

(phase one)

Topos (biocosm)

In the beginning all things were mixed together; then came understanding and created order.

Anaxagoras [1]

What had to be accomplished in that chaotic pell-mell of primeval conditions, before all motion, so that the world as it now is might come to be, with its times of day and times of year, all conforming to law, with its manifold beauty and order, all without the addition of any new substance or force? How, in other words, could a chaos become a cosmos?

Friedrich Nietzsche [2]

The true difficulty for psychology is that the field of the unconscious is also the site of the production and interpretation of reality. With the unconscious we encounter thoughts and bodies mixed together heterogeneously, without the clear ontological divisions we tend in other disciplines to take simply for granted.

It is no wonder then that Lacan has suggested the reality of the unconscious is the most difficult subject for philosophers to approach [3] — no ontological method can find handles on this incorporeal assemblage, on this “body without organs.” In the enfolding of the psychic within the material we discover a phenomenological reality of the unconscious which is necessarily presupposed by any ontological analysis. Why? Because the unconscious functions as an unground for structures, obstructing original pathways to being, blurring images and spaces for thought. In the unconscious, only becoming matters.

The unconscious is a passageway and a field of differences: both a coded transfer and the imaginary matrix which decodes it. Psychology is not a narratology, not grounded in interpretation and metaphor but rather ceaselessly questioning these symbolic foundations. Thus the “ontology” of the unconscious is transitive and abyssal, its “structure” is that of an eternal recurrence of minimal difference, a membraneous vortex connecting incommensurable regions of being — or rather, *differential speeds of becoming*. In particular, a phenomenological account of the unconscious must be beyond representations, beyond the egoist separation from the real, pushing life-negating philosophy to its topological limit. Precisely the operation of the unconscious as revealed in the production of discourse and structure would be in question in such a rigorous thinking of becoming.

Nietzsche’s philosophy is our exemplary model here, a philosophy at once cosmic, machinic and abstract, a philosophy of difference, pure intensities and assemblages of forces, an atheistic philosophy of becoming. By blurring the ontological division between thought and being, a passageway is opened beyond the transitory figures of discourse which is the field of the unconscious.

In order to make conscious the unconscious we must move beneath and beyond discourse, beyond shame and lust for power.

Thus this pre-ontological phenomenological position aims beyond power and knowledge, and radically reformulates the question of the production of desire as a non-totality, open to multiplicity. The philosophy which could describe production generically, i.e., of reality and the unconscious at once, could not be primarily anthropological. It would make no teleological or ontological presuppositions.

In terms of the history of philosophy, Anaxagoras' *nous* is a powerful model of this mode of pure becoming beneath expression. For the *nous* is the infinite and self-ruled movement of spirit upon itself, operating via the thinnest of things, through the purest and lightest of beings. The abstract machine of the unconscious and the cosmos is expressed or instantiated in the self-organization of matter which takes place in transduction, and works not just by exploding the existing organized fields of intensities. Rather, by pervading even the pre-original field of becoming with a kind of free and constructive energy, *nous* accomplishes a primordial return, from to earth to its turbulent ungrounding and back, all as a single and simple free movement: *play*.

In this sense, the spirit is a real body, a uniquely free inclination, originating rotary movements at random in the field of intensities gradually extending until everything is turbulently in motion. *Nous* is the pure abstract machine, the ungrounding motor of becoming, the simultaneous vehicle of cosmic and psychic separation.

In *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks*, Nietzsche dramatically presents Anaxagoras' account of cosmogenesis. In his elegant formulation, "the order and efficiency of things are but the direct result of blind mechanical movement" produced in the dead inertia of chaos by "a free and undetermined spirit" guided by "neither causes nor ends." [4] Topology becomes productive as the real micro-structure or difference in revolutionary intensity between infinitesimal events, traces of maximal rotation and proximity, immanently generating minimal fluctuations throughout the primordial and heterogeneous medium.

The primary reality is chaos, *a differential field of intensities*: a minimal change anywhere begins the whirling and gyrating process of centrifugal development through which a chaos becomes a cosmos, unearthing unconscious forms buried beneath the ground, transcoding them into explicit information. This turbulence of turbulences is process itself, genesis, a revolutionary anti-structure which expands radially outwards in ever-widening orbits, encompassing the entire universe.

There is no representation, no anthropomorphic teleology in such a conception: begin randomly, at any susceptible point in the chaotic mixture. In the whirling vortex, similar elements are naturally joined together: the heavy, dark and moist are forced into the center, compressed by centrifugal forces, while everything that is warm, light, ethereal becomes concentrated around the outside. That there is some free independent force which initiates the process is the really crucial point; again, an ontology of flux, thought liberated from teleology.

The Anaxagorean *nous* is the principle of individuation itself, the primordial impulse which is also the ordering and governing principle of all things. It is the elemental medium communicating with and organizing itself. The centrifugal forces in the vortex are the means by which nature tears light from darkness, and wrenches darkness from itself so it can be purified through fire.

In *nous* we have a force which dominates in complete freedom and reckless abandon, a violent and real conception of strength. *Nous* is lightness itself at play, engendering the genesis of the real, pure power: the infinite and free force of becoming.

(phase two)

Eros (opening/being-opened)

All psychology so far has got stuck in moral prejudices and fears; it has not dared to descend into the depths. To understand it as morphology and the doctrine of the development of the will to power, as I do - nobody has yet come close to doing this even in thought - insofar as it is permissible to recognize in what has been written so far a symptom of what has so far been kept silent.

Friedrich Nietzsche [5]

There is always some madness in love. But there is also always some reason in madness.

Friedrich Nietzsche [6]

Time begins without warning, at random and without purpose. It comes in bursts, stuttering, flowing endlessly towards us across an infinite abyss. From this initial movement and circular ramification, chaos begins to develop into increasingly complex forms, unfolding alternate and internal dimensions of time.

At this point, to ask why it begins at all is really to ask why it begins *at a particular time*; but in fact there is no singular starting point. Rather we always begin with the field of pre-individual intensities, with pure multiplicity. Plurality is anterior to unity. Anaxagoras' account must not be confused with those who would attribute a purpose to becoming. The *nous* is undetermined and free, and from its random intervention the genealogical development of the universe follows.

The cosmos and the unconscious are not totalities but assemblages of singularities, machines engendered by the *nous* and completely determined by its originating indeterminacy. These machinic fields are engaged in experimental becomings which produce new differential surfaces (upon which new kinds of event are possible.) Thus by definition none of these fields are complete, and though they unfold "mechanistically," they do not therefore express a single purpose or final state.

The evolution of fields of intensity endlessly produces more and more novel forms without a fixed horizon. There is no origin or destination, but only an eternal return to the earth and language, a conjunction which is continually ungrounded and opened onto exteriority.

This modality of opening should be understood from the inside and from the outside. For opening onto... is also to *be opened*, to lacerate, to extrude a new ontological dimension more primordial than the orders of interior and exterior. Thus the unconscious is transpierced by reality as well as by expression; when we write, we are violently opening bodies, being opened by words. With thought there begins a new inward and abyssal dimension which reinscribes desire upon surfaces and objects, hijacking a transversal signal which circulates through new regions of becoming, bridging each ontological “jump” into a more or less complex field of intensity.

A subject is conjured into being through interpellation by speech. It exists by virtue of becoming *pressed into place*, made to conform to a role, made to assume itself as (guilty) One — transfixed by judgment. In other words, the space of thought cannot be thought outside of its biocosmic implications; as Deleuze poignantly notes, politics precedes being. So how is consciousness produced in the midst of life?

Hegel answers this question by pointing towards a mystical negation of life which is nonetheless mysteriously tied to life. Ironically, Nietzsche might approve of this formulation as a historical (and not metaphysical) description. That is, consider the same abstract story without the mysticism. In the Nietzschean terms of *Genealogy of Morals*, we see that the *life-negating* processes of guilt, bad conscience and shame are in fact the productive furnace of individuation which is prior to the *necessarily* self-hating individuals themselves. The individual is an impossibility as a subject, produced only in order to be controlled. The perfect subject is in control, or is under the strictest illusion that this is the case. This obsessive dissociation of energy and desire (a body from what it can do) accounts for the compulsive fascination of psychoanalysis with power.

In other words, psychoanalysis characteristically tends to hide the historical fact that the only subjects we’ve ever been able to *create* are always self-hating, resentful, impotent herd types — because in terms of the State precisely these are “good individuals.” Indeed, this very genesis of the higher from the lower is the origin of slavery and democracy at once. The diachrony of freedom and slavery is a tense turbulence and double-becoming which modern democracies cannot help but feel profoundly. This internal agitation causes us no little amount of anxiety, mirroring as it does the profound external agitation of the modern urban space, and so further contributes to our alienation from reality, and again requiring the patient compulsive construction of more and more complex mechanisms of social control (self-observation.)

More fundamentally, separation and micro-segmentarity are the *reality* of the social, the cruel movement of culture dividing bodies into organs, horrifically opening organic bodies onto more primary machinic systems of control.

Unlike the pure intellection of the *nous*, historical and individual self-consciousness does not develop freely or at random. It’s origin is tied to machines of social control, to one-way

exchanges and asymmetrical power relations. According to Nietzsche the origin of self-consciousness is tied to the development of morality and culture, social processes. Nietzsche identifies historically as originating in debtor-creditor relationships. In order that life could be made “responsible,” man’s incalculable inner depths had to be constructed precisely in order *to be made calculable*. The truth of man’s being, the historical essence of his conscious activity in the world, became real through the formation and social ordering of debt and recompense, in shame and the desire for punishment.

Thus the rational, creative and ethical dimension of life is born in resentment, shame and jealousy. Religion is born in horror at the terrifying depths of the other, and philosophy in the misery of being alone, nomadic, untimely and so therefore evil, incomplete, archaic, marginal, separate, dangerous, repressed, terrified, and insecure of the future. All culture is already the terror of the other within us, the movements of the alien war machine within our bodies, *opening us up from within*.

Capitalism names a post-human machinic order emerging gradually from the biopolitical space of human activity, constructing a new dimension of control by the transformation of existing power structures. Theology seeks to separate bodies from their power, the unconscious from what it is able to do: this is the sublime cruelty of conventional morality, the existential meaning of being made calculable. The horizon of this moral calculus is its own proliferative ungrounding; as Nietzsche writes: “To be ashamed of one’s immorality: that is a step on the staircase at whose end one is also ashamed of one’s morality.” [7]

In short, the field of the unconscious is social, productive of social desires. We are immersed in an unconscious machine, a self-organized field of pre-ontological desire. What cannot be expressed in any space is forcibly silenced; there is no guarantee that positive experimentation, however exuberant, will lead to liberation. Affirmation as the production of a smooth space is not enough; to affirm a belief is also the transitive closure of intensive social space, a limitation of interpretative dimensionality; it is being-opened rather than opening onto...

Perturbation in Semi-fluid Space

The psychological function of a traumatic disruption of space is identified with signification, intervening from an alternate order of being incommensurate with the material ground of psychic becoming. The psychoanalytical model of the unconscious is as a lacerated space, a space with a hole punctured into it, a non-organic space extruded from another body: lacerated or opened spaces functions to dissolve the compromised partial object (or fractured subject to power!) in a differential field of morphogenetic intensities, actively diffusing boundaries between words and things.

The experiment converges obscenely upon theoretical models. Which means: if we represent our models only as models, and not as experiments themselves, *they will therefore* lack the ability to actually provoke the meltdown of static theoretical, political, and ontological categories. In other words, engendering new hybrid modalities of interconnection and transformation cannot occur without experimentation.

Otherwise, we are left simply with the old paradoxes — the subject dissolves in chaos to become a cosmos, and *then there is no subject anymore*: the I is suddenly all the names in history. But in many ways this remnant of archaic chaos is the hidden truth of the absurdity of system itself. The rigid separation of freedom from reality is *merely* an illusion. Ideology is the locus of separation which disappears even in its own construction, permanently virtual, a truth without extension and, for that reason, of possibly infinite intensity.

To live safely is to be domesticated and the problem is this is also what we often desire. But isn't it a little like living on the shore of a great ocean without ever peering beneath the surface? Desire is made calculable only by the negation of life. There is an infinitesimal escape from ontology which is actual: creativity, joy, the ever-renewing erotic potential for opening the world and for being opened by it, without becoming appropriated by power structures, or made to play alien roles in a machinic assemblage. This is reality, the actual decision, eternally recurring, the "meaning" of life. There may not be wrong or right, but there is a yes and a no. Are you a yes?

What we have been arguing is that to situate psychology beyond the horizon of sociality, it is necessary to conceive of *desire as energy*, as the life-blood of conscious and unconscious assemblages, intrinsically mobile, conjoining and disjoining real and imaginary machines to one another. Desire is not in-itself, but composed of and even immersed within other flows of desire. It is the ground of the unground, the pre-individual field of the *nous* itself, pure intensity operating without shame or pity, but with complete freedom. Desire is the substratum of the world-governing nous which sparks the turbulent disruption of fields of intensity.

Not by necessity but pure freedom are worlds and time born, through the overflowing exuberance of metaphysical desire for what is beyond becoming. The question is not whether machines can desire, but how desire is made calculable, ascetic, turned against life itself: in short, captured by power, enamored with punishment, made willing to enter into a tyrannical regime of renunciation. In this process of being made calculable, subjects are commonly produced which desire their own repression. This desire can be reactionary or revolutionary, but you cannot tell in advance. Such subjectivity is irreducible, as pure connection to a transitory transcendental figure (or model, etc.) This kind of individuality is *superfluous*, produced ultimately out of cruelty. It is after all a rather naive discovery that culture almost always betrays a repellent and resentful desire to control and dominate.

And so at the end we are left with the really dangerous question: whether to accelerate morality to the horizon of calculability, to the abyssal depths of its silent exterior, to deregulate and open our desiring machines onto multiplicity? Dare we venture beyond good and evil?

(footnotes)

(1) Attributed to Anaxagoras (500 – 425 B.C) Diogenes Laertius' *Lives and Opinions* (II. 6)

(2) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* 107

(3) Jacques Lacan, *Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*

(4) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Philosophy in the Tragic Age of the Greeks* 117

(5) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 23

(6) Friedrich Nietzsche, *On Reading and Writing*

(7) Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil* 95