

CHAPTER ONE

The Structure of the Real

What is important is not that there are three dimensions in space.
What is important is the Borromean knot and that for the sake of
which we accede to the real it represents to us.

—Jacques Lacan, *Encore*

MONSTRATIONS

The publication of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus* in 1972 had a profound effect on Lacanian psychoanalysis. Its success precipitated the publication of Jacques Lacan's seminars and established the battle lines over the development of Lacan's thought throughout the 1970s. By the end of the 1970s, and Lacan's death in 1980, Jacques-Alain Miller, Lacan's son-in-law, gained control over the legacy (Roudinesco, 1990: 564; 1997: 414). During the 1970s, Lacanianism split into the hyper-rationalist Millerian Lacanianism and the Lacanianism of Lacan himself. As Elisabeth Roudinesco writes,

Miller's interpretations shut [Lacan's] work in on itself . . .
Lacan's gradually evolved concepts, detached from their history and stripped of the ambivalence that had been their strength, were now classified, labeled, tidied up, sanitized, and above all cleansed of their polysemic complexity. (1997: 305)

Flattered by the way in which Miller applied his philosophical training to a schematization of his concepts, Lacan allowed Miller to take control of the transcription, editing, and publication of the seminars. On his death, Miller took possession of Lacan's papers and the distribution of the work. Through his editing and even rewriting, according to Roudinesco, Miller rationalized Lacan's thought to the point of turning it into a kind of dogmatism.¹ The process was already evident in the early 1970s, however,

and Miller's growing influence was itself one of the reasons why Deleuze and Guattari wanted to give Lacan 'some help' in the liberation of some of his concepts from the dogmatism that was surrounding them. In a famous anecdote, Lacan apparently summoned Deleuze to his apartment, after the publication of *Anti-Oedipus*, and told him how hopeless all his disciples were except Miller. Then he said, "What I absolutely need is someone like you" (Roudinesco, 1997: 347). Deleuze acknowledges that in their book this is what he and Guattari sought to do, inspired by the creative side of Lacan's concepts. "I said to myself," recalls Deleuze, "that things would be better still if we found adequate concepts instead of using notions which are not even those of Lacan in his creative phase, but those of an orthodoxy that formed around him" (cited in Roudinesco, 1990: 494).

Perhaps symptomatic of the dual tendency in Lacanianism in the 1970s was the development of Lacan's mathemes and his exploration of the theory of knots. The increasing use and naming of mathemes in the late 1960s and 1970s undoubtedly appealed to Miller since, as the transcript of *Television* (1990) shows, he increasingly began to annotate and condense Lacan's discourse into quasi-algebraic formulas. At the same time, Lacan himself was retreating into silence and increasingly formulating his thought topographically in the form of Borromean knots. These knots replaced discourse with "monstrations" of the unrepresentable or ineffable. The term "matheme" seems to have been coined by Lacan from a combination of Levi-Strauss's *mytheme* and the Greek word *mathema*, meaning knowledge. The mathemes denoted not just meaning but the discursive demand and promise of meaning, and therefore its absence. In this sense, their mathematical incomprehensibility was partly the point, as was the implication of mathematical incomprehension generally. Mathemes are "the writing of what is not sayable but can be transmitted" (Roudinesco, 1990: 563). For Lacan, the element of the unsayable, of incomprehension and nonmeaning, was essential if Lacanian psychoanalysis was to be taught institutionally without being turned into a discourse of the university. This is because the matheme "was not the site of an integral formalization since it presupposed a residue that permanently escaped it" (Roudinesco, 1990: 563).

Alongside the creation of mathemes, Lacan's mathematical investigations went in another direction, one not simply his own creation, but toward that of the preestablished field of topology. The shape that particularly interested Lacan was suggested by the arms/insignia of the Milanese Borromeo family. The Borromean knot names a figure in which three rings are interlinked in such a way that, if one is cut, the remaining two are set asunder. For Lacan, this figure provided a topographical means to represent the interdependence of his tripartite scheme of the Imaginary, Symbolic, and the Real, further changing its emphasis from

ISR to RSI in which the cloverleaf became “dominated by the weight of the Real.” Indeed, the figure became the very structure of the Real insofar as this untranscribable structure could be rendered monstrable in the form of the knot. “It was a metaphor of the fact that everything proceeded from the one, but it also served to present that metaphor since no formalization of language was transmissible in the image of that language itself” (Roudinesco, 1990: 564). In *Encore*, Seminar XX, Lacan states that “the Borromean knot is the best metaphor of the fact that we proceed only on the basis of the One” (1999: 128), the one being the structure itself, the structure of the Real. This topology thereby “brings about a fundamental shift from symbolic to real” (Roudinesco, 1997: 359). For Roudinesco, this opposition in many ways represented the two forms of Lacanianism. She writes that

It was thus no accident if the designation of a “dauphin” in the person of Jacques-Alain Miller occurred by way of the matheme and the transcription of the seminar, while the death of the sovereign was formulated in a Borromean idiom: nothingness, muteness, silent confinement in a topological monastery. (1990: 564)

In what follows it is the loops of the Borromean knot that inform the structure of the order of joy. This book is primarily concerned with the spaces of intersection, however, where “the web which weaves together all things envelops our bodies / Bathes our limbs, / In a halo of joy” (Houellebecq, 2001: 7). As Lacan suggests in Seminar XX, joy is the cry, the squeal, of jouissance captured, coiled, and divided in the rings of the Borromean knot (1999: 111). But to discuss this further, and how it relates to the topology that provides the structure of the Real, we must first differentiate joy from jouissance.

FROM JOUISSANCE TO JOY

There is a certain philosophical tradition, starred by the names of Spinoza, Nietzsche, Deleuze, and Foucault, that constitutes a sort of cult of joy. To this lineage perhaps could be added Georges Bataille, although he would occupy a very marginal space. Bataille’s notion of joy before death of course informs Foucault, but is regarded with suspicion by Deleuze. Joy can also be located in the margins of Lacan’s teaching, but not in the form of that teaching given to it by Jacques-Alain Miller. Joy needs to be strictly differentiated from jouissance, particularly in the way it has been conceptualized by Miller and his followers.

Jouissance, for Lacan, is a highly fluid notion that is elaborated differently and continually modified in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s in relation to Freud, Hegel, Sade, and Bataille. In the early seminars, it seems to be synonymous with pleasure, but by the late 1950s and early 1960s, the notion of jouissance is developed in contradistinction to pleasure. Later, in the 1970s, jouissance seems to be a substance infusing bodies and signifiers, split into male and female varieties, that articulates and differentiates restricted and general economies, in Bataille's terms.

In Seminar I (1953–54), jouissance is defined in a reading of Hegel's master-slave dialectic mediated through the seminars of Alexandre Kojève in the 1930s. Lacan explicates the master-slave myth in terms of the imaginary and symbolic registers. The structure of jouissance in the interhuman bond, as it is outlined by Hegel, remains crucial for Lacan, and particularly some of his followers, even as the substance of jouissance changes.

Beginning with the mythical situation, an action is undertaken, and establishes the relation between pleasure [*jouissance*] and labour. A law is imposed on the slave, that he should satisfy the desire and the pleasure [*jouissance*] of the other. It is not sufficient for him to plead for mercy, he has to go to work. And when you work, there are rules, hours—we enter the domain of the symbolic. (Lacan, 1988a: 223)

Throughout Lacan's oeuvre, jouissance remains associated with work and production, or what Hegel calls the labor of the negative. The slave sacrifices or sublimates his or her jouissance for the jouissance of the master, who does not work. Work is of course not just the negation and transformation of nature, it is also the work of knowledge. In the enlightenment tradition, knowledge and enjoyment are often located in the same place, but never at the same time, the one always displacing the other. Kant located the origin of reason in the concealment of the sexual organs, the use of the fig leaf, while, for Hegel, the master enjoys the fruits of the slave's labor but is an unreflecting idiot. He enjoys, but knows nothing about it. This is how the imaginary degradation of the interhuman bond is played out in the dialectic. The master enjoys at the expense of the slave, but is a degraded figure, and subsequently all manifestations of enjoyment may be regarded as an excess, a degradation, an immoral libertinage or *plus de jouir*, a surplus taken at the expense of the subject of labor. In *Television* (1990), Lacan will find this structure at the heart of racism where the Other who does not work, or works too hard, or who has noisy parties, is seen to be enjoying at the expense of the subject (Lacan, 1999: 32; see also Miller, 1988: 129). Jouis-

sance is located therefore as the end and meaning of work and thought, but it is always sacrificed to, or taken by, the Other that represents the law precisely in the form of enjoyment.

Ultimately, the mythical master is only the imaginary representative of the Other in the form of the law and the signifier of jouissance. That is, the law of the Other not just in the form of the symbolization that enables the differentiation between master and slave, or that lays down the hours of work, but the law of the signifier without a signified, death. Death is the stake, risked by the master, but not the slave, that differentiates and names the couple to begin with, and that designates the dialectic as an effect of “a rule of the game” (Lacan, 1988a: 223). Jouissance, therefore, is indelibly associated with a risking of death, playing the game to the limit, and giving oneself up to the destiny of the signifier.

So even though in Seminar I jouissance is a name for pleasure, it is not simply “the enjoyable sensation that accompanies the satisfaction of a biological need” (Evans, 1996: 91). All the coordinates that will take jouissance altogether beyond the principle of pleasure are there in the dialectic. Jouissance is associated with death; it infuses the law with an imperative to work, and since it is enjoyed at the expense of labor, reason, and (slave) morality, it is evil. Furthermore, the signifier of this jouissance has no signified other than death, which cannot be subjectively known, which can only be imagined and feared; the signifier of jouissance is therefore empty, but all the more powerful and directive for that.

These coordinates of the plane of jouissance are laid out explicitly in 1960 in both Seminar VII (1959–60; Lacan, 1992) and in the paper “The subversion of the subject and the dialectic of desire in the Freudian unconscious.” The latter was delivered at a conference in 1960 and also published as a chapter in *Écrits* (1966; Lacan, 1986). In Seminar VII in a reading of Sade, Freud’s *Beyond the Pleasure Principle and Civilization and Its Discontents*, jouissance is firmly located beyond the pleasure principle in the domain of transgression, evil and suffering (1992: 184). Jouissance is precisely prohibited by the principle of pleasure and the good, and the rationalist, utilitarian, and liberal systems that seek to govern in the name of the good. God is dead, but “*jouissance* still remains forbidden” (184) in secular regimes—indeed its prohibition is redoubled. And therein, ironically, jouissance retains a spiritual dimension, albeit in a negative and paradoxical way appropriate to Sadean atheism. Or perhaps jouissance retains an aura of mysticism in an atheological Batailleian sense in which jouissance can be reconfigured as a moral summit beyond the polarities of good and evil. An inhuman jouissance that here would constitute a summit that “corresponds to excess, to an exuberance of forces [that] relates to measureless expenditures of energy and is a violation of

the integrity of individual beings” (Bataille, 1992a: 42). For Bataille, Christ on the cross constitutes such a summit since it is “an extremely equivocal expression of evil,” a simultaneously tragic and joyful signifier of death (42).

In the “Subversion of the subject” chapter from *Écrits*, the prohibition of *jouissance* is regarded as a domestication of its structural impossibility for speaking beings. Indeed, the idea of prohibition merely sustains the illusion concerning *jouissance* and its possibility. *Jouissance* is impossible because of the symbolic castration that results through gaining access to the social existence made possible by the signifier. The signifier of this castration, the phallus, consequently becomes the focus of the desire for *jouissance*, for completeness, totality, oneness. In the paper, Lacan argues that it must be called the phallus for cultural, anthropological, and historical reasons that inform the reality of analytic experience. It is called the phallus because the image of the penis is “negativity in its place in the specular image. It is what pre-destines the phallus to embody *jouissance* in the dialectic of desire” (Lacan, 1986: 319). But the erect penis comes to “symbolize the place of *jouissance*, not in itself, or even in the form of an image, but as a part that is lacking in the desired image” (320). Obscene and off stage, the erect penis is the image of the Other’s desire that is lacking, that does not signify. The erect penis is substituted by the phallus, that is: a signifier of the Other’s desire in socially acceptable form: truth, totality, woman.

In Seminar XX, Lacan returns to the distinction made in Seminar VII between *jouissance* and utility in order to reconfigure the law of *jouissance* as essentially an economy. “*Jouissance* is what serves no purpose (*ne sert à rien*)” (1999: 3). The essence of the law, meanwhile, is to put that purposelessness to use as a means that can have no end in itself, and “to divide up, distribute, or reattribute everything that counts as *jouissance*” (3). But what does it mean to put uselessness to use as a means of dividing up and distributing everything that counts as useless? Such a question becomes even more problematic when this economy of *jouissance* is considered in relation to postmodern capitalism where the distinction between utility and uselessness is extremely difficult to draw, where it can perhaps only be determined retrospectively in terms of the surplus (of useless *jouissance*) that it generates. As Jean-Joseph Goux writes, “is it useful or superfluous to manufacture microwave ovens, quartz watches, video games, or collectively, to travel to the moon and Mars, to photograph Saturn’s rings etc.?” (Goux, 1998a: 198).

Even as the economic law of *jouissance* is supposed to divide up and distribute everything purposeless that counts as *jouissance*, Lacan goes on

to argue that it is divided up between the sexes and distributed unequally. Indeed, this unequal distribution is both a determining factor and effect of the ‘sexuation’ of speaking beings. Jouissance is divided between a phallic jouissance available to those beings sexed male and female, and a jouissance of the Other available only to those beings sexed female, or at least available to males only on condition that they give up on phallic jouissance. This condition is not required of females, however. There is no need to go into Lacan’s formulas of sexuation here (see Lacan, 1999).

However, some characteristics of the different modalities of jouissance could be noted. Phallic jouissance is essentially unsatisfactory, narcissistic, masturbatory, and idiotic—for male or female. “I designate Phi as the phallus insofar as I indicate that it is the signifier that has no signified, the one that is based, in the case of man, on phallic jouissance. What is the latter if not following, which importance of masturbation highlights sufficiently—the jouissance of the idiot” (1999: 81). It is a jouissance focused on and channeled through the sexual organs that renders one unable to enjoy the Other’s body because what one “enjoys is the jouissance of the organ” (1999: 7). Unlike males, however, females are not wholly determined by the phallic function of jouissance.

Instead, the position of the woman (who does not exist) makes available “a jouissance that is hers about which she perhaps knows nothing if not that she experiences it—that much she knows. She knows it, of course, when it comes (*arrive*)” (1999: 74). ‘The’ woman, famously for Lacan, does not exist because she is not whole, but she marks out a place of ‘ex-sistence’ beyond the phallus available to anyone. This jouissance of the Other, that one experiences and yet knows nothing about, that is beyond the phallus and outside of knowledge, and therefore both deeply interior and exterior to the subject of self-reflection and self-knowledge, puts one on the path of ex-sistence (77), that is, the real. Since for speaking beings, existence necessarily implies speech, the path of ex-sistence leads to the reality that resists symbolization absolutely. It again suggests a mystical domain of jouissance since, historically, the jouissance that is beyond has been intimated by saints and mystics, and, Lacan suggests, the ‘God face’ of the Other could be considered to be “based on feminine jouissance” (1999: 77).²

These two modalities of jouissance are dignified, in the Lacanian lexicon, with their own algorithmic signs: $J\Phi$ (or $J\varphi$) for phallic jouissance and JO for the jouissance of the Other. In Lacan’s overall system of the structure of the Real, in which Imaginary, Symbolic, and the real are interlinked in the form of a Borromean knot, $J\Phi$ is located in the intersection between the Symbolic and the real, while JO is located between

the real and the Imaginary. The question of Meaning is interposed in the relation between Imaginary and Symbolic (see Fig 1.1).

In my elaboration of the order of joy I wish to draw on elements of Lacan's concept in its different manifestations, to use it as a reference, but only to modify it for my own purposes. These modifications do not seek their justification in a revised form of psychoanalytic practice. This book has nothing to say or to contribute to the analytic experience. Rather, justification is sought in two main areas: first the theoretical work done by Lacan's contemporaries and peers in writing that relates to or connects with his, and that brings with it a different perspective outside the specifics of the analytic experience. Justification is also sought in the work of a younger generation of philosophers and thinkers who have engaged and contested the philosophical grounds of Lacan's thinking. But this is only done because of the second reason, which is not so much a reason as an intuition that certain fundamental cultural premises necessary to the formulation of the understanding of *jouissance* have changed. Transformations in both imaginary and symbolic registers have been caused and caused to alter the relation to the real, which has correspondingly caused a mutation in the structure of affect. These transformations have taken place in the twentieth century, and promise to accelerate in the twenty-first. They profoundly alter, I argue, the configuration of pleasure and unpleasure from both the inside and the outside. These changes, cultural, social, economic, scientific, and technological, do not simply

Fig. 1.1 The Structure of the Real

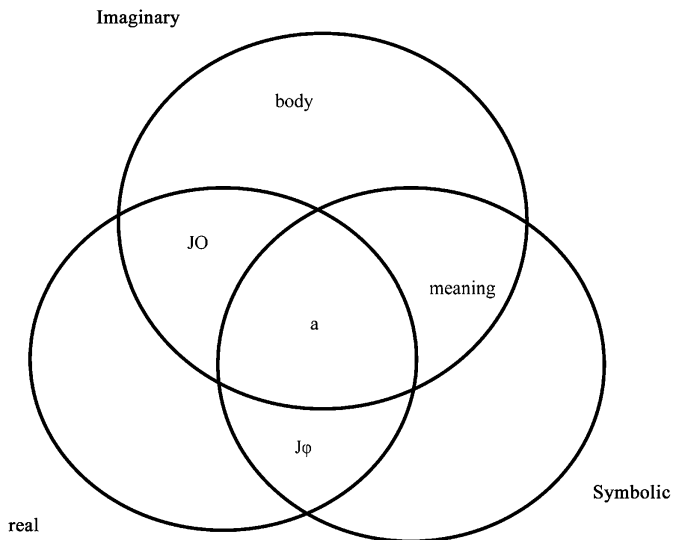
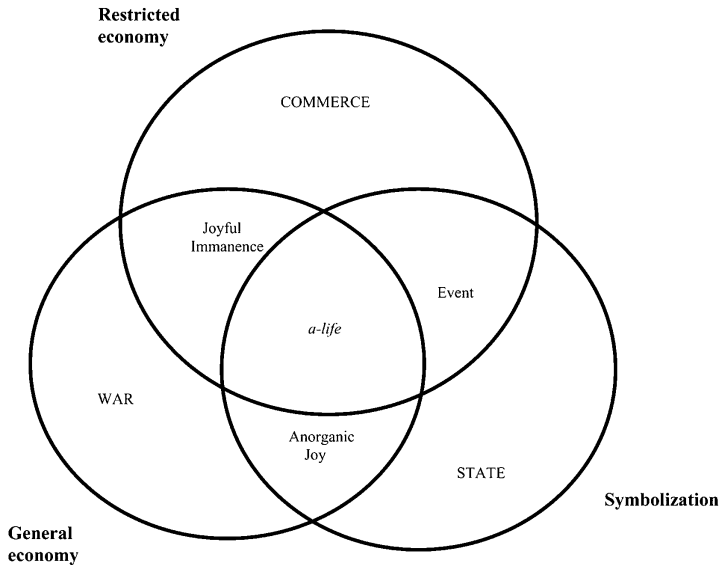


Fig. 1.2 The Order of Joy



alter the contemporary field of existence, they also have effects retroactively as the understanding of speech and being alters accordingly.

The following questions, therefore, need to be posed to the concept of *jouissance* in an era when the concepts of work, leisure, knowledge, production, truth, meaning, the good, utility, sex, the body have become problematized to such a degree that they barely seem operative. All of these concepts are essential to the meaning of *jouissance*, essential to any understanding of what 'enjoy' meant. In what follows in the succeeding chapters, all these concepts will be examined, along with the *jouissance* that they sublimate, promise, defer, distribute, or divide. In particular, the following chapters look at where these concepts have been placed under strain by transformations in three overlapping domains: commerce, war, and the state. These three areas have all altered in different ways, both subtle and profound. The way in which the world of commerce and finance operates in the global economy affects, and is affected by, the way in which war is waged by the world's major power. In turn, revolutions in military affairs and transnational corporations transform the role of the state, and state functions, in different ways. Nevertheless, these three domains remain interlocked and interdependent. It is where they intersect, however, that the new divisions of joy can be discerned, divisions that disclose the characteristic symptomatology or structure of feeling that characterizes supercapitalism. It is these three interlocking areas, and their extimate core that structure the divisions of the order of joy (see Fig. 1.2).

THE MODALITIES OF JOY: WAR, COMMERCE, THE STATE

The terms “restricted economy,” “general economy,” and “symbolization” mark places through which flow the various formations of joy’s expenditure. In the order of joy, there is no opposition between restricted and general economies, just as the presence of war does not mark the failure of commerce, or vice versa, but simply denotes a different modality of joy. Symbolization marks the place where the question of command and control, of operativity, efficiency, and homeostasis persists, precisely as a question concerning the drive of the machine.

War

I MYSELF AM WAR

—Georges Bataille, “The Practice of Joy Before Death”

“What hit me?” The encounter with the real is always traumatic, and missed. This “essential encounter—an appointment to which we are always called with a real that eludes us” is named by Lacan *tuché* in Seminar XI (1976: 53–55). In his analysis of the encounter with the real, Lacan notes that its function first presented itself to the history of psychoanalysis in the form of trauma. This trauma was not just the effect of the disturbances of psychic reality disclosed in Freudian case studies, but also and perhaps preeminently revealed itself in the effects of war. If the real has a preferred modality in its encounters with speaking beings it is war, a war that is continuous, perpetual, unrelenting, and always missed. It is a war that provides the condition of the rhetoric, blood and thunder of historical action, a war that lies beyond the automata, the rapid response, the automatic weaponry, both psychic and prosthetic, of the machineries of desire and combat.

Real war constitutes the field of battle, rather than takes place on one. As Deleuze writes, in his commentary on Nietzsche, “all reality is already quantity of force” (1983: 40). Immanent to the real is war between different quantities and relations of force, both active and reactive. The real insists in the order of things precisely through this war in convulsions of violence, chance, catastrophe, and sudden changes in the relations of forces. “Every force is related to others and it either obeys or commands. What defines a body is this relation between dominant and dominated forces. Every relationship of forces constitutes a body—whether it is chemical, biological, social or political” (1983: 40). Further, any two forces, being unequal, constitute a body as soon as they

enter into a relationship. This is why the body is always a fruit of chance (40). War is continually punctuated by chance encounters and alliances that introduce different possibilities and distributions of force, forming new bodies and assemblages.

Foucault's understanding of power is perfectly in line with this assumption about the perpetual war underlying politics and the history of struggle and contestation. "Power is war, the continuation of war by other means" (2003: 15). In his essay, "Nietzsche, Genealogy, History," Foucault, like Deleuze, outlines his own assumptions in terms of Nietzsche's philosophy:

Humanity does not gradually progress from combat to combat until it arrives at universal reciprocity, where the rule of law finally replaces warfare; humanity installs each of its violences in a system of rules and thus proceeds from domination to domination. (Foucault, 1984: 151)

In the series of lectures given in 1976, but posthumously published in 2003, Foucault gives a much fuller expression to the war that has exerted its grip, sometimes noisily, sometimes silently, on western Europe for over a thousand years. It is a story of how state functions—institutions, economic inequalities, language, disciplinarity—have been deployed in order to maintain and reinscribe a particular relationship of force. "Politics is the continuation of war by other means," states Foucault, inverting Clausewitz's famous dictum, but so also is law, culture, economy. Ultimately, one force exerts its dominance through the offices of the state by seizing the monopoly of violence and the ability to make war, with violence the cutting edge of a tool of government.

In his argument, Foucault is keen to disassociate his theory of power with political economy, as if the role of power was secondary, to be understood in terms of its economic functionality. Foucault wishes to develop a different model to the Marxian one that sees the role of power as essentially the maintenance of the relations of production and the domination of one particular class over another on the basis of the appropriation of the forces of production (2003: 14). At the same time, he acknowledges that "power relations are deeply involved in and with economic relations, even if power relations and economic relations always constitute a sort of network or loop" (14). But precisely at the point where power and economy loop around one another and become each other's underside or support, they can both be seen as modalities of pure expenditure. This is precisely the logic if power and politics are simply war by other means. If not power and politics, what point does war have

other than the joy of making war? Wealth and power are not the end of this war; wealth and power are simply the means to make more war, the chance for a body, an assemblage of forces, to dominate, subjugate and therefore “affirm itself with more joy” (Deleuze, 1983: 121).

On the plane of joyful immanence, war adopts increasingly commercial and economic methods, even as global war has become the modality of corporate capitalism. In this area where the state formation is suspended, there is no distinction between business and war, production and expenditure. War and business have become the same thing not just because the former supports the latter or because the latter capitalizes on the advantages offered by military and information technology. It is because of the way that the ‘spirit’ of bourgeois economy (for which war was traditionally the excess) has given way to a supercapitalism in which war is the *modus operandi*. The Protestant work ethic that was characterized by thrift, industriousness, petty calculation, and abstinence has disappeared, or become transformed, in a new intensity of aggressive competition and the work ethic “gone ballistic” (Goldman and Papson, 1998: 153; see also Wilson, 2008, for a fuller account of how commerce and war have conjoined in the form of supercapitalism).

Commerce

The oldest and most primitive personal relationship is that between buyer and seller, creditor and debtor: it was here that one person first encountered another person, first *measured oneself* against another.

—Nietzsche, *The Genealogy of Morals*

The exchange of objects, of signs and possessions, wealth, credit, and credence plays out the interhuman bond in an imaginary domain. It is above all an exchange of glances measuring oneself in the mirror of the other by looking him or her in the eye. Exchange is the modality of the romance of human rivalry, amorous, martial, and symbolic. Romance lies at the obscure origins of capitalism, according to Adam Smith, in the propitious event of a fall. The fall effects a division of “joysaunce,” the archaic English word for *jouissance*.³ In his famous account of the decline of feudalism in *The Wealth of Nations* (1976), Smith relates how joysaunce, in the form of the excessive expenditure on manufactured goods for personal use and vanity, brought the ruling class to their knees. In the *OED*, joysaunce is given two meanings:

1. The possession and use of something affording advantage.
2. Pleasure, delight, merriment, mirth, festivity.

For the ruling class of landed aristocrats there is no opposition between these two meanings. Advantage, in the form of social status and landed wealth, is already presupposed; advantage finds its meaning, rather, in pleasure, delight, mirth, and festive joy. The use of possessions is non-productive in that sense and joysaunce is a form of joyful expenditure. But, for Smith, modern economy begins with the splitting and opposition of these two meanings of joysaunce. In his account, Smith is critical of the economic inefficiency of the “antient method of expence” whereby lords kept large companies of retainers, tenants, and dependents, and shared and destroyed their surplus in great festivals of “rustick hospitality.” Smith is even more severe on the “violence, rapine and disorder” that the lords permitted and produced in endless quarrels. And he is withering when it comes to the cause of their economic downfall at the hands of the middle rank of urban manufacturers, merchants, and traders in foreign commerce. The latter provided these great proprietors, the noble heirs of the German and Scythian nations that overwhelmed and overran the might of the Roman empire in western Europe, with “a method of consuming the whole value of their rents” purely on themselves. This self-pleasuring vanity ultimately obliged them to let go of their retainers and dependents and therefore of their ability to disregard the laws of the growing metropolitan centres. And, most fatally, it rendered them unable to make war. Smith writes,

For a pair of diamond buckles perhaps, or for something as frivolous and useless, they exchanged the maintenance, or what is the same thing, the price of the maintenance of a thousand men for a year, and with it the whole weight and authority which it could give them. The buckles, however, were to be all their own, and no other human creature was to have any share of them; whereas in the antient method of expence they must have shared with at least a thousand people . . . and thus, for the gratification of the most childish, the meanest and the most sordid of all vanities, they gradually bartered their whole power and authority. (Adam Smith, 1976: 418–419)

Strangely, for an economist so often invoked by those extolling the individualist virtues of private property and self-interest, the first class of people with the means of affirming that individualism through the accumulation of private property destroyed themselves. Rendered powerless against the creeping restrictions and confinements of the state, “a regular government was established in the country as well as the city” so that the ruling class found themselves “as insignificant as any substantial burgher

or tradesman” and subject to the same rule of law (Smith, 1976: 421). The aristocrats were also vulnerable to the new wealth and economic efficiency introduced by those merchants “commonly ambitious of becoming country gentlemen” and accustomed to employing wealth in profitable pursuits, “whereas a mere country gentleman is accustomed to employ it chiefly in expence” (411). Eventually they were all but replaced by this new class of *nouveaux riches*. To the degree to which their descendants continued to simulate the luxurious vanities of the class they wished to emulate, this aspiring class also grew impoverished, some eventually having to sell off their own buckles and baubles, their family silver, portraits, suits of ceremonial armour, and so on.

Smith’s account of the seduction, profligacy, and demise of the feudal ruling classes owes much to his opinion of contemporary eighteenth-century estates. Large estates in the hands of landed families, Smith observes, are clearly incompatible with the ‘improvement’ that comes with the profitable utilization of manageable resources. To a large extent, Smith is projecting back eighteenth-century landed lassitude onto the disorder and decadence of the feudal ruling classes, particularly the Plantagenets (386). The mythical fall of the feudal classes, or their mode of existence, is usually located sometime in the past on the basis of conditions in the present, but Smith’s fall is at least located within rather than after feudalism. Shakespeare, in *Richard II*, seems to put the fall slightly later in the famous speech (brought out perennially to denote the decline of England’s greatness) that he gives to John O’Gaunt. The speech, and indeed the play, heralds the collapse of the Plantagenet dynasty, the fall into the Wars of the Roses, and the redemptive rise of the Tudors—as a traditional reading of Shakespeare’s History Plays would have it. For John O’Gaunt, the youthful profligacy of Richard has meant that “this scepter’d isle,” this “other Eden,” that was England, is now “leased out . . . like to a tenement or pelting farm . . . bound in with shame / With inky blots, and rotten parchments” (II.i. 40, 42, 59, 60, 64). “England, that was wont to conquer others, / Hath made a shameful conquest of itself” (II.1.65–66). Which is to say that, through its excessive consumption—Gaunt speaks of Richard as “Light vanity, insatiate cormorant, / Consuming means” (38–39)—England has allowed itself to be conquered by its commercial and clerical classes. This late sixteenth-century representation of John O’Gaunt’s demise in the late fourteenth century looks nostalgically back to the beginning of the Plantagenet dynasty in the late twelfth century. It looks back to the crusades where the nobility were “Renowned for their deeds as far from home / For Christian service and true chivalry” (53–54). From Adam Smith to Shakespeare and beyond lie six hundred years of nostalgia for a lost age of a nobility that glittered with the aid of diamond

buckles. For it is possible to argue with Smith, and against Gaunt's misty nostalgia, that the consuming rot set in precisely with the first Plantagenet reign and the fashion for that amorous frivolity known as courtly love that he and his wife, Eleanor of Aquitaine, introduced in the twelfth century.

For what reason would a medieval warrior, used to the martial frenzy and manly austerity of chivalric *virtus*, ride into town to purchase a pair of diamond buckles? For what reason would these noble lords sell "their birth-right . . . in the wantonness of plenty, for trinkets and baubles, fitter to become the playthings of children than the serious pursuits of men"? (Smith, 1976: 418). Apart from war and hunting, courtly love and romance provided the main means of social entertainment and intrigue in medieval courts. Smith does not intimate whether his noble lord bought the buckles as a gift or for his own adornment; his point is merely that larger proportions of the surplus, which would have been destined for general distribution in public festivities, were being diverted into the private pursuit of (self-) love. Self-love always implies a gaze in the Other in relation to which one may appear loveable to oneself. Narcissism is always established in relation to an Other whose desire acts as the mirror in which one can recognize oneself as desirable. A whole art of love was inaugurated by the court of Eleanor of Aquitaine, and itemized by her clerk Andreas Capellanus. This pattern was maintained throughout the centuries by ambitious young clerks and courtiers through the writing of love poetry, romances, and narratives to such a degree that they now constitute the starred texts of the early canon of English literature.

As has been noted by commentators before, Smith demonstrates a certain ambivalence toward material progress, betraying a moral distaste for the objects and commodities that have commonly signified wealth. Smith seems to approve only of industriousness, of the processes of production, and the maximization rather than enjoyment of profit, while accepting that the prospect of such enjoyment is, regrettably, a necessary incentive. Similarly, while he argues that an efficient division of labor along rational or mechanistic lines is essential to the maximization of profit, he regrets some of the consequences, most notably "the loss of the martial spirit and virtues" (Hirschman, 1977: 105). Indeed, as Albert Hirschman notes, this was a regrettable effect of commerce in general. In the *Lectures*, Smith opines that "another bad effect of commerce is that it sinks the courage of mankind . . . By having their minds constantly employed on the arts of luxury, [men] grow effeminate and dastardly" (Smith, 1976: 42–43). Smith, then, is nostalgic for the manly martial virtues of the Germanic and Scythian barbarians and contemptuous of the effeminacy of luxurious consumption. Ideally, perhaps, Smith wants

a chivalric industry or martial trade: a transformation of capitalism into a war machine in which the fruits of tireless industry are perpetually expended in the ascetic rigors of war.

Both Smith's political analysis of, and his famous ambivalence toward, the effects of commerce clearly demonstrate that in his modes of consumption man does not act in accordance with his own self-interest; indeed, he is barely aware of what his best interests might be. This is odd because insofar as economic theory is based on the classical and neoclassical eighteenth-century models of Smith, Ricardo, and so on, it relies on an abstract model of self-interest. But this notion of self-interest is the homogenized product of a variety of heterogeneous, historical forces, impulses, drives, passions, desires, vanities, and affects that have continually been identified, interpreted, and reinterpreted since the Renaissance. The famous passage from Smith, from which the abstraction of self-interest is derived, offers a variety of synonyms that give a highly complex meaning to self-interest. Smith writes that while man relies on the assistance of other men, he cannot expect this assistance to be given through benevolence only. Rather,

he will be more likely to prevail if he can interest their self-love in his favour, and shew them that it is for their own advantage that to do for him what he requires of them . . . We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages. (Smith, 1976: 26–27)

It is in the imaginary domain of self-love rather than in a purely economic or symbolic domain of self-interest that commerce takes place, in contradistinction to humanity. Self-love has rarely, if ever, been the same as self-interest (it cannot be in the interest of Narcissus to wither away in front of his own reflection, for example), and it is not at all in conflict with benevolence. One's egotism may be happily massaged by useful acts of altruism and benevolence. But at the limit man's self-love is incommensurable; it tends, precisely, toward the incalculable. Consequently, insofar as man spends in accordance with his self-love, he will always act against his best interests in restricted economic terms. He will, like Smith's feudal lords, go shopping for a pair of diamond buckles, perhaps, or something equally frivolous and useless. In this thing, he will measure himself and his self-love, not in accordance with the bargain—how much he makes in the exchange—but by how much it costs him, how much he loses.

Any hedonistic calculus that lies as the basis of commercial activity must take on a paradoxical character. Consumption, like joysaunce, is

split into two parts, one part of which only concerns, in a preliminary way, the self-preservation of the individual and its productive or profitable activities. The other meaning of consumption, “represented by so-called unproductive expenditures” (Bataille, 1997: 167), concerns activities that have historically had no end beyond themselves and no value other than that determined by the loss that paradoxically results in the production of sacred things. The sacrifice of a fortune for jewelry, the memorials and medals for the death of sons and daughters in battle, the relics of religious sacrificial rituals, the intrinsically valueless signifiers of victory in games and combats for which considerable sums of money and energy are spent in quarters, animals, equipment, or men and women, where immense crowds may be present whose “passions most often burst forth beyond any restraint, and the loss of insane sums of money is set in motion in the form of wagers” (Bataille, 1997: 170). Smith approves of some of these activities (war, for example) and martial virtues that necessitate selfless acts of valor. What the fate of Smith’s feudal lords shows, however, is that there is a plane of consistency in capitalism between the two modes of consumption. The question to address when considering the political implications of the rise of commerce is how a certain principle of loss and nonproductive or luxurious expenditure becomes deflected into, or by, a law of exchange, thereby setting off the delirium that became capitalism. A combination of a hunger for conquest, for mastery, for land, for novelty and for markets, for profit, for interests, exploded across the globe with the berserk rationality of a desiring machine (see Deleuze and Guattari, 1995: 53–73). In the conquest, by western European powers, of large parts of the globe, commerce played its part.⁴ The merchants, manufacturers, and traders in foreign commerce replayed their little primal scene of seduction, encouraging the noble chieftains of North America and West Africa to give up land or slaves for buckles, baubles, and trinkets, thereby singularly failing to consume in their self-interest.

As Braudel and many others affirm, capitalism begins in Europe not because of the burgeoning nation-states of western Europe; the technical and economic conditions were the same, in different periods, in China and Japan. Following Braudel, Deleuze and Guattari speculate that “perhaps the merit of the West, confined as it was on the narrow Cape of Asia, was to have needed the world, to have needed to venture outside its own front door” (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 224). The conditions for global capitalism were laid down in the eighteenth century by a naval war machine immanent in the interstices of war and commerce.⁵ Five centuries later, war and commerce are conjoined in a deterritorializing reformatting of the globe.

The State

By joy, therefore, I shall understand in what follows that *passion by which the mind passes over to a greater perfection.*

—Spinoza, *Ethics*

“There’s no question we are all the more indebted to Lacan, once we’ve dropped notions like structure, the symbolic and the signifier” (Deleuze, 1995: 14). In an interview collected in the book *Negotiations* (1995), Deleuze pays tribute to the debt he and Guattari owe to Lacan, particularly in the two volumes on *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. However, the tribute also takes the form of a decapitation of three of Lacan’s most important concepts. Cutting off the governing notions of structure, the symbolic, and the signifier produces an acephalic Lacanianism in which unanchored flows of desiring production traverse the ‘body without organs’. Desire in Deleuze and Guattari is not just preimaginary, a psychotic *hommelette*, it is also postsymbolic. Schizophrenic and joyful, desire walks out of the tragic theater of Oedipus and turns the unconscious into a factory, producing flows that bypass the signifier, and directly connect up part objects in multiple machinic assemblages that whirl away in the ruins of the symbolic order. Fundamentally, desiring-production is primary and not dependent on its codification by the signifier in the symbolic.

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari do not subordinate desiring-production to exchange, as an effect of the commerce of romance and rivalry. Rather they give a Nietzschean account of the formation of human memory, culture, and history that is consistent with Lacan’s understanding of the role of the signifier and the symbolic order in his system. Drawing on the Nietzschean ethnology outlined in the second essay of *Genealogy of Morals*, tempered with a Bataille reading of Marcel Mauss’s work on the gift, Deleuze and Guattari characterize primary desiring-production as a form of joy-writing, or inscription as violent expenditure.

The first technical machine is not used as a tool or a weapon, as such, but as an instrument of torture: the means of violent cruelty and joy. The first machine is a branding iron that becomes the vehicle of a cruel joy that territorializes through marking and encoding a body, thereby producing it as a discrete, named, and branded item. Deleuze and Guattari write,

The primitive territorial machine codes flows, invests organs, and marks bodies. To such a degree that circulating—exchanging—is a secondary activity in comparison with the task that sums up all the others: marking bodies: tattooing, excising, carving, scarifying, mutilating, encircling and initiating. (1984: 144)

The point to stress is that it is not a question of a primordial desire, or desiring-flow, that is simply redirected and divided up by forces of repression. The mark of repression (or territorialization) is the very mark or branding of desire and joy itself, a mark of and on the body. The brand enjoins the body to the realm of desire; desire is infused, incited, and excited by the desire of the body in the intensity of contact. Deleuze and Guattari refuse to ascribe to this continual infliction of pain an exchange model of revenge and retribution (“no *ressentiment* will be invoked here”). The infliction of pain is an active and affirmative expression of life and joy. They quote Nietzsche, “in punishment there is so much that is festive!” Pain and torture are deployed in punishments not so much because it is unpleasant for the victim, but because it gives the torturer a feeling of joy (or joysaunce in an archaic, festive sense). Furthermore, such festive tortures are associated with sacrificial and initiatory practices, circumcisions, and other rites of passage that are bound up with a general economic process in which social bonds are forged through a continual process of expenditure. The economic dimension of the primitive territorial machine is not one of exchange so much as expenditure. Torture, sacrifice, scarification, and potlatch all have the same basic purpose of forging bonds of obligation and debt. The most important effect of these intense contacts is that they are replicated and establish a collective memory through establishing bonds of filiation through debt. It is debt that forms the basis of human history:

open, mobile, and finite blocks of debt: this extraordinary composite of the speaking voice, the marked body, and the enjoying eye. All the stupidity and arbitrariness of the laws, all the pain of the initiations, the whole perverse apparatus of repression and education, the red-hot irons, and the atrocious procedures have only this meaning: to *breed* man, to mark him in his flesh, to render him capable of alliance, to form him within the debtor-creditor relation, which on both sides turns out to be a matter of memory—a memory straining toward the future. (Deleuze and Guattari, 1984: 190)

Deleuze and Guattari argue, after Nietzsche and Bataille but also looking toward Lacan, that man is bred through the intensity of a joy that is suffered and inflicted in the midst of the voice and gaze of the Other’s joy. “The fact that innocent men suffer all the marks on their bodies derives from the respective autonomy of the voice, and also from the autonomous eye that extracts pleasure from the event” (1984: 191). In Lacan’s framework, however, joy is recast as the *jouissance* of the Other in the dialectic of work and enjoyment that characterizes the interhuman bond for Hegel-Kojève. There

is nothing festive about this *jouissance*, which is always located as the end of production, that is, from the point of view of the *ressentiment* of the joyless slave.

Nevertheless, for Deleuze and Guattari, like Lacan, the earliest territorial machine is not defined by exchange, but is rather articulated by a symbolic system of alliance and filiation. The system of branding is established in and for an Other that marks out the locus of law, signification, and memory (the unconscious), and opens out its field of visibility. It is the Other as an assemblage of voice-body-eye whose series of brands differentiate us from the earth as bodies, whose voice enables and enjoins us to speak or cry out for the joy of the eye that illuminates our being.

Deleuze and Guattari argue that the primitive system of pain-filiation-coding is transformed by a sudden violent incursion from the outside. An exterior, more powerful force arrives to replace the Other and recode its system of symbolization. Deleuze and Guattari cite Nietzsche's "blond beasts of prey, a conqueror and a master race" who reorder the interconnected bonds of alliance and filiation into one hierarchical structure. These are the "founders of the state" who introduce "a terror without precedent, in comparison with which the ancient system of cruelty, the forms of primitive regimentation and punishment, are nothing" (1984: 192). The state is "the product of an effective deterritorialization that substitutes abstract signs for the signs of the earth, and makes the earth itself into the object of state ownership and property, or an ownership held by the state's richest servants and officials" (1984: 196). The state overcodes the previous terrain, and in so doing binds its subjects in a hierarchical system of debt that reaches up to a central point that holds together a new bureaucratic symbolic order. The previous blocks of "mobile, open, finite debts finds itself taken into an immense machinery *that renders the debt infinite*" (1984: 192).

Here, Deleuze and Guattari's Lacanian analysis is at its most unequivocal as they incorporate a simplified version of the functioning of the master signifier as *point de capiton*, exemplified in Lacan's seminar on psychosis by the signifier of the fear of God. "To have replaced . . . numerous fears by the fear of a unique being who has no other means of manifesting his power than through what is feared behind these innumerable fears, is quite an accomplishment" (Lacan, 1993: 266–267). On the basis of all the old finite debts, the despot establishes an infinite debt that is justified by his singular relation with God; the despot functions in the name of this singular signifier, like that of the fear of God, to which all subjects now owe their existence. Whether or not the state in question is monotheistic, for Deleuze and Guattari, "there is always a monotheism on the horizon of despotism" because the debt has to become a *debt of existence*, a debt of the existence of the subjects themselves. While, in the