

9. 1933: Micropolitics and Segmentarity



Segmentarities (Overview of the Types)

We are segmented from all around and in every direction. The human being is a segmentary animal. Segmentarity is inherent to all the strata composing us. Dwelling, getting around, working, playing: life is spatially and socially segmented. The house is segmented according to its rooms' assigned purposes; streets, according to the order of the city; the factory, according to the nature of the work and operations performed in it. We are segmented in a *binary* fashion, following the great major dualist oppositions: social classes, but also men-women, adults-children, and so on. We are segmented in a *cir-*

cular fashion, in ever larger circles, ever wider disks or coronas, like Joyce's "letter": my affairs, my neighborhood's affairs, my city's, my country's, the world's . . . We are segmented in a *linear* fashion, along a straight line or a number of straight lines, of which each segment represents an episode or "proceeding": as soon as we finish one proceeding we begin another, forever proceduring or procedured, in the family, in school, in the army, on the job. School tells us, "You're not at home anymore"; the army tells us, "You're not in school anymore" . . . Sometimes the various segments belong to different individuals or groups, and sometimes the same individual or group passes from one segment to another. But these figures of segmentarity, the binary, circular, and linear, are bound up with one another, even cross over into each other, changing according to the point of view. This is already evident among "savage" peoples: Lizot shows how the communal House is organized in circular fashion, going from interior to exterior in a series of coronas within which certain types of localizable activities take place (worship and ceremonies, followed by exchange of goods, followed by family life, followed by trash and excrement); at the same time "each of these coronas is itself trans-versally divided, each segment devolves upon a particular lineage and is subdivided among different kinship groups."¹ In a more general context, Levi-Strauss shows that the dualist organization of primitive peoples has a circular form, and also takes a linear form encompassing "any number of groups" (at least three).²

Why return to the primitives, when it is a question of our own life? The fact is that the notion of segmentarity was constructed by ethnologists to account for so-called primitive societies, which have no fixed, central State apparatus and no global power mechanisms or specialized political institutions. In these societies, the social segments have a certain leeway, between the two extreme poles of fusion and scission, depending on the task and the situation; there is also considerable communicability between heterogeneous elements, so that one segment can fit with another in a number of different ways; and they have a local construction excluding the prior determination of a base domain (economic, political, juridical, artistic); they have extrinsic and situational properties, or relations irreducible to the intrinsic properties of a structure; activity is continuous, so segmentarity is not grasped as something separate from a segmentation-in-progress operating by outgrowths, detachments, and mergings. Primitive segmentarity is characterized by a polyvocal *code* based on lineages and their varying situations and relations, and an itinerant *territoriality* based on local, overlapping divisions. Codes and territories, clan lineages and tribal territorialities, form a fabric of relatively supple segmentarity.³

However, it seems to us difficult to maintain that State societies, even our modern States, are any less segmentary. The classical opposition

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between segmentarity and centralization hardly seems relevant.⁴ Not only does the State exercise power over the segments it sustains or permits to survive, but it possesses, and imposes, its own segmentarity. Perhaps the opposition sociologists establish between the segmentary and the central is biological deep down: the ringed worm, and the central nervous system. But the central brain itself is a worm, even more segmented than the others, in spite of and including all of its vicarious actions. There is no opposition between the central and the segmentary. The modern political system is a global whole, unified and unifying, but is so because it implies a constellation of juxtaposed, imbricated, ordered subsystems; the analysis of decision making brings to light all kinds of compartmentalizations and partial processes that interconnect, but not without gaps and displacements. Technocracy operates by the segmentary division of labor (this applies to the international division of labor as well). Bureaucracy exists only in compartmentalized offices and functions only by "goal displacements" and the corresponding "dysfunctions." Hierarchy is not simply pyramidal; the boss's office is as much at the end of the hall as on top of the tower. In short, we would say that modern life has not done away with segmentarity but has on the contrary made it exceptionally rigid.

Instead of setting up an opposition between the segmentary and the centralized, we should make a distinction between two types of segmentarity, one "primitive" and supple, the other "modern" and rigid. This distinction reframes each of the figures previously discussed.

1. Binary oppositions (men/women, those on top/those on the bottom, etc.) are very strong in primitive societies, but seem to be the result of machines and assemblages that are not in themselves binary. The social binarity between men and women in a group applies rules according to which both sexes must take their respective spouses from different groups (which is why there are at least three groups). Thus Levi-Strauss can demonstrate that dualist organization never stands on its own in this kind of society. On the contrary, it is a particularity of modern societies, or rather State societies, to bring into their own duality machines that function as such, and proceed simultaneously by biunivocal relationships and successively by binarized choices. Classes and sexes come in twos, and phenomena of tripartition result from a transposition of the dual, not the reverse. We have already encountered this, notably in the case of the Face machine, which differs in this respect from primitive head machines. It seems that modern societies elevated dual segmentarity to the level of a self-sufficient organization. The question, therefore, is not whether the status of women, or those on the bottom, is better or worse, but the type of organization from which that status results.

2. Similarly, we may note that in primitive societies circular segmen-

tarity does not necessarily imply that the circles are concentric, or have the same center. In a supple regime, centers already act as so many *knots*, *eyes*, or *black holes*; but they do not all resonate together, they do not fall on the same point, they do not converge in the same black hole. There is a multiplicity of animist eyes, each of which is assigned, for example, a particular animal spirit (snake-spirit, woodpecker-spirit, cayman-spirit ...). Each black hole is occupied by a different animal eye. Doubtless, we see operations of rigidification and centralization take shape here and there: all of the centers must collect on a single circle, which itself has a single center. The shaman draws lines between all the points or spirits, outlines a constellation, a radiating set of roots tied to a central tree. This is the birth of a centralized power with an arborescent system to discipline the outgrowths of the primitive rhizome.⁵ Here, the tree simultaneously plays the role of a principle of dichotomy or binarity, and an axis of rotation. But the power of the shaman is still entirely localized, strictly dependent upon a particular segment, contingent upon drugs, and each point continues to emit independent sequences. The same cannot be said of modern societies, or even of States. Of course, the centralized is not opposed to the segmentary, and the circles remain distinct. But they become concentric, definitively arborified. The segmentarity becomes rigid, to the extent that all centers resonate in, and all black holes fall on, a single point of accumulation that is like a point of intersection somewhere behind the eyes. The face of the father, teacher, colonel, boss, enter into redundancy, refer back to a center of signifiante that moves across the various circles and passes back over all of the segments. The supple microheads with animal facializations are replaced by a macroface whose center is everywhere and circumference nowhere. There are no longer *n* eyes in the sky, or in becomings-animal and -vegetable, but a central computing eye scanning all of the radii. The central State is constituted not by the abolition of circular segmentarity but by a concentricity of distinct circles, or the organization of a resonance among centers. *There are already just as many power centers in primitive societies; or, if one prefers, there are still just as many in State societies.* The latter, however, behave as apparatuses of resonance; they organize resonance, whereas the former inhibit it.⁶

3. Finally, in the case of linear segmentarity, we would say that each segment is underscored, rectified, and homogenized in its own right, but also in relation to the others. Not only does each have its own unit of measure, but there is an equivalence and translatability between units. The central eye has as its correlate a space through which it moves, but it itself remains invariant in relation to its movements. With the Greek city-state and Cleisthenes' reform, a homogeneous and isotopic space appears that overcodes the lineal segments, at the same time as distinct focal points

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begin to resonate in a center acting as their common denominator.⁷ Paul Virilio shows that after the Greek city-state, the Roman Empire imposes a geometrical or *linear reason of State* including a general outline of camps and fortifications, a universal art of "marking boundaries by lines," a laying-out of territories, a substitution of space for places and territorialities, and a transformation of the world into the city; in short, an increasingly rigid segmentarity.⁸ The segments, once underscored or overcoded, seem to lose their ability to bud, they seem to lose their dynamic relation to segmentations-in-progress, or in the act of coming together or coming apart. If there exists a primitive "geometry" (a protogeometry), it is an operative geometry in which figures are never separable from the affectations befalling them, the lines of their becoming, the segments of their segmentation: there is "roundness," but no circle, "alignments," but no straight line, etc. On the contrary, State geometry, or rather the bond between the State and geometry, manifests itself in the primacy of the theorem-element, which substitutes fixed or ideal essences for supple morphological formations, properties for affects, predetermined segments for segmentations-in-progress. Geometry and arithmetic take on the power of the scalpel. Private property implies a space that has been overcoded and gridded by surveying. Not only does each line have its segments, but the segments of one line correspond to those of another; for example, the wage regime establishes a correspondence between monetary segments, production segments, and consumable-goods segments.

We may summarize the principal differences between rigid segmentarity and supple segmentarity. In the rigid mode, binary segmentarity stands on its own and is governed by great machines of direct binarization, whereas in the other mode, binarities result from "multiplicities of n dimensions." Second, circular segmentarity tends to become concentric, in other words, causes all of its focal points to coincide in a single center that is in constant movement but remains invariant through its movements, and is part of a machine of resonance. Finally, linear segmentarity feeds into a machine of overcoding that constitutes *more geometrico* homogeneous space and extracts segments that are determinate as to their substance, form, and relations. It will be noted that this rigid segmentarity is always expressed by the Tree. The Tree is the knot of arborescence or principle of dichotomy; it is the axis of rotation guaranteeing concentricity; it is the structure or network gridding the possible. This opposition between arborified and rhizomatic segmentarity is not just meant to indicate two states of a single process, but also to isolate two different processes. For primitive societies operate essentially by codes and territorialities. It is in fact the distinction between these two elements, the tribal system of territories and the clan system of lineages, that prevents resonance.⁹ Modern, or State, societies, on the other hand,

have replaced the declining codes with a univocal overcoding, and the lost territories with a specific reterritorialization (which takes place in an overcoded geometrical space). Segmentarity is always the result of an abstract machine, but different abstract machines operate in the rigid and the supple.

It is not enough, therefore, to oppose the centralized to the segmentary. Nor is it enough to oppose two kinds of segmentarity, one supple and primitive, the other modern and rigidified. There is indeed a distinction between the two, but they are inseparable, they overlap, they are entangled. Primitive societies have nuclei of rigidity or arborification that as much anticipate the State as ward it off. Conversely, our societies are still suffused by a supple fabric without which their rigid segments would not hold. Supple segmentarity cannot be restricted to primitive peoples. It is not the vestige of the savage within us but a perfectly contemporary function, inseparable from the other. Every society, and every individual, are thus plied by both segmentarities simultaneously: one molar, the other *molecular*. If they are distinct, it is because they do not have the same terms or the same relations or the same nature or even the same type of multiplicity. If they are inseparable, it is because they coexist and cross over into each other. The configurations differ, for example, between the primitives and us, but the two segmentarities are always in presupposition. In short, everything is political, but every politics is simultaneously a *macropolitics* and a *micropolitics*. Take aggregates of the perception or feeling type: their molar organization, their rigid segmentarity, does not preclude the existence of an entire world of unconscious microperepts, unconscious affects, fine segmentations that grasp or experience different things, are distributed and operate differently. There is a micropolitics of perception, affection, conversation, and so forth. If we consider the great binary aggregates, such as the sexes or classes, it is evident that they also cross over into molecular assemblages of a different nature, and that there is a double reciprocal dependency between them. For the two sexes imply a multiplicity of molecular combinations bringing into play not only the man in the woman and the woman in the man, but the relation of each to the animal, the plant, etc.: a thousand tiny sexes. And social classes themselves imply "masses" that do not have the same kind of movement, distribution, or objectives and do not wage the same kind of struggle. Attempts to distinguish mass from class effectively tend toward this limit: *the notion of mass is a molecular notion* operating according to a type of segmentation irreducible to the molar segmentarity of class. Yet classes are indeed fashioned from masses; they crystallize them. And masses are constantly flowing or leaking from classes. Their reciprocal presupposition, however, does not preclude a dif-

ference in viewpoint, nature, scale, and function (understood in this way, the notion of mass has entirely different connotations than Canetti's "crowd").

It is not sufficient to define bureaucracy by a rigid segmentarity with compartmentalization of contiguous offices, an office manager in each segment, and the corresponding centralization at the end of the hall or on top of the tower. For at the same time there is a whole bureaucratic segmentation, a suppleness of and communication between offices, a bureaucratic perversion, a permanent inventiveness or creativity practiced even against administrative regulations. If Kafka is the greatest theorist of bureaucracy, it is because he shows how, at a certain level (but which one? it is not localizable), the barriers between offices cease to be "a definite dividing line" and are immersed in a molecular medium (*milieu*) that dissolves them and simultaneously makes the office manager proliferate into microfigures impossible to recognize or identify, discernible only when they are centralizable: another regime, coexistent with the separation *and* totalization of the rigid segments.¹⁰ We would even say that fascism implies a molecular regime that is distinct both from molar segments and their centralization. Doubtless, fascism invented the concept of the totalitarian State, but there is no reason to define fascism by a concept of its own devising: there are totalitarian States, of the Stalinist or military dictatorship type, that are not fascist. The concept of the totalitarian State applies only at the macropolitical level, to a rigid segmentarity and a particular mode of totalization and centralization. But fascism is inseparable from a proliferation of molecular focuses in interaction, which skip from point to point, *before* beginning to resonate together in the National Socialist State. Rural fascism and city or neighborhood fascism, youth fascism and war veteran's fascism, fascism of the Left and fascism of the Right, fascism of the couple, family, school, and office: every fascism is defined by a micro-black hole that stands on its own and communicates with the others, before resonating in a great, generalized central black hole.¹¹ There is fascism when a *war machine* is installed in each hole, in every niche. Even after the National Socialist State had been established, microfascisms persisted that gave it unequaled ability to act upon the "masses." Daniel Guérin is correct to say that if Hitler took power, rather than taking over the German State administration, it was because from the beginning he had at his disposal microorganizations giving him "an unequaled, irreplaceable ability to penetrate every cell of society," in other words, a molecular and supple segmentarity, flows capable of suffusing every kind of cell. Conversely, if capitalism came to consider the fascist experience as catastrophic, if it preferred to ally itself with Stalinist totalitarianism, which from its point of view was much more sensible and manageable, it was because the

segmentarity and centralization of the latter was more classical and less fluid. What makes fascism dangerous is its molecular or micropolitical power, for it is a mass movement: a cancerous body rather than a totalitarian organism. American film has often depicted these molecular focal points; band, gang, sect, family, town, neighborhood, vehicle fascisms spare no one. Only microfascism provides an answer to the global question: Why does desire desire its own repression, how can it desire its own repression? The masses certainly do not passively submit to power; nor do they "want" to be repressed, in a kind of masochistic hysteria; nor are they tricked by an ideological lure. Desire is never separable from complex assemblages that necessarily tie into molecular levels, from microformations already shaping postures, attitudes, perceptions, expectations, semiotic systems, etc. Desire is never an undifferentiated instinctual energy, but itself results from a highly developed, engineered setup rich in interactions: a whole supple segmentarity that processes molecular energies and potentially gives desire a fascist determination. Leftist organizations will not be the last to secrete microfascisms. It's too easy to be antifascist on the molar level, and not even see the fascist inside you, the fascist you yourself sustain and nourish and cherish with molecules both personal and collective.

Four errors concerning this molecular and supple segmentarity are to be avoided. The first is axiological and consists in believing that a little suppleness is enough to make things "better." But microfascisms are what make fascism so dangerous, and fine segmentations are as harmful as the most rigid of segments. The second is psychological, as if the molecular were in the realm of the imagination and applied only to the individual and interindividual. But there is just as much social-Real on one line as on the other. Third, the two forms are not simply distinguished by size, as a small form and a large form; although it is true that the molecular works in detail and operates in small groups, this does not mean that it is any less coextensive with the entire social field than molar organization. Finally, the qualitative difference between the two lines does not preclude their boosting or cutting into each other; there is always a proportional relation between the two, directly or inversely proportional.

In the first case, the stronger the molar organization is, the more it induces a molecularization of its own elements, relations, and elementary apparatuses. When the machine becomes planetary or cosmic, there is an increasing tendency for assemblages to miniaturize, to become micro-assemblages. Following Andre Gorz's formula, the only remaining element of work left under world capitalism is the molecular, or molecularized, individual, in other words, the "mass" individual. The administration of a great organized molar security has as its correlate a whole micro-

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management of petty fears, a permanent molecular insecurity, to the point that the motto of domestic policymakers might be: a macropolitics of society by and for a micropolitics of insecurity.¹² However, the second case is even more important: molecular movements do not complement but rather thwart and break through the great worldwide organization. That is what French President Valéry Giscard d'Estaing was saying in his military and political geography lesson: the more balanced things are between East and West, in an overcoding and overarmed dualist machine, the more "destabilized" they become along the other, North-South, line. There is always a Palestinian or Basque or Corsican to bring about a "regional destabilization of security."¹³ The two great molar aggregates of the East and West are perpetually being undermined by a molecular segmentation causing a zigzag crack, making it difficult for them to keep their own segments in line. It is as if a line of flight, perhaps only a tiny trickle to begin with, leaked between the segments, escaping their centralization, eluding their totalization. The profound movements stirring in a society present themselves in this fashion, even if they are necessarily "represented" as a confrontation between molar segments. It is wrongly said (in Marxism in particular) that a society is defined by its contradictions. That is true only on the larger scale of things. From the viewpoint of micropolitics, a society is defined by its lines of flight, which are molecular. There is always something that flows or flees, that escapes the binary organizations, the resonance apparatus, and the overcoding machine: things that are attributed to a "change in values," the youth, women, the mad, etc. May 1968 in France was molecular, making what led up to it all the more imperceptible from the viewpoint of macropolitics. It happens that people who are very limited in outlook or are very old grasp the event better than the most advanced politicians, or politicians who consider themselves advanced from the viewpoint of organization. As Gabriel Tarde said, what one needs to know is which peasants, in which areas of the south of France, stopped greeting the local landowners. A very old, outdated landowner can in this case judge things better than a modernist. It was the same with May '68: those who evaluated things in macropolitical terms understood nothing of the event because something unaccountable was escaping. The politicians, the parties, the unions, many leftists, were utterly vexed; they kept repeating over and over again that "conditions" were not ripe. It was as though they had been temporarily deprived of the entire dualism machine that made them valid spokespeople. Bizarrely, de Gaulle, and even Pompidou, understood much more than the others. A molecular flow was escaping, minuscule at first, then swelling, without, however, ceasing to be unassignable. The reverse, however, is also true: molecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the molar orga-

nizations to reshuffle their segments, their binary distributions of sexes, classes, and parties.

The issue is that the molar and the molecular are distinguished not by size, scale, or dimension but by the nature of the system of reference envisioned. Perhaps, then, the words "line" and "segment" should be reserved for molar organization, and other, more suitable, words should be sought for molecular composition. And in fact, whenever we can identify a well-defined *segmented line*, we notice that it continues in another form, as a *quantum flow*. And in every instance, we can locate a "power center" at the border between the two, defined not by an absolute exercise of power within its domain but by the relative adaptations and conversions it effects between the line and the flow. Take a monetary flow with segments. These segments can be defined from several points of view, for example, from the viewpoint of a corporate budget (real wages, net profit, management salaries, interest on assets, reserves, investments, etc.). Now this line of payment-money is linked to another aspect, namely, the flow of financing-money, which has, not segments, but rather poles, singularities, and quanta (the poles of the flow are the creation of money and its destruction; the singularities are nominal liquid assets; the quanta are inflation, deflation, stagflation, etc.). This has led some to speak of a "mutant, convulsive, creative and circulatory flow" tied to desire and always subjacent to the solid line and its segments determining interest rates and supply and demand.¹⁴ In a balance of payment, we again encounter a binary segmentarity that distinguishes, for example, so-called autonomous operations from so-called compensatory operations. But movements of capital do not allow themselves to be segmented in this way; because they are "*the most thoroughly broken down*, according to their nature, duration, and the personality of the creditor or debtor," one "no longer has any idea where to draw the line when dealing with these flows."¹⁵ Yet there is always a correlation between the two aspects since linearization and segmentation are where flows run dry, but are also their point of departure for a new creation. When we talk about banking power, concentrated most notably in the central banks, it is indeed a question of the relative power to regulate "as much as" possible the communication, conversion, and coadaptation of the two parts of the circuit. That is why power centers are defined much more by what escapes them or by their impotence than by their zone of power. In short, the molecular, or microeconomics, micropolitics, is defined not by the smallness of its elements but by the nature of its "mass"—the quantum flow as opposed to the molar segmented line.¹⁶ The task of making the segments correspond to the quanta, of adjusting the segments to the quanta, implies hit-and-miss changes in rhythm and mode rather than any omnipotence; and something always escapes.

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We could take other examples, such as the power of the Church. Church power has always been associated with a certain administration of sin possessing a strong segmentarity (the seven deadly sins), units of measure (how many times?), and rules of equivalence and atonement (confession, penance . . .). But there is also what might be called the molecular flow of sinfulness, something quite different yet complementary: it hugs close to the linear zone, as though negotiated through it, but itself has only poles (original sin-redemption or grace) and quanta ("that sin which is the default of consciousness of sin"; the sin of having a consciousness of sin; the sin of the consequence of having a consciousness of sin).¹⁷ The same could be said of a flow of criminality, in contrast to the molar line of a legal code and its divisions. Or to take another example, discussions of military power, or the power of the army, consider a segmentable line broken down into types of war corresponding exactly to the States waging war and the political goals those States assign themselves (from "limited" war to "total" war). But following Clausewitz's intuition, the war machine is very different; it is a flow of *absolute* war stretching between an offensive and a defensive pole, and is marked only by quanta (psychic and material forces that are like the nominal liquid assets of war). We may say of the pure flow that it is abstract yet real; ideal yet effective; absolute yet "differentiated." It is true that the flow and its quanta can be grasped only by virtue of indexes on the segmented line, but conversely, that line and those indexes exist only by virtue of the flow suffusing them. In every case, it is evident that the segmented line (macropolitics) is immersed in and prolonged by quantum flows (micropolitics) that continually reshuffle and stir up its segments.

A: flow and poles
a: quanta
b: line and segments
B: power center
(all of which constitutes a
cycle or period)

f
 I
 V
 $\wedge$
 $A V^s s^{\wedge}$



Bb i_3 i_t
 i_t $Bi^{n\sim}$

In homage to Gabriel Tarde (1843-1904): his long-forgotten work has assumed new relevance with the influence of American sociology, in particular microsociology. It had been quashed by Durkheim and his school (in polemics similar to and as harsh as Cuvier's against Geoffroy Saint-Hilaire). Durkheim's preferred objects of study were the great collective representations, which are generally binary, resonant, and overcoded. Tarde countered that collective representations presuppose exactly what needs explaining, namely, "the similarity of millions of people." That is why Tarde was interested instead in the world of detail, or of the infini-

tesimal: the little *imitations*, *oppositions*, and *inventions* constituting an entire realm of subrepresentative matter. Tarde's best work was his analyses of a minuscule bureaucratic innovation, or a linguistic innovation, etc. The Durkheimians answered that what Tarde did was psychology or inter-psychology, not sociology. But that is true only in appearance, as a first approximation: a microimitation does seem to occur between two individuals. But at the same time, and at a deeper level, it has to do not with an individual but with a flow or a wave. *Imitation is the propagation of a flow; opposition is binarization, the making binary of flows; invention is a conjugation or connection of different flows.* What, according to Tarde, is a flow? It is belief or desire (the two aspects of every assemblage); a flow is always of belief and of desire. Beliefs and desires are the basis of every society, because they are flows and as such are "quantifiable"; they are veritable social Quantities, whereas sensations are qualitative and representations are simple resultants.¹⁸ Infinitesimal imitation, opposition, and invention are therefore like flow quanta marking a propagation, binarization, or conjugation of beliefs and desires. Hence the importance of statistics, providing it concerns itself with the cutting edges and not only with the "stationary" zone of representations. For in the end, the difference is not at all between the social and the individual (or interindividual), but between the molar realm of representations, individual or collective, and the molecular realm of beliefs and desires in which the distinction between the social and the individual loses all meaning since flows are neither attributable to individuals nor overcodable by collective signifiers. Representations already define large-scale aggregates, or determine segments on a line; beliefs and desires, on the other hand, are flows marked by quanta, flows that are created, exhausted, or transformed, added to one another, subtracted or combined. Tarde invented microsociology and took it to its full breadth and scope, denouncing in advance the misinterpretations to which it would later fall victim.

This is how you tell the difference between the segmented line and the quantum flow. A mutant flow always implies something tending to elude or escape the codes; quanta are precisely signs or degrees of deterritorialization in the decoded flow. The rigid line, on the other hand, implies an overcoding that substitutes itself for the faltering codes; its segments are like reterritorializations on the overcoding or overcoded line. Let us return to the case of original sin: it is the very act of a flow marking a decoding in relation to creation (with just one last island preserved for the Virgin), and a deterritorialization in relation to the land of Adam; but it simultaneously performs an overcoding by binary organizations and resonance (Powers, Church, empires, rich-poor, men-women, etc.) and complementary reterritorializations (on the land of Cain, on work, on reproduction, on

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money.. .)• Now the two systems of reference are in inverse relation to each other, in the sense that the first eludes the second, or the second arrests the first, prevents it from flowing further; but at the same time, they are strictly complementary and coexistent, because one exists only as a function of the other; yet they are different and in direct relation to each other, although corresponding term by term, because the second only effectively arrests the first on a "plane" that is not the plane specific to the first, while the momentum of the first continues on its own plane.

A social field is always animated by all kinds of movements of decoding and deterritorialization affecting "masses" and operating at different speeds and paces. These are not contradictions but escapes. At this level, everything is a question of *mass*. For example, from the tenth to the fourteenth centuries we see an acceleration of factors of decoding and deterritorialization: the masses of the last invaders swooping down from north, east, and south; military masses turned into pillaging bands; ecclesiastical masses confronted with infidels and heretics, and adopting increasingly deterritorialized objectives; peasant masses leaving the seigneurial domains; seigneurial masses forced to find means of exploitation less territorial than serfdom; urban masses breaking away from the backcountry and finding increasingly less territorialized social arrangements in the cities; women's masses detaching themselves from the old passionate and conjugal code; monetary masses that cease to be a hoard object and inject themselves into great commercial circuits.¹⁹ We may cite the Crusades as effecting a connection of flows, each boosting and accelerating the others (even the flow of femininity in the "faraway Princess," even the flow of children in the Crusades of the thirteenth century). But at the same time, and inseparably, there occur overcodings and reterritorializations. The Crusades were overcoded by the pope and assigned territorial objectives. The Holy Land, the Peace of God, a new type of abbey, new figures of money, new modes of exploitation of the peasant through leasehold and the wage system (or revivals of slavery), urban reterritorializations, etc., form a complex system. At this point, we must introduce a distinction between the two notions of *connection* and *conjugation* of flows. "Connection" indicates the way in which decoded and deterritorialized flows boost one another, accelerate their shared escape, and augment or stoke their quanta; the "conjugation" of these same flows, on the other hand, indicates their relative stoppage, like a point of accumulation that plugs or seals the lines of flight, performs a general reterritorialization, and brings the flows under the dominance of a single flow capable of overcoding them. But it is precisely the most deterritorialized flow, under the first aspect, that always brings about the accumulation or conjunction of the processes, determines the overcoding, and serves as the basis for reterritorialization under the

second aspect (we have already encountered a theorem according to which it is always *on* the most deterritorialized element that reterritorialization takes place). For example, the merchant bourgeoisie of the cities conjugated or capitalized a domain of knowledge, a technology, assemblages and circuits into whose dependency the nobility, Church, artisans, and even peasants *would enter*. It is precisely because the bourgeoisie was a cutting edge of deterritorialization, a veritable particle accelerator, that it also performed an overall reterritorialization.

The task of the historian is to designate the "period" of coexistence or simultaneity of these two movements (decoding-deterritorialization and overcoding-reterritorialization). For the duration of this period, one distinguishes between the molecular aspect and the molar aspect: on the one hand, *masses or flows*, with their mutations, quanta of deterritorialization, connections, and accelerations; on the other hand, *classes or segments*, with their binary organization, resonance, conjunction or accumulation, and line of overcoding favoring one line over the others.²⁰ The difference between macrohistory and microhistory has nothing to do with the length of the durations envisioned, long or short, but rather concerns distinct systems of reference, depending on whether it is an overcoded segmented line that is under consideration or the mutant quantum flow. The rigid system does not bring the other system to a halt: the flow continues beneath the line, forever mutant, while the line totalizes. *Mass* and *class* do not have the same contours or the same dynamic, even though the same group can be assigned both signs. The bourgeoisie considered as a mass *and as* a class... The relations of a mass to other masses are not the same as the relations of the "corresponding" class to the other classes. Of course, there are just as many relations of force, and just as much violence, on one side as the other. The point is that the same struggle assumes two very different aspects, in relation to which the victories and defeats differ. Mass movements accelerate and feed into one another (or dim for a long while, enter long stupors), but jump from one class to another, undergo mutation, emanate or emit new quanta that then modify class relations, bring their overcoding and reterritorialization into question, and run new lines of flight in new directions. Beneath the self-reproduction of classes, there is always a variable map of masses. Politics operates by macrodecisions and binary choices, binarized interests; but the realm of the decidable remains very slim. Political decision making necessarily descends into a world of microdeterminations, attractions, and desires, which it must sound out or evaluate in a different fashion. Beneath linear conceptions and segmentary decisions, an evaluation of flows and their quanta. A curious passage by Michelet reproaches Francois I for having badly evaluated the flow of emigration bringing to France large numbers of people in struggle against the Church: Francois saw it only as an influx of

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potential soldiers, instead of perceiving a mass molecular flow which France could have used to its own advantage by leading a different Reformation than the one that occurred.²¹ Problems are always like this. Good or bad, politics and its judgments are always molar, but it is the molecular and its assessment that makes it or breaks it.

Now we are in a better position to draw a map. If we return to a very general sense of the word "line," we see that there are not just two kinds of lines but three. First, a relatively supple line of interlaced codes and territorialities; that is why we started with so-called *primitive* segmentarity, in which the social space is constituted by territorial and lineal segmentations. Second, a rigid line, which brings about a dualist organization of segments, a concentricity of circles in resonance, and generalized overcoding; here, the social space implies a *State apparatus*. This system is different from the primitive system precisely because overcoding is not a stronger code, but a specific procedure different from that of codes (similarly, reterritorialization is not an added territory, but takes place in a different space than that of territories, namely, overcoded geometrical space). Third, one or several lines of flight, marked by quanta and defined by decoding and deterritorialization (there is always something like a *war machine* functioning on these lines).

This way of presenting things still has the disadvantage of making it seem as though primitive societies came first. In truth, codes are never separable from the movement of decoding, nor are territories from the vectors of deterritorialization traversing them. And overcoding and reterritorialization do not come after. It would be more accurate to say that there is a space in which the three kinds of closely intermingled lines coexist, tribes, empires, and war machines. We could also put it this way: lines of flight are primary, *or* the already-rigid segments are, and supple segmentations swing between the two. Take a proposition like the following one by the historian Pirenne about barbarian tribes: "The Barbarians did not spontaneously hurl themselves upon the Empire. They were pushed forward by the flood of the Hunnish advance, which in this way caused the whole series of invasions."²² On one side, we have the rigid segmentarity of the Roman Empire, with its center of resonance and periphery, its State, its *pax romana*, its geometry, its camps, its *limes* (boundary lines). Then, on the horizon, there is an entirely different kind of line, the line of the nomads who come in off the steppes, venture a fluid and active escape, sow deterritorialization everywhere, launch flows whose quanta heat up and are swept along by a Stateless war machine. The migrant barbarians are indeed between the two: they come and go, cross and recross frontiers, pillage and ransom, but also integrate themselves and reterritorialize. At times they

will subside into the empire, assigning themselves a segment of it, becoming mercenaries or confederates, settling down, occupying land or carving out their own State (the wise Visigoths). At other times, they will go over to the nomads, allying with them, becoming indiscernible (the brilliant Ostrogoths). Perhaps because they were constantly being defeated by the Huns and Visigoths, the Vandals ("zone-two Goths") drew a line of flight that made them as strong as their masters; they were the only band or mass to cross the Mediterranean. But they were also the ones who produced the most startling reterritorialization: an empire in Africa.²³ Thus it seems that the three lines do not only coexist, but transform themselves into one another, cross over into one another. Again, we have taken a summary example in which the lines are illustrated by different groups. What we have said applies all the more to cases in which all of the lines are in a single group, a single individual.

In view of this, it would be better to talk about simultaneous states of the abstract Machine. There is on the one hand an *abstract machine of overcoding*: it defines a rigid segmentarity, a macrosegmentarity, because it produces or rather reproduces segments, opposing them two by two, making all the centers resonate, and laying out a divisible, homogeneous space striated in all directions. This kind of abstract machine is linked to the State apparatus. We do not, however, equate it with the State apparatus itself. The abstract machine may be defined, for example, *more geomet-rico*, or under other conditions by an "axiomatic"; but the State apparatus is neither geometry nor axiomatics: it is only the assemblage of reterritorialization effectuating the overcoding machine within given limits and under given conditions. The most we can say is that the State apparatus tends increasingly to identify with the abstract machine it effectuates. This is where the notion of the totalitarian State becomes meaningful: a State becomes totalitarian when, instead of effectuating, within its own limits, the worldwide overcoding machine, it identifies with it, creating the conditions for "autarky," producing a reterritorialization by "closed vessel," in the artifice of the void (this is never an ideological operation, but rather an economic and political one).²⁴

On the other hand, at the other pole, there is an abstract machine of mutation, which operates by decoding and deterritorialization. It is what draws the lines of flight: it steers the quantum flows, assures the connection-creation of flows, and emits new quanta. It itself is in a state of flight, and erects war machines on its lines. If it constitutes another pole, it is because molar or rigid segments always seal, plug, block the lines of flight, whereas this machine is always making them flow, "between" the rigid segments and in another, submolecular, direction. But between the two poles there is also a whole realm of properly molecular negotiation, translation,

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and transduction in which at times molar lines are already undermined by fissures and cracks, and at other times lines of flight are already drawn toward black holes, flow connections are already replaced by limitative conjunctions, and quanta emissions are already converted into center-points. All of this happens at the same time. It is at the same time that lines of flight connect and continue their intensities, whip particles-signs out of black holes; and also retreat into the swirl of micro-black holes or molecular conjunctions that interrupt them; or again, enter overcoded, concentricized, binarized, stable segments arrayed around a central black hole.

What is a center or focal point of power? Answering this question will illustrate the entanglement of the lines. We speak of the power of the army, Church, and school, of public and private power ... Power centers obviously involve rigid segments. Each molar segment has one or more centers. It might be objected that the segments themselves presuppose a power center, as what distinguishes and unites them, sets them in opposition and makes them resonate. But there is no contradiction between the segmentary parts and the centralized apparatus. On the one hand, the most rigid of segmentarities does not preclude centralization: this is because the common central point is not where all the other points melt together, but instead acts as a point of resonance on the horizon, behind all the other points. The State is not a point taking all the others upon itself, but a resonance chamber for them all. Even when the State is totalitarian, its function as resonator for distinct centers and segments remains unchanged: the only difference is that it takes place under closed-vessel conditions that increase its internal reach, or couples "resonance" with a "forced movement." On the other hand, and conversely, the strictest of centralizations does not eradicate the distinctiveness of the centers, segments, and circles. When the overcoding line is drawn, it assures the prevalence of one segment, as such, over the other (in the case of binary segmentarity), gives a certain center a power of relative resonance over the others (in the case of circular segmentarity), and underscores the dominant segment through which it itself passes (in the case of linear segmentarity). Thus centralization is always hierarchical, but hierarchy is always segmentary.

Each power center is also molecular and exercises its power on a micrological fabric in which it exists only as diffuse, dispersed, geared down, miniaturized, perpetually displaced, acting by fine segmentation, working in detail and in the details of detail. Foucault's analysis of "disciplines" or micropowers (school, army, factory, hospital, etc.) testifies to these "focuses of instability" where groupings and accumulations confront each other, but also confront breakaways and escapes, and where inversions occur.²⁵ What we have is no longer The Schoolmaster but the monitor,

the best student, the class dunce, the janitor, etc. No longer the general, but the junior officers, the noncommissioned officers, the soldier inside me, and also the malcontent: all have their own tendencies, poles, conflicts, and relations of force. Even the warrant officer and janitor are only invoked for explanatory purposes; for they have a molar side *and* a molecular side, and make us realize that the general or the landlord also had both sides all along. We would not say that the proper name loses its power when it enters these zones of indiscernibility, but that it takes on a new kind of power. To talk like Kafka, what we have is no longer the public official Klammm, but maybe his secretary Momus, or other molecular Klamms the differences between which, and with Klammm, are all the greater for no longer being assignable. ("[The officials] don't always stick to the same book, yet it isn't the books they change, but their places, and [they] have to squeeze past one another when they change places, because there's so little room." "This official is rarely very like Klammm, and if he were sitting in his own office at his own desk with his name on the door I would have no more doubt at all,"²⁶ says Barnabas, whose dream would be a uniquely molar segmen-tarity, no matter how rigid and horrendous, as the only guarantee of certainty and security. But he cannot but notice that the molar segments are necessarily immersed in the molecular soup that nourishes them and makes their outlines waver.) And every power center has this microtexture. The microtextures—not masochism—are what explain how the oppressed can take an active role in oppression: the workers of the rich nations actively participate in the exploitation of the Third World, the arming of dictatorships, and the pollution of the atmosphere.

This is not surprising since the texture lies between the line of overcoding with rigid segments and the ultimate quantum line. It continually swings between the two, now channeling the quantum line back into the segmented line, now causing flows and quanta to escape from the segmented line. This is the third aspect of power centers, or their limit. For the only purpose these centers have is to translate as best they can flow quanta into line segments (only segments are totalizable, in one way or another). But this is both the principle of their power and the basis of their impotence. Far from being opposites, power and impotence complement and reinforce each other in a kind of fascinating satisfaction that is found above all in the most mediocre Statesmen, and defines their "glory." For they extract glory from their shortsightedness, and power from their impotence, because it confirms that there is no choice. The only "great" Statesmen are those who connect with flows, like pilot-signs or particles-signs, and who emit quanta that get out of the black holes: it is not by chance that these men encounter each other only on lines of flight, in the act of drawing them, sounding them out, following them, or forging ahead of them, even

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though they may make a mistake and take a fall (Moses the Hebrew, Genseric the Vandal, Genghis the Mongol, Mao the Chinese . . .). But there is no Power regulating the flows themselves. No one dominates the growth of the "monetary mass," or money supply. If an image of the master or an idea of the State is projected outward to the limits of the universe, as if something had domination over flows as well as segments, and in the same manner, the result is a fictitious and ridiculous representation. The stock exchange gives a better image of flows and their quanta than does the State. Capitalists may be the masters of surplus value and its distribution, but they do not dominate the flows from which surplus value derives. Rather, power centers function at the points where flows are converted into segments: they are exchangers, converters, oscillators. Not that the segments themselves are governed by a decision-making power. We have seen, on the contrary, that segments (classes, for example) form at the conjunction of masses and deterritorialized flows and that the most deterritorialized flow determines the dominant segment; thus the dollar segment dominates currency, the bourgeoisie dominates capitalism, etc. Segments, then, are themselves governed by an abstract machine. But what power centers govern are the assemblages that effectuate that abstract machine, in other words, that continually adapt variations in mass and flow to the segments of the rigid line, as a function of a dominant segment and dominated segments. Much perverse invention can enter into the adaptations.

This is the sense in which we would speak, for example, of banking power (the World Bank, central banks, credit banks): if the flow of financing-money, or credit money, involves the mass of economic transactions, what banks govern is the conversion of the credit money that has been *created* into segmentary payment-money that is *appropriated*, in other words, coinage or State money for the purchase of goods that are themselves segmented (the importance of the interest rate in this respect). What banks govern is the conversion between the two kinds of money, and the conversion of the segments of the second kind into any given good.²⁷ The same could be said of every central power. Every central power has three aspects or zones: (1) its zone of power, relating to the segments of a solid rigid line; (2) its zone of indiscernibility, relating to its diffusion throughout a microphysical fabric; (3) its zone of impotence, relating to the flows and quanta it can only convert without being able to control or define. It is always from the depths of its impotence that each power center draws its power, hence their extreme maliciousness, and vanity. Better to be a tiny quantum flow than a molar converter, oscillator, or distributor! Returning to the example of money, the first zone is represented by the public central banks; the second by the "indefinite series of private relations between banks and borrowers"; the third by the desiring flow of

money, whose quanta are defined by the mass of economic transactions. It is true that the same problems are reformulated at the level of these very transactions, in relation to other power centers. But the first zone of the power center is always defined by the State apparatus, which is the assemblage that effectuates the abstract machine of molar overcoding; the second is defined in the molecular fabric immersing this assemblage; the third by the abstract machine of mutation, flows, and quanta.

We cannot say that one of these three lines is bad and another good, by nature and necessarily. The study of the dangers of each line is the object of pragmatics or schizoanalysis, to the extent that it undertakes not to represent, interpret, or symbolize, but only to make maps and draw lines, marking their mixtures as well as their distinctions. According to Nietzsche's Zarathustra and Castaneda's Indian Don Juan, there are three or even four dangers: first, Fear, then Clarity, then Power, and finally the great Disgust, the longing to kill and to die, the Passion for abolition.²⁸ We can guess what fear is. We are always afraid of losing. Our security, the great molar organization that sustains us, the arborescences we cling to, the binary machines that give us a well-defined status, the resonances we enter into, the system of overcoding that dominates us—we desire all that. "The values, morals, fatherlands, religions and private certitudes our vanity and self-complacency generously grant us are so many abodes the world furnishes for those who think on that account that they stand and rest amid stable things; they know nothing of the enormous rout they are heading for... *in flight from flight*."²⁹ We flee from flight, rigidify our segments, give ourselves over to binary logic; the harder they have been to us on one segment, the harder we will be on another; we reterritorialize on anything available; the only segmentarity we know is molar, at the level of the large-scale aggregates we belong to, as well as at the level of the little groups we get into, as well as at the level of what goes on in our most intimate and private recesses. Everything is involved: modes of perception, kinds of actions, ways of moving, life-styles, semiotic regimes. A man comes home and says, "Is the grub ready?", and the wife answers, "What a scowl! Are you in a bad mood?": two rigid segments in confrontation. The more rigid the segmentarity, the more reassuring it is for us. That is what fear is, and how it makes us retreat into the first line.

The second danger, Clarity, seems less obvious. Clarity, in effect, concerns the molecular. Once again, everything is involved, even perception, even the semiotic regime, but this time on the second line. Castaneda illustrates, for example, the existence of a molecular perception to which drugs give us access (but so many things can be drugs): we attain a visual and sonorous microperspective revealing spaces and voids, like holes in the

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molar structure. That is precisely what clarity is: the distinctions that appear in what used to seem full, the holes in what used to be compact; and conversely, where just before we saw end points of clear-cut segments, now there are indistinct fringes, encroachments, overlappings, migrations, acts of segmentation that no longer coincide with the rigid segmentarity. Everything now appears supple, with holes in fullness, nebulas in forms, and flutter in lines. Everything has the clarity of the microscope. We think we have understood everything, and draw conclusions. We are the new knights; we even have a mission. A microphysics of the migrant has replaced the macrogeometry of the sedentary. But this suppleness and clarity do not only present dangers, they are themselves a danger. First, supple segmentarity runs the risk of reproducing in miniature the affections, the affectations, of the rigid: the family is replaced by a community, conjugality by a regime of exchange and migration; worse, micro-Oedipuses crop up, microfascisms lay down the law, the mother feels obliged to titillate her child, the father becomes a mommy. A dark light that falls from no star and emanates such sadness: this shifting segmentarity derives directly from the most rigid, for which it is indirect compensation. The more molar the aggregates become, the more molecular become their elements and the relations between their elements: molecular man for molar humanity. One deterritorializes, massifies, but only in order to knot and annul the mass movements and movements of deterritorialization, to invent all kinds of marginal reterritorializations even worse than the others. But above all, supple segmentarity brings dangers of its own that do not merely reproduce in small scale the dangers of molar segmentarity, which do not derive from them or compensate for them. As we have seen, microfascisms have a specificity of their own that can crystallize into a macro fascism, but may also float along the supple line on their own account and suffuse every little cell. A multitude of black holes may very well not become centralized, and acts instead as viruses adapting to the most varied situations, sinking voids in molecular perceptions and semiotics. Interactions without resonance. Instead of the great paranoid fear, we are trapped in a thousand little monomanias, self-evident truths, and clarities that gush from every black hole and no longer form a system, but are only rumble and buzz, blinding lights giving any and everybody the mission of self-appointed judge, dispenser of justice, policeman, neighborhood SS man. We have overcome fear, we have sailed from the shores of security, only to enter a system that is no less concentricized, no less organized: the system of petty insecurities that leads everyone to their own black hole in which to turn dangerous, possessing a clarity on their situation, role, and mission even more disturbing than the certitudes of the first line.

Power (*Pouvoir*) is the third danger, because it is on both lines simultane-

ously. It stretches from the rigid segments with their overcoding and resonance to the fine segmentations with their diffusion and interactions, and back again. Every man of power jumps from one line to the other, alternating between a petty and a lofty style, the rogue's style and the grandiloquent style, drugstore demagoguery and the imperialism of the high-ranking government man. But this whole chain and web of power is immersed in a world of mutant flows that eludes them. It is precisely its impotence that makes power so dangerous. The man of power will always want to stop the lines of flight, and to this end to trap and stabilize the mutation machine in the overcoding machine. But he can do so only by creating a void, in other words, by first stabilizing the overcoding machine itself by containing it within the local assemblage charged with effectuating it, in short, by giving the assemblage the dimensions of the machine. This is what takes place in the artificial conditions of totalitarianism or the "closed vessel."

But there is a fourth danger as well, and this is the one that interests us most, because it concerns the lines of flight themselves. We may well have presented these lines as a sort of mutation or creation drawn not only in the imagination but also in the very fabric of social reality; we may well have attributed to them the movement of the arrow and the speed of an absolute—but it would be oversimplifying to believe that the only risk they fear and confront is allowing themselves to be recaptured in the end, letting themselves be sealed in, tied up, reknotted, reterritorialized. They themselves emanate a strange despair, like an odor of death and immolation, a state of war from which one returns broken: they have their own dangers distinct from the ones previously discussed. This is exactly what led Fitzgerald to say: "I had a feeling that I was standing at twilight on a deserted range, with an empty rifle in my hands and the targets down. No problem set—simply a silence with only the sound of my own breathing. ... My self-immolation was something sodden-dark."³⁰ Why is the line of flight a war one risks coming back from defeated, destroyed, after having destroyed everything one could? This, precisely, is the fourth danger: the line of flight crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes, but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, *turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition*. Like Kleist's line of flight, and the strange war he wages; like suicide, double suicide, a way out that turns the line of flight into a line of death.

We are not invoking any kind of death drive. There are no internal drives in desire, only assemblages. Desire is always assembled; it is what the assemblage determines it to be. The assemblage that draws lines of flight is on the same level as they are, and is of the war machine type. Mutations spring from this machine, *which in no way has war as its object*, but rather the emission of quanta of deterritorialization, the passage of mutant

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flows (in this sense, every creation is brought about by a war machine). There are many reasons to believe that the war machine is of a different origin, is a different assemblage, than the State apparatus. It is of nomadic origin and is directed against the State apparatus. One of the fundamental problems of the State is to appropriate this war machine that is foreign to it and make it a piece in its apparatus, in the form of a stable military institution; and the State has always encountered major difficulties in this. It is precisely when the war machine has reached the point that it has no other object but war, it is when it substitutes destruction for mutation, that it frees the most catastrophic charge. Mutation is in no way a transformation of war; on the contrary, war is like the fall or failure of mutation, the only object left for the war machine after it has lost its power to change. War, it must be said, is only the abominable residue of the war machine, either after it has allowed itself to be appropriated by the State apparatus, or even worse, has constructed itself a State apparatus capable only of destruction. When this happens, the war machine no longer draws mutant lines of flight, but a pure, cold line of abolition. (Later, we will propose a theory of the complex relation between the war machine and war.)³¹

This brings us back to the paradox of fascism, and the way in which fascism differs from totalitarianism. For totalitarianism is a State affair: it essentially concerns the relation between the State as a localized assemblage and the abstract machine of overcoding it effectuates. Even in the case of a military dictatorship, it is a State army, not a war machine, that takes power and elevates the State to the totalitarian stage. Totalitarianism is quintessentially conservative. Fascism, on the other hand, involves a war machine. When fascism builds itself a totalitarian State, it is not in the sense of a State army taking power, but of a war machine taking over the State. A bizarre remark by Virilio puts us on the trail: in fascism, the State is far less totalitarian than it is *suicidal*. There is in fascism a realized nihilism. Unlike the totalitarian State, which does its utmost to seal all possible lines of flight, fascism is constructed on an intense line of flight, which it transforms into a line of pure destruction and abolition. It is curious that from the very beginning the Nazis announced to Germany what they were bringing: at once wedding bells and death, including their own death, and the death of the Germans. They thought they would perish but that their undertaking would be resumed, all across Europe, all over the world, throughout the solar system. And the people cheered, not because they did not understand, but because they wanted that death through the death of others. Like a will to wager everything you have every hand, to stake your own death against the death of others, and measure everything by "deleometers." Klaus Mann's novel, *Mephisto*, gives samplings of entirely ordinary Nazi speeches and conversations: "Heroism was something that

was being ruled out of our lives. . . . In reality, we are not marching forward, we are reeling, staggering. Our beloved Fihrer is dragging us toward the shades of darkness and everlasting nothingness. How can we poets, we who have a special affinity for darkness and lower depths, not admire him? . . . Fires blazing on the horizon; rivers of blood in all the streets; and the frenzied dancing of the survivors, of *those who are still spared, around the bodies of the dead!*"³² Suicide is presented not as a punishment but as the crowning glory of the death of others. One can always say that it is just a matter of foggy talk and ideology, nothing but ideology. But that is not true. The insufficiency of economic and political definitions of fascism does not simply imply a need to tack on vague, so-called ideological determinations. We prefer to follow Faye's inquiry into the precise formation of Nazi statements, which are just as much in evidence in politics and economics as in the most absurd of conversations. They always contain the "stupid and repugnant" cry, *Long live death!*, even at the economic level, where the arms expansion replaces growth in consumption and where investment veers from the means of production toward the means of pure destruction. Paul Virilio's analysis strikes us as entirely correct in defining fascism not by the notion of the totalitarian State but by the notion of the suicidal State: so-called total war seems less a State undertaking than an undertaking of a war machine that appropriates the State and channels into it a flow of absolute war whose only possible outcome is the suicide of the State itself. "The triggering of a hitherto unknown material process, one that is limitless and aimless. . . . Once triggered, its mechanism cannot stop at peace, for the indirect strategy effectively places the dominant powers outside the usual categories of space and time. . . . It was in the horror of daily life and its environment that Hitler finally found his surest means of governing, the legitimation of his policies and military strategy; and it lasted right up to the end, for the ruins and horrors and crimes and chaos of total war, far from discharging the repulsive nature of its power, normally only increase its scope. Telegram 71 is the normal outcome: *If the war is lost, may the nation perish*. Here, Hitler decides to join forces with his enemies in order to complete the destruction of his own people, by obliterating the last remaining resources of its life-support system, civil reserves of every kind (potable water, fuel, provisions, etc.)."³³ It was this reversion of the line of flight into a line of destruction that already animated the molecular focuses of fascism, and made them interact in a war machine instead of resonating in a State apparatus. *A war machine that no longer had anything but war as its object* and would rather annihilate its own servants than stop the destruction. All the dangers of the other lines pale by comparison.