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## The Materiality of *Poiesis*

This article attempts to explain the reason behind a secondary division within the Spinozian immanence principle - a principle that occurs, or is construed, within what could be seen (after Deleuze) as the level of practice, and that remains crucial to the so-called posthumanist turn. Posthumanism seems to ascribe an important role to claims and theses that are oriented towards the abolishment of all dichotomies that rupture the existing substance (dichotomies such as form-matter, but also internal-external, subject-object, soul-body, reflection-truth/experience). Interestingly, embracing such a performative perspective - one in which philosophy or theory is something that is „performed” - is only possible when the division between the „immanence of practice” and the „poststructuralist” ideas of literariness or textuality is maintained and emphasised. The reason for this is that the latter has been strongly associated with the centrality of the human being, their language and their intellectual creations (see e.g. Braidotti, Barad). But, as I would like to point out, referring to Deleuze and Guattari themselves, this allegedly poststructuralist framework has been successfully transcended by poststructuralists themselves. Nonetheless, this did not lead them to exclude the art of language - including literature which, seen here as a type of social practice, was among the chief interests of these French philosophers.

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Taken as a whole, the Spinozian problematic of the various manifestations of the “production-reproduction” of reality understood as life—biologically, but also, after all, within social categories and in relation to matters of political philosophy—is the point of departure for post-humanist projects (Janik 2018, 150). In these theoretical perspectives, a fundamental role is played by theses aiming to abolish every kind of dichotomy tearing apart the existing substance (form/matter, but also interiority/exteriority, subject/object, souls/bodies and the mirroring of truth/experience; see e.g., Haraway 2003, 6-7; Braidotti 2013, 37-38, 56-57; Barad 2007, 42 and 2003, 803-804; Markiewicz 2017)<sup>1</sup>. The object of my reflections remains the following question: in what manner does there come about a certain sort of derivative division of the Spinozian principle of immanence—occurring, or even being constructed upon, the “*common plane of immanence* on which all bodies, all minds, and all individuals are situated” (Deleuze 1988, 122), understood in Deleuzian terms.

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1 In this instance, I have referred, above all to New Materialism; however, what is at bottom essential for this sketch is the manner in which posthumanist perspectives are applied to literary studies research, especially that which is bound up with the concept of affectivity (Zaleski 2015, Dauksza 2015 and 2017, Glosowicz 2018). Gestures in the direction of an immanence understood in Spinozian terms are often made without invoking the name of the philosopher, simply in the spirit of the interdisciplinarity which constitutes the foundation of the cultural turn in Polish literary studies. Such gestures are made, finally, in relations to the posthumanist turn; they are bound up (though of course not in every instance) with an anti-formalistic tendency—deriving from a desire for separation from poststructuralism and, above all, from an interest in textuality alone—as well as with having a general problem with literature understood within the categories of autonomy. The words of two introductions to an edited volume, including Polish theoreticians and anthropologists of literature—*Nowa humanistyka: Zajmowanie pozycji, negocjowanie autonomii*—seem emblematic of this tendency. The editors of this volume treat the concept of autonomy—in this case, the autonomy of literature or literary studies—as an essential inheritance of a discipline in fact transgressing its own boundaries—a phenomenon which is, in fact, impossible clearly to problematise, from today’s point of view, and one with which it is difficult to come to grips. One can only come to terms with it in the context of a performatively understood weak theory, rather than one which orders research (Nycz 2017, 28 and 38–39; Czaplinski 2017, 12–13). Such an approach brings about its own sort of “displacement” of the puzzle of autonomy, beyond a scholarly discourse bound up with aesthetics, as a question less essential, less interesting and associated with a subject that arbitrarily determines the field of its own power, is modern, and rationalises its world in a scientific manner. It is supposed simply to be eliminated as a meaningful concept together with the transgression of the boundaries of the discipline. I must emphasise here that it is not my intention to present a critique of posthumanist perspectives, but only to attempt to introduce corrections to the theses connected to this turn.

The philosophical principle of immanence can be treated, in general, as a point of transgressions proposed within the frame of posthumanism. In Gilles Deleuze's book *Spinoza: The Practical Philosophy*, what remains particularly essential for the author is the way in which the "plane of immanence" comes to be related to itself "geometrically" as a diagram, and as a "life" practice at the same time:

This plane of immanence or consistency is a plan, but not in the sense of a mental design, a project, a program; it is a plan in the geometric sense: a section, an intersection, a diagram. Thus, to be in the middle of Spinoza is to be on this modal plane, or rather to install oneself on this plane—which implies a mode of living, a way of life. What is this plane and how does one construct it? For at the same it is fully a plane of immanence, and yet it has to be constructed if one is to live in a Spinozist manner" (Deleuze 1988, 122-123)

An important element of Spinozian immanence remains, I repeat, a practical "installing of oneself on a modal plane," which can also be expressed as "a way of life" (Deleuze 1988, 122). It can be understood as well, as one would like to say, as "performing" this plane, which immediately brings it about that one can't understand it only as a "mental performance," or as a defined representation. It remains, at the same moment, both what describes our location and that which is produced by us. Thus, there is no world beyond us all (bodies, souls, individuals)—which does not mean that one cannot think about the rules or the poetics of our creation. These rules (of composition) are also not excluded from the Deleuzian world; rather, they are worked over by this world, removed from concepts bound up with the categories of ready-made representations and of projects to be realised.

The adoption of such a—performatively understood and practical—perspective of the theory or philosophy, what is interesting, in many of the perspectives found within the posthumanist turn becomes possible only thanks to a qualification of the separability of "the immanence of practice" from the literariness dominant in the context of the poststructuralist turn, or, as one would rather say, the textuality and semiotic structures ordering a socially understood space, ment as its dominant aspect. For, this is a sphere associated with traditionally placing the human being at the centre of its interest, as well as human language and its intellectual products (Barad 2007, 42; Braidotti 2013, 29-30).

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and Guattari, who remain an important point of reference for the proponents of the so-called posthumanist turn. This, however, didn't necessarily imply the exclusion of art—especially avant-garde art (including avant-garde literature)—which was still seen as a unique type of social practice, and thus a fundamental object of interest to those French philosophers. The status ascribed to this practice was, however, very ambiguous; thus, a tendency emerged to underline not only the political nature of every text, but also its performativity—which was seen, by the same token, as taking a place in the real world (Derrida 1981, 68-69; Barthes 1998; Burzyńska 2013, 272).

At the very beginning of her interesting book *Politics Beyond Form: The Ontological Conditions of the Political Philosophy* (2012), Joanna Bednarek draws a precise (both historically and theoretically) line between the debates on postmodernism and poststructuralism. She consigns to oblivion the former—as a procedure critical to modernity, based on a Fukuyama-esque thesis of “the end of history” and a series of propositions (primarily philosophical, but also aesthetic and social) such as relativism, the demand for pluralisation of values, narratives and ways of living, but also the tendency to exclude some ontological issues—the ones that make a real ethical or political difference—from the domain of social practice. In Bednarek's book, postmodernism (though I admit that an attempt to defend this, not very successful, category derived from cultural studies makes little sense) is relegated—together with “textuality” or, one might say, “literariness” (which after all seem to belong to poststructuralist discourse)—to a space which is not treated very favourably by contemporary Polish political philosophers. This is the space of an elitist, intellectual play, occasionally revealing its socially harmful or, let us say after Deleuze and Guattari, Oedipal—if not openly fascist—side. Interestingly, the whole series of strictly “literary” topics commented on by the poststructuralists themselves—topics which are here read through the lens of the Polish reinterpretation of postmodernism and poststructuralism—are, in effect, placed on the “dark” side of the force: one that is non-emancipatory, noncritical, one that supports the economic determinant of the capitalist oppression (which neutralizes any possibility of emancipation) and that supports the now completely exhausted discussion about the expiration of modernity and its great narratives (which includes those offered by Lyotard, Bauman, Rorty, Baudrillard; Bednarek 2012, 18). And so, though the author herself admits that one should see the great poststructuralists—Lacan, Barthes and Derrida—as poststructuralism's “main representatives,” their theories remain distinguished from a positively understood, let us say interven-

tionist, poststructuralism, since unlike the authors associated with this positive paradigm (Agamben, Žižek, or Hardt and Negri), they do not seem to possess a “political theory”. Ultimately, Bednarek does not decide in what role Derrida, for instance—especially problematic, in this context, on account of his repeated and strongly political theses—is to not-appear in her work. She only notes: “‘Political’ poststructuralism is different from ‘textualist’ poststructuralism, which till now has remained at the centre of the attention of various researchers, especially in Poland” (Bednarek 2012, 21).

This way, issues that are after all essential for very many poststructuralist philosophers (indeed, not excluding Foucault, Deleuze, or Agamben)—and are bound up precisely with language and “belles-lettres” as a particular model of social practice—are, ultimately, separated from allegedly more important political issues. Meanwhile, textuality, understood in a poststructuralist manner, is not only, and is not so much, subject to various structural-generative procedures, but also sets into motion—predominately as one of the driving functions of the proliferation of textual meanings—cognitive and ontological questions. The structures, processes of semiosis and textuality located within the order of philosophical discourse, beyond the boundary excluding the questions bound up with them, become a new “form”: an untruth with regard to truth, falsely mirroring the world of matter-idea. In the majority of posthumanistic gestures—even if we take into consideration, let’s say, those constituting a strong current in Polish research on affectivity, immediately bound up with literary phenomena—there arises a similar, crypto-dialectical, schema of theoretical activity, revealing an unchangingly real, true difference, which is accepted as an axiom.

Issues potentially tied to “literariness,” designating an important current of reflection in the field of the Polish humanities in the 1990s, are treated by Bednarek as categories central to postmodernism. Textuality, understood as a free play of signs, a pluralism of narratives, or a linguistic and social constructivism, was to signify the pre-eminence of deconstruction, recognised as a paradigmatic example of “French Theory.” The consequence of this was the non-discernment of the political specificity of the perspectives of Lacan, Deleuze, or Foucault (Bednarek 2012, 18). I agree with Bednarek’s claim concerning generalisations and distortions caused by the reception of French thought in the pragmatism-influenced space of American universities, from which it was also transplanted onto the terrain of Polish theory. This issue has been discussed on several occasions (Domańska and Loba 2010, Burzyńska 2013, Szopa 2017, Orska 2018). The non-discernment of the political

character of poststructuralist theory constitutes, as Bednarek accurately notes, the fundamental deficiency of this reception. What stays interesting, however, is the way in which Polish (re)interpreters of political philosophy tend to throw the baby out with the bathwater when trying to separate themselves from the postmodernist perspective. “Literariness” or “textuality” are only allowed as long as the text has a distinctly political, “truth-declaring” message. Attempts at reflection upon the literary, as well as upon the text itself, are abandoned—textuality itself being apparently worthy of attention solely among older, white, heterosexual (and meat-eating) gentlemen.

I write all this, in order to draw attention to the potential found in certain observations on art (and literature in particular) made by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. Since the protagonists of this article (perhaps the strongest precursors both of the posthumanist turn and of new materialism), with full conviction related themselves to the avant-garde (and neo-avant-garde)—Gilles Deleuze was, as is known, the author not only of a few books about experimental literature, but also of a treatise on cinema—their conceptions are especially well-suited to being the object of my reflection. These authors perceive art and literature (above all precisely in their semiosis, integrated in their work with a broadly understood machinistic production of the real) as an essential manifestation of collective reality. As such, comments on art and literature accompany here various social diagnoses; this happens in both volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*: in *Anti-Oedipus* (to which I want to draw particular attention; Deleuze and Guattari 1983), as well as in *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), the latter of which, in Poland, has been described by the publisher as “philosophical poetry.” Both of these books are, in many places, explicitly dedicated to language: structures, semiosis, grammar, logic, but also precisely the art of language, first on account of the authors’ indebtedness to Lacan, secondly, on account of a certain cultural context, namely, the strength of the artistic and literary avant-garde, circa 1968. Out of necessity, I will refer to this matter only very briefly.

Within the frame of their post-Kantian project, in the essay *What is philosophy?* (Deleuze and Guattari 1994), art (also in its textuality and as literature) functions alongside philosophy—whose concepts are considered events—as a collection of percepts and affects, forces of perception and passion, joined together (as both created and self-establishing) into compositions (ibid., 65–66). Percepts and affects, alongside philosophical concepts and scientific functions (and partial observers) constitute an element of theory (experience), which is at the same time the

production of the real. Art, as a practice co-creating them in a manner proper to itself, comes to be distinguished, by the authors, as that which “preserves” impressions: “Art preserves, and it’s the only thing in the world that is preserved” (ibid., 163).<sup>2</sup> Thus, art is meant to preserve “the blocks of present sensations” (ibid., 167), which, according to Deleuze and Guattari, do not memorialise so much what has passed away as, rather, constitute a distinctive contemporised practice: “A monument does not commemorate or celebrate something that happened but it confides to the ear of the future the persistent sensations that embody the event: the constantly renewed suffering of men and women, their reacted protestations, their constantly resumed struggle” (ibid., 176-177). As is known, also from some of the more political observations made by Deleuze and Guattari, this can have negative consequences as well, helping to maintain the status quo, on account of the similarly de-territorialising nature of capitalism (Herer 2006, 15); however, it is also the only way of escaping beyond despotic, automated modes of production. Art, in *Anti-Oedipus*, is one of the desiring-machines; in *What is philosophy?* it becomes one of the three levels on which the production of the real takes place.

The assumption of the essential importance of art, in its role as a desiring-machine, constitutes, on various levels, an essential element of Deleuze’s and Guattari’s work.<sup>3</sup> Deleuze’s *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*

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2 In the book *Proust and Signs* (1964), earlier in relation to the project of *Difference and Repetition* (1968), and also in relation to the conception of Spinozism, Deleuze grasps the question of art even more radically, saying, in relation to this that “Only the signs of art are immaterial” (Deleuze 1999, 39). He underlines this, from one side, in a Kantian manner, as an element of pure composition, thanks to which the artistic signs capture experiences, above all consolidating themselves. At the same time, it constitutes in the book an exposition for the later statement about artistic signs, whose sense is an “essence” or a “quality of a world,” and which, being non-material artistic signs, “no longer have anything opaque about them” (Deleuze 1999, 49 i 50). Of course, an essence, which art unveils, is difference alone. Yet, one can say that Deleuze’s theses, in his book on Proust, remain “pre-Spinozian”; there is visible a dichotomisation accompanying the distinguishing of particular series of signs in *In Search of Lost Time* (of the world, of love, of the senses, of art). Especially the statement about the non-sensible character of signs, which are supposed to carry in themselves the very essence of art, independently of their own material carrier, seems to contradict the Spinozian conception of reality, which finds no issue in presenting that which is sensual as conceptual and at the same time that which is conceptual as material. From the perspective of *A Thousand Plateaus*, in relation to language, semiosis (and also art), the only notions that can still be mobilised are these of matter and function.

3 Literary critics appeal to Deleuzian conceptions; however they do so in



(1981) was written more or less in the same period as *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). In relation to the immediate frame of the theses of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* most engaged in a social critique, *Spinoza* can be read equally, above all, as a justification of the emancipatory perspective offered by its authors, who propose the deregulation of the automatized activity of social machines through the practice of “becoming-minoritarian” (Bednarek 2012, 316-318).<sup>4</sup> In the American reinterpretation—contrived by, among others, the critics tied to third-wave feminist theory, in the writings of Haraway, Braidotti and Barad, for whom Deleuze and Guattari were especially important—their concepts were invoked also, above all, on account of their emancipatory, political potential. Meanwhile, working out a Spinozian idea of so called “common notions” (about these more later), Deleuze more than once, and non-metaphorically, referred precisely to the question of the artistic composition of those concepts in the practice of Spinoza, writing, among other things: “The musical composition comes into play throughout the *Ethics*, constituting it as the one and same Individual whose relations of speed and slowness do not cease to vary, successively and simultaneously” (Deleuze 1988, 127). Later still, he noted: “Writers, poets, musicians, filmmakers—painters too, even chance readers—may find that they are Spinozian; indeed such a thing is more likely for them than for professional philosophers. It’s a matter of one’s practical conception of the »plane« [of immanence—J.O.]” (Ibid., 129).

It seems that current, political reckonings with postmodernism in

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a somewhat different way, than the one I attempt to emphasise in my essay. Monika Glosowicz writes about *Affective Machineries* in reference to Deleuzian concept of affects, as understood by, among others, Rosi Braidotti, Donna Haraway, Karen Barad, Sara Ahmed and Brian Massumi (Glosowicz 2019). Glosowicz, examining the operations of “affective machinery” in relation to new poetry written by women, and giving her reflections a feminist and political leaning, introduces into her thought the concept of “representation”, involving traditional elements of *mimesis*, in order to explore their affective dimension. Agnieszka Dauksza proceeds somewhat differently, in the book *Affective Modernism* (Dauksza 2017); she emphasises the necessity of an interpretation of emotions – including the expectations of writers regarding the impact of their work on readers – as a broader context of the communicative scenario, shaping equally the artist and the work, and setting into motion the artist’s interactions with the entirety of the reality conditioning that interaction.

4 Joanna Bednarek describes at some length the issues with the translation of the French term “devenir-minoritaire” in Deleuze’s and Guattari’s *Milles Plateaux* (Bednarek 2012, 316). Here I use the translation proposed by Brian Massumi, from the English version of the book (*A Thousand Plateaus*, transl. B. Massumi. London-Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press 1987).



Poland bring it about that poststructuralist conceptions—indebted to philosophy, within the sphere of revolutionarily understood artistic practices (especially literary ones)—are somewhat reduced, in relation to the element which constitutes a value fundamental to them—namely, their poetics. After Agamben, we could associate it with *poiesis*—functioning equally in accord with holistic, Romantic conceptions, as a certain compositional-dynamic dimension of a mutually produced human reality, inseparable from philosophy or science, but also as decisive for the possibility of a performative reinterpretation of their functioning-production, which can manifest immediately in the poetic form of *A Thousand Plateaus* or *Anti-Oedipus*. It is difficult to imagine the work of Deleuze—the author of, among others, books about Kafka and Proust—without numerous references, quotes both hidden and overt, referring to modern French, world, and most often avant-garde, literature. Yet this natural environment of his multi-disciplinary thought, seems problematic within the posthumanist perspective; which, as it seems, first marginalises the entirety of the literary perspective, only to allow it to return by the right of exception—the way the repressed is always doomed to return. The materiality of the poetic work—for avant-garde writers something completely obvious—and possible thanks Deleuze and Guattari’s non-dualistic conception of the production of that which is real, remains a weak option.<sup>5</sup> One must always justify it;

5 In her book, *The Posthuman*, Rosi Braidotti, rejecting the humanistic conception of the Vitruvian man, motivating intellectual, masculine orderings of the world also still in the post-structuralist perspective, and so right up to the post-humanist turn, before she moves to an exposition of the Spinozian theory makes a gesture, which one should recognise as, at the least, modernistically characterised. Namely, she invokes the author (George Eliot) of her “favourite sentence in English literature”—deriving from *Middlemarch*—which sentence is meant to document, above all, the affective aspect of Spinoza’s monist revolution; while, the problem that we, nevertheless, have in this place the very fact of a quotation from literature, undoubtedly constituting, as it were, a relic of the “Vitruvian epoch,” remains implicitly inessential. Having a poetic character, and being literary in its very nature, the surface of the text becomes in this way a new fetishism—an impossible to comment upon opacity within the framework of a monistically understood order of life-creation. Instead, Braidotti qualifies her interpretation with an emotional element, splendidly amenable to founding a new, humanistic mythology. Thus, she describes her favourite sentence poetically, as “(...) a roar which lies on the other side of the urbane, civilized veneer that allows for bound identities and efficient social interaction is the Spinozist indicator of the raw cosmic energy that underscores the making of civilizations, societies and their subjects.” (Braidotti 2013, 55). Karen Barad, on the other hand, in the introduction to *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, undertakes a polemic with the

since, to the literary text—written down on paper, recognised as a reality unambiguously intellectual and being subject to hierarchical ordering by a cognitive *ratio*—its own kind of Oedipality is simply ascribed at the very beginning of new-materialist reckonings. Meanwhile, as I think, the conception of the French, politically-oriented poststructuralists demands not only a new conception of materiality, but also a new conception of textuality, and a new conception of the literary. The multi-series of interruptions and “drainings,” produced by desiring machines, (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 5), do not, meanwhile, only arrange themselves in compositions, but are also *produced* through a social process (as in Romantic *poiesis*). Just as they, themselves, independently of circumstances, preserve themselves (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 163). Unfortunately, we are most clearly unable to grant to art itself—and its specificity, concealed within the concept of autonomy—which in contemporary, “weak” theories turns out to be a new taboo—the status of a material reality. Meanwhile, according to the authors of *Anti-Oedipus*, everything (hence also art, literature, poetry) is a production of the real.

The “work” of the desiring machine of (literary) art, in a series of interruptions and drainings producing and reproducing the process of its own production of the real, is inherently artistic, not only because it

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position of Katherine Hayes, with a proposition deriving from the sketch *Constrained Constructivism: Locating Scientific Inquiry in the Theatre of Representation* (a text published in the edited volume *Realism and Representation: Essays on Realism in Relation to Science, Literature and Culture* [ed. G Levine, 1993]). She first draws critical attention to the fact that Hayes’s “theatre of representation” derives from a narcissistic conception of language, as something deprived of any rooting in things, and given over to a free play of meanings. Next, on the other hand—making use of the thesis of the author of *Constrained Criticism*, concerning the limitation of discourse by real boundaries established for it by the real world, in which it has meaning—she turns, enviously, towards literary studies or philosophical reflections, in which it is possible to pose ontological questions. But, for this purpose is needed—a modernist and Kantian in spirit—conception of language as a vehicle of ordering and change. Thus, opposing the lack of philosophical sensitivity in the research of the hard sciences, Barad, in effect, invokes the help of the worn-out concept of “discourse” and its “textures—unable to simply do without metaphor: “It is crucial that we understand the technologies by which nature and culture interact. Does nature provide some template that get filled in by culture in ways that are compatible with local discourses? Or do specific discourses provide the lenses through which we view the layering of culture or nature? Does the full »texture« of nature get through, or is it partially obliterated or distorted in the process? Is reality an amorphous blob that is structured by human discourses and interactions? Or does it have some complicated, irregular shape that is differently sampled by varying frameworks that happen to »fit« in local regions like coincident segments of interlocking puzzle pieces?” (Barad 2007, 42).

preserves itself. The weave of the premises on which philosophy and art (as well as science) are based, which is laid out in the book *What is philosophy?*, is so strong and so strongly penetrates the whole of the serial-nomadic philosophy of Deleuze, that those elements are, in fact, difficult to distinguish (though their premises form separate “lines” or “currents,” which meet only contingently). For example, the statement that philosophical concepts, as well as artistic percepts and affects, intersect, that “the concept as such can be concept of the affect, just as the affect can be affect of the concept” (Deleuze/Guattari 1994, 66),<sup>6</sup> suggests that it is a matter rather of the activity of these phenomena and of the manner in which they come to be received and introduced into the production of experience, not only of a strictly understood difference between them. One may presume that the work of every desiring machine can be determined as an issue, which acquires in reflection a more artistic or a more philosophical/political character, depending on the point of view, the object and the needs of that reflection. As I said, according to Deleuze and Guattari, art is the one thing which preserves itself; such a preservation does not, however, achieve a concrete “expression,” understood as an autonomous field of its own interests, which one could treat as an object of philosophical or sociological reflection. The nature of the artistic is not understood here in such terms; rather, to refer again to Spinozian categories, one should attempt to characterise artistic phenomena, difficult as it might be, within the categories of “ways of life” (Deleuze 1988, 122)—as those which always remain embedded within a certain practice (whether conceptual, or real). Reintroducing, for our purposes, the idea of “common notions” derived from *Spinoza*—the notions that determine the affective links between Deleuzian series and weaves—one can say, after the philosopher:

So it appears that the common notions are practical Ideas, in relation with our power; unlike their order of exposition, which only concerns ideas, their order of formation concerns affects, showing how the mind: “can order its affects and connect them together”. The common notions are an Art, the art of the *Ethics* itself: organising good encounters, composing actual relations, forming powers, experimenting (Deleuze 1988, 119).

Art is not among the author’s chief interests, either here or in *Anti-Oedipus*, or even in such books as the one about the series of signs in

6 The philosophers point to the figure of Don Juan as an example, which is musical, theatrical, and which becomes a conceptual figure in Kierkegaard.

Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*. On the other hand, omitting the artistic element in compositions—which may be contingent, mechanistic, but always, in the end, remain precisely that: compositions—would make it difficult to say anything specific about their life and desire. One of the essential protagonists of *Anti-Oedipus* is, say, Antonin Artaud. References to Artaud (or Proust, Michaux, Céline, Miller, Lawrence and Beckett) never remain solely a pretext; the writers appear on equal rights alongside the occasionally invoked philosophers, authors of psychoanalytical concepts and their patients and, finally, historical figures and fictional characters. On this basis, the figure of Judge Schreber fulfils an uncommonly interesting textual function in *Anti-Oedipus*. Schreber remains, simultaneously, a patient whose case was famously reinterpreted by Freud (as described in *Psychoanalytical Notes*), the author of his own book (on the history of his own neurosis) and, finally, a constantly returning character in *Anti-Oedipus*, where he plays the role of the useful idiot (thus, it is possible to recognise him as a protagonist and at the same time as a hidden mechanism of philosophical discourse). In one case, he is a historical figure, being again an emblem of the desiring machine (“Judge Shreber has sunbeams in his ass” [Deleuze/Guattari 1983, 2]), which is broken, and at the same time exemplary for the Oedipal order, as also a perfect example of a schizophrenic. Later, in turn, as a character in the text of Deleuze and Guattari, he may stand in for Freud (who also becomes, in the meantime, a character in their text) in a manner proper to an avant-garde artist (Deleuze/Guattari 1983, 36). Judge Schreber remains, in this way, at the same time a protagonist and the hidden mechanism of the production of philosophical discourse—as it would be proper to add by means of the properly poetical:

One can easily imagine Schreber answering Freud: “Yes, I quite agree, naturally the talking birds are young girls, and the superior God is my daddy and the inferior God my brother.” But little by little he will surreptitiously “reimpregnate” the series of young girls with all talking birds, his father with the superior God, and his brother with the inferior God, all of them divine forms that become complicated, or rather “desimplified,” as they break through the simplistic terms and functions of the Oedipal triangle. As Artaud put it:

*I don't believe in father  
in mother,  
got no  
papamummy.*

(Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 14)

Judge Schreber is the arche-argument in the case put forward against Freudian Oedipalism in all its shapes; he functions, *de facto*, as a figure that is fictional, literary, invented and inherently ironic. On the other hand, he necessarily enjoys the same rights as, for instance, Freud, Melanie Klein or Lacan, also referenced in the book. Similarly unclear is the function of the writers referenced in the course of the argument: their works are not mere examples of particular ideas; they do not simply illustrate philosophical theses. The points made by Deleuze and Guattari (following Artaud's statements or the books of Proust, the protagonists of the philosophers' lecture) are incarnated as arguments in the activity of social machinism, while all the time remaining as effects or momentary crystallisations of authorial reinterpretation of their authors' texts; a reinterpretation that grafts itself onto the original works, just as Deleuze-Guattarian production grafts itself onto products. Artaud or Proust, like Freud or Lacan and ultimately also like John Brown or George Jackson, are the co-creators of *Anti-Oedipus*, together with Deleuze and Guattari, as elements of machinery, subjects playing together in series of interruptions and "drainings." They are, as one might conceive this in a still different way, "matrices" of composition, which we can contemplate for a moment; they decide, simultaneously, on the manner and sense of rhizomatic production, but also on its sensual preservation.

It's also to fiction and literature that the authors constantly look for help against the automated principle of the Oedipal social rite. Avant-garde art is, therefore, located in a schizophrenic order, a domain of wandering at the margins of capitalist society. One can see this well at the moment when Deleuze and Guattari, laying out the principles of schizoanalysis, use the picture of two poles, the segregative and the nomadic—thus revealing two rules of the functioning of developing series (interruptions and drainings of *hyle* in the production of the real), corresponding to investments of desire in the communal, social field, as being the object of these investments. The first pole, the fascist-paranoid, overinvests in a sovereign formation, leading to a hierarchical ordering of the field and a privileging of it as the principle of every social form. The second, the schizo-revolutionary, "that follows the *lines of escape* of desire; breaches the wall and causes flows to move; assembles its machines and its groups in fusion in the enclaves or at the periphery—proceeding in an inverse fashion from that of the other pole" (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 277). The authors of *Anti-Oedipus* next write that between both poles of madness are produced the astonishing oscillations of the unconscious: "the way in which an unexpected revolutionary force breaks free in the midst, sometimes even in the midst of the worst

archaisms; inversely the way in which everything turns fascist or envelops itself in fascism, the way in which it falls back into archaisms” (Ibid.). This way they escape beyond the walls of a simple, Hegelian dialectic of the opposites, which, from their point of view, would remain, at a fundamental level, simply Oedipal. In order to additionally justify their standpoint, they recall the example of the mad Celine, evolving in the end towards a fascistic paranoia, and the schizoid Kerouac, who in the end gives himself over to the separative rule of the American dream. They complete their escape from dialectic by referring directly to the example of Artaud’s *Heliogabalus*: “The two poles united by Artaud in the formula: Heliogabalus-the-anarchist, »the image of all human contradictions and of the contradiction *in principle*«. But no passage impairs or suppresses the difference in nature between the two, nomadism and segregation” (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 278). However, art, in its role as a desiring machine, might serially entangle itself—jumping between those poles, leaving behind itself zig-zag traces like a sewing machine (while at the same time tearing the fabric); undoubtedly, one of the aspects of its activity, having to do precisely with its “compositional” potential, though less evident here, is consistently appreciated by the authors through their distinguishing of an insane, escapist and at the same time emancipatory fantasy. Its nature is partly explained by George Jackson, one of the leaders of the Black Panthers: “I may take flight, but all the way I’m fleeing, I’ll be looking for the weapon” (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 277). We can find a similar Deleuzean trope in the opening lines of a poem by Andrzej Sosnowski: “My unease has a weapon to hand” (*Cover*). What is surprising is the sudden intersection of these two currents, consolidating an artistic cartography of conceptual events and recognizing, incidentally, the affective power of encounter. They do not act together, like a net suspended in space (or also drawn upon a flat plan); rather, they cooperate like a “gravitational” slingshot, stretching itself in a continuously proliferating infinity. When it becomes a part of this commodity circulation, it is already something different; this does not erase the potential of the compositions the philosophers called “enduring,” sustaining always the potential for “grafting.”

As is known, the authors of *Anti-Oedipus* write, in the introductory parts of their argument, that desiring machines function such that they damage themselves in the course of their operation; it is precisely the fact that they are damaged, which opens the process of investment in communal social fields, in the macro-perspective of world as production. It is difficult, from this perspective, to say anything not only about the traditionally understood autonomy of the artistic work (or political and philosophical ideas), but, also about the autonomy of the living subject-

-body as a repeated series of interruptions and flows. There where the real, the physical and the biological become real and physical within the categories of quantum physics or biological within the concepts of biopolitics, as happens in the work of Barad or Haraway, it is difficult to stubbornly point at the non-material universality of the text, code or sign as fundamental communicative faults or also faulty ways of mirroring reality . . . When they all become positions situating bodies, souls and individuals on an immanent plane, being simultaneously “ways of life,” the accusations leading to a severing of an autotelically understood “texture” of performance from a whole understood in this way seem to be simply devoid of sense. All the more, when that “texture” can be expressed as a weave or also a diagram of various series and interruptions—as a performatively played out, occurring process. From the “anti-Oedipal” perspective of Deleuze and Guattari, a special place has been found for art and for the artist—specifically, the schizoid breaking down of what is predestined: art often makes use of that property (activity on condition of breaking down and breaking down as a condition of activity, in which production is “grafted onto” the product, being in the end a production of production—J.O.), forming the realest group fantasies, which produce connections at the junction of social production and desiring production and introduce the function of disordering into the process of reproduction of technical machines (see for instance Deleuze and Guattari 1983, 6).

Art, by “differentiating,” cuts social outlets leading beyond the Oedipal automaton in “revolutionary” directions, which are always different—as one could say, following upon Deleuze’s thought in *Spinoza*—always determined by a different point of cartographic reference, longitude or latitude as co-ordinates of motion. “We call *longitude* of the body the set of relations of speed and slowness, of motion and rest, between particles that compose it from this point of view, that is, between unformed elements. We call *latitude* the set of affects that occupy a body at each moment, that is as intensive states of *anonymous force* (force for existing, capacity for being affected),” wrote Deleuze (Deleuze 1981, 127–128). The Spinozian approach to body would meanwhile regard it as “an animal, a body of sounds, a mind or an idea, (...) a linguistic corpus, social body, collectivity” (Ibid.). Thus, we will be able to see the art of that composition every time as a movement-image or a time-image (in *poiesis*), diverting and ruining the track of the machine of technical production in the direction of communal fantasy, and grafting itself onto products. From such a point of view, art (also literature) would be (philosophically) a concept-event in motion, one having an exceptionally unstable constitution. “The artist is the master of objects; he puts in



front of us shattered, burned, broken down objects, converting them into the regime of desiring-machines; breaking down is part of the very functioning of the desiring-machines; the artist presents the paranoiac machines, miraculating-machines, celibate machines as so many technical machines, so as to cause desiring machines to undermine technical machines” (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 32).

Of course, it is not the philosophers’ intention to retain an elitist setting apart of “the artist,” following in the tracks of the Romantic tradition. The “interruption of the series,” described here as “grafting producing onto the product”—and making it so that the series can never succeed one another in a linear order—constitutes the “compositional” element of all kinds of practice, and doesn’t even require indicating where compositions come from or who exactly is their composer. Following upon the treatise *What is Philosophy?*: the exterior of a work of art remains inversely proportional to its interior, as far as the presence of a compositional principle, which commands an affective force of consolidation, is concerned; when we “dissolve” the limit, determined by the very notion of art, we pass to the other side of the mirror and the reality, which we produce, undergoes a reversal—nothing more than this occurs. *Poiesis* in the work and beyond the work would, therefore, remain a composition in various states of concentration; the more composition—as a principle of practice—the greater the intensity of the materiality (that which is available for reception) with which the work distinguishes itself, in contrast to that which produces it, contributing to interruptions in *hyle* and to the arising of series. From such a perspective, *poiesis*, in Deleuzian terms, remains indistinguishable from the Spinozian creative matter—providing at the same time the compositional principle and the material, determining its character and responsible for its dynamism. The composition, consolidation, autonomy (hence specificity) of the artistic principle would, therefore, possess the features of an affective *modi*—not only a reason for, but also a manner of linking and preserving events. It can, however, function as a common notion—if we were to consider only the principle of art as such.<sup>7</sup>

7 As Deleuze writes, after Spinoza, common notions are not abstract concepts, but only common ones; in Spinoza’s work they had to do with bodies and were concepts more biological than mathematical; whereas, their “generality” was meant to be a secondary property. It is precisely from this that there flow premises relating common notions to composition: “(...) a common notion [is] the representation of a composition between two or more bodies, and a unity of this composition. (...) common notions are common to minds—more or less so, since they are common only to minds whose bodies are affected by the composition

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For this reason, Deleuze and Guattari can also speak—at the end of *Anti-Oedipus*, and following upon the Lacanian thesis—of the code of the unconscious built from a “chain of signifiers.” However, they introduce their own strictly avant-garde, and by nature surrealist, correction, which, it should be said, is essential for the whole picture:

No chain is homogeneous; all of them resemble, rather, a succession of characters from different alphabets in which an ideogram, a pictogram, a tiny image of an elephant passing by, or a rising sun may suddenly make its appearance. In a chain that mixes together phonemes, morphemes, etc., without combining them, papa’s mustache, mama’s upraised arm, a ribbon, a little girl, a cop, a shoe suddenly turn up. Each chain captures fragments of other chains from which it “extracts” a surplus value, just as the orchid code “attracts” the figure of a wasp: both phenomena demonstrate the surplus value of a code. It is an entire system of shuntings along certain tracks, and of selections by lot, that bring about partially dependent, aleatory phenomena bearing a close resemblance to a Markov chain. The recordings and transmissions that have come from the internal codes, from the outside world, from one region to another of the organism, all intersect, following the endlessly ramified paths of the great disjunctive synthesis. If this constitutes a system of writing, it is a writing inscribed on the very surface of the Real: a strangely polyvocal kind of writing, never a biunivocalized, linearized one; a transursive system of writing, never a discursive one; a writing that constitutes the entire domain of the “real inorganization” of the passive syntheses, where we would search in vain for something that might be labelled the Signifier—writing that ceaselessly composes and decomposes the chains into signs that have nothing that impels them to become signifying. The one vocation of the sign is to produce desire, engineering it in every direction (Deleuze and Guattari 2000, 39).

Karen Barad, whose theory of reality, in *Meeting the Universe Halfway* (2007), would not be possible without *Anti-Oedipus*—in a similar way to Joanna Bednarek, referenced at the beginning—filters out the post-structuralist-textual aspect of Deleuze and Guattari’s work, in order to get at its deep, socio-political texture. Her essay included in the Polish

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and the unity of the composition in question” (Deleuze 1988, 54). As we know, common notions are formed as a result of affects. Deleuze concludes the entry dedicated to them as follows: “(...) insofar as they apply solely to existing bodies, the common notions have to do with things that can be imagined (indeed, this is why the idea of God is not in itself a common notion [...]). They represent compositions of relations. Now, these relations characterise bodies insofar as they combine with and affect one another, each one leaving »images« in the other, the corresponding ideas being imaginations” (Deleuze 1988, 56).

anthology *Subversive Theories*, meant to summarise the basic tenets of her criticism, begins in a manner that is symptomatic for thinkers associated with the turn against poststructuralism:

Language has been granted too much power. The linguistic turn, the semiotic turn, the interpretative turn, the cultural turn: it seems that at every turn lately every “thing”—even the materiality—is turned to the matter of language or some other form of cultural representation. The ubiquitous puns on “matter” do not, alas, mark the rethinking of the key concepts (materiality and signification) and the relationship between them. Rather, it seems to be symptomatic of the extent to which matters of “fact” (so to speak) have been replaced with the matters of signification (no scare quotes here). Language matters. Discourse matters. Culture matters. There is an important sense in which the only thing that does not seem to matter anymore is matter (Barad 2003, 801).

Obviously, in her subsequent words, the author of *Posthumanist Performativity* declares that in turning against the dominion of language she only submits to criticism a kind of privileging of only one side of the description-reality opposition, on account, precisely, of the potential for an intellectual ordering of meanings. The conception of a signifying matter in performative activity, a matter whose reality is described primarily in terms borrowed from quantum physics, suggests, however, a duality similar to that of various poststructuralist concepts. In the same way as these concepts earlier—from the point of view of the posthumanist turn—privileged meaning, and also annulled the metaphysical dimension of the question regarding the difference between the meaning and the meant, the original and the derivative, in this way, now, the sphere of the biologically or physically understood “reality of bodies” begins to enjoy a new appreciation; while, the issue of Spinozian composition remains neglected, though being the main and at the same time hidden affective machinery of the theoreticians of New Materialism. Posed in this way, such theses make impossible that which, from the perspective of my sketch was the most important: the posing of the fascinating question concerning the potential materiality of language.

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**Tytuł:** Materialność *poiesis*

**Abstrakt:** W tym szkicu podejmuję próbę wyjaśnienia, dlaczego dochodzi do swego rodzaju wtórnego rozdzielenia Spinozjańskiej zasady immanencji – wydarzającej się czy też konstruowanej na po Deleuzjańsku rozumianej płaszczyźnie praktyki – a przyjmowanej jako teza zasadnicza dla zwrotu posthumanistycznego. W koncepcjach tych zasadniczą rolę odgrywają tezy zmierzające do obalenia wszelkiego rodzaju

rozdzierających istniejącą substancję dychotomii (formy-materii, ale i wewnętrzności-zewnętrzności, podmiotu-przedmiotu, duszy-ciała, odbicia-prawdy/doświadczenia). Przyjęcie takiej, performatywnie rozumianej perspektywy „wykonywania” teorii czy filozofii staje się, co ciekawe, możliwe dopiero dzięki zastrzeżeniu rozłączności „immanencji praktyki” z dominującą w ramach zwrotu „poststrukturalistycznego” literackością czy tekstualnością. Ta bowiem sfera kojarzona była jako tradycyjnie umieszczająca w centrum swoich zainteresowań człowieka, jego język i jego wytwory intelektualne (przez np. Braidotti czy Barad). Ta głęboko strukturalistyczna koncepcja została z pozytywnym skutkiem przekroczona – jako pewien typ nowoczesnego, absolutyzującego porządkowania przestrzeni doświadczenia – przez wszystkich właściwie poststrukturalistów, w tym Deleuze’a i Guattariego, którym przede wszystkim poświęcam tej esej. Nie przyczyniło się to jednak do wykluczenia sztuki języka, także literatury, pojmowanej jako rodzaj społecznej praktyki, a co za tym idzie ważnego przedmiotu zainteresowania francuskich filozofów.

**Słowa kluczowe:** materializm, *poiesis*, sztuka awangardowa, filozofia i sztuka, Deleuze i Guattari, percepty, afekty, performatywność