

our desire for fascism (and for democracy)

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INTRODUCTION

The point of this paper is to develop a way of thinking about fascism that is useful in our current context. The paper is not another analysis of the historical manifestations of fascism, like Mussolini, Franco, or Hitler.¹ It is also not a contribution to the debates about the surge of fascism over the last ten years or so.² Instead, the paper focuses its attention on something closer to what Umberto Eco calls “Ur-Fascism, or Eternal Fascism.”³ “Political regimes can be overthrown, and ideologies can be criticized and disowned,” Eco says, but “behind a regime and its ideology there is always a way of thinking and feeling, a group of...obscure

instincts and unfathomable drives.”⁴ This paper examines this way of thinking and feeling, these obscure instincts and unfathomable drives. It sheds light on the undercurrent that is Eternal, the stream that runs through all manifestations of fascism. Its aim is to understand the forces in our collective human psyche that give rise to fascism. Taking my cue from the collaborative work of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, I call these psychic forces “our desire for fascism.”

The bulk of the paper, in fact, is a close analysis of Deleuze and Guattari’s explorations in our desire for fascism. These explorations certainly do not amount to scientific claims about human political psychology that the reader should expect to be substantiated empirically. What they are instead is an evolving cluster of generative philosophical propositions about the desire for fascism. They prompt us to think about fascism, I argue, in bright new ways, in ways that I think are *useful* in our present political context. The paper’s core mission is to draw out of Deleuze and Guattari’s work a way to understand fascism that can help us think more clearly about what is to be done, politically, today. Its core method is exegesis. Most of the paper is taken up by an interpretation of how Deleuze and Guattari understand the desire for fascism. I intend for this interpretation to be both rigorous and creative. I aim for it to bring “forward something new and useful to our own purposes,” as Deleuze scholars Ian Buchanan⁵ and Rosi Braidotti⁶ have urged us to do. I intend both to make clear how Deleuze and Guattari think about fascism, and how we might use that thought today.

In addition to that core mission, I am happy if this exegesis can contribute to the scholarship on Deleuze and Guattari’s work, since in that scholarship their idea of fascism has been relatively less examined. And of course I hope this way of conceiving fascism can be of use to those who study historical fascism, perhaps helping those scholars see familiar details in a new light. In a similar way, the paper may also be of value to those trying to make sense of the current moment of populist authoritarianism prevalent in so many societies today.

So then, just what do Deleuze and Guattari say fascism is? The paper contends

that over the course of their collaboration Deleuze and Guattari come to propose two main hypotheses: 1) the desire for fascism is in all of us, permanently installed at the very root of our human experience, and 2) fascism is the product of two primary desires, the desire to be ruled and the desire to destroy.

If we all desire fascism, then fascism is not someone else's problem. We are all called to participate, together, in a collective project to *desire otherwise*. But what would that entail, specifically? I argue that we should not resist or struggle against our desire for fascism. Rather we should cultivate our other desires. In particular, we should pursue a project to strengthen our desire for *democracy*. For several years now, I have been developing a concept of democracy that understands it as driven by the desire to manage our affairs for ourselves.⁷ Just as the desire for fascism is present in all of us, so too is the desire for democracy, and so I have argued that the project of democracy must be a project to attend to and develop our desire to manage our affairs ourselves. We do that by investing our energy in ways of living together that require such self-management. Certainly the desire for self-management is very different from the desire to be ruled, and so in that sense the desire for democracy is the opposite of the desire for fascism. But if fascism is produced not only by the desire to be ruled but also by the desire to destroy, might we understand democracy, then, as *also* animated by the desire to *create*, the desire that urges us to produce new human communities, new forms of life in common? I have not conceived of democracy that way in the past, but in this paper I argue that we should. The desire for democracy, therefore, involves both our desire to manage our affairs ourselves *and* our desire to create, and so the project of democracy must be to encourage and strengthen those desires

DELEUZE, GUATTARI, AND THE DESIRE FOR FASCISM

Any exploration of fascism in Deleuze and Guattari's work starts with desire. They understand this term psychoanalytically; it is not just sexual desire but all desire, all pulsions, drives, forces of the unconscious that impel humans to act into the world, and to change it. Moreover, for them desire is not only a matter of psychology *per se*, it is also a social and economic force that produces the material

world. They thus conceive of their work as a “materialist psychiatry”⁸ whose subject is both “political economy *and* psychoanalysis, political economy *and* libidinal economy”.⁹ Both Freud and Marx.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that desire has been wrongly understood by the traditional, Platonic logic of Western thought, which sees desire as produced by a lack.¹⁰ We lack something, this logic presumes, and as a result we desire (or want or need) that something. For Deleuze and Guattari, instead, desire produces lack. More generally, desire is, by its very nature, “a process of production”.¹¹ That is why they often use the hyphenated term “desiring-production” to refer to desire, in order to emphasize its fundamentally productive and generative nature.¹² Desire produces our material and social reality by making “investments in the social field”.¹³ Desire even produces the structures that repress it, structures like Oedipus, capital, and the State. “Even the most repressive and the most deadly forms of social reproduction,” they contend, “are produced by desire”.¹⁴

Once desire produces these forms of repression and reproduction, they then have the power to operate on desire, to control it, limit it, channel it. Deleuze and Guattari put it this way: desire produces repressive social structures, and then those structures “fall back on (*se rabat sur*)” desire and force it to produce in particular ways.¹⁵ The Oedipus complex is of course the main structure of repression that they critique in *Anti-Oedipus*. Desire produces Oedipus, which then falls back on desire and controls it. But the archetype for this relation is to be found in Marx, where labor produces all value, including capital, which for Marx is nothing more than “dead labor.” But capital, once produced, then falls back on labor and controls it. What is more, Marx says, capital will then present itself, falsely, as the source of all value, a mystification Marx is keenly concerned to refute. Deleuze and Guattari model Oedipus on this relation: Oedipus “fell back on and appropriated desiring-production as if all the productive forces emanated from Oedipus itself...The same history as that of Capital, with its enchanted, ‘miraculated’ world”.¹⁶ Similarly concerned to refute the lies of Oedipus, Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly insist that it is desire that is the productive force. Desire

“does not arise after Oedipus....On the contrary, it is *Oedipus that depends on desiring-production*”.¹⁷ Desire produces the structures that repress it.

And so for example if we apply this way of thinking to the economic sphere, we would seek to understand “how social production and relations of production are an institution of desire, and how affects or drives form part of the infrastructure itself. For *they are part of it, they are present there in every way* while creating within the economic forms their own repression, as well as the means for breaking this repression”.¹⁸ Or in the sphere of psychoanalysis, we would see that “there is no difference in nature between neuroses and psychoses. *For in any case desiring-production is the cause*, the ultimate cause of both the psychotic subversions that shatter Oedipus or overwhelm it, and of the neurotic reverberations that constitute it”.¹⁹ Since our own desire institutes capitalist relations of production and produces Oedipus, we must attend to that fact. They urge us to “ward off...this abject desire that makes us bend our knees, lays us on the couch, and makes us remain there...”.²⁰ But note that in both cases desire produces not only the structures that repress it but also the liberating flows that can overwhelm that repression. Desire is also capable of breaking capitalist relations and shattering Oedipus. We must leave off desiring our own repression, but we must also attend to our desire for liberation. Either way, their analysis suggests, our project must be to attend to our own desire.

In a solo article in 1974, Guattari connects this way of understanding desire to an analysis of fascism. He writes that “fascism seems to come from the outside, but it finds its energy right at the heart of everyone’s desire”.²¹ And so, he says, we must start from the fact that “everybody wants to be a fascist”.²² This salvo is clearly meant to unsettle the way fascism is often understood, especially in countries that have not endured a full-blown fascist regime. We assume it is something that must have been imposed on people by an outside entity. Deleuze and Guattari open up the possibility that fascism does not work that way, that it does not originate in the State, or in some power outside of and beyond people themselves. Fascism, they propose, is generated by us. It arises in the social structure as the

result of the investments made by our own desiring-machines. In his preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, Michel Foucault says the book's "major enemy" is "the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us."²³ We all desire fascism, Foucault suggests, and that is precisely how fascism comes to exist in the world.

So many of us in liberal-democratic societies, steeped as we are in our liberal political dogma, tend broadly to assume what Étienne de La Boétie taught us, that by their nature people desire to be free.²⁴ Whenever people are in a condition of servitude, he contends, it must have been *imposed* upon them by some outside force.²⁵ Writing in the 1500s, La Boétie does not discuss fascism *per se*, but rather "servitude" as opposed to "freedom." A century later, Thomas Hobbes reinscribed this way of thinking. "There are very few so foolish," he wrote, "that had not rather govern themselves, than be governed by others".²⁶ I propose that this assumption—that everybody wants to be free and nobody wants servitude—is near-universal and mostly unconscious in liberal-democratic societies, and it leads us to assume that servitude in general, and fascism in particular, is somehow unnatural, unstable, "bound to lose."²⁷ When a multitude becomes a cult and willingly follows a leader like Mussolini or Hitler into the abyss, we assume they must have been duped somehow, that they must have been promised freedom but were betrayed and tricked into servitude.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari refuse this idea. They argue instead that fascism comes to exist because people desire fascism. Here they are working quite closely with Wilhelm Reich, whose work understood the rise of Nazi Germany psychoanalytically, from the perspective of desire.²⁸ "Reich's cry," Deleuze and Guattari tell us, was that "the masses were not deceived, they desired fascism, and that is what has to be explained."²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari continue: "It is not enough to say: they were fooled, the masses have been fooled. It is not an ideological problem, a problem of failing to recognize, or being subjected to an illusion. It is a problem of desire, *and desire is part of the infrastructure*".³⁰ Hitler does

not instill in the masses a desire for fascism. The desire of the masses for fascism produces Hitler. Deleuze and Guattari insist that our goal must be “to analyze the specific nature of the libidinal investments in the economic and political spheres, and thereby to show how...desire can be made to desire its own repression....All this happens, not in ideology, but well beneath it. An unconscious investment of a fascist or reactionary type can exist alongside a conscious revolutionary investment.” In the unconscious there are “ever so many subtle, uncertain shiftings where the unconscious itself oscillates between its reactionary charge and its revolutionary potential....Here schizoanalysis must unravel the thread”.³¹

When we make room for the possibility that it is the investments made by our own desire that produce fascism, and this desire is “part of the infrastructure,” part of our own complex of desiring-machines, inherently present in the bodies and minds of all persons, churning “right at the heart of everyone’s desire,” we perceive immediately that fascism can arise among any people, in any era. We cannot assume we are an exception. Mark Seem argues that the English and Americans have difficulty accepting this fact. They tend to think, he argues, that “fascism is a phenomenon that took place elsewhere, something that could only happen to others, but not to us; it’s *their* problem.”³² I submit that this is precisely the kind of thinking Americans were raised on after WWII, and it is a big part of the reason Trumpism caught the United States so off guard.³³ But Guattari disabuses us of this assumption succinctly: “We must abandon, once and for all, the quick and easy formula: ‘Fascism will not make it again.’ Fascism has already ‘made it,’ and it continues to ‘make it’.”³⁴ Fascism is always with us, with everyone, because it is generated by our own desire.³⁵

If we take this intervention by Deleuze and Guattari to heart, it opens up a new way to understand what a non-fascist political project must consist of. Put on what I contend is the wrong path by La Boétie so many years ago, we have assumed that fascism must be unjustly imposed on us by something outside us, and so we go looking beyond ourselves for an outside force to confront, resist, and struggle against. We have been looking in the wrong place. Fascism is produced by the

desire for “fascism in us all.” Any non-fascist political project must look *within ourselves*. We must work, intentionally and creatively, to invest our desire in ways that produce social structures other than fascism.

SURRENDER! SURRENDER!

So Deleuze and Guattari urge us to locate the source of fascism in the infrastructure of our desire. But what kind of desires, specifically, produce fascism? Recall Foucault’s argument from the preface: fascism is associated with our desire for “the very thing that dominates and exploits us.” Fascism is produced, at least in part, by our desire to be ruled.³⁶ It is the desire to surrender our power to something other than us, and to let that something decide our affairs for us.³⁷ In the case of historical fascism, the desire to be ruled led people to surrender their power to an exalted “leader” to whom they offered blind allegiance. In that case, people did not surrender to actual persons so much—Benito Mussolini or Adolf Hitler—but rather to a fantastical, mythologized, and artificial version of those persons: *il Duce* or *der Führer*. This historical case of fascism, Nazism in particular, is the example through which Deleuze and Guattari initially explore the desire to be ruled:

the fundamental problem of political philosophy is still precisely the one that Spinoza saw so clearly, and that Wilhelm Reich rediscovered: ‘Why do men fight *for* their servitude as stubbornly as though it were their salvation?’...after centuries of exploitation, why do people still tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point, indeed, that they *actually want* humiliation and slavery not only for others but for themselves? Reich is at his profoundest as a thinker when he refuses to accept ignorance or illusion on the part of the masses as an explanation of fascism, and demands an explanation that will take their desires into account, an explanation formulated in terms of desire: no, the masses were not innocent dupes... they *wanted* fascism, and it is this perversion of the desire of the masses that needs to be accounted for.³⁸

Here they are quite clearly moving us beyond La Boétie's assumption that we always want only freedom, and they are drawing on Spinoza's assertion that we also want servitude. Fascism arose in Germany, in part, because the masses wanted to be ruled by a strong leader. This is not a "perversion" of the desire of the masses, as Deleuze and Guattari suggest here, it is merely a rising of their desire to be ruled, and a related ebbing of their desire to manage their affairs themselves.

In the first half of *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari understand our desire to be ruled in the context of historical fascism. In the second half, however, they turn their attention to capitalism, and they explore how our desire to be ruled operates in that context as well. "The bourgeois field of immanence," they say,

institutes an unrivaled slavery, an unprecedented subjugation: there are no longer even any masters, but only slaves commanding other slaves; there is no longer any need to burden the animal from the outside, it shoulders its own burden. Not that man is ever the slave of technical machines; he is rather the slave of the social machine. The bourgeois sets the example, he absorbs surplus value for ends that, taken as a whole, have nothing to do with his own enjoyment: more utterly enslaved than the lowest of slaves, he is the first servant of the ravenous machine, the beast of the reproduction of capital, internalization of the infinite debt. "I too am a slave"—these are the new words spoken by the master.³⁹

In this condition of unrivaled slavery, they say, bourgeois and proletariat alike desire to be ruled. They "come to desire strength while also desiring [their] own impotence".⁴⁰ Both classes in capitalism, in other words, desire to be impotent, to surrender their power. In this case, they surrender their power not to a mythologized leader, but to the capitalist "social machine." For Deleuze and Guattari the "unrivaled slavery" of capitalism is not the bourgeoisie enslaving the proletariat. Rather servitude pervades the entire system, and that servitude is

desired by everyone. All people in both classes desire to be enslaved by capitalism. For Deleuze and Guattari, therefore, the important opposition in capitalism is not between bourgeoisie and proletariat, but between our desire to be ruled by the capitalist social machine, and our desire to manage our affairs—in this case economic production—ourselves.⁴¹

In *Anti-Oedipus* they also explore the desire to be ruled in the context of the emergence of the sovereign State in human history. Here they suggest that the State arose “from within,” as a product of our own desire to be ruled. However, in these pages they also explore the possibility that the State was imposed on us by a “from without,” by an entity that is other than us.⁴² The latter thesis is considered through Nietzsche, who proposes the possibility that the “founders of the State” are beings who “come like fate...a master race which...lays its terrible claws on a populace”.⁴³ “The death of the primitive system,” by which they mean societies that did not have a sovereign State, “always comes from without...like a cloud blown in from the desert...”.⁴⁴ The “populace,” in this line of thinking, are innocent victims, they know nothing of the desire to be ruled. Sovereign control is imposed on them by a despot that arises without, far beyond them, in the remote desert. However, in these same pages Deleuze and Guattari also aver that the State arises from within: “but this death that comes from without is also that which was rising from within,” they say, because societies before States “already prefigured despotic formations”.⁴⁵ The primitive community without the State “remains on its guard with respect to its own institutions of chieftainship, and exorcises or strait-jackets the image of the possible despot whom it threatens to secrete from within...”.⁴⁶ Here the populace is not so innocent. It desires to be ruled. It secretes the despot from *within* its own body. Across these passages, Deleuze and Guattari seem to decide that it is not always easy to know whether the State arises from within or it is imposed from without.

Later, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, they take up again this image of the populace secreting the State from within.⁴⁷ Here they are inspired by the work of Pierre Clastres on indigenous societies in South America.⁴⁸ Clastres was interested in societies

that organized themselves without a sovereign State, and his work demonstrates that such organization is not only possible but also has been quite common in human history. Clastres' work, Deleuze and Guattari suggest, allows us to ask *why* humanity came to choose the sovereign State as its default organizational structure when it had many other less oppressive options to choose from. Here Deleuze and Guattari say little about the State being imposed from without, and they focus their discussion on how it arises from within. "Clastres is fascinated by the problem of 'voluntary servitude,' in the manner of La Boétie: In what way did people want or desire servitude, which most certainly did not come to them as the outcome of an involuntary and unfortunate war?"⁴⁹ Here they argue that modern societies came to accept the State as their normal mode of organization because people *want* the servitude it provides. The State arose, in other words, from our desire to be ruled, from our desire to surrender to the State. This desire, I would argue, occupies Deleuze and Guattari's attention for the whole second half of *A Thousand Plateaus*. In those pages, they make an extended and impassioned argument against Hobbes and against the modern State.⁵⁰ And they imagine ways we might be able to unbind ourselves from its rule, ways we might desire, instead, to manage our affairs ourselves.

And so Deleuze and Guattari prompt us to consider that in order to truly grapple with servitude—whether it be in the form of fascism, capitalism, or the State—we should understand our servitude not as something imposed on us from without, but as something we secrete from within. We must come to terms with our desire to be ruled. We must become aware of our desire, come to understand it, and discover ways to desire differently. In addition, they show us that the desire to be ruled is does not produce only fascism. It produces capitalism and the State as well (see Figure 1). Since fascism, capitalism, and the State are not identical, we can infer that there must be something more to fascism than just the desire to be ruled. Some other desire must be at work that distinguishes fascism from those other two forms of rule.

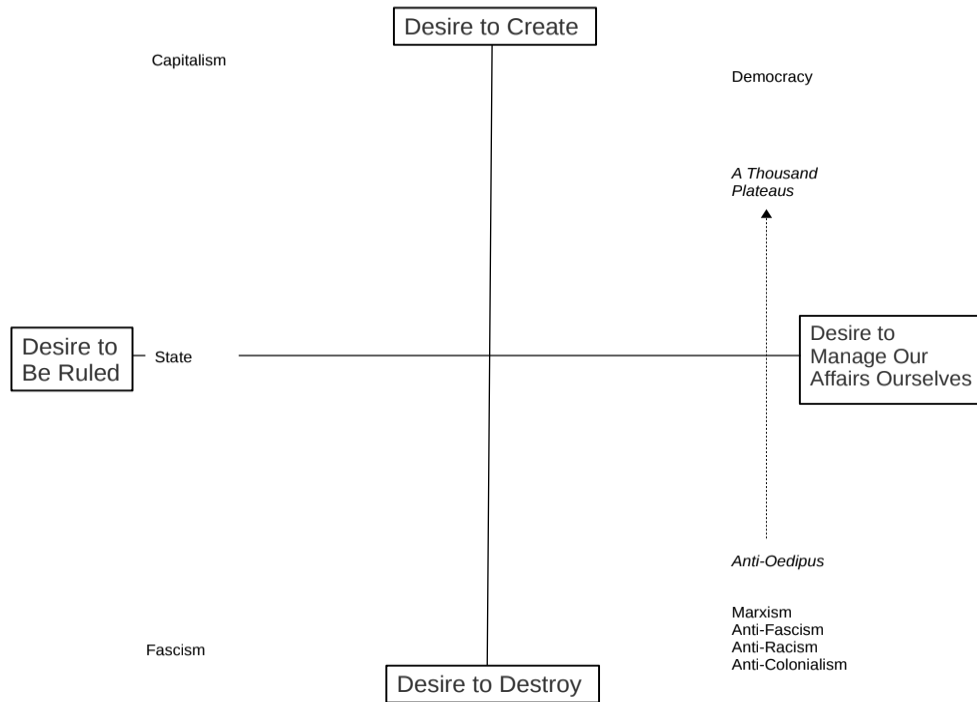


Figure 1: Plan(e) of Our Desire

DESTROY! DESTROY!

Indeed, throughout Deleuze and Guattari’s discussion of fascism there is always another desire lurking: the desire to destroy. This desire often takes the specific form of the desire to destroy life, the desire to kill, the desire for death. Very early in *Anti-Oedipus*, for example, they name this desire, even though they do not yet tie it to fascism: “the death instinct: that is its name, and death is not without a model. For desire desires death also, because the full body of death is its motor, just as it desires life, because the organs of life are the working machine”.⁵¹ Nearer the end of *Anti-Oedipus*, they again refer to this desire, “what is this death that always rises from within...?”⁵², and they read this desire for death in the context of Nietzsche’s critique of *ressentiment*:

All the cynical tactics of bad conscience, just as Nietzsche...analyzed them to arrive at a definition of civilized European man...the torpor...the hatred of life and of all that is free, of all that passes and flows; the universal effusion of the death instinct; depression and guilt used as a means of contagion...aren't you ashamed to be happy? follow my example, I won't let go before you say, "It's my fault," ... let me deceive, rob, slaughter, kill! ... the double direction given to *ressentiment*, the turning back against oneself, and the projection against the Other...⁵³

As Nietzsche understood it, *ressentiment* is a particular form of the desire for death.⁵⁴ It is the desire of the weak, the "slaves," not for their own thriving, but for the death of the strong, the "masters." The slaves desire the destruction of the masters' world. *Ressentiment* is a bitter, consuming desire for revenge against one's enemies. In its purest form, Nietzsche says, it is the fantasy of the weak that in the next life the strong will burn in Hell. Nazi desire, for example, with its constant railing against the humiliation imposed by the Treaty of Versailles, and its vigorous efforts to undo every provision of it, consisted greatly of *ressentiment* against Germany's enemies, the desire to destroy the world they had built on their own terms.

Over the course of their thinking, Deleuze and Guattari begin to realize that this desire for death does not exclude the self, and so it often manifests as a desire for suicide. In an early passage in *A Thousand Plateaus*, for example, as they are advocating their "geological" project of destratification, they warn that doing so too rapidly will lead to "demented or suicidal collapse".⁵⁵ "A body without organs [BwO] that shatters all the strata," they warn us, "turns immediately into a body of nothingness, pure self-destruction whose only outcome is death".⁵⁶ In this same discussion, they begin to associate the desire for one's own death with fascism. They want to discover how we "can fabricate a BwO for ourselves without its being the cancerous BwO of a fascist inside us, or the empty BwO of a drug addict, paranoiac, or hypochondriac? How can we tell the three Bodies apart?".⁵⁷ Then, in that same section:

the BwO is desire; it is that which one desires and by which one desires.... Even when it falls into the void of too-sudden destratification, or into the proliferation of a cancerous stratum, it is still desire. Desire stretches that far: desiring one's own annihilation, or desiring the power to annihilate. Money, army, police, and State desire, fascist desire, even fascism is desire.... The material problem confronting schizoanalysis is knowing whether we have it within our means to make the selection, to distinguish the BwO from its doubles: empty vitreous bodies, cancerous bodies, totalitarian and fascist. The test of desire: not denouncing false desires, but distinguishing within desire between that which pertains to stratic proliferation, or else too-violent destratification, and that which pertains to the construction of the plane of consistency (keep an eye out for all that is fascist, even inside us, and also for the suicidal and the demented)...There is a fascist use of drugs, or a suicidal use, but is there also a possible use that would be in conformity with the plane of consistency?⁵⁸

But it is in Plateau 9, when they are exploring their well-known concept of “lines of flight” and how they can escape the apparatuses, that they really cement this connection between fascism and the desire for death.⁵⁹ They first establish that lines of flight are not always happy occasions, that they bring with them “four dangers.” One danger is that the lines will be recaptured. But, they say, that is far from the worst outcome. Lines of flight themselves

emanate a strange despair, like an odor of death and immolation, a state of war from which one returns broken.... Why is the line of flight a war one risks coming back from defeated, destroyed, after having destroyed everything one could? This, precisely, is the fourth danger: the line of flight crossing the wall, getting out of the black holes, but instead of connecting with other lines and each time augmenting its valence, turning to destruction, abolition pure and simple, the passion of abolition. Like Kleist's line of flight, and the strange war he wages; like suicide, double

suicide, a way out that turns the line of flight into a line of death”.⁶⁰

One page later, they turn to Virilio in order to connect this desire for death to fascism:

A bizarre remark by Virilio puts us on the trail: in fascism, the State is far less totalitarian than it is suicidal. There is in fascism a realized nihilism. Unlike the totalitarian State, which does its utmost to seal all possible lines of flight, fascism is constructed on an intense line of flight, which it transforms into a line of pure destruction and abolition. It is curious that from the very beginning the Nazis announced to Germany what they were bringing: at once wedding bells and death, including their own death, and the death of the Germans.... And the people cheered, not because they did not understand, but because they wanted that death.⁶¹

“Nazi statements,” they go on, “always contain the ‘stupid and repugnant’ cry, Long live death!”⁶² A “reversion of the line of flight into a line of destruction” is what “animated the molecular focuses of fascism.” This more generalized desire to destroy in fascism is captured in a quote from Witold Grombrowicz who says that Hitlerism and fascism set about “destroying all that was held dear until then”.⁶³ Hitlerism became “a war machine that no longer had anything but war as its object and would rather annihilate its own servants that stop the destruction.”⁶⁴ In the face of this danger, they conclude, “all the dangers of the other lines [of flight] pale by comparison”.⁶⁵

As the passages above suggest, we can understand this desire for death as merely a specific instance of a more general desire to destroy. Fascism is a “intense... line of pure destruction and abolition,” as they put it. The “realized nihilism” of fascism is animated by the desire to annihilate, which means, strictly, to *make nothing* out of that which is now something. This non-specific desire to destroy appears in Plateau 10 in a discussion of music. “Music,” they write, “has a thirst for destruction, every kind of destruction, extinction, breakage, dislocation. Is

that not its potential ‘fascism?’”.⁶⁶ In the last Plateau they sum it up tersely: “the lines of flight themselves...always risk abandoning their creative potentialities and turning into a line of death, being turned into a line of destruction pure and simple (fascism)”.⁶⁷ In their subsequent book, *What Is Philosophy?* they do not discuss fascism very much, but even there they sing the same refrain: “...the thinker’s tired eye mistakes one for the other...the fascist for a creator of existence and freedom”.⁶⁸ The fascist is, evidently, the *destroyer* of existence and freedom.

DELEUZE AND GUATTARI DESIRE TO DESTROY...

So by the middle of *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari have come to understand that fascism is produced not only by the desire to be ruled but also by the desire to destroy (see its location in the lower-left quadrant of Figure 1). With that understanding in place, we can return to *Anti-Oedipus* and discover that they install there, right at the heart of what Foucault says is an “Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life,” the desire to destroy so integral to fascism. The book’s very title, *Anti-Oedipus*, sets the agenda: we are *against* Oedipus. We want to *destroy* Oedipus. Their alternative psychoanalytic project, “schizoanalysis,” takes as its first task the destruction of Oedipus. “Destroy, destroy. The task of schizoanalysis goes by way of destruction—a whole scouring of the unconscious, a complete curettage. Destroy Oedipus, the illusion of the ego, the puppet of the superego, guilt, the law, castration”.⁶⁹ Before it can be anything else, they say, schizoanalysis must be a frontal assault on Oedipus. It must

devote itself with all its strength to the necessary destructions.... And when engaged in this task no activity will be too malevolent. Causing Oedipus and castration to explode, brutally intervening each time the subject strikes up the song of myth or intones tragic lines...⁷⁰

Of course capitalism must be destroyed too, tightly linked as it is to Oedipus. “The schizophrenic deliberately seeks out the very limit of capitalism: he is its inherent tendency brought to fulfillment, its surplus product, its proletariat, and

its exterminating angel”.⁷¹ Our revolutionary practice, they argue with gusto, must devote “all its strength” to brutal, malevolent destruction. This horrific spree reaches its most intense frenzy when their schizo-hero “liquidates even his grandmother with a machine for tying shoes”.⁷²

We learn later that there are other tasks in schizoanalysis, ones that are positive and creative, and so not *all* our strength, it turns out, must be devoted to destruction. Nevertheless, throughout this first book together they fully embrace the desire to destroy. They accept the very Hegelian (and oxymoronic) idea that in order to engage in any kind of creation, any productive act, we must *first* destroy the thing we oppose.⁷³ This erroneous algorithm is everywhere in the book.⁷⁴ We are told we must: shatter Oedipus in order to rediscover desiring production;⁷⁵ denounce illegitimate syntheses so as to rediscover a transcendental unconscious;⁷⁶ “de-oedipalize the unconscious in order to reach real problems”;⁷⁷ and undo the Oedipal unconscious so that we can attain the productive unconscious.⁷⁸ If any doubt remained about the order in which we must do these tasks, they actually number them for us later in the book: “a true politics of psychiatry, or antipsychiatry, would consist therefore in the following praxis: (1) undoing all the reterritorializations that transform madness into mental illness; (2) liberating the schizoid movement of deterritorialization in all the flows...”⁷⁹ It is like a chanted mantra: we must *first destroy* the world we do not want in order to create the world we do want. The first task of schizoanalysis, Deleuze and Guattari think, is to become an advancing army of exterminating angels whose mission is violent, brutal, and malevolent destruction.⁸⁰

In Foucault’s preface to *Anti-Oedipus*, he offers a set of seven principles for living a non-fascist life. Given what we have just seen, the third is of particular note. It advises us to “withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is positive and multiple...”⁸¹ Clearly Deleuze and Guattari are having trouble withdrawing this allegiance. In *Anti-Oedipus* they retain what can only be called a relish for the negative, for

opposition, for destruction. And I should note that even Foucault himself, as he is telling us to prefer the positive, begins with the negative: “*withdraw allegiance....*” In fact, six of Foucault’s seven principles for the non-fascist life are negative imperatives: “*Do not think...Do not use...Do not become...*” and so on. Negate, denounce, rupture, undo, oppose, cancel, shatter, explode, kill, annihilate, abolish, liquidate, destroy. The (fascist) desire for destruction.

...AND THEY DESIRE TO CREATE

To be sure, their eager embrace of the desire to destroy is not fully fascist, since they cannot be said to also embrace fascism’s other desire, the desire to be ruled. In fact, the opposite is true. The Hegelian algorithm they reiterate throughout the book is also very much driven by the desire to manage our affairs ourselves. We must destroy what rules us, it urges, so that we will be able to rule ourselves. This mix of desires—destruction and self-management—is actually more typical of Marxism than fascism (see Figure 1). Nevertheless, any project for a non-fascist life should be cognizant—and concerned—about the striking overlap between the two: both Marxism and fascism embrace, with relish, the desire to destroy. They are both steeped in *ressentiment*. At the same time, we should not cast Deleuze and Guattari out because their desire resonates with fascism in this way. This would be to miss Foucault’s point, that fascism is in all of us. The desire for fascism is not someone else’s problem. It is not only broken or evil people that desire fascism. Fascism is “in us all,” even in radical thinkers who are writing an “introduction to the non-fascist life.” We should not be surprised that they exhibit this desire to destroy, especially at the outset of their project. We should notice instead that, over the course of their work together, they steadily leave behind their desire to destroy, and they become increasingly motivated, instead, by a creative desire, a desire to produce, a desire to invent: both new concepts and new lives in common.

That other, creative desire is already there, even if it is in the background, at the beginning of *Anti-Oedipus*. Again Foucault’s preface is instructive. His third principle asks us to “prefer the positive.” His second is even more productive:

“develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation....” Even if his non-fascist principles call mostly on our desire to destroy, they still intimate, and even speak out loud of, this other desire, the desire to produce, to develop, to generate, to create new things. Deleuze and Guattari are certainly aware of this desire in the book. Near the end, gushing about Henry Miller (as they will), they give us this passage:

Everything is said in these pages from Miller: Oedipus (or Hamlet) led to the point of autocritique; the expressive forms—myth and tragedy—*denounced* as conscious beliefs or illusions...the necessity of a *scouring* of the unconscious, schizoanalysis as a curettage of the unconscious; the matrilineal fissure in opposition to the line of castration; the *splendid affirmation* of the orphan- and producer-unconscious; the *exaltation* of the process as a schizophrenic process of deterritorialization that must *produce a new earth*; and even the functioning of the desiring-machines *against* tragedy, *against* “the fatal drama of the personality,” *against* “the inevitable confusion between mask and actor”).⁸²

Notice how they begin by again denouncing and scouring (and curettage!), but then they turn to a “splendid affirmation” of the orphan-unconscious and an “exaltation” of the schizophrenic process, which “must produce a new earth,” even if they end the passage by forcing our desiring-machines back down into the morass of “against...against...against.” You can almost see them working on it here, working on their own desire. They are engaging in their own schizo-analytical process to embrace the desire to create and leave aside the desire to destroy.⁸³ Nearer the end of the book, they give schizoanalysis an unabashedly positive task when they tell us that

the task of schizoanalysis is that of learning what a subject’s desiring-machines are, how they work, with what syntheses, what bursts of energy in the machine, what constituent misfires, with what flows, what chains, and what becomings in each case”.⁸⁴

Unfortunately, on that same page they are quick to add that “this positive task cannot be separated from indispensable destructions, the destruction of the molar aggregates, the structures and representations that prevent the machine from functioning”.⁸⁵ Here, at the end of *Anti-Oedipus*, they are not able to see the possibility that these tasks can be separated. They assume schizoanalysis must involve a destructive first task. They have not come to see, yet, that schizoanalysis can have only one task, a positive task: learn—and learn to use—our desiring-machines; discover what flows and connections we can produce; discover what becomings we are capable of.

But, again, they are working on it. Just a few pages later they offer one of their first glimpses of a what a project driven fully by a desire for creation might look like:

Nonfigurative loves, indices of a revolutionary investment of the social field ... which are neither Oedipal nor pre-oedipal since it all amounts to the same thing, but innocently anoedipal, and which give the revolutionary the right to say, “Oedipus? Never heard of it”.⁸⁶

So much is contained in that change of prefix! They are able to perceive, here in a book called *Anti-Oedipus*, the possibility of moving from *antioedipal* indices, in which we desire to *destroy* Oedipus, to *anoedipal* indices, in which we desire on our own terms, as though we had “never heard of” Oedipus. These “nonfigurative loves” reappear in *A Thousand Plateaus* and are developed further, and the “revolutionary investments of the social field” are not only creative rather than destructive, but they are also explicitly non-fascist, since “revolutionary” and “fascist” are how they name the two poles of political desire.⁸⁷ In these loves, and these revolutionary investments, the entire focus of our desire shifts: from destruction to creation. It is an enormous breakthrough for them to say ‘Oedipus? Never heard of it,’ when they have, for so very many pages, been saying, ‘Oedipus? I am obsessed with it. I am its exterminating angel.’

Perhaps it is this breakthrough near the end of *Anti-Oedipus* that allows A

Thousand Plateaus to become a work that spends most of its time prospecting in the positive, in the creative tasks of schizoanalysis. Right from the outset, the first plateau begins constructing the rhizome and its burgeoning connections that are organized horizontally, without any centralizing nodes. In the second plateau, we meet Franny, who learns to connect to a spontaneously coordinated wolfpack, never in the center yet never letting go, such that she experiences “vertiginous happiness”.⁸⁸ In the second half of plateaus 12 and 14, we find “war machines,” which are bands or tribes that live outside of State society, populating the steppe by drawing creative lines of flight. In between, in plateau 13, they develop the concept of “revolutionary movement” in which flows are connected, nondenumerable aggregates are composed, and we witness the “becoming-minoritarian of everybody/everything”.⁸⁹ Lines of flight, which appear throughout the text, are perhaps the most well-known example. While they are clear that these lines are subject to becoming fascist, as we saw, for the most part Deleuze and Guattari explore the “collective, positive, and creative” affects the lines can produce.⁹⁰ A line of flight always has the potential to contain, they insist, “a message of joy,”⁹¹ and here they mean the Spinozan affect of joy, the affect that is bound up with an affirmation of life.⁹²

Early in *Anti-Oedipus*, there is a little scene where a good psychoanalyst asks a patient, “Tell me a little bit about your desiring-machines, won’t you?”⁹³ It is almost as though *A Thousand Plateaus* is Deleuze and Guattari on the couch (or out on a walk, as they prefer) offering an extended response to that question. We might see the whole book as offering a series of variations on the theme of affirmative desire, explorations of the immense creativity our desiring machines are capable of.⁹⁴ The rhizome retold as the wolfpack retold as the war machine and so on. Here schizoanalysis becomes less anti-Oedipus and more pro-body-without-organs. They even get to the point of saying, in italics, that the body without organs “*is the only practical object of schizoanalysis*.” What is your body without organs? What are your lines? What map are you in the process of making or rearranging? What abstract line will you draw...what is your line of flight?”⁹⁵

As *A Thousand Plateaus* rehearses these affirmative variations, we begin to see that it is possible to see all these variations together, as one fundamentally and powerfully *creative* project, a project that engenders and gives rise to new things. One such new thing that project might produce is what they call “a people yet to come.” Over the course of *A Thousand Plateaus* the question becomes

whether molecular or atomic “populations” of all natures...continue to bombard the existing people in order to train it or control it or annihilate it—or if other molecular populations were possible, could slip into the first and give rise to a people yet to come. As Virilio says in his very rigorous analysis...the question has become: “To dwell as a poet or as an assassin?” The assassin is one who bombards the existing people with molecular populations that are forever closing all of the assemblages, hurling them into an ever wider and deeper black hole. The poet, on the other hand, is one who lets loose molecular populations in hopes that this will sow the seeds of, or even engender, the people to come, that these populations will pass into a people to come, open a cosmos.⁹⁶

Here, late in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the assassin—the exterminating angel—is disavowed at last. We are given permission to let go of our desire for destruction, our desire to cancel, our desire to give death to what we are against. We are invited to turn instead to the incredibly empowering possibility that we might “dwell as a poet,” that we might set ourselves to the task—the sole task—of creating the life-in-common we want to live. The poet is one who is devoted to *poiesis*, to creative production. The poet produces, sows seeds, engenders, propagates, brings forth. The poet gives life. New ideas, new selves, new peoples: a people yet to come.⁹⁷ It is a project—I want to call it a democratic project—that always and only *gives life*.

A PROJECT FOR DEMOCRACY

So, by the end of their second book together Deleuze and Guattari have made considerable progress. They have moved from the more Marxist combination of

the desire to manage our affairs ourselves and the desire to destroy to this other combination, the desire to manage our affairs ourselves and the desire to create (see the right side of Figure 1). In this section, I bring this new combination into conversation with my own work on democracy. In the past I have understood democracy as a project that is driven by our desire to manage our affairs ourselves, but it seems apropos at this point to extend that understanding, to see democracy as also driven by the desire to create.

I have argued that we need to “recapture” the idea of democracy from the conventional meaning, in which democracy is thought to be bound tightly to the State apparatus.⁹⁸ That conventional meaning uses the word “democracy” to signify something that is in fact a liberal-democratic government that is chosen by citizens in periodic elections. I argue that democracy is capable of accommodating a much fuller and more radical meaning. Democracy has the potential to signify a form of life in which people (*demos*) reclaim their power (*kratos*) and use it to manage their affairs themselves.⁹⁹ In thinking democracy in this more radical way, I draw on a tradition of political thought that emerged in the middle of the 20th Century and set out an ethical commitment to the idea and practice of popular self-management. Important touchstones in this tradition include Castoriadis’ concept of “autonomy”¹⁰⁰ developed in the 1950s, Fanon’s support in the 1950s and 1960s for decentralized self-management in the context of a decolonizing African continent¹⁰¹, the idea of *autogestion* in the texts of Lefebvre and Vaneigem in the 1960s,¹⁰² and the work in Italy on *autonomia* beginning in the 1970s.¹⁰³ This tradition of political thought had strong roots in the workers’ movement, and initially the idea of self-management was understood to mean workers directly managing economic production in the factory. However there was always, simultaneously, a move to extend this idea of popular self-management beyond the factory. Castoriadis and Fanon, for example, advocated that rural people directly manage agricultural production in their villages. Lefebvre and the Italian autonomists, for their part, imagined urban residents managing the production of domestic space in their neighborhoods. And so, over time this work came to theorize a

“generalized self-management”¹⁰⁴ that championed direct popular control in all areas of life.

I have mostly understood democracy this way, as generalized self-management. Clearly democracy in this sense is driven by people’s desire to manage their affairs themselves. In democracy, people’s desire to be ruled is weak, and so they retain their power. They do not allow their power to be institutionalized, centralized, or bureaucratized. This is already a deeply radical concept, because in modern societies such institutionalized power is entirely normal. We have fully internalized, deep in our unconscious assumptions about how the world must work, the “social contract” that Hobbes invented in the 1600s.¹⁰⁵ In *Leviathan*, Hobbes offered us his extraordinary proposal: people cannot be allowed to keep their power and use it as they wish. That would mean that any person could attack or kill any other, at any time, and that would produce, in his famous line, a “war of all against all.” Therefore, persons outside State society who retain their own power—whom he called “natural persons” living in a “state of nature”—must agree, by means of a social contract, to surrender their power. To whom? Not to another natural person, since natural persons having power is precisely what he thinks causes war. Instead, natural persons must surrender their power to what he calls an “artificial person,” an imagined or “feigned” entity whose purpose is to receive the power that natural persons surrender, keep that power separate from them, and use it to stop the war of all against all.¹⁰⁶ The artificial person is, of course, the modern State. It is designed explicitly to be *other than* natural persons. It is a disembodied “body” that is a different kind of thing than our bodies are: alien, fantastical, unreal. Moreover, it is designed explicitly to be hierarchically *above* us. It rules us. It is a sovereign entity, a transcendent power that rises above and looms over us, terrifying us into peace.

So in the context of our life under Leviathan, to say that in democracy people manage their affairs themselves is to say that in democracy people do not surrender their power to the unreal body of the artificial person. They are not driven by the desire to be ruled, but by the desire to manage their affairs themselves. They retain

their power—it remains vested in their own, real, natural bodies—and they use their power to manage their lives in common. The archetypical artificial person is Hobbes' modern State. But of course a capitalist Corporation¹⁰⁷ is equally an artificial person, in this case granted the power to make economic decisions. A workers Union is, similarly, an artificial person to whom workers surrender their power. Democracy envisions a move from a world in which artificial persons hold power to one in which real persons do, driven by their desire to manage their affairs themselves.

Clearly, then, democracy offers a stark alternative to fascism's desire to be ruled. But taking our cue from Deleuze and Guattari's analysis of fascism, I think we can see democracy as also the polar opposite of fascism's desire to destroy. We can see democracy as driven by the desire to create, to produce, to invent, to dwell as a poet, to engender new lives in common. If we do, we will understand that democracy is a project that does not have a first task of destruction. In democracy we invest ourselves fully in the project of creating new democratic lives in common. Seen that way, democracy offers a path forward that avoids the disastrous relish for destruction that fascism, Marxism, and *Anti-Oedipus* embrace. Moreover, this way of seeing democracy makes sense because the desire to engender new lives in common is entirely consonant with the desire to manage our affairs ourselves. That is because, as we engage the latter desire, as we practice self-management together, we will need to be inventing new forms of community. We will necessarily be creating new democratic ways of living together. Both the desire to manage our affairs ourselves and the desire to create are integral to any project for democracy. When we understand democracy this way, the project for democracy becomes a project in which we work to understand and encourage those two desires in combination. It is an enormous change. We will not become democratic overnight. And so we should see democracy, instead, as a long-term project into the future.

SO, THEN, WHAT IS TO BE DONE?

We find ourselves today, in 2025, in the midst of a powerful re-emergence of fascism, which combines the desire to be ruled and the desire to destroy. The capitalist social machine, which combines our desire to be ruled with our desire to create, continues to dominate the planet. Its partner, the modern State, is also founded on our desire to be ruled. What, then, is to be done, now? What is the nature of the project we should commit ourselves to?

The Madisonian Temptation

My previous conception of democracy essentially conceived of it as a line of flight on which we escape the State apparatus of capture and develop our desire to rule ourselves outside State control.¹⁰⁸ That way of seeing democracy, however, is deeply troubled by Guattari's warning that "everybody wants to be a fascist." Both democracy and fascism are produced by desire, by our *own* desiring-machines. Fascism is in all of us, and it is on the rise. And the liberal-democratic State, even if it blocks our desire for real democracy, *also* blocks our desire for fascism. In the last eight years in the United States, for example, we have lived through an open struggle between a rising popular desire for fascism and the Madisonian institutions of the liberal-democratic State that were designed to ward off just such a calamity. That struggle has been traumatic, and it is far from over. In such a circumstance, it is extremely tempting to put our faith in a State that is so well designed to protect us from fascism.

But I argue that we should not give in to that temptation. We should not abandon the project of democracy for the safety of the artificial person. While the State prevents us from developing our desire for fascism because it blocks our desire to destroy, it also prevents us from developing our desire for democracy because it stokes our desire to be ruled. It blocks democracy by design. And so the State prevents us from working on the problem, which is a problem of desire. We should work on the problem. In the face of our desire for fascism, we must become even more intentional and focused on our desire for democracy. We need to more rigorously attend to it, to understand what affects, relations, attitudes,

and behaviors it produces.

Foucault's "Old Categories of the Negative"

It is also be tempting, in the context of waxing fascism, to assume that some form of anti-fascism is the right way forward. But as we saw with Deleuze and Guattari's misadventures in *Anti-Oedipus*, such "anti" projects are animated by our desire to destroy. That does not make them fascist necessarily, since they can combine the desire to destroy with the desire to manage our affairs ourselves. That is what anti-fascism typically does. Marxism does too, insofar as it desires to destroy capitalism in order to make way for a more self-managed society. In fact, there is a whole cluster of radical political thought—anti-fascism, anti-racism, abolitionism, anti-colonialism—that reanimates this Marxist combination of the desire to destroy and the desire to manage our affairs ourselves.¹⁰⁹ Woody Guthrie wrote on his guitar: "This machine kills fascists." Fanon demanded the "liquidation of colonialism".¹¹⁰ Anti-racists want to "abolish" prisons and police. In this work, moreover, it is common for the desire to destroy to very much take the lead, to be the first and overwhelmingly most vibrant desire. The desire to manage our affairs takes a back seat, waiting patiently until we have first destroyed what we oppose.

We tend to think that the problem with Marxism was that it insisted that class was the primary form of oppression, to the exclusion of race, gender, sexuality, and so on. But maybe the problem was more fully that Marxism embraced, with relish, the desire to destroy. This desire trapped us, as Nietzsche showed so clearly, in a bitter resentment of capitalism that took up all the oxygen and prevented us turning our attention to creation, to what new ways of life the working class has the power to imagine and produce instead.

The Project of Democracy

Democracy embraces neither our desire to be ruled nor our desire to destroy. The aim of democracy is not to destroy fascism. That would stoke the desire to destroy so integral to fascism itself, and it would move us away from the desire

to create that is proper to democracy. The project of democracy, instead, should stoke, encourage, and strengthen our desire to manage our affairs ourselves and our desire to create. As we invest ourselves in this way, as we gain experience in the practice of democracy, we will become better at using our power to manage our own affairs and our power to create new forms of life. As our practice develops and our skills increase, those desires will grow stronger and lead us to make still more democratic investments in the social field. If we are successful, a positive feedback loop will emerge between desire and practice such that our project grows ever more robust and ingrained in our daily life.

A schizoanalytic project for democracy, may the authors of *Anti-Oedipus* forgive me, does not go by way of destruction. Our first task—and our *only* task—is to create democracy. Engender our desire for democracy. Analyze our desire, learn it, cultivate it, help it grow, and practice using it. “Tell me a little about your [democratic] desiring-machines, won’t you?” Invent new democratic communities, and practice managing our affairs ourselves. If we choose this path, if we really do devote “all our strength” to that one task, we will not have any strength left over for fascism. We will neglect it. We will ignore it. And even then, we will ignore it indirectly, simply as a byproduct of the fact that we are devoting all our attention to inventing new democracies. As long as we are diligent about our project for democracy, as long as we remain intentional and active in cultivating our desire for democracy, our desire for fascism will grow weak.

Understood that way, democracy is a very, very long-term project, a generational project, even a perpetual one. Our desire for democracy must be maintained, tended, and cultivated slowly, and on a daily basis. Democracy is not a spectacular project, or a revolutionary one. It does not emerge during one news cycle, and it is never a victory that is finally won. Democracy is, instead, a quiet practice, an insistent daily habit of care in which we encourage our desire for democracy to grow, slowly but insistently. Democracy involves not periodic bursts of terrific power, but an insistent routine of patient, resolute attention. And for all that practice, democracy is never an onerous chore. Instead, when our practice is going

well, democracy produces delight. A slow-burning but pervasive delight that can fuel our project into the future. Into the very long-term future.

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47. Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari. (1980) 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus*. Translated by Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 359.

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50. Consider, for example, "the war machine," their concept of a human grouping that lies radically outside State society. This is precisely Hobbes' formulation: he said the condition of humans outside the State is a condition of *war*.

51. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 8.

52. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 262.

53. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 268–69.

54. Nietzsche, Friedrich. 1989. *On the Genealogy of Morals*. Translated by Walter Kaufmann. New York: Vintage.

55. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 161.

56. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 162.

57. Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987, 163.

58. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 165.

59. It is strange that they take so long to reach this point, given that in 1974 Guattari had already seen the connection: "the fascist machine, in its Italian and German forms, became a threat to capitalism and Stalinism because the masses invested a fantastic collective death instinct in it"

- (Deleuze and Guattari, [1974] 1977, 96).
60. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 229.
 61. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 230.
 62. This was better known as a motto of Franco's Falangists (Eco, 1995).
 63. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 98.
 64. There is a debate in the Deleuze and Guattari scholarship about whether historical fascism desired suicide (see: Holland, 2008; Michelsen, Nicholas. 2013. "Fascist Lines of the Tokkotai." In *Deleuze and Fascism*, edited by Brad Evans and Julian Reid, 148–72. New York: Routledge; Neocleous, Mark. 2005. "Long Live Death! Fascism, Resurrection, Immortality." *Journal of Political Ideologies* 10 (1): 31–49; Protevi, John. 2000. "A Problem of Pure Matter." In *Nihilism Now!*, edited by Keith Pearson and Diane Morgan, 167–88. New York: St. Martin's Press). While interesting, this debate does not change the fact that for Deleuze and Guattari fascism includes the desire for suicide. And in any case, fascism, for Deleuze and Guattari, is produced by the non-specific desire to destroy, the desire for abolition (see: Evans, Fred. 2016. "Deleuze's Political Ethics: A Fascism of the New?" *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* 10 (1): 85–99, 91).
 65. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 231.
 66. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 299.
 67. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 506. On this point see (Protevi, 2000).
 68. Deleuze, Gilles, and Felix Guattari, (1991) 1994. *What Is Philosophy?* Translated by Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press., 109.
 69. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 311.
 70. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 314.
 71. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 35.
 72. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 318.
 73. This error very much plagues radical politics more generally, as its intense attachment to "antis" demonstrates: anti-Oedipus, anti-capitalist, anti-fascist. Our most recent version is anti-racism (see: Kendi, Ibram. 2019. *How to Be an Antiracist*. One World), which so often embraces the "passion for abolition" that sits at the heart of fascism, as we saw above.
 74. Deleuze and Guattari claim theirs are not "Hegel-style destructions," (Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 311), but it is hard to square that denial with the avowed program: *first* destroy the structures that restrain us *so that we can then* produce something new.
 75. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 53.
 76. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 75.
 77. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 81.
 78. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 88.
 79. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 381.
 80. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 381.
 81. Foucault, [1972] 1977, xiii.
 82. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 299, my emphasis.
 83. Henry Miller's presence is not incidental here. His work, and that of other novelists in the same vein (e.g. Lawrence and Melville), are an important force pushing Deleuze and Guattari in the direction of the desire to create rather than the desire to destroy (see: Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 186).
 84. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 338 & 290–291.
 85. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 338.
 86. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 366.

87. Terms they take from Reich.
88. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 29.
89. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 473.
90. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 367.
91. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 205.
92. Braidotti, 2019.
93. Deleuze and Guattari, [1972] 1977, 45.
94. Massumi, Brian. 1987. "Translator's Forward." In *A Thousand Plateaus*, ix–xv. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, xi.
95. Deleuze and Guattari [1980] 1987, 203. And in *What is Philosophy?* the purpose of philosophy is understood to be "the art of forming, inventing, and fabricating concepts" in order to intensify life (Deleuze and Guattari, [1991] 1994, 2 & 72–74). [To which compare Italian futurist Filippo Marinetti's "beautiful Ideas which kill" (Marinetti, Filippo. 1909. "Declaration of Futurism." *Poesia* 5 (6): 1–2, 1)].
96. Deleuze and Guattari, [1980] 1987, 345.
97. See: Braidotti 2019, 473; Lee, Alex Taek-Gwang. 2021. "Deleuze and the Third World." *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* 15 (2): 250–65.
98. Purcell, Mark. 2008. *Recapturing Democracy: Neoliberalization and the Struggle for Alternative Urban Futures*. New York: Routledge.
99. Purcell, 2013; Purcell, 2016.
100. Castoriadis, Cornelius. 1997. *The Castoriadis Reader*. Edited by David Curtis. Oxford ; Cambridge, Mass: Wiley-Blackwell. See: chapters 8, 10, and 11.
101. . (1961) 2004. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Translated by Richard Philcox. New York: Grove Press,
- 94, 104, 121–4 & 141–3.
102. Lefebvre, Henri. 2009. *State, Space, World: Selected Essays*. Edited by Neil Brenner and Stuart Elden. Translated by Gerald Moore, Neil Brenner, and Stuart Elden. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Vaneigem, Raoul. 2012. *The Revolution of Everyday Life*. Translated by Donald Nicholson-Smith. Oakland, CA: PM Press.
103. Negri, Antonio. 1999. *Insurgencies: Constituent Power and the Modern State*. Translated by M. Boscagli. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press; Virno, Paolo. 2004. *A Grammar of the Multitude*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).; Agamben, Giorgio. 1993. *The Coming Community*. Translated by M. Hardt. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
104. The French phrase, for Lefebvre and Vaneigem, was "*autogestion généralisée*."
105. Hobbes, [1651] 1985.
106. Hobbes, [1651] 1985, chapter 16.
107. Note that a Corporation is etymologically an "embodiment" of something that does not in fact have a body. An artificial person.
108. Purcell, 2013.
109. I would suggest that it is feminism, very broadly speaking, that has been the least eager to embrace the desire to destroy and the most likely to cultivate the desire to create: new relations of care, to take just one example.
110. Fanon, Frantz. (1964) 1967. *Toward the African Revolution*. Translated by Haakon Chevalier. New York: Grove Press, 113.