Introduction

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> Mesdames et Monsieurs,
> Bienvenue à bord de notre vol à destination
>
> to nowhere... to you... deep inside
>
> [...]
>
> Beachten sie den Orbit, Mondaufgang, Sternenstaub
> Beachten sie links und rechts ihre Nachbarn
>
> We are on the way to find you...
> so please forget who you are
>
> Nous vous remercions de choisir, choisir, choisir...[1]

Philosophy and politics

When Socrates took the poisoned cup, the uneasy relationship between philosophy and politics began. Hannah Arendt traces back this emerging split to the trial and conviction of Socrates.[2] Charged with subverting Athens' youth, Socrates was unable to prove his innocence. He tried to convince his accusers by engaging them in a philosophical dialogue, as a means of searching for truth. Sadly, the problem was that it is not possible to be convincing through philosophical truth, only with opinion (*doxa*), which is part of the political domain. Socrates' failure to win his case inspired Plato to search for eternal truths, which according to him should govern the polis (the philosopher as king), as opposed to the temporary truths of opinions. After Plato, however, philosophy became famously and notoriously apolitical. The moment Aristotle was threatened with a fate similar to Socrates, he left Athens, without feeling any responsibility for the polis. As Arendt states, the only thing that, philosophers demanded of politics for ages, was to have a space to protect their freedom of thought, and to be left alone.

From the French Revolution onwards, philosophy and politics regained mutual interest. Nineteenth century philosophers historically reinterpreted

the events of 1789-1814 in politically significant ways. After the Russian Revolution in 1917, and even more so after 1945, the term 'revolution' no longer referred to the past, but came to designate a project for the future. Many philosophers engaged in this political project, but for the most part did so unsuccessfully. In the twentieth century, the gap between theory and practice seemed to grow again. Philosophers who made the step to political action very often got trapped between their ideas and their concrete effects: powerlessness or tyranny. The starting points of this book emerge from precisely these two critiques of contemporary philosophy and cultural theory. According to Richard Rorty, the academic left in general has become powerless because it does not engage in 'real' politics. In particular, the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari has been accused by several critics of leading either to limitless individual freedom without leaving room for the social and political, or to elitist tyranny. As a film scholar and cultural theorist, I strongly felt the need to engage with these charges and critically reinvestigate the various relationships between theory and practice. Having worked with the ideas of Deleuze in the field of film studies, I felt that his work, and the work he created together with Guattari, could offer some solutions to these political impasses. However, it was necessary to inquire further into this initial intuition. The question 'what is it that we do as cultural theorists' was a central theme at an interdisciplinary symposium, 'The Politics of Gilles Deleuze', in Amsterdam.[3] A number of the articles in this book were first presented and discussed during these meetings. But, as Deleuze states, 'negotiations sometimes last so long you don't know whether they're still part of the war or the beginning of peace'.[4] This book presents a continuation of various negotiations between theory and practice, mediated by the work of Deleuze and Guattari. But before introducing the articles, let me briefly recall some of the main objections towards the relationship between politics, cultural theory and philosophy.

Most recently, Richard Rorty has been one of the important contemporary intellectuals who stirred up this unresolved issue once more. In *Achieving our Country* he deplores the fact that the intellectual left from the beginning of the twentieth century has changed from people who act into people who observe.[5] The academic left has permitted a shift from engaging in actual political life into a turn to spectatorial 'cultural politics'. This has made them powerless. There is no single academic, Rorty states, who has any policy plan to offer. While he acknowledges the merits and positive mentality changes that academics have been able to help establish in the last few decades (such as more equality for women, black people and gays), Rorty considers these changes of minor importance in respect to, for instance, continuing economic inequality. Rorty's main objection to the cul-

tural left is the cultural pessimism since the Vietnam War. If young intellectuals see a John Wayne movie after reading Foucault or even Neal Stephenson's *Snow Crash*, Rorty argues, they get the idea that America is a terrible, violent and corrupt country.[6] In fact, Rorty deplores the fact that a common nationalistic belief in the Dream Country is no longer part of intellectual life. He praises Dewey and Whitman for their attempt to see America as the paradigmatic self-creating democracy: 'To say the United States themselves are essentially the greatest poem is to say that America will create the taste by which it will be judged. It is to envisage our nation-state as both self-creating poet and self-created poem.'[7]

According to Rorty, the mistake of the cultural left is its theorizing of difference, which opposes a sense of commonality at the level of national politics. Rorty even glorifies the 'platoon' movies ('What do our differences matter, compared with our commonality as fellow Americans?') to illustrate this point.[8] He does not seem to mind that this 'platoon-feeling' in the Vietnam war could only be created by having a 'common', national enemy, nor does he seem to acknowledge that in many platoons commonality was not as strong as it appeared to be, as shown in Oliver Stone's PLATOON.

Another major objection that Rorty has against the academic left is the level of abstraction of many academic discourses. He gives the example of Fredric Jameson's *Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, which he thinks is a brilliant book. But after reading it, Rorty says, you know everything except what to do.[9] An abstract term that Rorty rejects is the Foucaultian concept of (invisible) power. When the right states that socialism has failed and that the only alternative is capitalism, the left has nothing to say, because it does not like to discuss concrete matters like money, Rorty argues.[10] Because of the emphasis on political action as such, without any acknowledgement of the many practical failures of the Left in the twentieth century, Rorty's proposal to the left to forget theory and start believing again in the American Dream is rather problematic.[11] Yet the question he asks about the relationship between cultural theory and practice remains a haunting one that invites further investigation.[12]

Contrary to Rorty, the Dutch philosopher Luuk van Middelaar does take into account the failures of political engagement of the intellectual left. In his book *Politicide* he takes a historical perspective on the relation between philosophy and politics.[13] Van Middelaar concentrates on twentieth century French philosophy, and argues that all contemporary French thinkers have made themselves guilty of 'politicide', even if they had open and strong political engagements, such as Sartre, for instance, who displayed the sort of political action that, according to Rorty, the academic left used to possess. Van Middelaar traces the *échec* of philosophy in respect to politics back to

one man, who influenced all famous French thinkers of the twentieth century, namely Alexandre Kojève. His courses on Hegel, Marx and later Nietzsche guaranteed the political impasses in generations of French thinkers. One group of thinkers that Van Middelaar distinguishes, among whom are neo-Kantians like Lyotard, try to reach a rational *post-political* world. They deny the impossible end of social conflict that constitutes society and consider politics as a stage that can be overcome. Their political engagement is moderate and has not much influence.

Another group, Existentialists and Nietzschean thinkers like Foucault and Deleuze, have systematically denied the specific nature of political power structures. According to Van Middelaar, they live in a *pre-political* world. With their call for resistance, these philosophers do not acknowledge the fact that the state, or the political power that they hate so profoundly because it interferes in social battles, has also created society and given conditions of freedom. The fact that their call for resistance can just as well lead to tyranny they seem to take for granted. Van Middelaar analyses Deleuze as the philosopher of 'sovereign desiring machines'. His objection to Deleuze's 'irresponsible and autonomous nomads' is twofold. On the one hand, these 'desiring machines' lead to an apology for tyranny, in that everybody, by strictly following their own desires, is invited to become a tyrant. On the other hand, Deleuze's philosophy would lead to political powerlessness: if there were no connection between all these 'desiring machines', this would lead to 'Five billion Robinson Crusoes, each King of their own islet'.[14]

Van Middelaar's overview of contemporary philosophy is brilliantly written; he puts his finger on several sore spots. However, his concise analysis of all the thinkers he mentions does not do justice to the complexities of their works, neither does it take into account the different meanings politics can produce. Although their critiques are very different and even opposed, and their solutions for intellectual political engagement as well,[15] Rorty and Van Middelaar seem to share a conception of politics in terms of policy plans, economic measurements and governmental organization. Their definition of politics seems to be an important indication for investigating the possible political significance of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy.

'Making the future different from the past': redescriptions, planes and thresholds

When they talk about politics as such, Deleuze and Guattari do not just refer to policy plans and political organizations. They distinguish three political

lines: the molar line, the molecular line and the line of flight.[16] These different 'lines' form a complex political network (of individuals and groups, within individuals and groups). The molar line is the line of 'the binary machine', the line on which the world is divided into binary oppositions: man/woman, adult/child, public/private, white/black. It is the line that Deleuze identifies most with representational thinking, in which identity is always formed on the basis of molar oppositions. It is also the line that organizes society in segments, strata and separate 'institutes'. It is on this level that the kind of political action Rorty and van Middelaar talk about takes place. However, Deleuze and Guattari's theory also concerns the two other lines. The molecular line works on a more invisible level: the private thoughts one can have about certain structures in society form the cracks in the system of the molar line. The line of flight is where the system really cracks, and a break is inevitable. All lines have their own internal dangers (rigid codification, microfascism and self-destruction). Always operating at the same time, these lines form complex networks of conscious and unconscious political activities.

In his book *Deleuze and the Political*, Paul Patton states that there is indeed much in *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* that could lead to the conclusion that Deleuze and Guattari are simply anti-State and hence anti-political, as does Van Middelaar when describing desiring machines as leading to tyrannical little islands.[17] From certain passages in these books, one could conclude that Deleuze and Guattari's desiring machines are 'social suicide machines' or that Deleuze and Guattari oppose the capturing and territorializing State (bad) to the deterritorializing lines of flight (good). However, Patton argues, there are many other elements in Deleuze and Guattari's mature political philosophy which disallows a simplistic anti-political point of view: 'First, the axioms of the capitalist social machine do not simply repress a natural state of free and undirected social existence. They are also constitutive of new social forces and forms of life. Deleuze and Guattari are not romantic anarchists who believe in the realm of social being beyond the subjection to political power. It would be an error, they argue, "to take a disinterested stance toward struggle on the level of the axioms".[18] Furthermore, to look only at the molar level of politics and the act of translating theoretical concepts directly into political actions does not do justice to both the complexity and variation of each theoretical concept nor to the indirect relationship between molar politics and micropolitics.

Of course, one can object, as does Rorty, that this indirect relationship is precisely what the cultural left has offered over the last decades, and which Rorty thinks is insufficient (politically powerless). In the article opening this book 'Redescriptive Philosophy: Deleuze and Guattari's Critical Pragma-

tism', Patton takes up this question by explicitly addressing Rorty and re-examining the role of philosophy. Patton argues that Rorty's pragmatism has in fact a lot in common with the work of Deleuze and Guattari. Both Rorty and Deleuze and Guattari emphasize the functional, non-representative role of texts and meaning. They also share a conception of philosophy as 'the fabrication of intellectual tools rather than the attainment of truth'. Like Rorty, Deleuze abandons the idea that philosophical descriptions of the world can or should converge on a unique or 'true' theory. Patton argues that Deleuze's method of transcendental empiricism, according to which 'what problems there are is an open question to be answered by the set of problems thrown up by history, social life or by the development of particular sciences,' is entirely consistent with Rorty's historicism.

In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari elaborate on the characteristics of a philosophical concept. The concept, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is never exhausted by the actual state of affairs, rather it is 'the contour of an event to come'. What is important, according to Patton, is the act of describing the events; they help to actualize particular events in a social field. Deleuze and Guattari see the invention of concepts as a means of creating new descriptions and therefore new possibilities for (political) action. They agree with Marx and Rorty that the political or even utopian job of philosophers is 'to help make the future different from the past'. Deleuze and Guattari provide a series of new concepts, such as the Body without Organs, becoming-minoritarian, (de)territorializations and many more, which can function effectively in a given social and political context.

The difference between Rorty and Deleuze is, according to Patton, the difference between complacent and critical pragmatism. For Rorty, redescriptive philosophy is a private affair that can have no bearing on public and political life. However, the invention of new concepts and new forms of description have certainly contributed to public attitudes and, as a result, eventually to changes in the law and public institutions. Patton concludes that in their common goal of freedom (instead of truth), Rorty believes freedom is to be reached within the framework of democratic society. Deleuze, on the other hand, talks about critical freedom that is our way of 'responding to what is tolerable', which is historically determined and changeable. It involves making choices that can change one's life. Redescription, made possible by the invention of new concepts, contributes to such local and specific ways in which the future will be unlike the past, be it for personal or collective 'assemblages'.[19] In *Deleuze and the Political*, Patton suggests that the 'sudden shift towards another quality of life or towards a life which is lived at another degree of intensity is one possible outcome of what they call a line of flight. It is on this kind of line that critical freedom is manifest.'[20] He

adds that according to the different choices made, the individual's capacity to affect and be affected may change and give rise to what Deleuze and Guattari call 'becomings'. It is precisely because Deleuze and Guattari develop so many concepts that deal with micro-movements that determine our actions on an invisible level that their work is easily misunderstood.

While Paul Patton demonstrates the way in which philosophy is political in helping 'make the future different from the past' by creating new concepts and descriptions, Catherine M. Lord in the second article, 'The Lady Sits Between Two Long Windows, Writing', emphasizes the transformative power an encounter with art can have. More specifically, she rereads Virginia Woolf's *The Waves* with a clear question, namely the question of how theory passes into art. In Deleuze's famous conversation with Foucault, 'Intellectuals and Power', Deleuze suggests that we are in the process of experiencing a new relationship between theory and practice: 'A theorizing intellectual, for us, is no longer a subject, a representing or representative consciousness. Those who act and struggle are no longer represented, either by a group or a union that appropriates the right to stand as their conscience. Who speaks and acts? All of us are "groupuscules." Representation no longer exists; there is only action – theoretical action and practical action which serve as relays and forms of networks.'[21] In order to see how 'theoretical action' can be redefined, Lord investigates the relation between cultural theory and artistic practice, between the work of philosophers and artists, with the help of the conceptual tools offered by Deleuze and Guattari in *What is Philosophy?*.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy and art move on different planes, the plane of immanence and the plane of composition, occupied by concepts and conceptual personae and by percepts, affects and aesthetic figures. The two planes can encounter each other at several thresholds, where philosophy and art start to 'pass into each other'. In *The Waves* there is a figure, a lady writing, who seems to appear and disappear between the Deleuzian planes. Lord takes this figure, which passes from aesthetic figure to conceptual persona and back again, as her guide to disclose the secrets of such an 'experience of a new relationship between theory and practice'. From her poetical analysis it becomes clear that practice can no longer be considered an application of theory, neither can it be seen as the inspiration of theory. As Deleuze has indicated, these types of relationships are totalizing processes. The new relationship of theory and practice is far more partial, fragmentary and local.[22] Lord demonstrates that what is interdisciplinary may turn out to be the 'interdisci-planary' or even the 'transdisci-planary'. The moments in *The Waves* when self-reflection (of the characters) turns into self-reflexion (of the literary process) are the moments where one

plane passes into the other. These are also the moments where becomings take place: 'the multiplicities of winds, faces, hails, rains, noises, loves, into which subjects would become.' Lord offers a new perspective on the relationship between theory and practice: 'Between philosophy and aesthetic production, the lady offers this new threshold for the future: cultural analysis as art.'

Deleuze and Guattari distinguish yet another plane that can open up to new experiences and new thoughts, that is, the plane of reference and of science. Art, philosophy and science can 'extract from chaos the shadow of "the people to come"', hence their political potential. And where philosophy, art and science become undecidable, they share this 'shadow of a people to come'.[23] In her article 'Sharing Technologies: Thought and Movement in Dancing', Maaike Bleeker is also concerned with interactions or movements between planes, using the theoretical metaphor of dance. Her question concerns thought itself. In order to investigate what is new in thinking, it is useful to look at how thought constitutes itself on the three different planes, by concepts, by percepts and affects, and by figures. On all planes, in order to think, some movement is necessary. Bleeker therefore considers three 'duets'. The first one is performed by Deleuze and Guattari; the second one is a literal duet, the choreography WHEN YOU SEE GOD TELL HIM, by dancers Itzik Galili and Jennifer Hanna; the third duet is by cognitive scientists Lakoff and Johnson, who present metaphor as a model to trace the movement of thought. By confronting these three duets, Bleeker is able to open new spaces where thought can move in different ways. The conceptual metaphor 'argument is war', for instance, both enables us to understand arguments in terms of war and prescribes how we can do so. To think of 'argument as dance' gives a new perspective on argument and all kinds of other relationships. By confronting Lakoff and Johnson's scientific figure with an aesthetic figure of a dancer (that itself passes on to the philosophical plane of immanence), Bleeker demonstrates how also the plane of reference and our knowledge starts to shift. She analyses how in the performance the dancers become friends, who set into motion the movement between them and in thinking, always moving between the three planes. In this way, Bleeker demonstrates why 'philosophy needs a non-philosophy that comprehends it, [...] just as art needs non-art and science needs non-science.'[24] Only in that way can a conception be productive.

After having seen the philosopher as writer and as dancer, Eva Jørholt presents us with a philosopher as filmmaker David Cronenberg. In her article, 'The Metaphor Made Flesh', she analyses the political and philosophical potentiality of David Cronenberg's horror movies. Jørholt makes clear what happens when philosophy, art and science meet in cinema. In looking at the

visuality and sensuality of thought, Jørholt's approach is comparable to the interdisci-planary analysis of Lord and the dancing interdisciplinarity of Bleeker. Jørholt starts with a quote from David Cronenberg in which he states that by comparing imagination to disease, he hopes to illuminate some aspect of human imagination that perhaps has never been perceived before. Cronenberg's films are full of bodies that are 'out of control'. His characters are constantly seeking to invent themselves and their own lives by transgressing the boundaries of their bodily organisms. The fact that these attempts of physical and mental auto-invention usually end in disaster does not prevent the 'glimpses of utopian freedom' that Cronenberg's films offer.

Cronenberg refers to his films as 'existential drama', and the idea of 'auto-invention' would make philosophical existentialism a logic partner in dialogue with Cronenberg's films. However, Jørholt argues, the fact that Cronenberg does not consider the body as a stable centre for being in the world, but on the contrary considers it as changeable matter, means Cronenberg has more in common with Deleuze's philosophy. There is one particular Deleuzian concept that offers many points of convergence and mutual illumination: the Body without Organs. In fact, the Body without Organs is not so much a concept as a practice, something to be attained without ever reaching it. The Body without Organs can be considered as a desire producing machine, where the body (be it an individual body or any other body or 'corporation') goes beyond its traditionally defined borders of the organism. All Cronenberg's films present such bodies and spectators are invited to think new thoughts, to perceive new sensations: for instance, to become a cell in a body and to be capable of experiencing life from the cell's point of view. Jørholt pays special attention to Cronenberg's EXISTENZ. This film is constructed as a computer game and asks questions about blurring the boundaries between 'real' and 'fiction'. Not only is this film 'populated' by Bodies without Organs, but also the battle that goes on between the game players and the 'realists' demonstrates why art can have a political impact. Like Salman Rushdie, Cronenberg's main character (a computer game designer) in EXISTENZ is on the run because of a fatwa against her from the 'realists'. Jørholt quotes Cronenberg's commentary: 'Art is a scary thing to a lot of people because it shakes your understanding of reality, or shapes it in ways that are socially unacceptable.'

Modern utopia and the links with the epoch: capitalism and cinema

With the reference to 'the socially unacceptable', Cronenberg points to another way in which philosophy is political, which is its modern utopian vocation. Utopia and utopianism has always been a political issue. Before 1800 Utopia meant a sort of static blueprint for an ideal but far away future society. After 1800 Utopia no longer meant a perfect society, but a slow change to a better society (making the future different from the past). Since May '68, utopian ideas are mostly presented as a critical way of thinking, in which it is no longer the future that is at stake but the present. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari state indeed 'that utopia is what links philosophy with its own epoch. It is with this understanding of utopia that philosophy becomes political in taking the criticism of its own time to its highest point.'[25] If we now move from the possibilities for the future (new thoughts, new sensibilities, new actions) to the present moment and look at contemporary society, we cannot avoid talking about capitalism. Obviously, almost every aspect of contemporary life is permeated by capitalism. And, as Rorty rightly suggests, the 'academic left' should not leave money matters to the right. Deleuze and Guattari, once more, agree with Rorty on this point in stating that any political philosophy should be centered on an analysis of capitalism. In *What is Philosophy?* they emphasize once more the scope of capitalism: 'A world market extends to the ends of the earth before passing into the galaxy: even the skies become horizontal.'[26]

In her article 'Micropolitics: A Political Philosophy from Marx and Beyond', Malene Busk investigates Deleuze's criticism of the epoch, and hence his analysis of capitalism. Busk first exposes the specific form of 'society of control' which capitalism today has taken. She then investigates in what ways Deleuze is an heir to Marx. The most important aspect of Marx's theory that Deleuze takes over is his idea of capitalism as an immanent system that constantly overcomes its own limits. Capitalism and philosophy, according to Deleuze, are thus both immanent systems. Both Marx and Deleuze argue that the conceptual apparatus they develop should be at the same time a presentation as well as critique of the system. Where Marx and Deleuze diverge is in their conception of Utopia. According to Deleuze, the no-where of Utopia is just as well a now-here. Therefore, Deleuze does not believe in a Revolution, but in a 'becoming-revolutionary of a people' that is available to everybody at any moment in the passing present. Deleuze's micropolitical philosophy then diverges in some significant ways from Marx's theory: Marx's contradictions become 'lines of flight'; the Party is re-

placed by 'war machines' and classes turn into 'minorities'. All Deleuzian terms point to the micropolitical idea that 'beliefs and desires are at the basis of every society'. However, as has been said before, all these micropolitical movements are in constant negotiations with macropolitical segmentations: 'molecular escapes and movements would be nothing if they did not return to the molar organizations to reshuffle their segments, their binary distributions of sexes, classes, and parties,' say Deleuze and Guattari.[27] A 'war machine', for instance, can be the jurisprudence that slowly has its effects on constitutional law.[28] However, Busk reminds us of Deleuze's observation that philosophy in itself is not a power. As Deleuze states in *Negotiations*: 'Philosophy isn't a Power. [...] Not being a power, philosophy cannot battle with the powers that be, but it fights a war without battles, a guerilla campaign against them. [... It] can only negotiate.'[29]

Another important aspect of the epoch, very strongly related to capitalism, is the audiovisual 'nature' of contemporary society. Images and sounds are not only increasingly dominant in contemporary life; they also have shifted from a marginal place at the periphery of economy and culture at large to the centre of the 'network society', as Manuel Castells calls contemporary culture.[30] Having seen in what way Deleuze constructs an immanent system of both philosophy and capitalism, it can now be noted that also cinema is an immanent system of images and sounds, according to Deleuze. In his two cinema books, *The Movement-Image* and *The Time-Image*, Deleuze has presented the building blocks of this audiovisual system by giving numerous formal concepts and categories with which to describe cinematographic material.[31] All the articles that deal with cinema in this book do not directly engage with the formal aspects of the cinema books.[32] Rather, they try to see how Deleuze and Guattari's political concepts can be put to work in specific films. I will come back to this point in the last section of this introduction. In my own contribution 'Glamour and Glycerine: Surplus and Residual of the Network Society', I aim to establish what the status of cinema and audiovisual culture at large is in respect to capital. Films like THE NET could be seen as examples of our contemporary capitalist society of control. However, this representative conception of cinema as a reflection of society is not sufficient to establish the importance of audiovisual culture today. Our culture has become a 'culture of real virtuality', as Castells call it. As 'real virtuality' audiovisual images have moved to the centre of society and culture. Here its relationship to capital has become so profound that capital realizes itself as cinema. Forming an immanent system with capital, cinema therefore is also the place where capital can be 'deterritorialized'. By looking at two examples of contemporary culture in which both audiovisual media and capitalism are of key importance, Bret Easton Ellis' *Glamorama* and David Fincher's

FIGHT CLUB, I try to see how Deleuze and Guattari's immanent concepts of capitalism can be used to describe this system of capital/cinema, while at the same time criticizing it. Capitalism produces and maintains itself, and at the same time it produces anti-production, what Deleuze and Guattari call 'schizophrenization'. *Glamorama* and FIGHT CLUB demonstrate how surplus ('glamour') and residual ('glycerine') are some of the ingredients that keep on circulating the schizo-flows that run through our capitalist/audiovisual society. One of the questions that is raised by Fincher's film is where 'critical freedom' and 'breaking away' turn into 'unfreedom'. This is a question that can only be dealt with at a micropolitical level, for which Deleuze gives no answers, but conceptual tools.

The next article, 'Is Bess a Bike?' also deals with capitalism and cinema. Frans-Willem Korsten looks at the mixed feelings in the reception of Lars von Trier's film BREAKING THE WAVES. He acknowledges the feminist critiques on the film that conceived the main female character, Bess, as a stereotypical example of female passivity and masochism. However, Korsten pleads for looking at the film from more perspectives. One possible other lens through which to read Bess' sacrificial behaviour is an intertextual resonance with a Dutch Medieval story that makes clear that Bess' action is not just an act of self-destruction, but also an attempt to break free. As becomes clear from the intertextual resonance, the thing that allows her to break free is faith. At another level, BREAKING THE WAVES invites an encounter with Jesus, the next 'screen' of references that Korsten elaborates. There is also the terror of capitalism and the family that put Bess' behaviour in a different light. Finally, Korsten argues that by prostituting herself Bess becomes a 'motor program of experimentation'. Bess's face, populated with intensities, becomes a Body without Organs. Bess starts to produce a schizophrenic surplus of meaning (and has nothing to do with passivity), believing that her actions will save her husband Jan. By producing a BwO, Bess' face becomes an image of combat; a combat of breaking away with the judgement of God that was capturing her. Finally, on a meta-level of the film production itself, by sentimentalizing old (melodramatic) values and bringing new ones into existence, Von Trier has resurrected Hollywood's capital and changed it at the same time, thus fitting in perfectly with the immanent system of capital/cinema of contemporary society.

What to do with Deleuze in daily life and in cyberspace?

The next two articles deal with a very practical level of engagement with Deleuze. In 'Holy Fools: Revolutionary Elitism in Cyberspace' Richard Barbrook is very critical of the legacy of Deleuze and Guattari on the net. According to Barbrook, in cyberspace a lot of TJ's ('theory jockeys') use *A Thousand Plateaus* to provide buzzwords: 'rhizome' comes to signify any non-hierarchical network and the Body without Organs equals cyber-sex. Besides this, the libertarianism of the Sixties is eerily transformed into what Barbrook calls 'the Californian Ideology' of magazines like *Wired*. In this way 'Deleuzoguattarians' expose the weaknesses of *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. At least if we take Deleuze and Guattari as the romantic 'anarcho-communists' as Barbrook considers them to be. In this way Barbrook points to a few problematic aspects and effects of the heritage of Deleuze and Guattari that cannot be denied, as in for instance the impossibility of directly translating theory into practice.[33] Barbrook takes the failed experience of community radio, set up by Guattari in the early Eighties, as his representative example (that he then connects to Stalin and Pol Pot). It turned out that radio *Fréquence Libre* was not as liberal as it was intended: Guattari was more interested in lecturing his audience than in giving them direct access to the ether. Even lyrics of hip-hop songs had to be screened before airing. Barbrook reproaches Deleuze and Guattari for this avantguardistic elitism, which is precisely what has also been so problematically taken over by 'the Californian Ideology', albeit in a twisted neo-liberal version. Another reason why the community radio failed is because Guattari did not raise enough cash, because no commercial compromise could be made. Besides elitism, this 'purism' is the second disadvantage of Deleuzoguattarianism which, according to Barbrook, does not aid in understanding the non-hierarchical mixed practice and hi-tech gift-economy of the Net.

Barbrook signals a similar kind of 'politicide' in the work of Deleuze and Guattari as does Luuk van Middelaar. Both are very right in pointing out the real dangers of philosophy that enters practical life. However, both van Middelaar and Barbrook also have a rather one-dimensional view of the work of Deleuze and Guattari.[34] Although Barbrook certainly is right that elitism and purism can lead to rather disastrous effects in practice, Deleuze was very well aware of the end of the vanguardistic role of the intellectual.[35] He also has a far more complex view of capitalism, the role of the state and all the complex layers of interaction between theory and practice and between different 'political lines', and indeed, more so than is often suggested.

Furthermore, his concepts of creativity, becoming and revolution are meant for everybody. The pitfalls occur when these are taken to be an elitist 'representative' privilege, as does happen on some Net sites.

In the next article, 'How to Endure Intensity? Towards a Sustainable Nomadic Subject', Rosi Braidotti looks at another charge against Deleuze and Guattari, namely the objection of relativism and moral nihilism often made against nomadic views of subjectivity. She investigates the very concrete implications for daily life and social relations of Deleuze's philosophy. Nomadic becoming or rhizomatics is essentially an ethics of transformative forces and intensities, argues Braidotti. It is a view on subjectivity that demands the possibility of change and at the same time the 'stability' of endurance. Empowering change can occur by an imaginative investment of reason and by an aesthetic mode of 'absolute immersion of one's sensibility into the field of forces – music, color, light, speed, temperature, intensity, which one is attempting to capture'. It involves creation. And creation, Braidotti states, has different aspects. It is technological: it is about how. It is also geological: it is about where and in which territory. Ultimately, it is ethical: it is about where to set the limits and how to sustain the process of change without hurting self or other. It is especially this ethical question that Braidotti investigates more profoundly in her article.

In order to transform and change, in order to empower the actualization of virtual possibilities in the subject, memory needs imagination: some self-creation and self-invention are needed, albeit not necessarily a self-created poem of a complete Utopian Dream such as Rorty's country. Rather, one should think of micro-movements of change and creative transformation in aesthetic practice. One could recognize here the 'powers of the false' and the importance of fabulation in modern political cinema that Deleuze mentions in *The Time-Image* and that I will discuss in the next section.[36] Furthermore, contrary to some 'escape velocities'[37] that are promised in cyber-culture, Braidotti emphasizes the 'threshold of sustainability' that is necessary to find in nomadic subjectivity. According to her, the very pragmatic observation of 'I can't take it anymore' is an ethical energetic statement. With this ethical observation, the political moment of 'critical freedom' as discussed by Paul Patton is also possible.[38] Braidotti concentrates on the ethical implications. She suggests that instead of moral judgements of all kinds, the ethical (and again very pragmatic) 'what ever gets you through the day' is very important. Braidotti pleads for a less moralistic and conceptually more rigorous public debate of all problematic social issues of today. 'Whatever gets you through the day' can then be a tool to frame our thresholds of sustainability and change, both on the individual and the social level.

Becoming-minoritarian and the modern political film

Braidotti demonstrates that 'becoming' is at the heart of a Deleuzian ethics. It is also at the heart of the politics of Deleuze and Guattari. The last three articles of this book all deal more specifically with this concept. Paola Marrati analyses the problem of 'majority' and 'minority' implicated in any becoming. Sasha Vojkovic and Laleen Jayamanne both investigate how these concepts can be operative in films that deal with 'minority' positions. Paola Marrati argues in her article 'Against the Doxa: Politics of Immanence or Becoming-Minoritarian' that in one respect Deleuze has remained a Platonist, namely in his fight against opinion and common sense. Although Deleuze does not look for eternal truths or dreams of a state where the philosopher is king, he does see a breaking with the *doxa* as the ultimate philosophical and political vocation. For Deleuze this takes the shape of a struggle against the dominant image of thought that is governed by representation. According to Marrati, this critique of representation is the background to Deleuze's politics of becoming. Marrati investigates this critique of representation in the way in which it is implied in the concept of 'majority'. She then goes on to argue that the concept of 'becoming-minoritarian' creates a form of universality that is antagonistic to any representative politics. According to Deleuze a majority can never have any representative value. Not only because such a concept is not primarily defined by quantitative criteria, but also because it is a model that represents Nobody; it is an empty model. However, the emptiness of the majoritarian model is not a universal emptiness. The universal concerns everybody. And it is this kind of 'universalism' that is at work in processes of becoming where the ultimate end is a becoming-everything, a becoming-world. All processes of becoming are becoming-minoritarian and thus political: 'the shared deterritorialization and the asymmetrical movements implied by becoming must be understood in relation to the analysis of the majority as an empty model.' Contrary to Barbrook, Marrati argues that the philosopher, therefore, can represent no-one, he can only enter in a 'zone of indiscernability' with the non-philosopher and thus become-other, in the hope that something new (a thought, a sensation, a resistance to what's intolerable, 'a people') will come out of it. Becoming is always a double movement of proximity, not an invitation from an elite position to follow.

With the critique on representation, one can also ask what the consequences can be for political cinema. It is known that with his cinema books, Deleuze also develops a theory of images that goes beyond the idea of cinema as representation. The full implications of a different theory of the im-

age are beyond the scope of this book. However, the question of representation is of course very important in considering 'political cinema' (however broadly that may be defined). In *The Time-Image* Deleuze specifically addresses the question of political cinema.[39] He distinguishes the classical political film from the modern political film. In classical political films, like BIRTH OF A NATION (Griffith, 1915) or the Russian Revolution films of Eisenstein and Pudovkin, there is always a Nation, the People, the Common Good. In modern political films, the people no longer exist, or does not yet exist: 'the people is missing'. The People has become a multiplicity of people. At best, Deleuze argues, the people is a becoming, when it is inventing itself in the suburbs and the ghettos. And all a modern political film can do is contribute to this becoming. Fragmentation and disintegration, the explosion of all unity, is therefore characteristic for the modern political film (and for contemporary political reality). There is a lot of internal violence within the different groups, which brings about a strong feeling of intolerance and impossibility.

The second difference between the classical and the modern film deals with the distinction between private and public and is related to this feeling of impossibility. In the classical political film there is still a border between private and public or political life. In the modern political film the private is immediately politically engaged. Connected to this is the fact that revolution (the change from one political belief to another, mediated by private consciousness) seems no longer possible; the modern political film is based on a feeling of the impossible and the intolerable. When Revolution is no longer possible, all that is left is a 'becoming-revolutionary'. The last characteristic of the modern political film is that it is not a place of representation (as was the classic political film, where the goals and aims of the People are represented) but a space of fabulation and 'powers of the false', an invention of the people in stories and myths that is self-creative. Cinema, seen in this perspective, can therefore be considered as comprising speech-acts.[40] They have (per)formative and hence political power, to invite becoming of all sorts, and hence to help a becoming-revolutionary, by definition minoritarian, of 'a people to come'.

However, the question of 'becoming-minoritarian' is not a straightforward process. Although virtually it is available at any moment for everybody, in certain actual historical circumstances it might not be the best political solution, as Sasha Vojkovic argues in her article 'SCHINDLER'S LIST and the Facing of History: The Return of the Promised Land'. Vojkovic analyses Spielberg's film SCHINDLER'S LIST while looking at the specific 'regimes of signs', territories and (de)territorial movements. She uses the concepts from *A Thousand Plateaus* of the four signifying systems (the signi-

fying regime, the presignifying regime, the countersignifying semiotic and the postsignifying regime) to analyse how these regimes, as a mixed semiotic which is always the complexity of any semiotic system, function in SCHINDLER'S LIST and in respect to Jewish history. According to Vojkovic, the film problematizes the Jewish subject as exemplary of an ethnic group existing without/on an impossible territory. Since semiotics, or 'giving face' is always related to the question of territory, Vojkovic proposes a 'pragmatics of territoriality' of the film. The three 'lines of action' in the film, the line of Oscar Schindler, the line of the Jews, and the line of the Nazis, are defined by different territories. By tracing the different movements on and between these territories, Vojkovic analyses the complexities of the mixed semiotic. Becomings, in this case deterritorializations, are not always positive here. The Nazi regime is a despotic regime of the sign. It deterritorializes the 'scapegoat', the Jewish people, for whom this deterritorialization ('effacing', becoming-animal) is a negative line of flight. Reterritorialization, in the Promised Land, is therefore the only possibility of overcoming deportation and ghettoization. It is only once the arrival at the Promised Land is attained that the concept of deterritorialization needs to be reconsidered because the semiotic machines keep on moving; being a 'minority' is never a guarantee for becomings and new possibilities for the future. Vojkovic demonstrates that by offering a 'screen on which the face of history is mapped out', SCHINDLER'S LIST reminds us of how we have to review and negotiate our cultural present in order to find a zone of 'positive and absolute' deterritorialization, which is not possible at all moments. In as far as the film presents a people, the Schindler Jews represent a strong part of Jewish history, and Spielberg relies a lot on the mythical and biblical past. One could consider SCHINDLER'S LIST as a classic political film. As such it raises all the problems of representation, but functions nevertheless as a speech act that can have political impact in renegotiating the past and the present in order to create a future.

In the last article 'Forty Acres and a Mule Filmworks', Laleen Jayamanne also takes up the issue of the territory in relation to minorities and becomings. Fascinated by the aesthetic investment of the real Brooklyn location (to the point were it looks artificial) where Spike Lee's film DO THE RIGHT THING is shot, Jayamanne investigates the way in which this film is preoccupied with aesthetics. DO THE RIGHT THING has all the characteristics of a modern political film, but rather than talking about the strong polemic moments and the much discussed violence, Jayamanne looks at the preoccupation with aesthetics that is presented in this film. The many non-eventful moments in the film introduce a variety of tones, moods, temperatures and rhythms that have much more 'molecular' effects; small gestures break

the sense of sensory-motor rhythms of ordinary action scenes. Jayamanne focuses on the role of Public Enemy's 'Fight the Power' by considering it as the refrain of DO THE RIGHT THING. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari consider the refrain as a territory marker. Considering the recurring rhythms of 'Fight the Power' as a refrain, the film gains a transformative force, both creative and destructive. As Jayamanne demonstrates, 'Fight the Power' occurs at the beginning and end of the film in a non-diegetic way, whereas in the film it is audible ten times, always blasting out of Radio Raheem's boom box, moving through the film like a moving sonic block, territorial motif or 'rhythmic character' that eventually reaches its stone wall and breaks in the final fight. However, Jayamanne suggests, the little improvised rhyme between Sal and Mookie, the day after the riot, gives in a very fragile way an opening to establish some equilibrium in the midst of terrible chaos, and hence the possibility for the creation of new sensibilities, maybe a 'new people to come' on a cross-cultural plane. With her aesthetic analysis of Lee's film, Jayamanne makes clear how a song can create a territory and how a film can be a speech act with micropolitical power.

The articles in this book interconnect at various points. In some cases I have indicated some connecting or negotiating moments in editor's notes. Of course, many other moments of dialogue are possible as well. I have chosen to emphasise the interdisciplinary character of this anthology by *not* ordering the articles by discipline. Rather, in the order of the articles, there is a theoretical and conceptual movement in thought from a more meta-theoretical level, to the level of engaging with the contemporary epoch of capital/cinema, and finally to looking at the most micro-political level of becoming. This movement in thought is reflected in the three sections that group the articles. At the same time these sections indicate the different temporal relations that the political and utopian vocation of theory can have. The articles in Section One 'Meta-Theory: The Future and the Past' deal with questions of 'how to make the future different from the past'. The fourth article in this section, Eva Jørholt's article on the cinema of David Cronenberg, makes a connection with the present, which is the temporal space of the next set of articles. In Section Two 'Engaging in the Present', utopia is defined in respect to a critical engagement with the present. In these articles the present is discussed with respect to capitalism, cinema, cyberspace and daily life. The articles in Section Three 'Micropolitical Becoming: Duration and Change', in dealing with becoming, are located in the ever escaping time of duration where everything always changes and the present is eluded.[41] This kind of time then could be seen as yet another temporal relation to 'utopia': here the complete opposite of the traditional idea of Utopia as a fixed blue-

print for society has been reached. No Utopia ('nowhere') can be reached forever, since the 'now here' is always mobile and transforming. In becoming, every territorialization implies possible deterritorializations and reterritorializations.

As is argued in this book, cinema and audiovisual media in general are a central concern for contemporary culture. In its immanent link with capital, audiovisual culture is the one of the most important areas from which to (re)describe, engage with and escape from contemporary culture. And as we know from Deleuze and Guattari, this can only be done in a schizophrenic way, working from within the system, producing and 'anti-producing' at the same time. Contrary to what may be expected, however, most of the articles that deal with audiovisual media do not so much tackle Deleuze's books on cinema. Although the cinema books are very important in that they offer theoretical tools to look at images from an immanent formal perspective, these formal and aesthetic concepts of the cinema books are not addressed. Instead, this anthology tries to read in a rhizomatic way the more political concepts developed by Deleuze and Guattari together in *Anti-Oedipus*, *A Thousand Plateaus* and *What is Philosophy?* to film and other contemporary issues.[42] This is because the question implicitly or explicitly addressed by all articles in this anthology is that of whether and in which respects Deleuze and Guattari offer any useful concepts to bridge the gap between theory and practice.

From the several critiques on philosophy's direct and mostly failed engagements, it is clear that we cannot ask the philosopher nor the artist nor the scientist to write a policy plan, as is suggested by Rorty. All too often this has led to 'politicide' and elitist tyranny, as is demonstrated by Van Middelaar and Barbrook. Philosophers should invent new concepts in order to redescribe the world and create new possibilities for the future. Theory should be seen as a 'practice of theory' in which it is very important that art, science and philosophy mutually illuminate their specific effects. The analysis of the current epoch, by emphasizing both the immanence of capitalism and the centrality of audiovisual media that function as speech acts, is another area where theory can become political. With the many concepts that Deleuze and Guattari have invented, it has become clear that 'politics' in contemporary society really takes place at the microlevel of beliefs and desires. It is this invisible level that is most important in a culture that at the same time increasingly depends on the visible, to the point where 'capital becomes cinema'. It is also for this reason that the micro- and macropolitics keep on influencing each other continuously, always moving and changing, demanding that everybody always be alert. All theory and philosophy can do is to give tools to sharpen our perceptions and sensibilities for grasping

the complexities of the various political lines that constitute the individual and the social. With this modest mission it might be possible to see where philosophy and politics can meet again, without the risk of passing round 'a poisoned chalice'.

Section One

Meta-theory:
The Future and the Past