

Introduction

Rosi Braidotti and Patricia Pisters

This volume assembles a selection of the most distinguished scholars in the field of Deleuze studies. The topic on which all contributions converge is the issue of normativity, the law and the question of norms and values in the ethical, political and methodological sense of the term. It is by now accepted that the theoretical core of nomadic thought consists in the rejection of the unitary vision of the subject as a self-regulating rationalist entity, of consciousness as the transcendent universal common denominator of the human and of the traditional image of thought and of normative practices that rest upon it.

Normativity is traditionally expected to be structured around and to implement a number of axioms which are drawn either from a canonical set of universal rules – as postulated in the Kantian tradition – or by coercive reference to a master signifier, as argued by Lacan and Derrida. The implication of both these traditions of thought is that laws are produced through the submission to a central matrix of power – be it moral universalism or the terror of the master signifier – which governs social and ethical normativity. The same mechanisms also police the borders of what counts as respectable, acceptable and workable as a set of operative norms and values both in society and in scientific, philosophical and cultural practice.

Deleuze's philosophy opposes to this traditional view a differential notion of normativity. This rests on a non-unitary vision of the subject as situated beyond the liberal model of an entity that coincides with self-reflexive individualism and is consequently capable of self-correcting agency, transcendental consciousness and moral universalism. Nomadic jurisprudence is rather process-oriented and its value system is differential but never relativistic. Deleuze's philosophy also enacts a critique of the despotism of the master signifier, the structural negativity of the Law or any suggestion that power is governed by a primordial symbolic system, a representational matrix that functions by linguistic mediation, as suggested, with slightly different inflections, by both Lacan and Derrida.

Nomadic normativity moves beyond the mere critique of both the identitarian category of a sovereign self and the dominant subject position on the one hand and the image of thought that equates subjectivity with rational moral consciousness on the other, while avoiding the free fall into relativism and nihilism. It proposes an alternative vision of both the thinking subject of his or her normative status and the structure of thinking. The normativity of this non-unitary subject of becoming is in-built in the monistic ontology that sustains its material and yet vitalist processes of

self-actualization occur through encounters and transformations. Life itself is a self-emerging process that aims at sustainable modes, times and forms of becoming.

The key notions in this vitalist philosophy that aims at the actualization of virtual modes of becoming are: immanence, rather than the transcendence of universal norms; differential social assemblages, instead of either the assurance of *dogma* or the cynicism of *doxa* and the emphasis on the genesis of emerging, transversal collective affirmative values, rather than the implementation of canonical laws.

This volume develops these key ideas and the crucial conceptual shift they entail into two parallel directions: the first is a series of analytical accounts of the different conceptual aspects of this philosophy, which ranges from the socio-political critique of the identity politics to the epistemological and ethical implications of the allegedly universal subject of norms and values. The second is a series of cultural, artistic and aesthetic interventions that explore and enact the vitalist process of becoming that are central to Deleuze's philosophy. The interdisciplinary range is wide and it covers scientific laws, legal rules, financial regulations, political and ethical normativity and issues of legality and political representation.

In this respect, the volume mirrors Deleuze and Guattari's defence of the parallelism between philosophy, science and the arts. There is no easy isomorphism but rather an ontological unity among the three branches of knowledge. Deleuze and Guattari take care to stress the differences between the distinctive styles of intelligence that these practices embody, but these qualitative differentiations are possible only because they are indexed on a common plane of intensive self-transforming life energy. This continuum sustains the ontology of becoming that is the conceptual motor of nomadic thought.

Insofar as normativity has to come to terms with the real social and political processes of an actualized and defined world, it has to stay open to the processes of becoming or differentiation that characterize Deleuze's monistic ontology. As a consequence, one can venture the preliminary conclusion that the main implication of Deleuze's thought for reflexions of normativity is that the Laws need to be retuned according to a view of the subject of knowledge as a complex singularity, an affective assemblage and a relational vitalist entity. This could also be described as a meta-methodological shift or an ongoing experiment with evaluative judgements that cultivate affirmative and creative modes of becoming.

The first part of this book brings together four essays that discuss the question of normativity in Deleuze's philosophy on this meta-methodological level. In Chapter 1, 'Thinking and Normativity in Deleuze's Philosophy', Anders Raastrup Kristensen investigates how a Deleuzian perspective on normativity begins with Bergson's call for philosophy 'to go beyond the human state'. Raastrup Kristensen argues that Deleuze's philosophy is a science of the transcendental. This kind of science is concerned with what is beyond the humanism and anthropomorphism of social science. Deleuze's philosophy offers social science a transcendental empiricism that does not refer to an image of man but to an image of thought. The transcendental condition should not be sought in the fully constituted individual but rather in the problematic forms in which the individual is constituted. As such normativity has to be seen as immanent ethical principles of creation of values that concern not so much what ought to be, but rather what might be.

In Chapter 2, 'One More "Next Step": Deleuze and Brain, Body and Affect in Contemporary Cognitive Science', John Protevi discusses Deleuze's normativity as a dynamic system by bringing his philosophy in contact with the '4EA' school of thought in cognitive science ('embodied, embedded, extended, enactive and affective'). Deleuze's work resonates with the 4EA thinkers in seeing cognition as immanent to extended/distributed/differential bio-environmental systems in which 'real experience' is the non-representational direction of action through the integration/resolution of differential fields. Thus they are naturalist in fighting the myths of the self-identical, representationalist, isolated and spiritualist subject. Moreover, Deleuze can help the 4EA thinkers in further demystifications of the subject. The political orientation of Deleuze and Guattari can help, for instance, fight the myth that still haunts the 4EA schools that the object of analysis is an abstract subject, 'the' subject, that even though embodied, embedded, enactive, extended and affective is still unmarked by political categories such as race and gender. A Deleuzian approach helps here by thematizing multiple subjectification practices; in other words, we have to see subjectification practices as intensive individuation processes from a virtual social field.

In a different way Arkady Plotnitsky reveals Deleuze and Guattari in Chapter 3, 'The Spacetimes of the Nymphs: Matter and Multiplicity in Einstein, Monet and Deleuze and Guattari', as uncompromising thinkers of, jointly, both materiality and multiplicity. Deleuze and Guattari's thinking of the multiple is more customarily linked to mathematics, in particular calculus and Riemann's concept of manifoldness, which radically transformed our understanding of spatiality by giving it the architecture of the irreducibly multiple. Historically, Deleuze and Guattari's use of Riemann's ideas was mediated by both Bergson's and Lautman's engagements with them, and both engagements were inflected by Einstein's theory. In part following Leibniz, Einstein's general relativity tells us that gravity curves the space it defines and gives this space the Riemannian architecture of heterogeneous multiplicity, as against the Newtonian homogeneity of absolute space (pre-existing matter), which defines classical physics. These connections to relativity also allow one to explore, from a new perspective, the role of temporality and dynamics in this architecture. Arkady suggests that Claude Monet's *Nymphs* murals in the Musée de l'Orangerie in Paris, created in the wake of Einstein's theory of relativity, offer the *image* of this architecture, better captured by Deleuze and Guattari's *philosophical architecture* and Einstein's physical-mathematical architecture than by the latter alone. Ultimately, at stake is what Deleuze and Guattari see in *What Is Philosophy?* as *interferences* between the planes of philosophy, art and science that create new thoughts and new norms.

In the last chapter of this part, Chapter 4, 'The Question of Deleuze's Neo-Leibnizianism', Simon Duffy provides an account of the role of mathematics in the reconstruction of Leibniz's metaphysics that Deleuze undertakes in *The Fold*. Deleuze provides a systematic account of the structure of Leibniz's metaphysics in terms of its mathematical foundations. However, in doing so, Deleuze draws upon not only the mathematics developed by Leibniz and developments in mathematics made by a number of Leibniz's contemporaries but also a number of subsequent developments in mathematics. Deleuze then retrospectively maps these developments back onto the structure of Leibniz's metaphysics in order to offer a solution to overcome and extend

the limits that Deleuze identifies in it. The result is a thoroughly mathematical explication of the structure of Leibniz's metaphysics which comes to explain the underlying dynamics of Deleuze's normativity of the genesis of the individual.

After the (inter)disciplinary analysis of Deleuze's normativity, the second part deals more specifically with normativity in relation to habits, jurisprudence and problems of law. Constantin V. Boundas warns in Chapter 5, 'Encounters, Creativity and Spiritual Automata', against the idea that in the name of creativity, associative bricolage and normative anarchy is celebrated. Boundas asserts that on the one hand the representational and recognitive, dogmatic image of thought has at its core the subsumption of the new under the old and renders, as a result, genuine creativity impossible. On the other hand, the jolt administered to our faculties whenever singular cases are encountered – cases that resist the process of subsumption – has been welcomed by Deleuze as the necessary condition for every new creation. However, in the euphoria of a climate of experimentation that this notion of the encounter generates, what is often overlooked is that Deleuze puts encounters to work side by side with the notion of 'spiritual automaton'. Without the coordination of the two concepts, Boundas argues, the old problem created by the alleged incommensurability of the logic of discovery and the logic of demonstration is bound to strike again, in the harshest possible pre-hermeneutic terms. The chapter first explores the shortcomings and the pitfalls of a theory of creativity from which a rigorous logic of demonstration is lacking by undertaking three diagnostic excavations: in the domain of jurisprudence; in the domain of the philosophy of science and in the domain of the creation of concepts. In the sequence, the notion of the 'spiritual automaton' is introduced in order to conclude that in Deleuze's work, the spiritual automaton prevents the disjunction of the logic of discovery and the logic of demonstration, without abandoning the thinker to the threatening decisionism of the dictum, '*pas des idées justes, juste des idées*'.

Claire Colebrook demonstrates in Chapter 6, 'Norm Wars', that it might be possible to use the philosophical resources of Deleuze and Guattari to chart our way through the present and the great normativity binary: either one assumes vital norms (in the manner of Esposito) that will free us from systematic relativism or one regards normativity as the matrix through which we might destabilize the operations of constitutive structures of power (Butler). As with most binaries, Deleuze and Guattari destroy this poorly posed problem in order to think beyond the humanity of normativity and the post-humanism of normalization. Life requires neither the constitutive norms of recognition and identification nor some post-human and vital norm of life. On the contrary, what presents itself to be thought is the refusal both of recognition and vital transgression. It is in this sense that Colebrook argues for a Deleuzian criticism of all that has come to be known (however variously and precariously) as post-human and life in general.

In Chapter 7, 'Nature, Law and Chaomopolitanism', Ronald Bogue's thesis is that Deleuze and Guattari's thought may be usefully approached through what he calls 'chaomopolitanism'. This notion is drawn in reference to the cosmopolitanism of the Cynics and early Stoics, especially in terms of the relationship between the cosmos and the *polis*. Whereas being a citizen of the cosmos for the Cynics and Stoics entailed

living in accordance with the natural rational law of the cosmic city, for Deleuze and Guattari being a citizen of the chaosmos involves living in accordance with an emergent, metastable and metamorphic world whose processes resonate, in the new harmony of a *concordia discors*, with social and political practices that engage new conceptions of law and community. Chaomopolitanism, Bogue demonstrates, is in keeping with Deleuze's ideas of jurisprudence and sympathy, both of which arise from Deleuze's early work on Hume. Chaomopolitanism is also compatible with the 'realistic utopia' that Patton has traced in Deleuze and Rawls, as well as the ecosophy proposed by Guattari in *The Three Ecologies* and *Chaosmosis*. The issue of norms is addressed through an investigation of Vogt's analysis of the Stoic city as a normative concept, Canguilhem's definition of normativity as flexible, creative health 'capable of surviving catastrophe and establishing a new order', and Patton's characterization of realistic utopianism as entailing an evaluative judgement of concrete socio-political institutions in terms of fundamental standards of justice and equality.

Ronald Bogue's chapter forms a transition to the more explicit political questions of normativity and deterritorialization that the third part of this book explores. In Chapter 8, 'Infinite Debt and the Mechanics of Dispossession', Matthew Tiessen investigates Deleuze's notion of the limit by challenging the common interpretation that Deleuze's is an ontology open to endlessly new potentialities by emphasizing that creative processes are always at once enabled, held captive and determined by the limits constituted by their relations. The focus of this discussion is Deleuze and Guattari's critical assessment of capitalism's infinite creation of debt – understanding capitalism as a body that has reached its limits. Debt has become a global problem with destructive force. Tiessen argues for a new theory of money that moves beyond debt-based conditions of our existence and demonstrates in which ways a Deleuzian concept of limits is helpful in doing so.

In Chapter 9, '*Poésie en étendue*. Deleuze, Glissant and a Post-Postcolonial Aesthetics of the Earth', Birgit Kaiser discusses the work of the Caribbean writer Edouard Glissant who in his later work has drawn inspiration from Deleuze and Guattari. This chapter pursues the ways in which Glissant translates Deleuze and Guattari's rhizomatic thought into what he calls 'relation-identity'. The concern with relation-identity might at first perhaps seem at odds with Deleuzian/Guattarian thinking, but drawing on the rhizome Glissant endeavours to think 'identity' as a process of spatial-temporal weaving through expansion rather than filiation, and as an only preliminarily stabilized pole within a network of relata brought about in the process of relating – and hence moves beyond the conceptual shortcomings and political pitfalls of identity politics and a logic of representation. From this angle, Kaiser reads Glissant as a post-postcolonial writer akin to Deleuze and Guattari, a writer whose stress on the relational and processual emergence of 'identity' is indeed critical of the logics that underlie not only colonial but also national, postcolonial projects. Glissant leaves national frames of analysis behind and, given the close echoes between Glissant and Deleuze and Guattari, the chapter proposes to take Glissant as a case in point to explore the connections of Deleuzian philosophy and the postcolonial – where and how Deleuzian thought comes to bear on the (post-)postcolonial issues of 'identity' or cultural 'specificity' if we affirm a world swirling with multiplicity.

This moves us – with Glissant, Deleuze and Guattari – towards an aesthetics of the earth and more complex understandings of identification and towards thinking and practicing ‘relation-identity’ and ‘moral generosity’.

Tina Rahimy discusses in Chapter 10, ‘The Minor Philosopher: The Political-Philosophical Relevance of Incomprehension’, that what refugees and migrants, and also victims of extreme violence such as rape, often experience is a form of pause in their familiar forms of expression, an experience of stuttering and hesitation. This kind of numbness, whether perceived as an excuse to exclude such victims from political arena or as a moral instrument to show mercy, has often been looked upon as a form of passivity. Rahimy appeals to another form of politics, in which pausing is not seen as a negation of language but as the act that dynamically envisions the most characteristic element of language. However, if hesitation and stuttering are part of the game, and the rules change every time we speak, how can we communicate? Agamben, and Deleuze and Guattari, suggest that in order to do so, we need to deterritorialize the structure of our thought and experience language as a pure means, as a means as such. But what is the politics of a communicability that is willing to speak while knowing that we cannot communicate fully and clearly? How can we comprehend incomprehension? By analysing the film *Bagdad Café*, Rahimy demonstrates how it is to experiment as a minor philosopher.

Chapter 11, ‘Worse Luck’, is dedicated to the problem of chance. Matthew Fuller and Olga Goriunova suggest looking at the concept of luck as a cultural figure that is a means of understanding and experiencing the tensions between different forms of time, but more importantly as the operations of chance. Luck as well as fate are forms of hypotheses. But they are also a means of explaining or experiencing the differing ontological loads, the variable exposures and ability to act upon a condition of chance that people, cultures, ecologies, moments undergo. The game, in Deleuze and Guattari, is to multiply the means of recognizing and experiencing the multiplicity of ways by which things occur. As such, the stake of a metaphysics is to become adequate to the world, and consequently, such grand formulations as chance, will, causation, subconscious, history, are never enough and must themselves be recognized as rolls of the dice with all their concomitant hauntings and lingerings or misses of chance in which new deformations of chance may arise. Fuller and Goriunova conclude by urging that in the present conjunction we are faced with the challenge of the means of inventing chance, not taming it.

The final part of the book turns to the question of normativity and creation in art and media. In Chapter 12, ‘Concepts and Creation’, Daniel Smith investigates the concept of creation in philosophy and in art. In *What Is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari define philosophy, famously, as an activity that consists in forming, inventing and fabricating the concepts. But this definition of philosophy implies a somewhat singular ‘analytic of the concept’, to borrow Kant’s phrase. One of the problems it poses is the fact that concepts, from a Deleuzian perspective, have no *identity* but only a *becoming*. This chapter examines the nature of this problem, arguing that the aim of Deleuze analytic is to introduce the *form of time* into concepts in terms of what he calls ‘continuous variation’ or ‘pure variability’. The aim is not to rediscover the eternal or the universal, but to find the conditions under which something new is produced (*creativity*).

In Chapter 13, 'The Death Index', Felicity Colman looks at media images of the dead body. The political manifestos of different nation states in the world today do not vary a great deal. Acts of aggression and domains of aestheticism are force fed into collective subjects, ensuring that the work by the state-made-self continues. The situation is amplified by the media regulations of specific nation-state controls over rituals and habits, and becomes a component of the production of social and familial affective controls that work to regulate the worker-bodies required for the nation, in and for economic order to be maintained. However, one collective subject that appears regularly on our media surfaces is the dead one. In militarized economies, a dead body is still required to be productive, and the dead body exists as both an object for the terms of dying and a highly subjectivized subject. Engaging with the ontological terms of the refrain that Guattari used to describe the territorial aspect of a concrete machine (in *Molecular Revolution*), later expanded with Deleuze (in *A Thousand Plateaus*), Colman considers Guattari's concept of machinic subjectivation through the death of the subject. This chapter examines some of the public structures of the death of the subject as arranged by national security institutions and the media by looking, for example, at the processes given on the death of soldiers and civilians in the current war in Afghanistan and Iraq or the deaths in custody of indigenous people.

Laura Marks takes in Chapter 14 plant life as the non-human 'norm'. In 'Vegetable Locomotion: A Deleuzian Ethics/Aesthetics of Traveling Plants', she asks if humans might learn from our evolutionary heritage by observing the travels of plants and asks this in light of the long history of traveling plants in art. Muybridge analysed animal locomotion, but vegetable locomotion remains relatively little studied, as plants are commonly considered not to locomote. This fixity promotes in plants a discerning receptivity and a wily opportunism, both of which are themes in Bergson that inspired some of Deleuze's work. Yet the movement of plants is also a significant theme on the underside of Deleuze and Guattari's writings: not only the rhizome but also the foliated scroll analysed by Riegl. 'It's just a weed', Deleuze remarked of the acanthus, but in art and architecture, the vine-like form becomes a transformative force as it twines from culture to culture. Further, we humans understand other creatures and plants because we have more in common with them than we differ from them; Deleuze and Guattari take up this argument from Bergson in *Creative Evolution*. But usually humans see, and make, plants in terms of our immediate needs. Much of plant migration is the reactive result of human agriculture, climate change and genetic engineering. How might we expose ourselves to plant ways openly and creatively? Marks turns to contemporary art in which plants are a living presence, as in the dancing trees and unpredictable mold farms of Gordon Matta-Clark, for example, of inspiring vegetable locomotion.

In the final chapter 'Art and the Aesthetics of the Interface: Autonomy, Sensation and Biopolitics', Stephen Zepke takes the interface as his starting point for reflecting on issues of normativity. The digital interface is the realm where our contemporary consciousness is being created. Not only is 'information' the field of the emerging practices of immaterial labour and cognitive capitalism but also the production and management of affects within the culture industry continues to be a realm of political dispute. By looking at different biopolitical approaches towards the interface (excessive parasitic acceptance by Pasquinelli, rejection by Bifo and post-modern embrace by

Shaviro), Zepke points to Deleuze and Guattari's stubborn insistence upon the political efficacy of the radical autonomy of art and the sensations that it creates. It is precisely this insistence that makes art a kind of science fiction, inasmuch as science fiction can be understood as the creation of an untimely future that resists the present.

After revisiting normativity with Deleuze in the various chapters of this book, one can conclude that normativity has become dynamic and creative, transforming reality always according to hidden intensities which are not limitless, but which, in going beyond the human and organic organization of the world, present the ethical norm of finding new ways of how we might inhabit the earth.