**Gilles Deleuze**

**Deleuze & Guattari at Vincennes, 1975-76**

*Il Senso in Meno,* **Part 6 - Rhizomes, Assemblages of Power and Territorialized Assemblages of Enunciation**

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[*Please note that the transcription follows as exactly as possible the discussion in the filmed seminar, and therefore the translation differs at time with the discussion rendered in the subtitles on the YouTube versions*]

[*From the tenor of Deleuze's opening remarks, in the first two minutes, as well as from his clothing and from the drawing that dominates the blackboard – the fourth, four-cornered drawing reproduced in* A Thousand Plateaus *(p. 183) --, this session's start is in all likelihood the end of another session for which we lack what precedes, marked distinctly from the session that opens after the first session interruption at time mark 2:19*]

Deleuze: I can say that since we began, everything we have done up to this point, from the start, is to consider three topics. The first of these was the *rhizome* in opposition to the tree. The second topic was to investigate or sketch out a sort of *theory of redundancy*. Thirdly, we looked at a particular problem: the problem of *faciality*. Do I think there is something that links all of this? In a way, they relate to the same thing but in a kind of magma because, behind the screen, behind the wall, or outside of the black hole, when the different lines enter into new relationships... landscapity... that is… when faces come undone to the benefit of their traits, when landscapes are unmade and no longer hold in place their traits of landscapity, everything enters into new relationships. That's when the *rhizome* begins. Black holes are like knots of arborescence.

Everything we've said up to now is connected. This is obvious, since we've seen how necessary the face is in building redundancies – whether redundancies of resonance or redundancies of frequency. I would say that the redundancies of frequency were the first figure of the face. If you multiply the black holes on the white surface... Redundancies of resonance constitute the second figure. Faces flow towards the black hole, that is, all faces will come to resonate in a single black hole. So, there you have it. Next time we'll look at a different topic… [*Tape interrupted; here ends the summary of the five preceding sessions, quite possibly in a sixth session for which the recording is missing*] [2:19]

[*Here begins the next session, February 3, 1976*] … [We'll continue], if you bear with me, focussing on two essential points. Firstly, the face-power assemblage, because in this rapport there's something we still have to consider, something I still can't figure out. Why do power assemblages need faciality? The second topic, if we don't have time, I would like some of you more qualified than me to speak about it next time… is the question of the close-up… the question of the close up in the history of cinema and the role of both the face and the close-up in cinema. What worries me... do you really want to say something?

A student (near Deleuze): No, no…

Another student: [*Inaudible*]

A third student: A question, may I? I'd like to ask a question.

The second student: [*Inaudible*]

The third student: The next time, I want to talk about the French language!

Another student: Ah, we know all about that.

The third student: No, no, no, no, no. Will you let me have just one minute?

The other student: Just one minute?

The third student: Yes, yes… [*Comments lost in the general noise*]

Deleuze: Will you stop bickering all the time? It's exhausting!

Another student: I'm not asking a question. I want to tell a story if you let me…

Another student: So, let's hear your story then.

The first student: Thank you! Are there others who want me to tell it? [*Deleuze is heard laughing; pause and relative silence of students*]

Deleuze: Yes, there's… I don't know, there's a problem that worries me... It's the story -- I also have a story -- the assemblages of power, you recall, we began with a very simple idea. On the white wall of the signifier, the signifier inscribes its characters, which are not information but orders. "You will do this!" and it's at this point that the face intervenes. The face intervenes because it guides us in what linguists famously call binary choices. These binary choices are for example: What did I hear? Did I hear "old *billiard*" or "old *pillager*"? What was it? What did I hear? [*On this example, see Michel Foucault,* Death and the Labyrinth: The World of Raymond Roussel*, trans. Charles Ruas, (New York: Continuum, 2004, 15). Deleuze adopts his example from Roussel frequently, notably in* Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester with Charles J. Stivale, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (1969; New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), pp. 38-39; new ed. (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2015), p. 41. See also sessions 14, 15 and 16 in the Cinema seminar 4 (March 5, 12 and 19, 1985), and session 7 in the current seminar (December 12, 1985)*]

And if the face makes redundancy with the redundancies of language, it's because I let the face guide me. What does it mean when traits of faciality escape the face? For example, all at once a teacher who appeared serious and had the trust of the headmistress starts acting crazy. Or, and this is stated by a famous name [*The phrase cited next is on that Deleuze attributed to Kierkegaard,* Traité du désespoir*, although according to Ronald Bogue, the phrase is not found in the Kierkegaard text; see Bouge, "The Art of the Possible,"* Revue internationale de philosophie*, 24.3 (2007), p. 278*], a respectable man sitting at the dinner table with his wife and children suddenly blows it, undoes his collar and screams: "The possible or I shall suffocate!" The children fix their black holes on daddy while the mother says: "The possible or I shall suffocate? What?" And we look at his face and we see that he no longer has one. The traits of faciality have freed themselves from the face's domination.

Facial tics are very moving. A tic, a tic… it's a kind of gentle effort, an effort that enables traits of faciality to subtract themselves from the imperialism of the face. A tic arrives out of the blue but is, at the same time, always controlled. That's what characterizes a tic, otherwise it wouldn't be a tic. It's always controlled by the face that recomposes itself. There are some admirable tics. Specialists

of tics give them a bad rap. But it's good to have tics… though not too many. And then… there's no time to go into it more.

So, we were saying that there are traits of faciality, that the face guides us in binary choices, as linguists call them. This is very useful for power since binary choices are actually orders. To make a mistake in a binary choice, to mistake a *v* for a *p*, what does this mean? It means being a bad pupil... and why? Mistaking a *v* for a *p*, or 100 for 10, none of this is information, it's the transmission of orders - both at a social level and at that of the most obvious power assemblages.

So, the question I can't manage to figure out is: we would have a more flexible and precise hinge between power assemblages and faciality if we managed to show how and why the face has a fundamental rapport with binary choices: that is to say, how and why the face instigates dichotomies in every direction. You are a man or you're a woman, you're rich or you're poor. Look at your face! You're a woman. Why do you dress like a man? But you're poor, look at you! And you expect to have the right to come in here. Here… a poor guy like you. Rich, poor, boy, girl. You'll tell me that it's not just a question of the face. But yes! In certain power assemblages, in certain semiotics, it's the face that will function, it's the face that will be in charge of enunciating and assigning places. As though the face instigated dichotomies that are actual knots of arborescence. The face is a tree, the black hole is a tree, the wall is a tree. That's it.

But in what way does the face create dichotomies? I don't know... Guattari has understood this better than me, he's gone farther on this point, and that pisses me off because there's something I don't fully understand, there's something that escapes me. I completely understand binary choices, for example in language, and the role of the face with respect to the binary choices of language, and I know there wouldn't even be language if a machine of faciality didn't connect to the axis of signifiance. But here there's something that escapes me, I don't get it… In what way does the face dichotomize everything? And why does it do so? It's not enough to say: "Because we have two eyes, two nostrils." Please tell us… I can't figure it out, I'm blocked.

Guattari: I don't know whether this is the right context...

Deleuze: So, forget about it. Let's speak about something else. We can discuss this next time…

Guattari: I'm sorry… I've got a bit of a cold. I just want to say a couple of things for the moment. The question is to know how, in its most general form, a machine of faciality contributes to establishing what I call capitalist flows, what in *Anti-Oedipus* we called *decoded flows*. Decoded flows, because they can exist outside of "capitalist" societies, while also menacing primitive societies. I wasn't planning to intervene during your presentation. It's a bit annoying because I'm introducing some ideas that we've not already discussed together. I need to explain them to myself before I can explain them to others.

Anyway, in what I would call *territorialized assemblages of enunciation* -- for example, "primitive" societies, or a group of children and so on – faciality doesn't have the same function. It doesn't function as a reference of a place, as Gilles said, around which the point of arborescence of the ensemble of coordinates, or of the world, is organized. In societies typified by capitalist flows the face is a bit like… as they tell you at primary school, the support polygon with its centre of gravity. The face is a kind of polygon of all the coordinates, with a centre of gravity in the form of a black hole around which everything is organized.

This support polygon of general coordinates in a territorialized assemblage of enunciation is the territory itself. The territories and the most territorialized semiotics had to be deterritorialized in order to produce a face and a landscape, to constitute a *facialization* and a *landscapification*, as

Gilles said last time - these are the result of this operation of deterritorialization. And this is accompanied by a general semiotic collapse. Meaning that all the semiotic components – gestural, ritual, corporeal, whatever you can imagine - no longer operate on their own account but must always refer to the point of arborescence.

In primitive societies too, people referred to a point of arborescence. However, this wasn't centred on the face but on the territory. So, there was a translatability, a redundancy, a comprehension of all these components in relation to a territory, whether it be through a tree, a ritual, a sorcerer or whatever... What was outside the territory was considered an outland, a non-world, something that implied a negotiation and an exit from the territory. With the advent of the faciality machine, we will no longer have a rupture marking "our" world, "our" territory – where corporeal traits are inscribed among the other elements – for example Native Americans who paint their faces form part of a landscape ensemble. It is neither face nor landscape, but part of the ensemble of the territory. Here, we have a double operation. On one hand you have a concentration of the elements of signifying redundancy on the face around the black holes of the eyes. On the other, you have a universalization of the ensemble of territories. Hence, it is presumed that nothing escapes comprehension through the face. A face is always the centre of signifying coordinates. And, what's more, the territory is vast. We tend to say: it's France, the world, white people, civilized people, normal people, men and so on. It's clear that all this constitutes a fascistic conception of universality. The signifying coordinates impose a very specific type of world.

Here I'm speaking quite generally. How do we get to the problem Gilles has posed? If I manage to get there... it's that when you look at a face... We introduced the idea of a four-eyed machine. The four-eyed machine consists in looking not at the eyes but at a point determined by the symmetry of the eyes. If you give me a moment, I'd like to tell you a dream I had so you can understand me better. One day, I dreamt about a woman who was looking at me. It was in a crowded space. Suddenly, I was captured by what I would say was her gaze - not her eyes. Then, I noticed that the way this woman was looking at me was quite bizarre. I was completely fascinated. And, suddenly, there was a flash. A very strange thing... a third eye appeared, very big, in the middle of her forehead that centered the two eyes. We can say that the black hole is not an eye in particular but rather the operation of symmetrization of all values, which permits there to be a central point for the organization of the coordinates.

To return, if you will, to the system of alternatives, a face functions like a kind of oscillograph establishing what is allowed and what is forbidden. There are always standard deviations around which a face oscillates. You can smile but not too much because if it turns into a grimace, you must be mad, delinquent, stoned or whatever. The ensemble of corporeal attitudes themselves, other semiotics continues to exist. We're not saying there is just the face. But these are captured by the arborescence of the face. They're recorded on a central computer, on the central oscillograph, which tells us what they're supposed to mean.

Deleuze: Actually, clothes are a facialization of the body…

Guattari: Like make-up and what have you... Starting from this point, we are in a better position to understand the operation of binary either/or systems. In territorialized assemblages of enunciation, what I will call "the possible" -- what it's possible to do, possible to say, in whatever register, marriage, ritual, play etc. -- is framed, organized according to a territory. If one leaves this territory, if something foreign appears, it requires a whole semiotic effort, a process of semiotization to be able to interpret and reframe this within the frame of the possible. If you leave your territory, there's a whole series of steps you have to take because you're entering a world in which the possible is no longer framed. For example, a cow dying is a strange event that we will try to frame within the possible – had it become rabid and in what conditions, whether this was caused by a certain act --

then we reintroduce the event of the death of the cow within the new frame of the possible.

In the other figure of the individuation of enunciation, or the power of faciality, the whole of the possible is already framed, nothing can escape the double articulation, or the signifying rupture - to employ an old expression we're not too fond of – that the face performs. In fact, in a primitive society, we have the feeling that what occurs in terms of inscription upon the face takes place upon the territory. Outside, are the others. But in these others, there is space for a whole possible world to open up. Nowadays when a white person looks at a black person, or an Algerian, they don't situate them in another territoriality but in a racist movement as a "non-other". Fascist or racist universality wants all people to be adult, white, normal, heterosexual, phallocratic and so on. And you see this immediately, you see it on the face, you see it from whether he got it, was he crazy, etc.

So, the aggregate of the possible – he has a strange face, a weird complexion, he's a suspicious guy… -- is attributed and centrally coded on the machine of facialization. At the same time, [*Pause*] the machine where there were not yet faces and landscapes, where there were territorialized rhizomes within territorialized assemblages, had only a local ambition and left a great degree of liberty to the other components of expression. With the machine of faciality, all components of expression become unified and depend upon a single expressive substance. So no matter what comes up can be seized and divided by this machine of faciality. Nothing can escape the universal white power of the normal face.

Now what is this dichotomizing operation that takes place for example in informatics, when a message is decomposed into "bits" of information? It's the fact that we can take the whole message and cut it a first time, so as to obtain a first division of bits, then a second time, obtaining a further division and so on. This will give us the formula of the quantity of bits corresponding to the number of divisions performed in the message. Thus, the ensemble of what arises can, on one hand, be unified, flattened on the white wall, while on the other, it can be divided up.

What accounts for the power of this division? What is it that permits anything to be divided up in this way whatsoever? If I pronounce judgement on the face of someone who belongs to my tribe, it's possible since they are part of my framing of the possible. But a primitive tribesman would never say that the other's is a "foreign" face. It's not even a face for him. It might be an animal, an intensity, or something else. It's not his business.

The principle of faciality on the other hand always gives one the possibility of dividing any enunciation or anything that presents itself. It's like the TV news. No matter what happens, even if it's the most extraordinary event, the presenter will always be able to say, and will always say: "But none of this is surprising to us... We knew it was going to happen". If the Martians landed tomorrow, "oh yes, that's not at all surprising", because there is always the possibility of reframing it within the signifying message's capture.

Therefore, the fact that a face is always interposed, and that it's always able to divide and give a vertical and horizontal axis, a weight to enunciations, means that we see the world, we see the enunciations only in relation to this position of the face. The face can insert itself everywhere. And this is what allows this operation of potential dichotomization - not to mention the fact that all possibles are continually at the mercy of this system of divisions and there is no space for a rhizomatic "possible." The possible is always subjected to a potential law of arborescence.

A rhizomatic possibility existed in its territorialized form within territorialized assemblages of enunciation. A machinic, rhizomatic possible will appear when the face is undone. And at that point the divisions performed by faciality will refer to something very different from territories, which is to say machinic assemblages. Or, as Gilles was saying, there will be an end of the face, a becoming-

imperceptible, where there will be a dissolution of both landscapes and faces. Because the face always implies a nationalism, a regionalism, a familialism, a space of redundancy, and where faces and landscapes will plug into a series of intensities that will no longer be reterritorialized but this time, caught up in machinic connections. I don't know if this is clear…

Deleuze: It works! [*Deleuze smiles at Guattari*] It works! [*Deleuze breaks out laughing*] … [*Tape interrupted*] [23:47]

Eric: I'm thinking about something…

Deleuze: I remind you that for two years you mistook me for Derrida. [*Laughter*]

Eric: Now I'll send it back to you! I'm for the forbidden garden! [*Unclear words*] I don't know ...

Deleuze: You're always addressing someone else!

Eric: I'm calling to you from far off...

Another student: I'm on a mountain. I'm very cold…

Eric: Oh yeh? Then you're in the wrong spot! [*Laughter*] Wait, in fact, you are very kind! Fine, I'm saying, your story about the face is a marvellous invention. But I'm not doing that... I want to raise a question regarding the film camera. It's the Marxist question. It's only matter, it's movement, it's the death-drive. So, what is the death-drive? It's your famous holes and I'm really upset! Here nobody says anything about castration and that's what I want to talk about. The borderlines, you understand? That's where the main point lies. And I'll speak in French... I would really like to speak French, but I can't manage it. The French language is in a triangle. It produces Oedipus. It's not for nothing that Lacan exists, right? Fine… [*Tape interrupted*] [24:55]

Another student:  Can I tell my story now? [*Brouhaha des voix*] … I've got the priority.

Eric: You think you can give information like that. You have to shout it out!

The student: Then I'll shout it out, for fuck's sake!

Eric: You have to fight!

An Iranian student: Iranian students, in protest at the Shah's latest crime – the execution of 19 revolutionary militants in Iran in the last few days, and last night there were others – have occupied the seat of the Iranian Government's press agency in Paris. Following the occupation, the students were just about to leave the premises when the police burst in and arrested around twenty of our comrades. Giscard's government has signed trade agreements with the Shah's regime. Three billion francs worth last year alone. Farah Diba, the Shah's wife, at the moment of the executions... Moreover,

Deleuze: Sorry, can I interrupt you a minute. We began our seminar exactly on this point. There is conflicting information… Some of us wish to be present at the trial, which begins in a short while. I was told it will take place at 1.30 pm in Courtroom 23. Is that right, 1.30, Room 23? Is it at 1.00 or 1.30?

A student: All the trials start at 1, but that doesn't mean we'll manage to get in.

Deleuze: Yes, but we have to be there on time so we can at least try to get in. We have to go at 1 o'clock, it's very important. We have to hurry.

The Iranian student: Can I continue reading now?

Deleuze: Yes, of course.

[*The Iranian student continues reading, sound inaudible*] ... all the fascists.... And the revolutionaries are defending the military from the regime.

Another student: We can't defend the *military*!

The Iranian student: I mean, defending Iranian *militants* against the Shah's regime and his accomplices, the Giscard government. The militants will appear today, February 3, after being arraigned on January 28, before the Paris Correctional Court. Last piece of news: following a hunger strike, our comrades asked that the prison authorities feed them, and the prison guards responded by systematic sabotage, a regime of pyjamas only in cold cells. We ask for your active support in the liberation of our student comrades from the French authorities. So, there are also some final details: according to the law, they risk from one to five years of prison or direct deportation to Iran - which means certain death as soon as they arrive. So your support is of the utmost importance in this trial.

Deleuze: Besides what they've already suffered at the hands of the French police before detention.

The Iranian student: People are asking if there's going to be a meeting.

Deleuze: There's a meeting at six here in Vincennes. But it's very important that anyone who wants to go to the trial goes, even if they don't manage to actually enter the room, so that at least there will be a lot of people around the room at the Palais de Justice.

So, I'll see you all next Tuesday. But if I understand properly, nobody knows whether there's going to be a holiday or not…

A student: We'll find out tomorrow.

Deleuze: We'll find out tomorrow?

A student: There's a general assembly tomorrow.

Another student: Apparently there's a philosophy meeting.

Deleuze: The holidays are from the 9$^{th}$ to the 15$^{th}$ aren't they?

A woman student: We're not sure yet… [*Various voices*] … [*End of the session*] [29:15]