

social communication, through discourse, programs, *explication de texte* or reference to Great Authors. It has gone over to the side of reflexes, to collective sensibility, to systems of nonverbal expression. Children and adolescents are not aware of their becoming, at least not predominantly in terms of meaningful discourse. They use what I call “a-signifying systems”: music, clothing, the body, behaviors as signs of mutual recognition, as well as machinic systems of all kinds. For example, my son is into politics. Not so much through discourse, but with his soldering iron: he sets up “free radios,” where technical discourse is hooked right into politics. There is no need to explain the opportunity and the political rationale of free-radio broadcasting; he got it right away. It is the intervention of machinisms—and not only those of communication as means, as political media, which seem fundamental to me. I have confidence in all the technico-scientific categories to which this new political field gives rise.

A LIBERATION OF DESIRE

George Stambolian: *In 1970 the authorities forbade the sale to minors of Pierre Guyotat's novel, Eden, Eden, Eden. More recently, they outlawed and seized the special issue of the magazine Recherches ("Encyclopedia of Homosexualities") to which you had made important contributions. You were even taken to court on the matter. How would you explain these reactions by the French government?*

Félix Guattari: They were rather old-fashioned reactions. I do not think that the present government would behave the same way because there is, on the surface at least, a certain nonchalance regarding the literary and cinematographic expression of sexuality. But I don't have to tell you that this is an even more subtle, cunning, and repressive policy. During the trial the judges were completely ill at ease with what they were being asked to do.

Wasn't it because this issue of Recherches treated homosexuality, and not just sexuality?

I'm not sure, because among the things that most shocked the judges was one of the most original parts of this work—a discussion of masturbation. I think that a work devoted to homosexuality in a more or less traditional manner would have had no difficulty. What shocked perhaps was the expression of sexuality going in all

directions. And then there were the illustrations—they were what set it off.

In your opinion, what is the best way to arrive at a true sexual liberation, and what dangers confront this liberation?

The problem, as I see it, is not a sexual liberation but a liberation of desire. Once desire is specified as sexuality, it enters into forms of particularized power, into the stratification of castes, of styles, of sexual classes. The sexual liberation—for example, of homosexuals, of transvestites, of sadomasochists—belongs to a series of other liberation problems among which there is an a priori and evident solidarity, the need to participate in a necessary fight. But I don't consider that to be a liberation as such of desire, since in each of these groups and movements one finds repressive systems.

What do you mean by "desire"?

For Gilles Deleuze and me desire is everything that exists *before* the opposition between subject and object, *before* representation and production. It's everything whereby the world and affects constitute us outside of ourselves, in spite of ourselves. It's everything that overflows from us. That's why we define it as flow. Within this context we were led to forge a new notion in order to specify in what way this kind of desire is not some sort of undifferentiated magma, and thereby dangerous, suspicious, or incestuous. So we speak of machines, of "desiring-machines," in order to indicate that there is as yet no question here of "structure"—that is, of any subjective position, objective redundancy, or coordinates of reference. Machines arrange and connect flows. They do not recognize distinctions between persons, organs, material flows, and semiotic flows.

Your remarks on sexuality reveal a similar rejection of established distinctions. You have said, for example, that all forms of sexual activity are minority forms and reveal themselves as being irreducible to homo-hetero oppositions. You have also said that these forms are nevertheless closer to homosexuality and to what you call a "becoming-woman." Would you develop this idea, in particular by defining what you mean by "feminine"?

Yes, that was a very ambiguous formulation. What I mean is that the relation to the body, what I call the semiotics of the body, is something specifically repressed by the capitalist-socialist-bureaucratic system. So I would say that each time the body is emphasized in a situation—by dancers, by homosexuals, etc.—something breaks with the dominant semiotics that crush these semiotics of the body. In heterosexual relations as well, when a man becomes body, he becomes feminine. In a way, a successful heterosexual relation becomes homosexual and feminine. This does not at all mean that I am speaking of women as such: that's where the ambiguity lies, because the feminine relation itself can lose the semiotics of the body and become phallogocentric. So it is only by provocation that I say feminine, because I would say first that there is only one sexuality, it is homosexual; there is only one sexuality, it is feminine. But I would add finally: there is only one sexuality, it is neither masculine, nor feminine, nor infantile; it is something that is ultimately flow, body. It seems to me that in true love there is always a moment when the man is no longer a man. This does not mean that he becomes a woman. But because of her alienation, woman is relatively closer to the situation of desire. And in a sense, perhaps from the point of view of representation, to accede to desire implies for a man first a position of homosexuality as such, and second a feminine becoming. But I would add as well a becoming-animal, or a becoming-plant, a becoming-cosmos, etc. That's why this formulation is very tentative and ambiguous.

Isn't your formulation based in part on the fact that our civilization has associated body and woman?

No, it's because woman has preserved the surfaces of the body, a bodily *jouissance* and pleasure much greater than that of man. He has concentrated his libido on—one can't even say his penis—on domination, on the rupture of ejaculation: "I possessed you" "I had you." Look at all the expressions like these used by men: "I screwed you," "I made her." It's no longer the totality of the body's surface that counts, it's just this sign of power: "I dominated you," "I marked you." This obsession with power is such that man ultimately denies himself all sexuality. On the other hand, in order to exist as body he is obliged to beg his sexual partners to transform him a bit into a woman or a homosexual. I don't know if homosexuals can easily accept what I'm saying, because I don't mean to say that homosexuals are women. That would be a misunderstanding. But I think that in a way there is a kind of interaction between the situation of male homosexuals, of transvestites, and of women. There is a kind of common struggle in their relation to the body.

"Interaction," "transformation," "becoming," "flow"—these words suggest a recognition of our sexual or psychic multiplicity and fluidity which, as I understand it, is an essential aspect of what you call schizoanalysis and psychoanalysis which, I believe, you have completely abandoned?

I was Lacan's student. I was analyzed by Lacan and I practiced psychoanalysis for twelve years; and now, I've broken with that practice. Psychoanalysis transforms and deforms the unconscious by forcing it to pass through the grid of its system of inscription and representation. For psychoanalysis the unconscious is always already there, genetically programmed, structured, and finalized on objectives of conformity to social norms. For schizoanalysis it's a

question of constructing an unconscious, not only with phrases but with all possible semiotic means, and not only with individuals or relations between individuals, but also with groups, with physiological and perceptual systems, with machines, struggles, and arrangements of every nature. There's no question here of transfer, interpretation, or delegation of power to a specialist.

Do you believe that psychoanalysis has deformed not only the unconscious but the interpretation of life in general and perhaps of literature as well?

Yes, but even beyond what one imagines, in the sense that it's not simply a question of psychoanalysts or even of psychoanalytical ideas as they are propagated in the commercial press or in the universities, but of interpretative and representational attitudes toward desire that one finds in persons who don't know psychoanalysis, but who put themselves in the position of interpreters, of gurus, and who generalize the technique of transfer.

With Gilles Deleuze, you have just finished a schizoanalysis of Kafka's work. Why this method to analyze and to comprehend literature?

It's not a question of method or of doctrine. It's simply that I've been living with Kafka for a very long time. I therefore tried, together with Deleuze, to put into our work the part of me that was, in a way, a becoming-Kafka. In a sense the book is a schizoanalysis of our relation to Kafka's work, but also of the period of Vienna in 1920 and of a certain bureaucratic Eros which crystallized in that period, and which fascinated Kafka.

In a long note you speak of Kafka's joy, and you suggest that psychoanalysis has found only Kafka's sadness or his tragic aspect.

In his *Diaries* Kafka gives us a glimpse of the diabolic pleasure he found in his writing. He says that it was a kind of demonic world he entered at night to work. I think that everything that produces the violence, richness, and incredible humor of Kafka's work belongs to this world of his.

Aren't you really proposing that creation is something joyful, and that this joy can't be reduced to a psychosis?

Absolutely—or to a lack.

In the same book on Kafka you say that a "minor literature," which is produced by a minority in a major language, always "deterritorializes" that language, connects the individual to politics, and gives everything a collective value. These are for you, in fact, the revolutionary qualities of any literature within the established one. Does homosexuality necessarily produce a literature having these three qualities?

Unfortunately, no. There are certainly homosexual writers who conduct their writing in the form of an Oedipal homosexuality. Even very great writers—I think of Gide. Apart from a few works, Gide always transcribed his homosexuality and in a sense betrayed it.

*Despite the fact that he tried to prove the value of homosexuality in works such as *Corydon*?*

Yes, but I wonder if he did it in just one part of his work and if the rest of his writing isn't different.

*In *Anti-Oedipus* you and Deleuze note that Proust described two types of homosexuality—one that is Oedipal and therefore exclusive, global, and neurotic, and one that is a-Oedipal or inclusive, partial,*

and localized. In fact, the latter is for you an expression of what you call "transsexuality." So if there are two Gides, aren't there also two Prousts, or at least the possibility of two different readings of his work?

I can't answer for Proust the man, but it seems to me that his work does present the two aspects, and one can justify the two readings because both things in effect exist.

You spoke of the demonic in Kafka. Well, Gide, Proust, and Genet have been accused of being fascinated by the demonic aspect of homosexuality. Would you agree?

To a point. I wonder sometimes, not specifically concerning the three names you mention, if it isn't a matter of persons who were more fascinated by the demonic than by homosexuality. Isn't homosexuality a means of access to the demonic? That is, they are the heirs of Goethe in a certain way, and what Goethe called the demonic was in itself a dimension of mystery.

But the fact remains that in our civilization homosexuality is often associated with the demonic.

Yes, but so is crime. There's a whole genre of crime literature that contains a similar demonic aspect. The demonic or the mysterious is really a residue of desire in the social world. There are so few places for mystery that one looks for it everywhere, in anything that escapes or becomes marginal. For example, there's something demonic in the life of a movie star. That's why it's used by the sensationalist press.

Doesn't that tell us that we are hungry for the demonic, that we are hungry for things that aren't "natural," that we have exploited movie stars and homosexuals to satisfy our need for the demonic?

I'm not against that because I'm not at all for nature. Therefore artifice, the artificially demonic, is something that rather charms me. Only it is one thing to live it in a relationship of immediate desire, and another thing to transform it into a repressive machine.

Let's go back to the homosexual writers. I'd like to quote here a remark of yours that struck me. It's the last paragraph of your interview published in the August 1975 issue of La Quinzaine littéraire. You say: "Everything that breaks something, everything that breaks with the established order, has something to do with homosexuality, or with a becoming-animal, a becoming-woman, etc. Any break in semiotization implies a break in sexuality. It is therefore not necessary, in my opinion, to raise the question of homosexual writers, but rather to look for what is homosexual, in any case, in a great writer, even if he is in other respects heterosexual." Doesn't this idea contain a new way to approach or perhaps to go beyond a question that has so obsessed certain Freudian critics and psychoanalysts—namely, the connection between homosexuality, or all sexuality, and creativity?

Yes, of course. For me, a literary machine starts itself, or can start itself, when writing connects with other machines of desire. I'd like to talk about Virginia Woolf in her relation to a becoming-man that is itself a becoming-woman, because the paradox is complete. I'm thinking about a book I like very much, *Orlando*. You have this character who follows the course of the story as a man, and in the second part of the novel he becomes a woman. Well, Virginia Woolf herself was a woman, but one sees that in order to become a woman writer, she had to follow a certain trajectory of a becoming-woman, and for that she had to begin by being a man. One could certainly find in George Sand things perhaps more remarkable than this. So my question is whether writing as such, the signifier as such, relates to nothing, only to itself, or to power. Writing begins to function in something else, as

for example for the Beat Generation in the relation with drugs; for Kerouac in the relation with travel, or with mountains, with yoga. Then something begins to vibrate, begins to function. Rhythms appear, a need, a desire to speak. Where is it possible for a writer to start this literary machine if it isn't precisely outside of writing and of the field of literature? A break in sexuality—therefore homosexuality, a becoming-woman, addict, missionary, who knows? It's a factory, the means of transmitting energy to a writing machine.

Can a break in semiotization precede a break in sexuality?

It's not a break in semiotization, but a semiotic connection. I'll give you a more familiar example. Take what are called mad people from a poor background from the point of view of intellectual formation—peasants who never read anything, who only went to grade school. Well, when they have an attack of dissociation, a psychotic attack, it happens sometimes that they begin to write, to paint, to express extraordinary things, extraordinarily beautiful and poetic! And then when they are "cured," they return to the fields, to the sugar-beets and asparagus, and they stop writing altogether. You have something of a psychotic attack in Rimbaud. When he became normal, he went into commerce: all that stopped. It's always a question of a connection. Something that was a little scholastic writing machine, really without any quality, connects with fabulously perceptive semiotics that start in psychosis, or in drugs, or in war, and that can animate this little writing machine and produce extraordinary things. You have a group of disconnected machines, and at a given moment there is a transmission among them, and everything begins not only to function but to produce an acceleration of operations. So you see, I'm not talking about sexuality. Sexuality is already specified as sex, caste, forms of sexual practice, sexual ritual. But creativity and desire are for me the same thing, the same formula.

I'd still like to ask you the following question. Could you begin the search for what is homosexual in a heterosexual writer with a great writer like, for example, Beckett, whose work offers us a "homosexuality" which seems at times to be the product of extraordinary semiotic connections, and which, in any case, confounds all previous representations and goes beyond them?

I think of those characters who travel by twos and who have no sexual practice because they live completely outside of sexuality, but who nevertheless represent a kind of collective set-up of enunciation, a collective way of perceiving everything that happens. And so many things are happening that it's necessary to select, to narrow down, in order to receive and distill each element, as if one were using a microscope to capture each of the intensities. Indeed, there is perhaps in Beckett a movement outside of the sexes, but then there is the absolutely fabulous relation to objects, a sexual relation to objects. I'm thinking of the sucking stones in *Molloy*.

Then how does one explain the elements of homosexuality, of sadomasochism, in his work?

But that's theater, because if there's a constant in Beckett's work, it's that even when he writes novels, he creates theater, in the sense of a *mise en scène*, an acting out, of giving something to be seen. So then inevitably, he gathers up representations, but he articulates them to create literature. What's more, Beckett is someone, I think, who was very interested in the insane, in psychopathology, and therefore he picked up a lot of representations. The use he makes of them is essentially literary, of course, but what he uses them for is not a translation, it's a collage, it's like a dance. He plays with these representations, or rather: he makes them play.

You said in your article on the cinema that any representation expresses a certain position with respect to power. But I wonder if Beckett hasn't succeeded in writing a politically "innocent" text.

I no more believe in innocence than I do in nature. One thing should be made clear—if one finds innocence, there's reason to worry, there's reason to look not for guilt, of course—that's the same thing as innocence, its symmetry—but for what is politically in germination, for a politics in dotted lines. Take Kafka again. Although his text isn't innocent, the supremely innocent character is K., and yet he is neither innocent nor guilty. He's waiting to enter a political scene. That's not fiction; it's not Borges, because he did enter a political scene in Prague, where one of the biggest political dramas was played around Kafka's work. So, innocence is always the anticipation of a political problem.

Everything that's written is therefore linked in one way or another to a political position?

Yes, with two fundamental axes: everything that's written in refusing the connection with the referent, with reality, implies a politics of individuation of the subject and of the object, of a turning of writing on itself, and by that puts itself in the service of all hierarchies, of all centralized systems of power, and of what Gilles Deleuze and I call all "arborescences," the regime of unifiable multiplicities. The second axis, in opposition to arborescence, is that of the "rhizome," the regime of pure multiplicities. It's what even innocent texts, even gratuitous games like those of the Dadaists, even collages, cut-ups, perhaps especially these things, will make it possible one day to reveal the pattern of similar breaks in reality, in the social field, and in the field of economic, cosmic, and other flows.

So sexual liberation is not going to rid us of political connections.

Sexual liberation is a mystification. I believe in, and will fight for, the taking of power by other castes and sexual systems, but I believe that liberation will occur when sexuality becomes desire, and desire is the freedom to be sexual, that is, to be something else at the same time.

How does one escape from this dilemma in which one caste replaces another?

What these liberation movements will reveal by their failures and difficulties is that there really aren't any castes. There's the possibility that society will reform itself through other types of subjective arrangements that are not based on individuals in constellation or on relations of power that communication institutes between speaker and listener. There will be arrangements, I don't know what, based neither on families, nor on communes, nor on groups, where the goals of life, politics, and work will always be conjugated with the analysis of unconscious relations, of relations of micropower, of microfascism. On the day when these movements fix as their goals not only the liberation of homosexuals, women, and children, but also the struggle against themselves in their constant power relations, in their relations of alienation, of repression against their bodies, their thoughts, their ways of speaking, then indeed, we will see another kind of struggle appear, another kind of possibility. The microfascist elements in all our relations with others must be found, because when we fight on the molecular level, we'll have a much better chance of preventing a truly fascist, a macrofascist formation on the molar level.

You and Deleuze often speak of Artaud, who wanted to rid us of masterpieces and perhaps even of written texts. Can one say that the written text already contains a form of microfascism?

No, because a written text can be lengthened. Graffiti in the street can be erased or added to. A written text can be contradictory, can be made into a palimpsest. It can be something extremely alive. What is much less alive is an *oeuvre* and Artaud himself did not write a work or a book. But then, one never writes a book. One picks up on books that have been written; one places oneself in a phylum. To write a book that wants to be an eternal and universal manual, yes, you're right; but to write after one thing and before another, that means participating in a chain, in a chain of love as well.

I'd like to return for a moment to what you said about desire and the problems of liberation. I think of people who might profit from that kind of formulation in order to circumvent the question of homosexuality and the specificity of this struggle, by saying that all that is just sexuality and that sexuality alone matters.

I'm very sympathetic to what you say. It's a bit like what they say to us regarding the struggle of the working class. I understand that, but I'd still like to give the same answer: it's up to the homosexuals. I'm not a worker or a homosexual. I'm a homosexual in my own way, but I'm not a homosexual in the world of reality or of the group.

Yes, but the theories one proposes on homosexuality are always important, and they are never innocent. Before writing Corydon, Gide read theories. Before writing La Recherche, Proust was totally aware of the psychological thought of his time. Even Genet was influenced after the fact by the theories of Sartre. Obviously, it's often writers themselves who are the first to see things that others transform into theories. I'm thinking of Dostoevsky, Proust, and, of course, Kafka. You've already begun to use your own theories to study the literature

of the past, and they are related perhaps to what may someday be called a "literature of desire." Writers, critics, and homosexuals have the choice of accepting or rejecting these theories, or of playing with them. But they can neither forget them nor ignore the words of moralists, psychoanalysts, and philosophers, certainly not today, and certainly not in France.

Right, I completely agree. It's truly a pollution. But in any case, what do you think of the few theoretical propositions I've advanced here? It's my turn to question you.

Judging your position by what you've said here and by what you've written, I think that you and Deleuze have seriously questioned Freud's system. You have turned our attention away from the individual and toward the group, and you have shown to what extent the whole Oedipal structure reflects our society's paranoia and has become an instrument for interiorizing social and political oppression. Also, I'd like to quote the following passage from Anti-Oedipus: "We are heterosexuals statistically or in molar terms, but homosexuals personally, whether we know it or not, and finally transsexuals elementarily, molecularly." I can't claim to understand fully this or other aspects of your theory, but you do show that the time has come to address ourselves to the question of sexuality in another way, and that's a kind of liberation.

Well, I want to tell those people who say "all that is sexuality" that they must go farther and try to see what in fact is the sexuality not only of the homosexual, but also of the sadomasochist, the transvestite, the prostitute, even the murderer, anyone for that matter, in order not to go in the direction of reassurance. They must see what a terrible world of repression they will enter.

Despite the passage from your work I just quoted, when you speak you often cite groups that are always outside the dominant field of heterosexuality.

For me desire is always "outside"; it always belongs to a minority. For me there is no heterosexual sexuality. Once there's heterosexuality, in fact, once there's marriage, there's no more desire, no more sexuality. In all my twenty-five years of work in this field I've never seen a heterosexual married couple that worked along a line of desire. Never. They don't exist. So don't say that I'm marginalizing sexuality with homosexuals, etc., because for me there is no heterosexuality possible.

Following the same logic there is no homosexuality possible.

In a sense yes, because in a sense homosexuality is counterdependent on heterosexuality. Part of the problem is the reduction of the body. It's the impossibility of becoming a totally sexed body. The sexed body is something that includes all perceptions, everything that occurs in the mind. The problem is how to sexualize the body, how to make bodies desire, vibrate—all aspects of the body.

There are still the fantasies each of us brings. That's often what's interesting in some homosexual writing—this expression of fantasies that are very specialized, very specific.

I don't think it's in terms of fantasies that things are played but in terms of representations. There are fantasies of representations. In desire there are semiotic flows of a totally different nature, including verbal flows. It's not fantasies; it's words, speech, rhythms, poetry. A phantasmal representation in poetry is never the essential thing, no more than is the content. Fantasy is always related to content.

What counts is expression, the way expression connects with the body. For example, poetry is a rhythm that transmits itself to the body, to perception. A fantasy when it operates does not do so as a fantasy that represents a content, but as something that puts us in motion, that brings out something that carries us away, that thaws us, that locks us onto something

Aren't there fantasies of form as well?

Fantasies of form, fantasies of expression, become in effect micro-fascistic crystallizations. This implies, for example, in scenes of power of a sadomasochistic character: "Put yourself in exactly this position. Follow this scenario so that it will produce in me such an effect." That becomes a kind of fantasy of form, but what counts there is not the application of the fantasy, it's the relation to the other person, it's complicity! Desire escapes from formal redundancies, escapes from power formations. Desire is not informed, informing; it's not information or content. Desire is not something that deforms but that disconnects, changes, modifies, organizes other forms, and then abandons them.

So, a literary text escapes all categorization as well as any sexuality that can be called one thing or another?

Take any literary work you love very much. Well, you will see that you love it because it is for you a particular form of sexuality or desire: I leave the term up to you. The first time I made love with Joyce while reading *Ulysses* was absolutely unforgettable. It was extraordinary. I made love with Kafka, and I think one can say that, truly.

Proust said it: "To love Balzac; to love Baudelaire." And he was speaking of a love that could not be reduced to any one definition.

Absolutely. And one doesn't make love in the same way with Joyce as with Kafka. If one began to make love in the same way, there would be reason to worry—one might be becoming a professor of literature.

Perhaps! Then literature can be a liberation of desire, and the text is a way of multiplying the sexes.

Certain texts, texts that work. Nothing can be done about those that don't work. But those that do function multiply our functioning. They turn us into madmen; they make us vibrate.