

CHAPTER 13

From Aesthetic Autonomy to Autonomist Aesthetics: Art and Life in Guattari

Stephen Zepke

Félix Guattari is a modern-day Nietzsche; his last work echoes Nietzsche's famous cry: 'Art and nothing but art! It is the great means of making life possible, the great seduction to life, the great stimulant of life'.¹ Deleuze argued that Nietzsche 'demands an aesthetics of creation' where artists are the 'inventors of new possibilities of life'.² It is in this sense that art has, according to Guattari, 'an eminent place' and 'privileged position'³ in relation to philosophy, science and politics. Politics, Guattari complains, currently lacks the 'existential impact of art',⁴ it doesn't have art's 'force for seizing the creative potentiality at the root of sensible finitude – "before" it is applied to works, philosophical concepts, scientific functions and mental and social objects'. It is this force 'which founds the new aesthetic paradigm'.⁵ Art's 'existential impact' (Guattari says art 'grabs you by your throat') comes from expressing this productive power in the construction of new social and subjective realities. As a result, he tells us: 'Aesthetic machines offer us the most advanced models for resistance against the steamroller of capitalistic subjectivity'.⁶ In fact, he goes even further: 'artists today', he claims, 'constitute the final lines along which primordial existential questions are folded'.⁷ The primordial question for Guattari is the autonomous production of subjectivity beyond the capitalized territories to which it is assigned. In his late work, he argues that this production is primarily aesthetic, and that art offers us the model for its creation and proliferation.

Guattari's affirmation of aesthetic creation as the contemporary paradigm of political resistance draws on the Italian *autonomia* movement's struggle for autonomous production, but his interest in art and artists clearly departs from *autonomia's* emphasis on the worker and work as

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the subject and site of revolutionary practice. So, while Guattari follows *autonomia's* claim that capitalism subsumes all productive processes, he maintains that some 'psychotic' and 'unconscious' aspects of these production processes 'involve a dimension of autonomy of an aesthetic order'.⁸ For Guattari, autonomous aesthetic production is an art-work, a process in which a sensation produces new forms of life 'before' being semiotized and subsumed by capitalism. As such, the art-work is a 'refusal of work' in the autonomist sense inasmuch as it resists being instrumentalized and exploited by art's institutions, but this is not a refusal of art per se, and in fact Guattari's affirmation of the autonomy of aesthetic production offers an alternative to the usual autonomist strategies of refusal and sabotage. Rather than an *exodus*, Guattari proposes a *proliferation*, and this, as we shall see, provides an alternative to that contemporary art and theory which has, often under the influence of *autonomia*, taken up the avant-garde affirmation of non-art as art's only possible political trajectory. Guattari's aesthetics has been used as a support for this renewal of the political efficacy of anti-art, but this not only misrepresents Guattari's position, but is inadequate for thinking through what 'political art' within the aesthetic paradigm might mean today.⁹ As I hope to show, Guattari's art-work will take us beyond the avant-garde dialectic of art and non-art, and so beyond the autonomist insistence on refusal and exodus as the conditions of autonomy.

Guattari follows the *autonomia* reading of Marx's 'Fragment on Machines' that claims the distinction between fixed and variable capital no longer provides an adequate explanation of capitalism's production of surplus-value. Surplus-value in 'Integrated World Capitalism' (IWC, Guattari's term for globalization) is not simply the monetary profit extracted from labour-time, but is also the continual development of the mechanisms controlling the production and reproduction of subjectivity. These biopolitical systems operate primarily through a process of 'semiotization'¹⁰ that continually 'apprehends' the decoded and deterritorializing material flows of what Deleuze and Guattari call 'desiring-production', and 'con-signs them to the universe of subjective representation'.¹¹ In this way the sign subsumes desire by replacing production with reproduction within an 'immanent system where each act of production is inextricably linked to the process of antiproduction as capital'.¹² As a result, capitalism and desire are 'one and the same production process',¹³ but on one side their semiotic interface produces the machinic enslavement of subjectivity by capital, while on the other desire achieves an autonomous production, an 'enrichment of potentialities' where 'the whole exceeds the sum of the parts', producing a 'machinic surplus-value'.¹⁴

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This will be the political stakes at play in art: will its innovations be instrumentalized and subsumed in a new capitalist axiomatic, or can it produce an autonomous machinic surplus-value? At this point Guattari's championing of art as his political weapon of choice appears Quixotic,¹⁵ inasmuch as it must confront 'a sort of collectivization of capitalism,'¹⁶ a ubiquity of the axioms producing 'capitalistic subjectivity (the subjectivity of generalized equivalence)'.¹⁷ The two significant operators of this general equivalence are money and signs, which deterritorialize previous modes of valuation, and reterritorialize sign-qualities onto sign-quantities (commodities).¹⁸ The production of a quality is thus standardized and subsumed in an '*alienated enunciation*',¹⁹ a discursive statement that erases any polysemic and phatic elements so it can be communicated (i.e. sold) through what Guattari calls 'scriptural machines and their mass-media avatars'. In its contemporary forms, this amounts, he says, 'to an exchange of information tokens calculable as bits and reproducible on computers'.²⁰ This alienation of the polysemic and material elements of the sign in the 'dictatorship of the signifier' demands in response, Guattari argues, an 'a-signifying' semiotics in which signs re-establish connections with deterritorialized material fluxes. Such signs – produced by art – create sensations that escape their subsumption by individualized, subjective experience and signification to express a 'collective assemblage of enunciation' encompassing all its constitutive elements, human and non-human.²¹ What is important to emphasize however, is Guattari's argument, once more echoing *autonomia*, that

precisely because it intervenes on the most functional levels – sensorial, affective and practical – the capitalist machinic enslavement is liable to reverse its effects, and to lead to a new type of machinic surplus-value accurately perceived by Marx (expansion of alternatives for the human race, constant renewal of the horizon of desires and creativity).²²

Guattari's interest in art as autonomous production is a relatively late development, as we can see from the book he wrote in 1985 with Antonio Negri called *Communists Like Us*. Although the book argues for 'redefining work as creative activity' in order to 'establish autonomous modes of expression',²³ its primary commitment is to 'work' and the 'worker' as the ontological mode of production: 'the revolutionary transformation occurs', Negri and Guattari write, 'in the creation of a new subjective consciousness born of the collective work experience – this moment is primary, all stakes are won or lost here, in the collective creation of subjectivity by individuals'.²⁴ But the new subject created through work,

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Negri and Guattari propose, is 'no longer crystallized in the form of private property, and does not consider the instruments of production as ends in themselves, but as means for attaining the happiness of singularity and its expansion in machinic rhizomes – abstract and/or concrete'.²⁵ It is in this sense that Guattari will retain a commitment to the autonomy of work, but in *Chaosmosis* it takes on an aesthetic value, meaning politics no longer begins from the refusal of work but from the production of an art-work. Guattari's 'aesthetic turn' acknowledges the way aesthetics has become an increasingly important factor in post-Fordist labour and production. However, what I wish to focus on here is his affirmation of modern art's autonomy from existing social structures as a condition of its political power. This raises the question of contemporary art, and the political efficacy of its post-conceptual immersion in wider processes of social and subjective production. Although some Autonomist thinkers such as Paolo Virno see this as a positive development, and one that includes art – or at least 'aesthetic production' – within the realm of work,²⁶ Guattari, as we will see, perversely insists on the autonomy of artistic production.

The art-work is the political agent of a bio-aesthetics, it is an artistic and singular event whose repetition creates a proliferating rhizome. Guattari takes the term 'autopoiesis' from the biologists Varela and Maturana, who use it to describe the entwined development of an autonomous organism and its environment. Autopoiesis emerges as a 'reciprocal relation' between local components and their global whole: 'An entity self-separates from its background', Varela argues, as an expression by which 'the autopoietic unity creates a perspective from which the exterior is one'.²⁷ This relation of reciprocal determination, which is 'enlarged' by Guattari to include 'aesthetic creation',²⁸ means that an art-work is not only an expression of its 'environment' but its simultaneous construction through, as Varela calls it, a process of 'world-making'.²⁹ This is what Negri and Guattari called 'the collective creation of subjectivity by individuals', and what Guattari will come to call 'micropolitics', although in his later work it is the autopoiesis of the art-work rather than labour that achieves the 'realization of autonomy'.³⁰

Although Guattari borrows the concept of autopoiesis from biology, he finds it at work in traditional artistic expressions and their aesthetic consumption, which he describes in a surprisingly ecstatic register:

A block of percept and affect, by way of aesthetic composition, agglomerates in the same transversal flash the subject and the object, the self and the other, the material and the incorporeal, the before and after . . . In short, affect is not a question of representation and discursivity, but of

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existence. I find myself transported into a Debussyist Universe, a blues Universe, a blazing becoming of Provence. I have crossed a threshold of consistency. Before the hold of this block of sensation, this nucleus of partial subjectification, everything was dull, beyond it, I am no longer as I was before, I am swept away by a becoming other, carried beyond my familiar existential Territories.³¹

We should not be surprised by this ecstatic tone, nor by Guattari's examples, as his bio-aesthetics have a distinctly modernist feel to them. The autopoietic affect emerges through an encounter that dissolves subjective consistency, and produces a new surplus-value, a quality that expresses its environment by constructing its 'beyond'. In this sense, Varela's description of autopoiesis is apt: 'What the autopoietic system does – due to its very mode of identity – is to constantly confront the encounters (perturbations, shocks, couplings) with its environment and treat them from a perspective which is not intrinsic to the encounters themselves'.³² In other words, an autopoietic art-*work* is a 'nuclei of differentiation', an expression of its environment in an autonomous 'perspective', a perspective that expresses its (capitalist) environment by opening it onto an aleatory future. But what are the actual conditions of emergence for an autonomous art-*work*, how is this 'singularization' produced?

Guattari was deeply influenced by Mikhail Bakhtin's early writings on aesthetics, which he extends to include social production. Bakhtin argues that an aesthetic object emerges from a process that first of all 'isolates' something from its self-evidence in the world, giving it an 'active indetermination' within reality.³³ This 'completion as disjunction'³⁴ is the art-*work's* 'isolating or separating function'³⁵ an 'aesthetic rupture of discursivity'³⁶ that frees words or images from their representational function, and puts them into a sudden proximity with the spectator. This encounter produces what Guattari calls a 'partial object' or 'enunciative substance',³⁷ a de-formed material whose relation to its 'content' (its meaning or function) has been broken, allowing it to express and expand the affective and ethical multiplicities embodied by the spectator. As a result, the flows of expression and content come together in the aesthetic object, an entirely contingent 'Debussyist Universe' where every shimmer of notes is the singular evocation of my beyond. The aesthetic object is in this sense 'alive', according to Bakhtin, because its 'content' is in a state of becoming, forming, he says, a 'self-sufficient . . . segment of the unitary open event of being'.³⁸

Guattari's use of Bakhtin's aesthetic object is not only compatible with Varela's account of autopoiesis, but also echoes his description of Loius

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Hjelmslev's linguistics, which places the a-signifying art-work in the midst of capitalism's flow of images and other signs. Here, Deleuze and Guattari claim, a substance is formed when two deterritorialized flows (in Bakhtin's terms the 'de-framed' aesthetic object and the aleatory affects produced from its encounter with the 'spectator') come together so that the first defines a content and the second, an expression. These flows of content and expression reciprocally determine each other in a process constituting figures, or non-signifying signs, 'flows-breaks or schizzes that form images through their coming together in a whole, but that do not maintain any identity when they pass from one whole to another'.³⁹

As a result, Deleuze and Guattari argue that Hjelmslev's break with the signifier in favour of non-signs causes 'content and expression to flow according to the flows of desire' and so 'constitutes a decoded theory of language about which one can say – an ambiguous tribute – that it is the only linguistics adapted to the nature of *both* the capitalist *and* the schizophrenic flows'.⁴⁰ The difference between capitalist semiotization and the autopoietic art-work is therefore internal to the bio-political sign, and is that between a cliché or new axiomatic quantity and a singular and unquantifiable quality, or sensation. In this sense, 'Only expression gives us the method',⁴¹ because it is only through expression – expression qua *proliferation* – that singularization becomes collective. But this process does not pass from one term to the other, singularization to collectivization, but rather expression escapes semiotic quantification precisely because its singular quality *does not stay the same*, and the Debussy-sensation is in this sense a becoming that produces 'polyphonic' or 'multiplicatory'⁴² affects. This 'semiotic polycentrism'⁴³ enables the aesthetic sign to generate singular affects on a collective level, and is what Bakhtin calls the 'immanent overcoming' of the material object in its transformation into an aesthetic object or work of art.⁴⁴ In the aesthetic paradigm the art-work is a 'unity without identity', a 'flux-schiz' that 'carries us to the gates of schizophrenia as a process'.⁴⁵ The 'mutational becomings' of this 'multi-headed enunciative layout'⁴⁶ encompass and erase distinctions between group and individual, and between human and non-human, and opens experience onto an infinity of virtual Universes/futures. At this moment of ontological 'interface' – or chaosmosis – art-works produce surplus-value, and so achieve a 'reappropriation, an autopoiesis, of the means of production of subjectivity'.⁴⁷

Although Guattari often privileges art and artists as the expressive mechanisms of art-work, he is also careful to point out that the production of aesthetic machines 'is not just the activity of established artists'. Rather, autonomous aesthetic production is a new will to art, a 'subjective

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creativity which traverses the generations and oppressed peoples, ghettos, minorities'.⁴⁸ Whether inside or out of institutions, art will have to, if it is to have political effect, overcome its capture in the 'deeply reactionary' institutions of 'culture'. Culture, Guattari tells us,

is a way of separating semiotic activities (orientation in the social and economic world) into spheres to which people are referred. These isolated activities are standardised and capitalised to suit the dominant mode of semiotisation – they are cut off from their political realities. Culture as an autonomous sphere only exists in terms of markets of power, economic markets, and not in terms of production, creation, and real consumption. . . . There is only one culture: capitalistic culture.⁴⁹

Culture is a form of semiotization that separates production from consumption, confining aesthetic machines within institutions, where they can be exploited. In this sense, Guattari's description of 'culture' echoes Peter Bürger's canonical definition of art in bourgeois society: 'the progressive detachment of art from real life contexts, and the crystallization of a distinctive sphere of experience, i.e., the aesthetic'.⁵⁰ Like Bürger, at least in this respect, Guattari sees the emergence of the cultural 'subsystem' of art, and its increasingly integrated relation to other capital flows, as capturing 'autonomous' aesthetic production. As Guattari notes, 'there is more and more economic activity in art, which is a collective will to crush art';⁵¹ art is 'apprehended' by the 'money and the market, capitalism's true police'.⁵² Although institutions participate in this process, and attacking their division of labour and valuation process is important, institutional critique is only an aspect of Guattari's aesthetic paradigm. For Guattari, art-work doesn't 'refer to institutionalized art, or to its works manifested in the social field',⁵³ and precisely for this reason its main function is not *exodus* in the sense some art theorists influenced by *autonomia* have suggested. Guattari's is not, in my opinion, simply the theory of contemporary avant-gardist practices that makes art's rejection of the institution, and its flight into non-art, a militant politics. Art qua autonomous aesthetic production is always already 'outside' the institution, but this 'outside' can also be encountered within an institution, and indeed within the most traditional of its objects.

As a result, Guattari doesn't begin his analysis by condemning and rejecting the traditional art-object for its complicity with cultural institutions. By focusing on production rather than its institutionalization, Guattari avoids the dialectical move of the avant-garde, which politicizes art by demanding non-art. With this deft step, Guattari rejects the almost

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compulsory starting point of contemporary discussions of the political efficacy of art. Guattari, instead, offers a qualified form of institutional critique, an 'institutional therapeutics'⁵⁴ as he calls it, which attacks the broader system of relations from which 'art' gains its cultural value, but in a fundamentally Nietzschean sense (at least as Deleuze describes it, as 'a principle of internal genesis'⁵⁵ or re-valuation of value), by affirming the pathic and a-signifying dimensions of sensation that emerge within the institution as its own autopoietic vectors of transformation.

It is important to note at this point that Guattari models the method of autonomous aesthetic production on traditional artistic practices: 'One creates new modalities of subjectivity in the same way that an artist creates new forms from the palette'.⁵⁶ For Guattari, the painter creates a new sensation, a surplus to what exists, an infinite, aleatory and proliferating expression constructing new futures. This process is at once ontological and aesthetic, inasmuch as it involves the way 'sounds and forms are arranged so that the subjectivity adjacent to them remains in movement, and really alive'.⁵⁷ In doing this, Guattari seems to prefer the 'fine-arts' to mass culture, which he sees as a 'subjectivity-producing machine' working through 'pre-established encoding, and modes of manipulation and remote control'.⁵⁸ For Guattari, popular cultural forms such as rock music are 'ambivalent': on one side they are a force of 'uniformization' operating through 'the production and distribution of goods',⁵⁹ but on the other, as with punk, they succeed in 'borrowing everything from the dominant oppressive systems to constitute elements in a process of singularization, a 'vector of molecular revolution', which can subvert the modelization of subjectivity.⁶⁰ Both high and low art can produce machinic surplus-value, inasmuch as 'capitalist culture' subsumes both of them.⁶¹ This process is not premised on the negation of art, or its institutions, but on the *art-work's* power of singularization-proliferation. This is the rule of micropolitics and seems to set the highest possible bar for art: 'to create the finite that restores the infinite'.⁶² Although this sounds rather grand (and not a little bit Romantic), Guattari consistently points out how easily and unexpectedly it might happen, and from what insignificant means. 'Revolution', he writes, 'creates trouble out of events that common sense would say were quite unimportant. . . . Will the revolution to come celebrate its principles from something said by Lautréamont, Kafka or Joyce?'⁶³ But despite this optimism, Guattari can also be bleak, and many years later he will matter of factly state, 'It's not at all clear how one can claim to hold creative singularity and potential social mutations together'.⁶⁴

If we are to understand how art and social mutation might be practically connected today, we need to account for what seems to be major

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discrepancy between contemporary art and Guattari's work. Guattari repeatedly rejects the theoretical and conceptual turn of art after the 1960s, and consistently maintains that art is always a question of sensation, including conceptual art.⁶⁵ That Guattari's insistence on sensation is problematic in relation to contemporary art was immediately obvious. In 1992, just after the publication of *Chaosmosis*, Olivier Zahm, a young curator and critic, tells Guattari that defining art as a being of sensation 'seems limited in relation to actual artistic practices'. Zahm goes on to argue, quite rightly, that contemporary art 'is no longer defined by the pre-eminence granted to the material, or to a medium and its tradition, but by the multiplicity of languages that use conceptual materials'.⁶⁶ This is a crucial point, and raises the question as to whether Guattari's ontology of art is compatible with contemporary art practices born of the rejection of painting in the 1960s, and their subsequent embrace of conceptual content and strategies.⁶⁷ Guattari's response to these contemporary art practices could perhaps be summed up by the following comment: 'The important thing is not the invention of a new medium of communication but *the invention of a new kind of relation with what is communicated*'.⁶⁸

In fact, Guattari sees this new relation as being 'invention' itself, understood as the production of proliferating expressions. It is only as such that art-as-sensation produces 'an existential singularization correlative to the genesis of new coefficients of freedom'.⁶⁹ This model, or as Guattari calls it this 'meta-modelling',⁷⁰ of political resistance is no doubt modernist in its emphasis on 'rupture' as the key operation constituting a 'tradition of the new'. Not only is Guattari's insistence on art-as-sensation problematic when applied to the conceptual and linguistic emphasis of much contemporary art practice, but the model of 'rupture' is quite different from that of an 'exodus' into non-art proposed by the avant-gardist advocates of activist art.

There are, in fact, specific reasons for Guattari's interest in modernist artistic practices, which places them at the centre of his autonomous aesthetics. The first of these is the way modernism developed through a constant experimentation with its own materials, a process of immanent critique that did not lead to the transcendental a prioris of art, à la Greenburg, but to a singularized sensation capable of catalysing autonomous production outside the realm of art. Guattari explains:

The incessant clash of the movement of art against established boundaries (already there in the Renaissance, but above all in the modern era), its propensity to renew its materials of expression and the ontological texture of the percepts and affects it promotes brings about if

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not a direct contamination of the other domains then at least a highlighting and a re-evaluation of the creative dimensions that traverse all of them.⁷¹

This then, is the first rule of meta-modelling: to affirm 'a machinics of existence whose object is not circumscribed within fixed, extrinsic coordinates; an object that can, at any moment, extend beyond itself, proliferate or abolish itself within the Universes of alterity with which it is compossible'.⁷² It is precisely the formal elements of painting, its non-discursive 'pictorial matter', that creates pathic affects as 'instances of self-productive subjectivity'.⁷³ Guattari's examples are not exactly fashionable: paintings by Balthus, Modigliani or Pollock. But nevertheless, these painters manifest what Guattari sees as the 'phenomena of rupture in the plastic arts', which extend well beyond the break they make with the tradition of painting, and enable us to 'perceive artistic relations in totally different situations'.⁷⁴

Consistent with Guattari's 'modernism' is his suggestion that art's 'phenomena of rupture' and its proliferation through sensation needs the social 'autonomy' afforded modernist art in order to emerge. This autonomy is not guaranteed by the institution, but by the fact that art's 'creative potentiality' exists 'before' its subsumption by semio-capital, giving it its 'privileged place':

Fabricated in the socius, art, however, is only sustained by itself. This is because each work produced possesses a double finality: to insert itself into a social network which will either appropriate or reject it, and to celebrate, once again, the universe of art as such, precisely because it is always in danger of collapsing.⁷⁵

As a result, art should not, Guattari argues, embark on transdisciplinary work such as attempting to produce concepts. This, he claims, is 'a facile intercommunication of the different disciplines. It is the myth of interdisciplinarity. . . . But it just doesn't work like that!' Minor politics is only possible when art is itself, when it experiments with sensation as part of the 'singularization of each of the disciplines'. It is only in this way that 'deterritorializations can be thought, and abstract machines can establish communications between systems of thought'.⁷⁶ The collectivization of art's material experiments, the autopoietic proliferation of its sensations on the social level, is only possible through their greatest possible singularization, a process aided and abetted through their continuing isolation and affirmation as art. In this sense, art's 'function of autonomy'⁷⁷ is not

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only immanent to the social and political dimensions, but a necessary condition for its effective political operation. This 'refoundation of political practice'⁷⁸ on aesthetic autonomy, or, to be less dramatic, this micropolitics of sensation, can be seen, Guattari suggests, in the paintings of Modigliani:

Modigliani saw faces in a way that perhaps nobody had dared to do before then. For example, at a certain moment he painted a particular kind of blue eye that completely changed what we might call the 'faciality machine' that was in circulation at the time. This microprocess of transformation, in terms of perception and practice, was taken up by people who perceived that something had changed, that Modigliani had changed not only his own way of seeing a face, but also the collective way of seeing a face. This process preserved its vitality, its revolutionary character, in a certain social field, at a certain moment in time, and for a certain period.⁷⁹

For Guattari 'political art' is a process of sensual singularization, one that requires the preservation of art as an autonomous universe, but only in order to achieve what art theory from Bürger to Rancière has posed as its opposite, the immanence of art and life in social production. This understanding of aesthetic autonomy affirms the *art-work* in modernist terms, but it places the *art-work* directly within and against the machinic enslavement of capitalist semiotization. As a result, Guattari affirms two traditionally opposed artistic positions in order to invent a new line of aesthetic resistance; an autonomous *art-work* produces an existential surplus-value or sensation that has the ability to open the social field onto a new future. For Guattari, the 'surplus-sensation' implies the paradoxical situation of art being immanent to life precisely in the sense that it is autonomous from it.

Guattari's autonomous aesthetics cannot be restricted to any particular style or method of artistic production, because artistic production is a method of meta-modelling that can appear in any mode of aesthetic singularization. This is finally the ontological necessity of micropolitics, it is by definition utterly democratic. 'Intellectual and artistic creativity,' Guattari writes, 'like new social practices, have to conquer a democratic affirmation which preserves their specificity and right to singularity'.⁸⁰ The aesthetic paradigm will be at its most democratic when it is at its most diverse, inasmuch as aesthetic micropolitics is the affirmation of art's right to exist everywhere.⁸¹ As Guattari says: 'The quality of base material matters little here, . . . it's like the situation of a painter who buys his paints

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at the same store. What matters is what she does with them'.⁸² So what should the artist, or for that matter the psychoanalyst or political militant (who, Guattari suggests, should also draw their meta-modellings from the methods of art), do with their materials?⁸³ They must use them to resist, to resist the very system of production/consumption we all inhabit, and which is forever working to subsume our inventions and innovations, especially perhaps when these are art. Despite the obvious differences then between Guattari and *autonomia*, they share this fundamental political horizon of resistance, an ontological horizon that on the one hand acknowledges capitalism's bio-political immanence to life, but nevertheless affirms an autonomous mode of production that surprisingly, even miraculously, perseveres. For Guattari this mode of production creates real sensations incarnating an infinite potential for freedom, a mode of production he calls art. Perhaps art is finally the last mode of production that is sufficiently schizo to evade the 'cogito of communication' that determines our lives. As Deleuze and Guattari put it: 'We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. *We lack resistance to the present*'.⁸⁴

NOTES

- ¹ Nietzsche, F. (1967), *The Will to Power*. New York: Random House, p. 542.
- ² Deleuze, G. (1983), *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. New York: Columbia University Press, pp. 102–3.
- ³ Guattari, F. (1995), *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-aesthetic Paradigm*. Translated by P. Bains and J. Pefanis. Sydney: Power Institute, pp. 54 and 101.
- ⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 134.
- ⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 112. Similarly, in *A Thousand Plateaus* aesthetics seems to come 'before' politics when Deleuze and Guattari suggest that 'property is fundamentally artistic' because it is a result of the refrain. Their example is the territorial markings of animals such as coral fish.
- ⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 90–1.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 133.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 13. Italics added.
- ⁹ The main exemplars of this tendency are Maurizio Lazzarato, Brian Holmes and Nicolas Bourriaud. See Lazzarato, M. (2010), 'The Practice and Anti-Dialectical Thought of an 'Anartist'', in *Deleuze and Contemporary Art*, edited by S. O'Sullivan and S. Zepke. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, pp. 100–15; Holmes, B. (2008), *Unleashing the Collective Phantoms, Essays in Reverse Imagineering*. New York: Autonomedia; Bourriaud, N. (2002), *Relational Aesthetics*, translated by S. Pleasance and F. Woods. Paris: Les presses du reel.

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- ¹⁰ Guattari, F., and Alliez, E. (1984), 'Capitalistic Systems, Structures and Processes', in Guattari F., *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*. Translated by R. Sheed. London: Penguin, pp. 273 and 275.
- ¹¹ Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1983), *Anti-Oedipus*. Translated by R. Hurley, M. Seem and H. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 337.
- ¹² Ibid.
- ¹³ Ibid., p. 245.
- ¹⁴ Guattari and Alliez 'Capitalistic Systems', art. cit. p. 274 (translation modified). On machinic surplus-value, see Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp. 232–6.
- ¹⁵ A Quixoticism perhaps shared with *autonomia* texts, which as Sergio Bologna describes them, share two elements (the first of which must be replaced by art or aesthetics in Guattari's case); 'It's not clear which was greater: the paean to the working class, or that to the capitalist capacity of subsuming this working class from the point of view of its components.' Quoted in Wright, S. (2008), 'Mapping Pathways within Italian Autonomist Marxism: A Preliminary Survey', in *Historical Materialism* 16, p. 114.
- ¹⁶ Guattari, F. (1996), 'Capital as the Integral of Power Formations'. Translated by C. Wolfe and S. Cohen, in *Soft Subversions*. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 211.
- ¹⁷ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 22.
- ¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp. 241 and 248.
- ¹⁹ Guattari, F. (2006), *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*. Translated by K. Gotman. New York: Semiotext(e), p. 43.
- ²⁰ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 104.
- ²¹ Guattari, F. (1996), 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution'. Translated by G. Genosko in *The Guattari Reader*. Edited by G. Genosko. New York: Basil Blackwell, p. 152.
- ²² Guattari, 'Capital as the Integral of Power Formations', art. cit. p. 220. Art, Guattari argues, is an 'ethico-political extension' of 'capitalist subjectification', which 'can cause its own eviction by heterogeneous, multcentred, polyphonic, polyvocal approaches, installing itself outside pre-coded equilibriums'. See Guattari, F. (1987), 'Cracks in the Street', in *Flash Art* 135. Translated by A. Gibault and J. Johnson, p. 85.
- ²³ Guattari, F., and Negri, A. (1990), *Communists Like Us*. Translated by M. Ryan. New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 13 and 15.
- ²⁴ Ibid., p. 19. Steve Wright, in his authoritative account of the Autonomist movement, dates Negri's interest in 'creativity directed towards the reproduction of the proletariat as antagonistic subject' to his 1976 book *Proletari e Stato*. See Wright, S. (2002), *Storming Heaven, Class Composition and Struggle in Italian Autonomist Marxism*. London: Pluto Press, p. 166.
- ²⁵ Ibid., p. 40.
- ²⁶ See Virno, P. (2009), 'The Dismasure of Art: An interview with S. Lavaert and P. Gielen', in *Open No. 17, A Precarious Existence*, pp. 79–80.
- ²⁷ Varela, F. (1992), 'Autopoiesis and a Biology of Intentionality'. Online at: <ftp://ftp.eeng.dcu.ie/pub/alife/bmcm9401/varela.pdf>, p. 7.
- ²⁸ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 93.
- ²⁹ Varela, 'Autopoiesis', art. cit. p. 8.

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- ³⁰ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 7.
- ³¹ Ibid., p. 93.
- ³² Varela 'Autopoiesis', art. cit. p. 7.
- ³³ Bakhtin, M. (1990), 'The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art', in *Art and Answerability, Early Philosophical Essays by M. M. Bakhtin*. Translated by K. Brostrom. Austin: University of Texas Press, p. 275.
- ³⁴ Guattari, F. (1996), 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', translated by J. Schiesari and G. Van Den Abeele in *The Guattari Reader*, op. cit. p. 166.
- ³⁵ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 14.
- ³⁶ Guattari, 'Cracks in the Street', art. cit. p. 86.
- ³⁷ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 26.
- ³⁸ Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art', op. cit. pp. 275 and 306–7.
- ³⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. pp. 240.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 242–3.
- ⁴¹ Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1986), *Kafka, Toward a Minor Literature*. Translated by D. Polan. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 16.
- ⁴² Guattari, 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', op. cit. p. 166.
- ⁴³ Guattari, 'The Place of the Signifier in the Institution', op. cit. p. 153.
- ⁴⁴ Bakhtin, 'The Problem of Content, Material, and Form in Verbal Art', op. cit. p. 297.
- ⁴⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 244.
- ⁴⁶ Guattari, 'Ritornellos and Existential Affects', op. cit. pp. 160–1.
- ⁴⁷ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 13.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid., p. 91.
- ⁴⁹ Guattari, F., and Rolnik, S. (2008), *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*. Translated by K. Clapshow and B. Holmes. New York: Semiotext(e), pp. 21 and 33.
- ⁵⁰ Bürger, P. (1984), *Theory of the Avant-Garde*. Translated by M. Shaw. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 23.
- ⁵¹ Guattari, 'Guattari and Contemporary Art', in this volume.
- ⁵² Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, op. cit. p. 239.
- ⁵³ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 102.
- ⁵⁴ Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, op. cit. p. 13.
- ⁵⁵ Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, op. cit. p. 91.
- ⁵⁶ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 7. For similar formulations, see Guattari, F. (2000), *The Three Ecologies*, translated by I. Pindar and P. Sutton. London: Athlone Press, p. 52; and Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 74.
- ⁵⁷ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 133.
- ⁵⁸ Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 23. Deleuze and Guattari are clear: 'We are not referring to popular or populist artists'. Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by B. Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, p. 381.
- ⁵⁹ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 97.
- ⁶⁰ Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 73.
- ⁶¹ 'In my view', Guattari says, 'there is no such thing as popular culture and high culture. There is capitalist culture, which permeates all fields of semiotic expression'. Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 33.

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- ⁶² Deleuze, G., and Guattari, F. (1994), *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press, p. 197.
- ⁶³ Guattari, *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, op. cit. pp. 202–3. See also Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka*, op. cit. p.18, and Guattari, *The Anti-Oedipus Papers*, op. cit. p. 44.
- ⁶⁴ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. pp. 130–2.
- ⁶⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, op. cit. p.198; Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 95; and Guattari, F. (2011), ‘Guattari and Contemporary Art’, in this volume.
- ⁶⁶ Guattari, ‘Guattari and Contemporary Art’, in this volume.
- ⁶⁷ I have dealt with this question in more detail in Zepke, S. (2009), ‘Deleuze, Guattari and Contemporary Art’, in E. Holland, D. Smith and C. Stivale (eds), *Gilles Deleuze: Image and Text*. London: Continuum, pp. 176–97.
- ⁶⁸ Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 383.
- ⁶⁹ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 13.
- ⁷⁰ For an excellent account of Guattari’s ‘Meta-modelling’, see Watson, J. (2009), *Guattari’s Diagrammatic Thought, Writing Between Lacan and Deleuze*. London: Continuum.
- ⁷¹ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 106.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 65.
- ⁷³ Guattari, ‘Cracks in the Street’, art. cit. p. 85.
- ⁷⁴ Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 383.
- ⁷⁵ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 130.
- ⁷⁶ Guattari, ‘Guattari and Contemporary Art’, in this volume.
- ⁷⁷ Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 74.
- ⁷⁸ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 120.
- ⁷⁹ Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 260. For the discussion of ‘faciality’ on which this passage draws, see Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, op. cit. pp. 176 and 198.
- ⁸⁰ Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 129.
- ⁸¹ Guattari’s use of the term ‘democratic’ can be understood as meaning ‘heterogenic’, a very specific usage that is clearly at odds with Deleuze and Guattari’s critique of democracy. See Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* op. cit. pp. 106–8.
- ⁸² Guattari, *Chaosmosis*, op. cit. p. 20; and Guattari and Rolnik, *Molecular Revolution in Brazil*, op. cit. p. 72.
- ⁸³ Guattari suggests that ‘practical psychiatry’ must ‘converge with the perspective of the art world’ (*The Three Ecologies*, op. cit pp. 41–2) and that ‘The remaking of politics must pass through aesthetic dimensions, and is inconceivable . . . without the advancement of a new art’. (Guattari, F. (1996), ‘Subjectivities for Better and for Worse’ in *The Guattari Reader*, op. cit. p. 202).
- ⁸⁴ Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*, op. cit. p. 108.