examine the integrated sociopolitical structure of even the tiniest movements of decay and growth. In order for this diagnostic-creative mode of discourse to exist we need a 'higher' politics capable of conceiving of this integrated social-psychic field of libidinally-knotted intensities.

The mathemes of Jacques Lacan might be raised in connection to this as raising some particularly interesting questions about the deep structure of the "unconscious" (as I understand it, the "unobserved" part of mental space, or aspect of cognitive processes.) To put it interrogatively: is the unconscious structured like a mathematical language? Are its rules of transforming space apprehensible by a kind of algebraic analysis? What is the point of calling this unconscious aspect of mental life "ethical" — what does psychoanalysis gain by this? (What else but a sanctification of their profession?) It has not really been so many years since voices like Foucault's, and Felix Guattari's, were raised against a whole new clergy of psychoanalyst-priests, against Oedipus and the IPA, against the stratifying Oedipal pseudo-diagnoses of pop sociology and psychoanalysis.

But they discovered that the problem goes deeper than psychology, it goes to the heart of philosophy itself. The sociodynamics of cultural and mental decline is a highly abstract problem, of the highest degree of complexity, calling in all our resources and insights, whether these resources are classified in the human or natural sciences. Indeed, the nature of this problem requires none other than a grand unification, a higher synthesis of physics and psychoanalysis, of literature and science.

As a small example of this complexity, consider how the question of mental illness and schizophrenia complicates the way Nietzsche is read and explained. That it does not compromise his literary and theoretical contributions should not have to be spelled out, but the question of the 'integrity' of his text is raised suspiciously often. It is as though we can safely ignore an insane

man's discourse, regardless of its truth value, its peculiar and personal meaning to us, just because he is insane. The question, then, is political, for insanity is not about obsession or grand theatrical gesture, it is about the falling away of gestural complicity, a breaking apart of the sociopolitical spectacle, a dissolving and reevaluation of mental prejudices — which we tend to see mostly as a breaking down (the clinical 'model.')

We are, in general, unaware that the process of breaking apart also bears the possibility of breaking through, of wholesale psychic and social transformation. But in fact, I believe we can explain scientific innovation in no other way.

### *B. Theory and the (Un-)Truth Machines*

A theory is pseudo-machinic: it algebraically resolves a series of cognitive relations, that is, by applying analytic transformations. Where does it touch upon a true, originary source of change? Information builds up slowly from shadows, swarms out from chaotic abysses; transformation and theory come simultaneously upon the scene, as a self-organizing war machine, intertwined together from birth, One from the very beginning. The one pulls the other out from within itself; put another way, the Other trans-pierces the One. Thus the structure of the transformation is also the structure of theory.

In short, all theories are thought-machines, ungrounding, partial-object machines which resolve certain selected relationships by algebraic transformation of the problem-space. Theories are, then, metaphysical-political machines, seeming to contain within themselves a unified coexistence or succession of metaphysical or political prejudices, which resolve to form a new optics, a new arrangement of abstract and social space. The first major consequence is that there is really no meta-theory, or that what is called "meta-theory" is really just one extreme of theory.

For all theories are untruth machines, 'thinking-machines' that diagnose and recontextualize earlier theories. They are a pure decoding of the space of thought which establishes a new space of thought. Whether the theory is physical or psychoanalytic, biological or cosmological, the entire question is how they work, whether they reshape the sociopolitical space of thought and activity, or whether they reinforce conventional ideologies or habitual modes of behavior.

Science aims to destroy prejudice, it ties its own theoretical becoming onto a transformation of sociopolitical space. This is not a "duty" of the scientist, it is his nature, to intuit by machinic inference a real problem, and to map out pathways of return to healthy modes of social and psychic functioning. Geometry no less than geology seeks a real relation of thought to the earth, the institution of a mode of discipline, a stratification and mapping of the body of the earth. Against institutional discipline, theory is a machine which disciplines institutions, exposes their dissembling and hypocrisy, shames them by recalling their former nobility and grandeur. If critical theory were merely this calling out of parasitic social relations, it would serve only a reactionary value, pointing to a moment of decline and decay. Theory does much more: it serves as an analytic transformation of psychic space, a partial resolution of history, a provisional expansion of our cognitive horizon through ungrounding older systems (refuting older theories, transcending historical limitations, stinging habitual modes into new activity and piercing obsolete images of thought.)

### *C. Ethics and Paranoia*

Morality, as metaphysical politics, begins with fear of depth, a fear of blindness. It is an ecclesiastical discourse which begins at death, looks into its own death, with the temperance of our own mor(t)ality. “But death is not its end”: behind the transcendent assertions of knowledge (and so also behind all seekers of knowledge,) there invariably lies a cold and incorporeal fear — a numbing, shadowy, subconscious, and very unusual species of fear. Metaphysics is the fear of loss, of the degeneration of stable order; its evil eye sees lack and insufficiency everywhere. Evidence: how quickly Empty spaces take on an active role, become “holes” used to burrow into bodies, seeking to find stable places to establish a void, to make a new home. Metaphysics organizes space along new absences (new axes)...

Language is the exemplary smooth space, structurally like the unconscious, that is, a self-organizing space of elemental interactivity, a site where all structures decay and are transcended. Things placed within measure themselves against one another, begin to correspond, finally establishing an autonomous field of coordination, establish periodic exchanges of energy, information, etc. Mathematics is language deprived of content, but this limitation is positive. It allows mathematics to touch upon pure expressivity, pure injunction, the magical distribution of new intensities throughout space.

Ontologies radiate organizational power from “hidden” or unobservable places. They lodge themselves unconsciously (like a moral limitation) in order to halt our thinking here, to accelerate it past there. The advantages are enormous; it is clear that having some ontological understanding is better than having none. But is our ontological structure the best of all possible such structures? Is it even possible to measure the ‘value’ of our metaphysical and political prejudices, to re-evaluate all values?

For according to a particular moral order (limitation,) the mystical sacrifice of a particular logical possibility (forbidden thoughts or actions) is itself taken to be already the reward of the discipline. “Human” is created only in order to be ruled over, to be placed into political-metaphysical categories, and should a “man” and the “law” grow out of alignment, the system violently attempts to right itself, to assert its omni-science, to bring things back into accordance with the law, in more perfect arrangement with respect to some relative (moral) ordering. This is important: the particular ordering-modes vary endlessly, but governance and realignment are invariant properties of a moral order. We do not have reason yet to use the word “morality” about our world. Our creators of laws are still too weak to comprehend what a real order, what real strategy would mean. For it would mean mobility — politics without choice, politics without lines — in the sense of a political impulse to open radical new modes of excursivity beyond philosophy, beyond science, beyond technique and rhetoric and false intensity.

In short, we need a post-organic model against the cybernetic-systems of Luhmann and the autopoietic models of Varela and Maturana. Politics is now more machinic than organic. It is precisely this boundary between human and machine that must be carefully investigated, the zone of convergence between flesh and the machine. We need to understand this human-machine boundary, where the tendrils of nerves and fibrous bundles of tissue interpenetrate an artificial machine of whatever material. For every force reflects and passes into its other. Parasitic

contamination is the driving force of evolution; not the second force (degradagation of the relation) but the third (degeneration of the media, the relation of the relation.) These forces of decay are also forces of resolution and transcendence, of political and scientific breakthrough.

(to be continued...)