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Anti-Oedipus I (1971-1972)

Lecture 8: March 7, 1972

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Code / Axiomatics; The Regime of Debt; Capitalist Immanence; Concealment in Axiomatics; Marking – Alliance and Filiation; On Christianity

... We tried to figure out how the capitalist machine could take the form of a system of immanence, defined by three of the machine's rather afferent and inter-connected aspects:

- 1) A complex system of differential relationships between decoded and deterritorialized flows. This differential system doesn't replace one code with another or faulty territorialities with new territorialities. The first aspect of capitalist immanence is this kind of bookkeeping axiomatics, which consists in establishing differential relationships between decoded and deterritorialized flows as such.¹
- 2) If it's true that decoded flows as such, deterritorialized flows as such, have a specifically schizophrenic external limit, i.e., that their limit is the "schizz," on the other hand, the differential between them wards off and resists this limit, substituting a set of internal limits that get reproduced on a wider and wider scale. The second aspect of capitalist immanence is the reproduction of the limits immanent to capital on an ever-larger scale.
- 3) The general effusion of anti-production into the apparatus of production, to the point that in such a system, no productive activity can occur without attesting to its place in an apparatus of anti-production. A point that allowed us to distinguish between ancient, imperial kinds of bureaucracy and modern bureaucracy, which served to make the apparatus of anti-production permeate throughout all productive activity.

If these are the three aspects of capitalist immanence, as an immanent machine, we can now determine how an axiomatic differs from coding [*codage*]. Capitalism doesn't restore code; it ushers in an axiomatic of decoded flows, which only happens to restore code.

I'm proposing that there are five differences between axiomatics and code, assuming that we won't find the model for axiomatics in science, though axiomatics does imply that science has reached a certain state, has taken on a certain shape.² Social axiomatics, which we have to interpret as a sort of extension of scientific axiomatics. On the contrary, it's scientific axiomatics, or science, that assumes an axiomatic form in a regime, in a form of society that, on its own terms, replaced codes with a properly social, quantifying axiomatic [*axiomatique comptable*]. Which means that scientific axiomatics, essentially, a new kind of social recording process,³ expressed in the scientific domain.

The first difference—in any regime of code, what do we find? A code is never homogeneous; a code is made up of shreds, of chunks, joined together piece-by-piece and, piece-by-piece,

crisscrossing a social field. Don't bother thinking in terms of linguistic homogeneity: a code borrows and mobilizes all sorts of signs; it mixes these signs together, and with this sort of multiplicity particular to code, a grid covers the social field by conjugating really diverse elements.

Yet, in every code, there are secret zones bound up with whatever collective investments of organs, which is included in any code. I'm saying that the collectivity, the group, invests organs. It's what [Paul] Parin demonstrates in his frustrating, awful book: *Les blancs pensent trop*.⁴ He does a good job of demonstrating how, if there's any castration in so-called primitive societies, it comes from the mouth of cousins, based on a collectively invested organ, I believe that the collective investment of organs is a fundamental aspect of code. In *Mythologiques*, [Claude] Lévi-Strauss demonstrates the collective investment of organs and prohibitions: like, under particular circumstances, given particular conditions, you don't have the right to use particular organs—which certainly doesn't imply a defense or prohibition in general, but [it does imply] something positive regarding code, i.e., collective investment.

All organs are coded, or over-coded: you're not going to use your eyes in certain conditions, you're not going to see this. You won't use your nose, or, on the other hand, you're called on after a system of initiation. And initiation means marking the body, and what follows are instances of displacement. A mask cannot be understood as the very depiction of a collective investment of organs; what I find so interesting about a mask is the displacement between the organs of the wearer and the organs represented on the mask—for example, those masks where the wearer doesn't see through the holes in the eyes but through some other orifice. What does that suggest? It suggests this gap between one's own organs and organs taking on a new capacity by virtue of their collective investment.

This whole regime of collectively investing organs implies zones that are necessarily secret—you're not in a position to make use of a collectively invested organ under such-and-such conditions. It requires a system of initiation to reach the point where you can use such an organ under those conditions. We have to bear in mind that such collective investments occur whenever there's a marking of bodies. Thus, every code harbors secret zones that play a fundamental role... [text missing] Strictly speaking, you could say that, everywhere, the secret weighs down on singular points, singularities of code, singularities of code that appear to be fundamentally linked to organs defined by their collective investment. In a way, nothing is unspeakable. The secret might be that of a secret society, or else it's something that quite literally cannot be spoken of without contradiction or cannot be spoken of without the system rupturing. There's no hiding it. The worst crimes—there's no covering it up, even if they involve secret codes, because concealment is a horse of a different color entirely.

We ought to maintain a categorical distinction between secrecy and objective concealment. I mean, it's very different in a capitalist system: you're told that you don't have the right to know this, or you don't have the right to participate in that, because you lack the enjoyment or use of the organ presupposed by such knowledge or such participation. That's the secret. In code there are two ways of handling the worst crimes: by over-coding one's organs—you *haven't been coded enough, you did because you escaped the code, so we're going to over-code you*, which might mean torturing you—or else by moving, expelling: *get the hell out, get lost*. And in

primitive societies, you often find a guy who's been expelled from his territoriality, from his group, who's gone away. He has a special status; sometimes he gets integrated somewhere else. Consider its latest forms in Greek cities, as the exile. You broke the secret, or you committed a crime—it was the movement of being run off.

What goes on these days? Every time we try to figure out how this machine works, we run into a wall. It's been the cornerstone of leftism: *we're going to try and figure out what's going on in this system!* A wall of police, of silence, opposes any such attempt, which leads us to believe that the search for or demand for information is singularly active. It's awful enough simply knowing what goes on in a factory. Literally, go to Renault on Émile-Zola, and see to what extent factories are prisons.⁵ When you want to know what happens in a prison, what you're dealing with isn't a secret as a function of code; it's something else. We must know how a Swiss bank functions.

Once you concretely understand how a capitalist institution functions, you enter a domain where, literally, you either collapse or you get riled up. It's a regime that, in one sense, doesn't tolerate anything even when it comes to the simplest information, doesn't tolerate anything nearby—on one hand, that's what makes it fragile, but it makes up for its fragility with a global repressive force which, on the other hand, constitutes its strength. This system isn't one of secrecy—the striking example of Dr. Rose at Toul, reporting on what goes on in a prison, violating a sort of capitalist understanding that an institution's participants will be silent; they might object to the institution in principle, but they're not to say anything about it—[it isn't a system of secrecy] but a system of concealment [*dissimulation*], not the subjective, psychological sort of concealment of capitalists, but an objective concealment, per the apparent objective movement of capital.⁶

We'd be mistaken were we to say that, in capitalism, there are two forms of money, but we should recognize that the money-form functions in two different ways: as finance and as revenue, financial flows and revenue flows fundamentally linked in a kind of differential relationship, since that's part of the system of differential relationships at the heart of capitalism. Such a system, with money assuming two forms and there being an established relationship between both forms, can only work on the condition that a fictitious principle of homogeneity is projected between both forms, both figures. Namely, the nature of finance flows and revenue flows is such that, in terms of how they're related, they appear as though they're convertible, in the form of a “uniform interest rate” or “gold standard,” and that's the real purpose of gold in capitalist regimes: rather than preserving it, [its purpose is] fundamentally to cover up [*dissimuler*] the heterogeneity between both kinds of flows and the nature of the relationship between both kinds of flows.

I'd say that the first broad, illustrative way of distinguishing code and axiomatics is that codes always function based on and in relation to zones of secrecy, while an axiomatic always functions on the basis and in relation to objective concealment.

The second point of contrast is this: in a code, due to its fundamental heterogeneities, its fragments linking together piece-by piece, etc., a code or coding always applies to flows. What code specifically does is work out the qualification of flows, independently of how they're related, i.e., the relationship between coded flows will result from said flows having been

qualified by code. For example, in a type of primitive society where, for example, you make out a machine with three or four flows—the flow of objects of consumption, the flow of prestige objects, the flow of rights over human beings (marriages, offspring, women, children, etc.)—I’m saying that code carries out coding, i.e., a qualification of such flows, each having its own circuit, where both the relationships between flows and the places where such relationships are established strictly depend on their first being qualified by way of code.

For example, in some places, usually on the outskirts of the group’s territory, there might be exchanges between prestige objects and objects of consumption. Such relationships between withdrawn flows [*prélèvements sur les flux*] are strictly determined by the quality of the flows and each of their own autonomous circuits. We ought to say that code is an indirect system of relations deriving from the qualification of flows that code carries out.

In an axiomatic, it’s the opposite, and it’s clear why an axiomatic entails a generalized decoding. Now there aren’t indirect relations between flows qualified by code, but on the contrary, the qualification of flows stems from the differential relationships between said flows, flows which possess no quality apart from how they’re situated in their differential relationship. And that’s fundamentally what characterizes axiomatics, that what determines the quality of each flow is the system of differential relationships between flows.

Example: we can’t talk about a flow of labor and a flow of capital, we can’t qualify these flows independently and prior to the differential relationship between them. And it’s only from the encounter between virtual capitalism and the virtual worker -- that is, the differential between both kinds of flows -- that will result the qualification of one of these flows as the flow of capital purchasing labor power and the other as the flow of labor purchased by capital. Otherwise, there would be no way of qualifying flows, since if they didn’t actually meet—forming differential relationships between flows with different capacities—if they didn’t actually cross paths, the capitalist would forever remain a capitalist, and the worker, a virtual worker, unable to sell their labor force. In this respect, I can make out a second contrast, and I believe that historically, axiomatics began as a new interpretation, a static and ordinal interpretation of differential calculus, and that that was its origin.

Third contrast: If it’s true that codes harbor and carry out qualifications of flows—which informs how flows are related to each other, and not the other way around—if that is indeed a point of contrast, I believe we can take the distinction further. In non-capitalist formations, just as flows are qualified and do not form indirect relationships stemming from their prior qualification, at certain points, points which can, by the way, constitute secrets, which can also be the subject of initiation, which is why all these distinctions are linked together. If that’s true, the fact remains that coding consists in a three-part operation precisely because there isn’t one code that spits everything out. Fundamentally, a code is a rule for recording or registering distribution [*enregistrement de distribution*]. Coding always operates where it affords the means; it’s a system of rules for siphoning off flows [*prélèvements sur les flux*], breaking off parts of chains [*détachements sur les chaînes*], and from there, distributing what remains, the residue, to consuming subjects. There are these three sides to any code: siphoning off flows, detaching from chains, and then distributing what’s left. See [Pierre] Bonnafé’s essay in *Nouvelle Revue de*

Psychanalyse on the magic object,⁷ where these three aspects of the magic object are delineated very clearly.

At this level, each fragment of code unites all the heterogeneous aspects at issue in an inherently finite combination, in a mobile, open, and finite combination. In the primitive market, in other words, if we're sticking to these kinds of flows, there's always an imbalance because, in point of fact, there is no form of exchange; there's no form of equivalence. There's a fundamental imbalance when it comes to each flow qualified in a particular way in the exchange relationship at stake in a combination. In other words, there is no exchange; there's a system of debt, and debt is fundamentally affected by a functional imbalance, a functional imbalance at the level of each finite combination, involving every aspect of coding and thereby all the different qualified flows, an imbalance compensated for by heterogeneous elements borrowed from another flow.

For example, the lack of equilibrium between giving and receiving objects of consumption effectively isn't rebalanced; its imbalance is fundamental, constant. It only works insofar as it's unbalanced. That's fundamentally what's in dispute with Leach and Lévi-Strauss: both agree that there's an imbalance, Leach claiming that the imbalance is a fundamental aspect of the system, integral to how it functions, while Lévi-Strauss maintains that it's a pathological outcome of the system. Leach is right. Looking at each flow, each combination, each flow contributing to a compound product, there's a fundamental imbalance relative to the flows in question, and it's as though this imbalance were perpetually made up for by siphoning off another flow, a flow with a different character.⁸

For example, the imbalance between the one distributing objects for consumption and the one receiving them will be compensated for by drawing off [*par un prélèvement*] a completely different flow, the flow of prestige, where the distributor gains prestige, or, from a third kind of flow, receives privileges over human beings, or from coats of arms, etc. I'd argue that, at that point, the economic unit in so-called primitive society are fundamentally finite combinations that both in themselves and in their unbalanced way of functioning inherently bring in flows of all different qualities, and there's a whole cycle of debt that forms around these circulating finite compounds. It's the regime of finite debt, and the regime of alliances is precisely what delineates the trajectory of finite debt.

On the other hand, what changes with axiomatics is how the system of finite and mobile combinations gets replaced by a regime of infinite debt, and how infinity fundamentally belongs to the regime of axiomatics, whereas coding implies the finitude of what it codes. And here, too, the infinite appears at the level of capitalist economics in the way money produces money. Marx highlights this infinite growth, whereby money makes money. And in what seems like a different form—but which is only the extension of the first—the infinite of capital, whose mode is the process whereby, at every turn, capital has immanent limits, but limits that it reproduces on an ever-wider scale. In other words, this regime of infinity is one of destruction-creation, and we've seen why the money form is necessarily tied to the destruction and creation of money. If there is no axiomatics of infinity *vis à vis* its form as axiomatics, it is the case that the material such axiomatics bears upon is fundamentally an infinite material. In other words, axiomatics is the system of finite rules structuring a subject matter that itself is properly infinite. That much should be clear for scientific axiomatics, but also at a more basic consideration of axiomatics, of axioms,

both as a way of treating and mixing a properly infinite material, one which is accounted for by the axiomatics of the infinite number of possible combinations deriving from the axiomatics itself.

Just as code is the system of finite debt and finite economics, so too is axiomatics the system of infinite debt. In the most basic terms, we will never fully pay our debt—infinite punishment, infinite repayment—economically, the great shift from archaic codes handling finite matter, with the capitalist sort of axiomatics that instead handle material that's fundamentally infinite.

The fourth difference: In a society, whether coded or axiomatized, there's a basic social component [*instance*], that of the body without organs, of the unproductive, of anti-production. With so-called primitive societies, we've seen that the Earth, as an indivisible entity, acts as the full body, as the body without organs, as the instance of anti-production. In imperial societies, the despot and his two-fold incest, with his sister and his mother—both kinds of incest outlining the two ends of imperial over-coding, one incest at the periphery and one incest at the center, so that everything gets over-coded—it isn't at all about fecundity. It's about sterility, one that appropriates all productive forces: nothing must be born from incestuous unions. On the other hand, whatever is born must depend on the sterile union itself, i.e., the great despotic incest—see the case of Oedipus, the club-footed despot—along the surface of the imperial full body, the great despotic incest forms its double union, with sister and mother, thereby ensuring an over-coding of the older territorial codes that are falling apart all over the place.

And here, indeed, imperial codes get added onto prior territorial codes a new full body, the full body. The body without organs of the despot, acting as an instance of anti-production and projecting [*se rabat*] onto every productive force, just as the full body of the Earth in so-called primitive societies was projected onto productive forces in order to appropriate them. I believe that, with such code, it's absolutely necessary for the full body being the appropriation, appropriating the forces of production, to be extra-economic in nature. That is, insofar as it's a prerequisite for the apparent movement, the objective movement of the recording process [*enregistrement*] in a particular form of society, it's inevitable that in a code, this apparent, objective movement emanates from and goes back to a non-economic entity. As Marxists might put it, that doesn't mean that the state of the economic process isn't what necessitates erecting such an economic full body, and the apparent movement whereby productive forces are attributed to the full body might come down to the state of these forces themselves.

The fact remains that, from the point of view of its objective movement, what appropriates productive forces is something extra-economic. Which itself explains the two-fold aspect of how anti-production operates: inhibiting, limiting productive forces on the one hand, and on the other, projecting [*se rebattre*] onto them in order to appropriate the productive forces. These two aspects are then separated in quality and in temporality from the work of productive forces themselves. The body of the earth, insofar as it both limits and appropriates productive forces, makes use of something it conjugates on its own surface—upon the full body of the earth, the primitive territorial machine conjugates filiations and alliances, a range of filiations and alliances appropriating the productive forces. And as its own nature isn't economic but geological and political, to the extent that there is a geology of politics, to the extent that the earth is what functions as a full body without organs. With imperial regimes, the full body of the despot

securing these same functions shows up as a transcendent instance, an instance of anti-production whose nature is political, administrative, or even religious.

I believe that capitalist axiomatics offers us the only form society where what plays the role, functions as a full body, becomes a directly economic instance. Something no code could ever withstand; it goes without saying that this is what grounds concealment. It must be hidden, i.e., the full body of such a society is directly economic; it's money capital. It's what all flows run on, and what productive forces are attributed to. In contrast to previous systems, there's no longer a difference in nature or timing between labor and surplus labor. In the worker's workday, it's impossible to distinguish—except abstractly, in the form of an arithmetical difference which allegedly belied the true nature of capitalism, the nature of its differential relations—it's impossible to find the line between labor and surplus labor, as opposed to what happens with despotic over-coding, where the part of labor and the part of surplus labor are qualitatively and temporally distinct.

The fifth and final point of contrast: just as an aside, when biologists today talk about genetic codes, it's interesting how they use the word, "code," because it also has aspects of an axiomatic. We can come at the word, "code," in two ways. The reason they say there's a biological code is precisely because everything depends on something extra-chemical, on some entity [*instance*] or on forms of connection, capable of relating bodies stripped of any chemical affinity, in the same way I was saying that, if we're talking about code, it's because there's some extra-economic instance which productive forces are attributed to. Indeed, whenever we find an entity whose objective appearance is external to or transcends the field of linkage in question, then we're dealing with code.

And the second characteristic that supports modern biological code being code is that it's a system of indirect relationships—for example, with so-called allosteric bodies, where any relationship can only be indirect, precisely because the bodies involved have no chemical affinity. Under both these aspects, the concept of code is perfectly justifiable. In an axiomatic, there are direct relationships that qualities are derived from, and the appropriating entity is itself economic.

In both codes and axiomatics, people aren't what gets marked. Code marks flows, only in a primitive society, flows are marked according to how poorly developed productive forces are. Flows are marked based on organs, and the fact that flows are coded implies the collective investment of organs—this shows up with cultural relativists—the investment of organs is integral to coding flows, and it motivates the whole system of prohibitions. I suppose that such prohibitions are only a cover for some positive operation, this process of collectively investing organs. On the other hand, with capitalism, we've always said that it's built on the basis of a generalized decoding, and decoding doesn't affect flows without also affecting organs. Organs have gone through a fundamental collective disinvestment. The first organ to have been disinvested was the anus (see Max Weber). We can't ignore how African mythology illustrates that, whenever organs get disinvested, organic codes, the coding of organs, will lean towards the anus. The other organs followed. If this collective disinvestment of organs is what we call castration, then the anus is what's behind the main castration, and the phallus, as a transcendent object, wouldn't exist were it not for what the anus does. Oedipus is anal, from top to bottom.⁹

What led to a collective disinvestment of organs in capitalism? It's like, go ahead and use your eyes, your mouth, your anus, do whatever you want—our collective investments no longer involve collectively investing organs; your organs are your business. How come? Because the collective investment of organs always points back to something essential about code, that code is a machine for ripping up alliances with filiations. If I use the word, "machine," it's to indicate that it isn't an axiomatic, nor is it a deductive system. Alliances are never drawn from filiations; they never follow or are deduced from filiations. There's a machine that conjugates alliances with filiations, a machine that does something incredible when it comes to code, where the form of social reproduction goes through the form of human reproduction, and where the family, whether in the narrow or broad sense, is always a protocol, a strategy, a tactical approach in a society of codes. In other words, the family is anything but familial. The family is the direct embodiment of investments in the extra-familial social field, and there it acquires its strategic function as it conjugates alliances with filiations.

In that sense, it's coextensive with the social field insofar as family stimuli are like bases, elements of social investment, which is another way of saying that social reproduction goes through human reproduction, hence the need for a collective coding of organs. Everything changes in imperial societies, yet it remains the same. The whole system of alliances and filiations in primitive communities is preserved, and the specifically despotic category of the new alliance is overlaid on top of it. It's a new category of alliances; the despot ushers in new alliances which direct filiations derive from. Imperial societies keep it so that social reproduction, at both ends, takes the form of human reproduction: at one end, the despot's reproduction, the despot's body without organs addressing the question of the dynasty, and at the other end, the village communities still upholding the regime of ancient alliances and indirect filiation.

In capitalism, alliances and filiations retain their old meanings, only now in the context of the full body's new characteristics, as money capital. Capital is now what the categories of alliances and filiations are attributed to. We enter a regime of new alliances, and filiation is the process whereby capital produces money as industrial capital. Industrial capital is the capital of filiation, while alliance capital is market capital in its banking and its commercial forms. And it's true about capitalism that, in its essence, in its specificity as a form of society, it is industrial—neither the merchant nor the banker would have been enough to establish the capitalist system. Had it not been for industrialization, they would have still found their roles and functions in the pores (as Marx puts it) of the previous form of society. Pores which are the little holes on the body without organs, whether territorial or despotic.¹⁰

It's true that the essence and specificity of capitalism lies in the industrial process whereby capital buys the means of production and the labor power of the deterritorialized worker. But if the specificity of capitalism resides with industrial capital, on the other hand, the functioning of capitalism is determined by banking and commercial capital, which then become fully autonomous and take on a leading role, based industrial capital. From there, it's appropriate to say that filiation is now something about capital, in the form of filial capital, money generating money *ad infinitum*, and on the other hand, alliance is a capital thing in the form of alliance capital, in the form of banking and trade. Then, not only does the registration of capital not apply

to people, but neither does it apply to organs: capital is now geared towards alliances and filiations.

In capitalism, in an axiomatic regime, social reproduction no longer takes the form of human reproduction. Which means that the form of human reproduction stops determining, informing social reproduction. To put it like some of Aristotle's commentators, human reproduction is now only the form of the material; social reproduction still needs material, material provided by human reproduction, but the form of social reproduction has become independent of the form of familial reproduction. The family is no longer a protocol or strategy.¹¹ What is the purpose of human reproduction then? Among the characteristics of the capitalist machine we looked at earlier, one was that differential relationships have an internal limit that's reproduced on an ever-broader scale, whereby they ward off and drive back capitalism's real external limit, schizophrenia.

As for capitalism pushing its schizo-limit back further and further, its first method for doing so was to substitute internal limits, to be reproduced on a larger and larger scale. The act of displacing its limit, the different scales of capital. But there's another way in which its limit gets displaced, since the form of human reproduction no longer shapes social reproduction, precisely because the latter is secured by filiation capital and alliance capital, insofar as they've taken it upon themselves to conjugate alliance and filiation—the reproduction of capital, in and of itself, no longer needs human reproduction except for as a material. The limit gets displaced in a second way: far from being a strategic and tactical impulse coextensive with the entire social field, the family now forms a subset to which... far from lending its form to social reproduction, [it is a subset] whose form is imposed by social reproduction, and social reproduction will intersect with its entire form and every aspect of its form. This second displacement isn't about internal limits which are ever-expanding, but internal limits which are ever-narrowing. That's not a contradiction, since it comes down to two completely different displacements, which are closely interrelated: just as capital takes over the functions of alliance and filiation and thus reproduces itself on a wider and wider scale, the form of human reproduction characterizes a more and more limited milieu, whereupon the now-autonomous capitalist social field can be reflected [*se rabattre*], applied to as its sub-set.

So much to say that: the more capitalist axiomatics distances itself from code, operating according to its always-expanding internal limits, the more restricted its field of application needs to be, and every capitalist determination finds its field of application in one sub-set, that of the family.

In *La Paix blanche* [The White Peace],¹² [Robert] Jaulin analyzes the example of deals missionaries make with Indians [*sic*]. The missionaries say, "We're going to build small personal houses for you"—we're witnessing the birth of Oedipus—"You'll have your own place, no more collective houses." And the Indians [*sic*] agree to it, thinking, this is the first time that white people are offering us part of their lives, so the Indians offer something from their own lives as well; they build a big collective house. A church! So, here's what Jaulin says, which sounds to me exactly like the birth of Oedipus: "The condition of the colonized can lead to a reduction in the humanization of the universe, so that any solution that is sought will be a solution on the scale of the individual and the restricted family."¹³ To that, I'll add that there's an initial

displacement of the limit. The limit is brought, in the condition of the colonized, to a more and more restricted scale: before, the Indian [*sic*] had whatever social field, and they invested it along with the social reproduction in said field. With its open family, its system of alliance and filiation, as Jaulin says, “the reduction of the humanization of the universe,” the limit of this field is no longer territorial or inter-territorial between allied groups, and undergoes a bizarre reflection [*rabattement*] where social reproduction completely escapes the Indian [*sic*]. It’s taken over by the colonizer, and it’s brought back under its limit: *you will no longer believe that the one who gave you life is a chief—we are the chief. The one who gave you life is just your dad.*¹⁴

See also [Victor] Turner’s account of the village where the chieftainship has been abolished, you get pinned down with a tighter and tighter limit, “with, by way of consequence, an extreme anarchy or disorder at the level of the collective: an anarchy whose victim will always be the individual—with the exception of those who occupy the key positions in such a system, namely the colonizers, who, during this period when the colonizers reduce the universe, will tend to extend it.”¹⁵ His text offers us a way of expressing the connection between two displacements of the limit.¹⁶ As the universe of the colonized shrinks, we see the limit makes two complementary moves: on the one hand, the internal limit expands further and further, and on the other hand, the internal limit defines a smaller and smaller subset, which becomes less and less capable of influencing the mechanisms of reproduction. In other words, the history and the constitution of the Western world, this heterogeneous whole, which can be taken up at any time and in any of its regions... [*Text interrupted*]

...this development concerning small personal houses represents the second way the limit gets displaced, and this is what Jaulin says: he gives us his depiction of the earlier collective houses, and from what I can gather it isn’t about there being large families. It’s not that the so-called primitive family was large; the houses were collective because fundamentally, as a strategy, insofar as it determines the form of social reproduction, they were open to the outside, to what Jaulin calls the other. What’s more, as a family, as subject to the investments of individual members, what the individual invests through [the family] are non-familial determinations in their social field: the land, alliances, etc. [The family] is fundamentally open to the other, i.e., to what isn’t family—to the ally, if you will.

Which certainly doesn’t suggest any shortcoming in the structure of the family. The fact that, under capitalism, it’s now no more than material lends it a powerful function. It assumes a very specific function under capitalist axiomatics. I think that with capitalist systems, all revolutionary forms are those that break down, slip out from under the axiomatics of order. The problem we always run into is how to ensure that acts of decoding, acts of deterritorialization, are both revolutionarily positive and don’t recreate some perverse or artificial version of the family, i.e., that they don’t form their own codes and territorialities.

I’ll elaborate using a somewhat less flashy example: psychiatry. Psychoanalysis has always been equal parts lovely and lousy. I’m of the persuasion that theories are formed piece-meal; the lovely is mixed in with the lousy. What’s great about Freud is that you’ll find gems and eyesores on the same page. Psychoanalysis entails—and here, it’s revolutionary—breaking down codes, a kind of decoding of desire (*Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality*). At high moments, we learn that dream interpretation shouldn’t be confused for the dream dictionaries from Antiquity,

because dream dictionaries are codes. Don't mistake that for psychoanalysis! But in the same book, this trickster gives us his account of Oedipus, and he doesn't know what to do with it; he's making a code. They make detention centers with groups, if necessary, almost militant groups, and what they're up against: preventing artificial families from forming again, artificial Oedipuses, at which point they'd be reterritorializing, recoding. The question is how to make way for decoded, positive, and revolutionary flows without reconstituting depraved families. That's the danger with militant groups.

In terms of the unconscious and how it relates to the social field, the territoriality of the party is a fundamental danger. How can there be a revolutionary link between people that mobilizes the libido, that mobilizes Eros, Desire, but doesn't wind up trapped in the coded or axiomatized structures of Oedipus? It's a problem at the level of practice.

*[Unrecorded discussion about the burial of Pierre Overney]*¹⁷

... Jaulin does a good job of demonstrating how intimacy or one's private life were completely upheld for the different families in the confines of a collective home,¹⁸ since the family is always open to the non-family, to the ally. Collective houses provide small, private territorialities open to the ally, and there are rules for alliance and filiation so that some things are not permitted of allies. There's some kind of intense private life, which doesn't prevent the Indian [*sic*] in the collective home, by way of this private life, from investing the whole group. Jaulin, on the subject of individual houses: "There occurred an excessive ferment of the elements of the group"—he saw the urban state of Oedipus—"affecting the group itself most often results in exacerbating each element's familial or sociological characteristics and is translated by a domestic opposition experienced in the home, between the couple's original 'dimensions.' Children are tossed around in this system, each (parent) vying to 'hoard' them for themselves, i.e., for the sake of their reference lineage."¹⁹ Oedipus is born!

Oedipus, for us cultured Europeans, is our little internal colony, and for Indians or Africans, it's forced colonization. It's one of the most immediate products of colonization, taking the form of: your father isn't what you think, i.e., an agent of social reproduction, end of story. Social reproduction involves every colonizer. Jaulin says that, at that point, he looks at the kid, and one says, "he's from my lineage," and the other says "he's from my lineage." They take the kid by the arm and ask what the child prefers, which doesn't come up in a regime of alliance or filiation, i.e., in the lineage machine, because there's a system for visitation, for opening up to the outside, where lineage isn't a problem.

Why does the capitalist system's internal limit get displaced in two conjoined ways, as the more and more protracted reproduction of social limits, on an ever-wider scale, and consequently with increasingly narrow limits circumscribing the family? And how are the two related? Capitalist axiomatics, insofar as it concerns a regime where social reproduction has become autonomous, needs a subset for its application. As social reproduction, it's constitutive of a first kind of image: the capitalist, the industrialist, the banker, the worker—the first order of images produced by social axiomatics. Consequently, its limits increasingly tighten around the family, which is where axiomatics finds its application, furnished by a second order of images. The second images are those formed using the material of human reproduction, i.e., family figures: daddy, mommy, me.

What capitalist political economy needs is a process called psychoanalysis. Psychoanalysis is the application whereby political economy defines its corresponding axiomatics. A perfectly acceptable formula.

There is transcendence not just when flows are coded, but when, on top of territorial codes, which don't invoke any transcendence, which are an underlying system, a despotic over-coding is overlaid. Then there's transcendence. The question of Christianity's imperial character immediately shows up in the very form of catholicity, i.e., of one transcendent universal, or one truth for all religions. And historically, the way it shows up bears on the very essence of early Christianity: what will be our relationship with the Roman Empire, a decadent form of empire? In other words, do we go with entrism, using the debris of the Roman Empire to end up rebuilding a spiritually motivated empire? Or should we dissolve the Roman empire, start from scratch, return to the desert? Return to the desert in order to recreate a despotic formation from this sort of pact with the Roman Empire; we'll build despotic formations from scratch, i.e., from anchorites, from convents. Early Christianity's return to the East, against the Christians allying themselves with the Romans; in that respect, Christianity is like the last great imperial form of society. Indeed, what we might call the transcendent regime of infinite debt really begins with the great empires. What real punishment looks like has changes; all countries have made a sacred pact—you aren't getting out of it; the debt is infinite.

But I wouldn't say that Christianity offers us a dialectic of transcendence and immanence. What I would say is that it comes in bits and pieces. On the one hand, it's the final attempt to rebuild an imperial society, but with this imperial form of society, the conditions are such that it cannot be rebuilt that way. It has to be formed spiritually, i.e., the great empires are what establish infinite debt, what Nietzsche refers to as a cunning ploy: it takes some troubling artists to pull it off, but infinite debt was still external. The trick with Christianity—and this is very closely tied to its becoming—is that it not only subjects us to the regime of infinite debt, but the regime of internalized infinite debt. On the one hand, there's the aspect of despotic formation renewed by Christianity, and on the other hand, there's the way its formation lies deep within the development of capitalism, where it's no longer a regime of transcendence, but one of immanence.²⁰

With immanence, assuming that it runs on an axiomatic and no longer on code, there's no more need for belief. Religion as belief only makes sense in the context of Christianity's place in an imperial form of society. When it comes to axiomatics, it's no longer a question of belief. That's why Christianity, as contemporary to capitalism, as we see it now, has always been like this: who cares whether they believe or not? It rubs me the wrong way granting Christianity an autonomy in terms of belief or religion because, when it goes through its conversion from transcendence to immanence, in its immanent aspect where it belong to capitalism, Christianity is *the* religion, and what makes it the religion of capitalism is that it doesn't operate in terms of belief. What they care about is it being the main religion, and looking at it that way, it's no longer a religion once belief isn't what matters. But Christianity guarantees a certain production of images in capitalism, and a certain relationship between such images, images which are part of the way in which the apparatus of capitalist immanence is fed. Religion is part of the economic machine.²¹

This business with the two poles of Christianity is the same as what we get with the death drive. Consider how death is coded in primitive systems: there is no death drive because it is more or less coded. It's when territorial codes break down that the death drive starts to show up, in processes of decoding. In imperial and despotic systems, the lion of the despot and death is ensured by a phenomenon that belongs to despotic formations—Freud lumped everything together under imperial forms of society, which is why he didn't understand capitalism—latency, everyone has a good laugh when latency comes up. Why did Freud invent latency? The real point of latency's implementation was as a historical determination, concerning the fate of despotic formations. Namely, why they were afflicted with a collective forgetfulness, which put them into a latent state—why the Greeks, the Egyptians, the Africans rejected, tamped down their imperial past into latency.²²

How did the Greeks forget Mycenae? In despotic forms of society, the death drive is the great transcendent instance of anti-production, and it gets over-coded in the form of the new alliance, the revenge of the new alliance. Death is over-coded and turned into a veritable transcendent instinct. At the same time, for despotic regimes, it's a transcendent instinct because mortifying anti-production is separate from production, separated both in quality and in time. With capitalism, death is decoded: the whole apparatus of mortifying anti-production effuses into production. Freud says that the death drive is something transcendent and silent... [*End of session*]

Notes

¹ Deleuze and Guattari flesh out this analysis in *Anti-Oedipus*, especially in Chapter Three, under the section, "The Civilized Capitalist Machine," which begins on p. 222.

² This line of analysis gets developed in *Anti-Oedipus*, starting around p. 248.

³ See the translators' note for "*enregistrement*" on *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 4.

⁴ Text untranslated. Title reads, "White People Think Too Much." Paul Parin et al, *Les blancs pensent trop*, (Paris: Payot, 1963). Referenced twice in *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 144 and 178.

⁵ A reference to the assassination of Pierre Overney on February 25, 1972, right on Renault's doorstep; see details below.

⁶ Deleuze refers to Dr. Rose in Lecture 3 (December 21, 1971).

⁷ Pierre Bonnafé, "Objet majique, sorcellerie et fétichisme," in *Nouvelle revue de psychanalyse*, no. 2 (1970). See *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 326.

⁸ On this disagreement, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 187-188. See also the Foucault Seminar, Lecture 9 (January 7, 1986).

⁹ For more on this, specifically, see *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 144.

¹⁰ On this reference to Marx, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 225, esp. Etienne Balibar's comments from *Reading Capital*.

¹¹ For more on Aristotle in this context, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 263.

¹² Robert Jaulin, *La Paix blanche, Introduction à l'ethnocide* (Paris: Seuil, 1970).

¹³ Following the translation of this passage in *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 169.

¹⁴ On Jaulin's analysis and these passages, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 169-170.

¹⁵ Although he mentions Turner and the direct citation is unacknowledged, Deleuze here (perhaps mistakenly) quotes the rest of the Jaulin passage cited in *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 169. Quotation marks have been added to the original text.

¹⁶ On Turner's *A Ndembu Doctor in Practice* (New York: Collier-Macmillan, 1964), see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 167-168.

¹⁷ A militant Maoist worker who was assassinated by a Renault security officer at the Regie Renault door in Boulogne-Billancourt on February 25, 1972. On March 4, 200,000 people marched with his coffin through Paris, carrying him on their shoulders. He was buried at Pere-Lachaise cemetery.

¹⁸ *La Paix blanche*, p. 395f.

¹⁹ The start of this passage follows the translation found in *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 169—adjusted to reflect Deleuze's changes to the original quote.

²⁰ On Nietzsche and infinite debt, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 216-217, as well as *The Genealogy of Morality*, II, para. 21.

²¹ See *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 213-216, for the links between religion, psychoanalysis, and capitalism.

²² On latency and these turns of events, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 213-216