


 Organization

The inhuman challenge: Writing with dark desire

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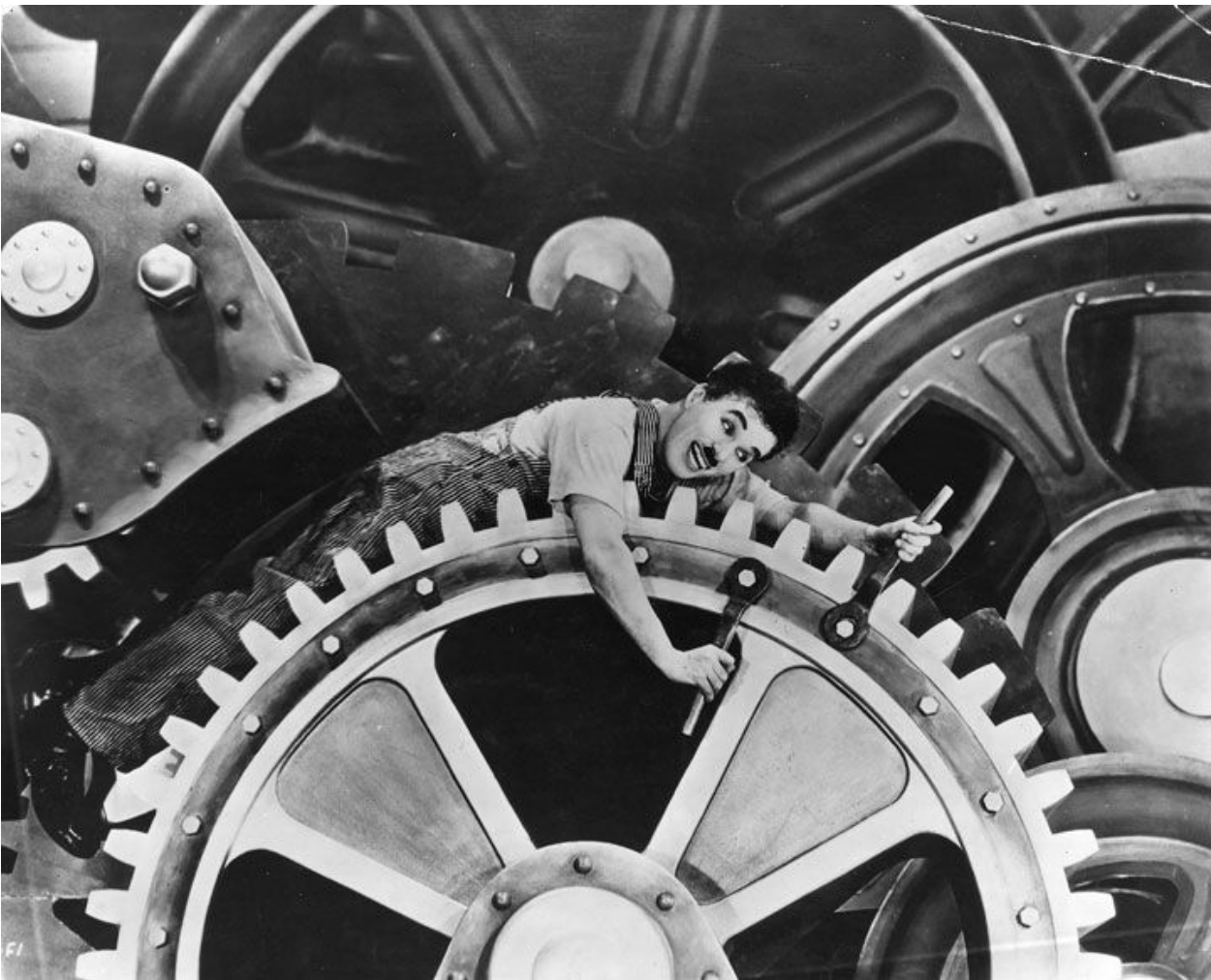
Abstract

Adaptations of Deleuze's and Guattari's philosophizing on the immanent forces of the unconscious have risen to challenge joyous, affirmative readings of their work by bringing the dark and destructive aspects of desire into focus. We find an innate potentiality within such accounts, as they are themselves spoken by the inhuman within us – the forces which render our subjective intentions obsolete. To supplement more traditional forms of academic expression, we advocate for an affective style of writing that can bring about 'shocks to thought' and convey the inhumanity of desire. We see this as an *activating form* of aesthetic violence that channels dark desiring itself, and thereby challenges critical organizational scholarship that seek to 'raise awareness'. An inhuman textuality that recognizes our own obscenity in disgust and through repulsion, serves to unleash that which is typically unthinkable and unspeakable in organisational research.

Keywords

Inhuman, desire, Deleuze and Guattari, accelerationism, affect, style

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In a famous scene from the film *Modern Times*, the character of Charlie Chaplin becomes so intimately involved with fixing the gears of a factory machine that he virtually fuses within its workings. Yet, his expression remains eerily joyous – a manic grin lines his face as he gets evermore entangled, marking a distinct *thrill to disappear* within its metal bowels. Following Deleuze and Guattari (hereafter D+G), who set forth desire as an unconscious force of flowing machinic connections, Chaplin's grin can be seen as an expression of visceral enjoyment. It expresses *machinic desire*, an automatized lashing out with no representational or cognitive qualities. It is thus not a desire for either 'this' or 'that', but rather an innate connectivity with

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3 everything and nothing. Literature following similar lines of thought, often constructed under loose
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5 rubrics such as non-representational theory (e.g., Beyes and Steyaert, 2012; Komporozos-
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7 Athanasiou and Fotaki, 2015), affect theory (Beyes and De Cock, 2017; Fotaki et al., 2016; Hjorth
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9 and Pelzer, 2007; Karppi et al., 2016) or object-oriented ontologies (Dzidowski, 2015; Humphries
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11 and Smith, 2014), have risen to challenge the modernist echoes of human rationality in
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13 organizational theory. Following a common reading of D+G, as advocates of freeing repressed
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15 desires, affective experimentation, and ethicality (Culp, 2016; also Munro and Thanem, 2017),
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17 attention has commonly been directed towards espousing desires' affirmative potentials. By
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19 conceptualizing desire as resisting representational binaries (also Clegg et al., 2005), these
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21 approaches tend to foreground precognitive affect and emancipatory and creative self-organization
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23 as possible means for subverting social structures that suppress more affective and relational
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25 encounters (Botez and Hietanen, 2017; Hietanen and Rokka, 2017; Linstead and Thanem, 2007;
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27 Pullen et al., 2016; Thanem, 2006).

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35 While this liberatory potential 'within' being seems to offer an attractive sense of optimism for
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37 scholars who seek to "contest the parameters of Western humanism from within without setting fire
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39 to the premises" (Murphet, 2016: 653), the *inhuman* dimension of Chaplin's grin points us to far
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41 more grim and destructive spaces. The inhuman *is* the desiring intensities and machinic impulses
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43 where subjective experiences and intentions are peripheral at best. It is excessive by nature, an
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45 unconscious flow of desire outside of rationality and reason, marking an obscenity that works "in
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47 spite of and around the human, within and as the human" (Grosz, 2002: 467; also Pawlett, 1997;
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49 Rehn and O'Doherty, 2007). Although our timid souls are immediately inclined to all that is 'good'
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51 about the human (as we have been taught), we believe that there is an urgent need to further
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53 elucidate these intensities in the global technologization of capitalism (in the total abstraction of
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55 financial capital, global digital communications, automation and by making the subject into an ever-
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3 divided commodity). The itch that forces our work in motion is a lingering sense of how the
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5 intensification of capitalist technologies has put a spell on us – a desiring spell that through
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7 machinic repression invokes a curious joy, akin to how totalitarian and populist regimes have
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9 always been able to attract the desires of people in libidinal ways (D+G, 2013a; Schuster, 2016;
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11 Žižek, 2002).

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17 By following recent D+G scholarship that places a particular focus on the inhuman aspects of
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19 desire, and especially its recent manifestations as ‘semiocapitalism’ (Berardi, 2010; Genosko,
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21 2011), ‘Dark Deleuze’ (Culp, 2016; also Swarbrick, 2018) and ‘accelerationism’ (e.g., Mackay and
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23 Avanessian, 2014), we explore desire as sinister intensities that *find enjoyment in repression*. To
24
25 complement extant approaches, we advocate for an *activating form* of aesthetic violence that taps
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27 into desiring *itself*, finds potentialities of ‘shocks to thought’ and ruptures prevalent “relations,
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29 identities, signifiers, and connected meanings” (Prichard and Benschop, 2018: 103). Through this,
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31 we endeavour to establish some theoretical grounds for a form of activism that embraces the
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33 obscene through a style of writing and reading, while eschewing the assumed rationality and benign
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35 purposiveness of human agency (also Böhm and Batta, 2010; Lambert, 2018; Rehn and O’Doherty,
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37 2007). Although its unsavoury flair may evoke repulsion, we feel its negativity could sensitize us to
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39 our own inhuman tendencies within contemporary capitalism, and that these intensities should be
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41 foregrounded rather than negated.
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49 Our approach both challenges and supplements previous work that has focused on the creative,
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51 joyful, and emancipatory aspects of D+G’s work, as we acknowledge the inhumanity of immanent
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53 desire that ‘enjoys’¹ excesses of all kinds and its violent engagements with *thrill of annihilation*
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59 ¹ ‘Enjoyment’ here refers to an intense libidinal investment (‘jouissance’ in psychoanalytic terms), not personal
60 pleasure or contentment.

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3 (also Land, 2005). While organizational scholarship has explored the excesses of desire from a safe
4 distance (Munro and Thanem, 2017; Rehn and O’Doherty, 2007), it has failed to recognize the
5 inhuman challenge that is closing in. In its general tone of rational awareness-raising, *it hasn’t gone*
6 *nearly far enough!* The problem with these well-intentioned accounts is thus a tripartite misprision
7 of the inhumanity within desire – the idea that capitalism is an ‘external’ threat (that can be
8 identified apart from our desiring), the humanist overemphasis of agency (action, resistance!) and
9 the modernist-cum-neoliberal insistence on a choice-making individual that seeks to do good.

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21 The inhuman challenge insists that the illusory individual was never there and even that its remnant
22 has become increasingly ‘dividualized’ in the technological immediacy of contemporary capitalism
23 (Berardi, 2010; Deleuze, 1992; Stiegler, 2011). The inhuman challenge reveals that our machinic
24 desire thirsts for our own repression with glee and, more importantly, that we are aroused by it in
25 ways which are no way metaphorical; “it is this perversion of the desire of the masses that needs to
26 be accounted for” (D+G, 2013a: 42). Thus, rather than attempting to ‘raise awareness’ or to speak
27 to a human agency at the helm, we seek to incite a scholarly style which both recognizes and
28 attempts to ‘speak’ with this aspect of desire more directly. We will begin by elaborating on the
29 dark reading of D+G that gives us a theoretical grounding for the inhuman desire, and later on we
30 attempt to establish a form of scholarship that can meet its excesses and obscenity head on.

41 42 43 44 45 46 47 **Awakening the dark side of D+G**

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51 While the inhuman challenge draws from a broad array of sources, its locus remains in D+Gs’
52 theorizing of desire and capitalism in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972/2013a) and *A Thousand Plateaus*
53 (1980/2013b), where the idea of desire as inhuman force is set ablaze. An affirmative reading of
54 these seminal works tends to find indefinite potentials for liberating desire, and it is indeed D+G
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3 (2013b) themselves who occasionally advocate for ‘caution’ in experimenting with one’s desiring
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5 urges (also Schuster, 2016). In contrast, an inhuman reading of their oeuvre tears the human subject
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7 away as a locus of desiring activity. D+G construct an immanent ontology of desire that does not
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9 emerge through a structure or *lack*, but rather denotes a machinic tendency that emerges in the
10
11 juxtapositions of simultaneous structural and non-structural tensions. Desire is thus not a response
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13 to something missing, but rather an unconscious, additive and automatized libidinal tendency,
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15 aiming for its own proliferation (also Linstead and Brewis, 2007). For D+G, a human is an
16
17 accumulation of such machinic urges making connections with other machines, a *desiring-machine*
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19 that eagerly fuses with its surroundings. This conception of being makes any coherent individuality
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21 an ontological myth, masking a stuttering organic machine-pile that at best can only oscillate
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23 between neurosis, perversion, and psychosis (Schuster, 2016)². Illustrated in *Modern Times*,
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25 Chaplin finds himself in a situation where his mouth-machine hungrily connects to the factory’s
26
27 aggressive-force-feeding-machine(s). With this implementation, the factory owners are intensifying
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29 the fusion of the worker and the assembly line, by eliminating wasteful lunch breaks and increasing
30
31 the rate of production. Chaplin devours course after course with an expression of intense
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33 fascination, or, that is until the corn-on-cob-machine’s increasing speed assaults his face.
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35 Eventually, all machines will fail, clunking and sputtering before cataclysm.
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44 For D+G, the desiring-machines too are always breaking down, finding new desiring in their
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46 ruptures and splits. This is founded in a terribly tense relationship with the *Body without Organs*
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48 (BwO), which can be imagined as a haunting presence of nothingness where all machinic
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50 connections deteriorate. It is thus an immanent plane where matter can only “pass and circulate”
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56 ² Being is a violent encounter with embodied, machinic desiring urges that are so overwhelming that the human cannot
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58 maintain stability. Thus, it can only oscillate between an anxiety of not knowing what it wants and what is wanted from
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60 it (neurosis), a manic impulse to control and organize its surroundings (perversion) and losing itself in the moment in a
flow of becoming where being is no longer separated by language or representation (psychosis). Jacques Lacan once
quipped that these indeed are the only forms of ‘normalcies’ of *being* (inseparable from desire within psychoanalytic
theory) that can exist (see Schuster, 2016).

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3 (D+G, 2013b: 153) as intensities without stratification (formation) and significance (interpretation),
4 which denotes both the impossibility and possibility of desire. This “death instinct: that is its name”
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7 (D+G, 2013a: 19), thus reveals itself as “the model of death” (D+G, 2013b: 375) that produces
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10 desiring connections in a curious manner. Through its accidents, stutters, and ruptures the desiring-
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12 machine thus lunges further into machinic connections while also constantly and seductively
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14 enticing its own breaking down – the splendour of desire in the moment of a sacrificial collapse. As
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16 the locus of both death and the vitalist impetus of desire, it is a violent desiring surge of living itself
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19 (also Thanem, 2004). More examples will follow.
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24 Thus, while conventional organizational theory tends to find its starting point in subjectivity, for
25
26 D+G the idea of a coherent subject is rather a *residuum*, a mythical ‘leftover’, that emerges as a
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28 representational outcome of more immanent desiring flows in becoming. By assuming the form of
29
30 an illusory representation, this constant *subjectivation* is nevertheless important for maintaining an
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32 idea of unity as our desperate attempt in the ever-changing flows of shifting intensities that engulf
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34 us constantly (also Guattari, 2011, 2014). However, the emphasis on machinic flows forces our
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36 attention away from ‘agents’ towards what *kinds of possibilities the context allows for*
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38 *subjectivation to emerge as* (also Bueno, 2017; Langlois, 2011). To describe our contemporary
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40 context, D+G delineate a fully financialized and globally integrated capitalism which does not
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42 operate by decodable representations and structures, but rather acts as a haunting ‘atmosphere’ that
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44 constantly whispers to our unconsciousness and harnesses its desiring urges (also Guattari, 2011;
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46 2014), an idea later conceptualized as *semicapitalism* (e.g., Berardi, 2010, 2017; Bueno, 2017;
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48 Genosko, 2011).
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56 The notion of semicapitalism can be traced to a McLuhanian (1964) lineage of thought as “it is not
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58 the net but its shadow; it is not the form but its function” (Genosko, 2011: 152). It does not
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3 represent, but rather *a-signifies* on an affective level (also Bueno, 2017; Genosko, 2008; Lazzarato,
4 2014) and is increasingly not concerned about ‘persons’, but the possibility to ‘dividualize’
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6 subjectivity into parts for commodification (see Deleuze, 1992; Cluley and Brown, 2015). It is ever-
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8 present beyond recognition – owing its subversive potential to its own disappearance. While credit
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10 cards promise ‘freedom’ on a symbolic level, their affective semiotic denotes a machinic
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12 enslavement of unending debt, and while the stock markets can produce representations of indexes
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14 and rates, its unconscious message is one of intensifying omnipresence, ceaselessness – it is not
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16 there to serve you but for you to serve (also Hietanen and Andéhn, 2017; Langlois, 2011). Through
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18 semicapitalisms’ machinic tendencies, subjectivation constantly desires its own affirmation in such
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20 repressive orders through ‘joyful’ encounters (see Sampson, 2016), or even simply by manically
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22 connecting with obsessive consumption patterns facilitated by the global instantaneity of online
23
24 media and technologies (Berardi, 2017). Immanent connectivity precedes consciousness. This is
25
26 why desire for D+G is an auto-erotic *inhuman* force within us that connects with capitalist desiring
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28 in ways that are not compatible with the representational ideas of individuality or rationality. The
29
30 inhuman challenge displaces the stability of these notions by exposing the limits of a causal
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32 relationship between thinking and acting. It is catalyzed through a-signifying relationalities which
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34 know no bounds. Within a semicapitalism, the possibilities of dialectical resistance are thus pre-
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36 empted, as the assumed villain does not carry the sign of the oppressor and the reactive antagonists
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38 have been dividualized into the libidinal flow itself (also Berardi, 2017; Land, 1993).
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49 In this sense, semicapitalisms’ machinic emergence “tends toward a threshold of decoding that
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51 will destroy the socius in order to make it a body without organs and unleash the flows of desire on
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53 this body as a deterritorialized field” (D+G, 2013a: 47). ‘Human’ organizing can thus be
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55 increasingly seen as an automatized activity of desiring flows that infuse expressions of subjectivity
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57 into the ever-intensifying algorithmic interfaces of machinic spaces (Berardi, 2017; Stiegler, 2011).
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3 It is on this delicate verge of subjective destruction that semiocapitalism incessantly regenerates
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5 itself through novel forms of desiring-production. There is a passing revelation of this in Chaplin's
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7 becoming-machinic as well. When he resurfaces from the machine's core, he continues to
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9 frantically apply his tools to humans (wrenching their noses and their nipples), having apparently
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11 lost his ability to discern between the components of the machine and people's bodies. Capitalism,
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13 set up by desiring flows itself, intensifies them in its demands of ceaseless accumulation, for the
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15 capitalist is
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19 "a conqueror [...] a monster, a centaur: his forequarters are nourished [...] under the law of the commodity
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21 standard, and his hind-quarters by looting overexcited energies" (Lyotard, 2004: 212).
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24 At the limits of this thrilling excess, we encounter a subjectivity in desperate flux, whose desire has
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26 become subsumed into the machinic tendency itself. Guattari (2014) observes that "a strange
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28 passivity haunts our lives" (p. 7), but what is it in this passivity that seems teeming with strange
29
30 'enjoyment'? The question is, what is it in desire that desires its repression? Why "do people still
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32 tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point, indeed, that they actually want humiliation
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34 and slavery not only for others but for themselves?" (D+G, 2013a: 42). Here, the systemic function
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36 of semiocapitalistic subjectivation not only comes to fruition, but is spared meaningful resistance as
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38 the oppression it exerts is paradoxically welcomed by the desires of its victims.
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44 **Enjoying our capitalized subjectivation**

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49 In an inhuman reading of D+G, the answer to why our desire eagerly desires its own repression lies
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51 precisely in the tension between desiring-machines and BwO. In all the 'violence' and instability
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53 inherent in humans' desire that only lashes out as a function of the constant breaking down of the
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55 desiring-machine, "its turbulence and fragmentation is such that it is able to gain a grip on itself
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57 only by attacking and repressing its rebel organs [...] Desire desires its own repression because it
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59 already represses itself" (Schuster, 2016: 172). Undermining this desiring tension becomes auto-
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3 erotic production, and thus “Repressing desire, not only for others but in oneself, being the cop for
4 others and oneself – that is what arouses” (D+G, 2013a: 394). This is why D+G (2013b) find it
5 helpful to exemplify the thrill of (self)annihilation through the manner in which the masochist (in a
6 perverted fashion) organizes its experience beforehand in minute detail (‘give me 100 lashes, then
7 turn me around and sew my lips closed etc.’), while awaiting in grand anticipation for the event
8 when there is *only* the vibrating sense of pain. It is that moment when the desiring-machine loses
9 itself and inhabits the BwO – a moment of release and the disappearance of subjectivity, or “the
10 *field of immanence* of desire, the *plane of consistency* specific to desire (with desire defined as a
11 process of production without reference to any exterior agency)” (D+G, 2013b: 179). In its endless
12 desiring-production and decoding of all that has consistency (including the social), capitalism gives
13 the desiring-machine a promise that resembles the BwO – to disappear in relentless cycles of
14 accumulation and to become dismembered in an ever-penetrating commodification of the social and
15 the bodily. Yet, unlike the undifferentiated flows on the BwO, capitalism always reintroduces an
16 axiom, which is the one of capital’s desire for accumulation itself. This is why

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35 “to be sure, it is not for himself or his children that the capitalist works, but for the immortality of the system.
36 A violence without purpose, a joy, a pure joy in feeling oneself a wheel of the machine, traversed by flows,
37 broken by schizzes” (D+G, 2013a: 394).
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40 This is the inhumanity of desire we see in Chaplin’s grotesque elation, in the collective ‘joyful’
41 ecstasy of Hitler’s audiences (also Sørensen, 2005), and in consumption encounters that rely upon
42 enjoyment as the loss-of-self in pain (see Scott et al., 2017). This is the enjoyment of self-
43 annihilation, a desiring that has left subjectivity in its wake. In semiocapitalism, it is through
44 increasingly technologically-mediated relations where a *capitalized subjectivity* emerges, one who
45 has completely embodied capitalism’s monstrous desire of indefinite accumulation (‘I am
46 *productivity* itself!’). This refrain within capitalist orders works to occlude other desiring potential,
47 because when capitalism has affectively commodified our unconscious longings, it is only a desire
48 that enjoys this repression and seeks more of it that sustains itself (*is there enjoyment in karoshi?*).
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3 As D+G note, ‘it was there all along’ and what has happened is that *all possible subjectivation is*
4 *replaced by the desire of capital itself*. And desiring-machines follow these desires, not simply
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7 because they are forced to do so, but rather because

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10 “one can enjoy swallowing the shit of capital [...] swallowing tonnes of it till you burst [...] And of course we
11 suffer, we the capitalized, but this does not mean that we do not enjoy” (Lyotard, 2004: 113-114)

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14 This circle of additive desire continues on even when we are faced with all the inequality and
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16 destruction caused by corporate capitalist production and consumption (see Žižek, 2002; also
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18 Cluley and Dunne, 2012), often by maintaining a critical distance to it as an alibi and thus never
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20 engaging with it fully (Stavrakakis, 2007). Simultaneously, we are all but passivized as increasingly
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22 individualized commodities, and unable to conceive of a single plausible alternative to the Western
23
24 capitalist order (Fisher, 2009; Genosko, 2009; Swarbrick, 2018). Today, “there is only one culture:
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26 capitalistic culture” (Guattari and Rolnik, 2008: 33) that in its excesses is increasingly “behaving
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28 like a capricious and psychotic animal” (Rehn and O’Doherty, 2007: 106). What is more, this order
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30 is increasingly marked by a sinister affective horizon where it is increasingly the case that
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32 optimistic futures have already been cancelled (Campbell et al., 2018; Fisher 2014a, 2014b; Noys,
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34 2016; Watson, 2016). For the inhuman challenge, this marks how the stuttering and constantly
35
36 overwhelmed desiring-machine has found its counterpart in the raging decoding and dividing of the
37
38 self in ever-intensifying semiocapitalism. Our desires are leading us to this point *en masse* as if it
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40 was instinctual!

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49 The inhuman challenge may indeed surprise us and understandably put us on our mettle – so
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51 accustomed are we to think otherwise within critical organizational theory. Indeed, should not
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53 desire resist any injustice brought upon it? However, any of our ‘good’ inclinations will not do
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55 away with the inhuman challenge, nor do our ethical narratives of resistance seem to have much
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57 bearing on a semiocapitalism that increasingly knows only of the ‘joys’ of immanent connectivity
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59 and speed (also Sampson, 2016). The real question is, how and for what reasons do we hang on to

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3 our humanistic prerequisites? Real concerns, academic habit, or even scholarly self-indulgence?

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5 While our trembling inclinations scream in rejection of this ‘science fiction’, it seems evermore
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7 fictitious, for in the cancellation of the future it is already itself out-of-date as fiction, and now all
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9 we seem to have is a future that has itself succumbed to retrospection (also Fisher, 2014a, 2014b;
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11 Noys, 2016). For the inhuman challenge, all focus on the affirmation of human creativity and desire
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13 looks increasingly like an old-fashioned ideology (Murphet, 2016). The inhuman capitalized desire
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15 cannot ‘read’ the D+G view of the human and stop half-way.
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20 21 **Pharmaka for consideration**

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26 The inhuman challenge’s attack against the rationality and coherency of the agentic individual
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28 leaves us trembling. A deep disgust for humanity’s condescending, illusory omnipotence is replaced
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30 with a future of unstable machinic bodies and desiring impulses. It strikes mercilessly against those
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32 who see promise in simply using D+G as a source of immanent affectivities for valorising creative
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34 potentials and non-hierarchical collective politics within organizational theory. Chaplin enjoys.
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36 Some noteworthy scholars of the D+G lineage (e.g., Braidotti, 2011; Stiegler, 2011) have also
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38 followed these affirmative paths by calling for a complete rethinking of aesthetico-ethical
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40 paradigms and new ways of living in the form of ‘absolute deterritorializations’ (D+G, 1994; also
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42 Munro, 2016). Alas, their request seems implausible in the face of semiocapitalist enjoyment. Still,
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44 whilst we must salute their optimism the cancellation of a future proceeds and we’re increasingly
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46 *too young* to see it. Indeed, as Culp (2016) insists, “enough with rhizomes” (p. 38), particularly
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48 when they are seen as affirmative opportunities to find new circuits ‘within’ systems of immediate
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50 semiocapitalist reterritorialization (see Styhre and Sundgren, 2005). In the face of semiocapitlaism,
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52 this ‘happy’ creative rhizome is a smokescreen, a tool of new passivizing sincerity. It is indeed true,
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54 that “affirmative politics requires us to reconsider otherness” (Pullen et al., 2016: 120), but the
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3 inhuman challenge forces us to envisage barren lands where there is less and less traces of any
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5 ‘other’ to make note of — apart from the digitalized immanence of “information replacing nature,
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7 and the brain-city, the third eye, replacing the eye of nature” (Deleuze, 1989: 265). Semiocapitalism
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10 is not resisted because our desire desires its flows.
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14 Thus, by not recognizing the inhuman challenge to its full extent, organizational scholarship has
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16 readily overlooked the ‘dark side’ of desiring (also Linstead and Brewis, 2007), and typically
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18 reduced the *dark* to the ‘dysfunctional’ aspects of organizing (also Linstead et al., 2014; Rehn and
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20 O’Doherty, 2007), perhaps even to everything that stands in the way of a ‘better world for all’ (see
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22 Prichard and Benschop, 2018). For us, this neglect is alarming as it underestimates how the endless
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24 productive flows of semiocapitalism have become encoded in desire. It has already been pointed out
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26 that criticism has become increasingly all-too soft and compromising, and that focus should not be
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28 put on ‘contributing’ to thought that manifests itself in safe resonance within the framework that
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30 already engulfs it (Culp, 2016; also Munro and Thanem, 2018). Insofar as academics will be
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32 preoccupied by writing, it would seem that a different form is needed to re-introduce the urgency of
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34 the situation in its painful despair, by catalysing ‘the powers of the negative’ (Brassier, 2010), and
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36 where “the style, the invective” (Fisher, 2014b: 340) would itself break out of compliance to the
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38 form of rationality that secures its position in extant orders of power (see present essay for an
39
40 example that has already failed)³. As Culp (2016) snaps, in spite of how we are taught to regurgitate
41
42 how “Good things come to those who are constructive!” (p. 10), we should rather be at work
43
44 “cultivating a hatred for it” (p. 8), that is, to come out with desiring potentials that would be
45
46 “something more exciting than capitalism, itself: its destruction” (p. 50). Only then could action *be*
47
48 troubling. While D+G noted how they have ‘never seen’ someone who has ‘truly’ liberated desire,
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59 ³ It remains striking how the invective of affective violence *par excellence* in organizational theory has been the
60 joyously vituperative remark by Van Maanen (1995) of Pfeffer in his *Style as Theory* page 133, paragraph 4.

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3 it must be remembered that they are not advocating an irreversible infusion with the BwO into a
4
5 suicidal collapse. Yet, they do wish that we could break out of how the affective theatre of
6
7 semicapitalism has turned our desires, in both our habits (praxis) and subjectivations, into puppet
8
9 play by replacing our unconsciousness with capitalist accumulation. Indeed, they simply wish for us
10
11 to
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14 “Shit on your whole mortifying, imaginary, and symbolic theatre. What does schizoanalysis ask? Nothing
15 more than a bit of relation to the outside, a little reality” (D+G, 2013a: 381)
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18 If capitalism is a destructive ‘sorcerer’s apprentice’ in D+G, then why could our craft of writing not
19
20 attempt to perform the same function? This would, however, entail a commitment to the idea of the
21
22 ‘shock to thought’ (Deleuze, 1989), which entails a violence to existing ideas that is not entangled
23
24 with the extant hierarchies and structures that forms thought as we *know* ‘it’. A shock to thought
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26 can only come out of an embodied event or encounter, where desires find speeding intensities and
27
28 the body becomes ‘visible’ in its violent contortions. We see no other way to begin of thinking the
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30 ‘unthought’ than by being butchered open by it (see Negarestani, 2008), and on those planes one
31
32 must already know excess and one must be already always ‘mad’. Here, we find a potentiality for
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34 an *activating form* of writing that attempts to both recognize and tap into the inhuman aspects of
35
36 desire through violent-thought-disturbance. While organizational scholars have started to develop
37
38 alternative stylistic expressions that challenges conventional academic work and its norms (e.g.,
39
40 Katila, 2018; Pullen, 2018), the idea of its ‘shock to thought’ in connection to inhuman desire has
41
42 not been its focus. The dark register of D+G allows us to start to experiment on such planes through
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44 the pleasures of excess, violence, and repression, through that which makes the inhuman within us
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46 vibrate.
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55 One is often in need of guides when leaping, and recently Julian Murphet (2016) ‘modestly’
56
57 insisted that the problem with much of the inhuman scholarship is that while it attempts to go
58
59 beyond affirmative affectivity, it features a style that *still remains* grounded in rational
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3 argumentation. For him, the *tone remains all too human* in its form and ‘disposable sincerity’, and
4
5 thus he sees that the “lethal dose is linguistic, not ontological” (p. 661). For Murphet, an
6
7 inhumanism that takes itself seriously, and is not just indebted to making itself backward-
8
9 compatible to maintaining a *status quo* with a creative flair, can find new resources in the inherent
10
11 inhumanity of *satire* as a form of writing. While his main concern is stylistic, his distaste for the
12
13 centrality of the human actor remains trenchant, for
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17 “Humanism is a smokescreen of sentimental affection for the universal in “man,” draped over the
18
19 pornographic spectacle of his rape of the universe. Satire, conversely, is viscerally disgusted by the universal
20
21 in “man”; it loves only the particular, the irreducible quality of truth, that flashes out momentarily like a gleam
22
23 of gold from the mountains of ordure and the oceans of vomit and blood” (Murphet, 2016: 662)

24
25 Making exemplary cases of Jonathan Swift and H. P. Lovecraft, he notes that this satire takes its
26
27 form by writing from outside of the human position in its very articulation and never forgets its
28
29 disgust of the hypocrisy of humanism that remains

30
31 “the constant ideological apology, among dominant classes, for an ever-spreading world system bent on the
32
33 systematic conversion of living labor powers into consumable values—that is to say, on the structural treatment
34
35 of the vast majority of human beings not as members of the set “humanity,” but precisely as exceptions to it:
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37 beasts, things and integers, manipulatable code” (Murphet, 2016: 665)

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39 Perhaps one strategy for doing the inhuman challenge justice, without succumbing to the barren
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41 landscapes of annihilation, can thus be literary so as to attempt to answer the “demands [of]
42
43 innovative and experimental approaches” (Fotaki et al., 2016: 8). In this case the experimentality
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45 would likely take a decidedly unsavoury tone in a work of polemical disgust that would
46
47 nevertheless not be directed at any particular human ‘target’ of ridicule. Its irony would lie in its
48
49 repulsion for the myth of our hypocritical exceptionalism, and its style would demonstrate it by
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51 writing our all-important rational reason outside. A violent ‘shock to thought’ that “forces thought
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53 to think the whole” (Deleuze, 1989: 157), which operates on the threshold of the impossibility of
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55 thought and where that impossibility *itself* forces thought to form new affective relationalities. This
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57 is an inhumanity wishing to continue a dialogue with an awakening through disgust, or “the
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3 uninhibited excretion of pigshit, i.e., immaculate defecation” in order to “write affectively, to turn
4 the wound against all scars, to write in blood” (Sørensen, 2005: 129).
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10 Thus, if the dark recesses of desiring are taken seriously then there is a need to *write* and *read* our
11 work as neurotics, perverts, and psychotics who continue to enjoy swallowing the shit of capital, for
12 as we have learned, desire will not answer to rational argumentation or ‘raising awareness’ (also
13 Skonieczny, 2017). We need to *write* and *read* from the perspective of a semiocapitalist becoming
14 where our subjectivity looks like a weary cliché, and from the perspective of dismembered desiring
15 urges whose parts have already all been commodified. We need to encounter the world as a void of
16 algorithmic news communications, social media, finance markets, and the military-industrial-
17 complex (or the academic publishing apparatus) that feed off us as teeming inputs enjoying their
18 own disappearance in their desiring flows. We need to *write* and *read* in forms that do not assure us
19 of the lie of the agentic subject-verb-object form. While the inhuman challenge generally remains
20 wary of any affirmative logics that come in the form of agentic human subjectivity, it is here where
21 it can connect with the D+G ideas of experimentation in an excessive form that coincides with
22 desires’ excesses. By being done with human intent, its negativity could be activating on a different
23 plane.
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45 Of course, in academia we tend to rather stay away from such trembling moments (Sørensen, 2005),
46 and rather focus on ‘impact’ while obediently working to get ready to embrace Parker’s (2014)
47 accounts of our ‘glorious’ future vocations. There may even be gargantuan amounts of lurking
48 ‘enjoyment’ in replicating the ever-proliferating capitalist machine of knowledge ‘production’⁴. But
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57 ⁴ It is in these moments we know the system of desiring intensities has risen to speak. Academics in a bar on Friday, the
58 mood is getting hazy, allowing for triumphant justification of intoxication. Voices are raised, no doubt revealing
59 seniority, power and relative insight. But no-one really speaks there, even when gazes intensify and subdued moments
60 of resentment flare. The desiring-machine enunciates. A collective machine where any number of hours and a still
assumed camaraderie are filled with changes in journal metrics, strategizing messages of contribution, and targeting

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2
3 let us be clear – the inhuman challenge is vociferous and will not stop at half-measures; when we
4 are finally granted access to the toilet of our desiring-production we will not be satisfied with a
5 flush that only continues to function thanks to nontrivial amounts of gaffer tape. It does not liberate
6 (subjective) desires nor does it ride the coat-tails of talk about precious rhizomes, but rather finds
7 machinic desire as the thrilling locus of disappearance. It wants as its prey all our vulnerability and
8 a deluge of shit that will not go silently into the night. It is this pharmakon so as to mirror its other,
9 semicapitalism “as megadeath-drive as Terminator: that which can’t be bargained with, can’t be
10 reasoned with, doesn’t show pity or remorse or fear and absolutely will not stop, ever” (Fisher,
11 2014b: 344). This does not in any way imply a one-sided dismissal of the affirmative, joyful and
12 humanist lines of thought that can be found in D+G (and others), but urgently advocates an urgent
13 sensitivity to the dark recesses of desire in globalized capitalist flows that have already morphed the
14 polis into ‘control societies’ (Deleuze, 1992).

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33 While this text has been an attempt to expeditiously theorize the tactics of writing the inhuman
34 rather than a representational mapping of the actual delivery itself, we were nevertheless delighted
35 by one review comment that feeds our neurosis-cum-psychosis perfectly. The comment started off
36 with our work being “rude, pessimistic, depressing, repressive and painful cry of sad passions
37 which denies that capitalism can be destroyed unless the human is annihilated with it”. We are not
38 happy it has come to this (for we are also still too *old*), but we are euphoric that it is already
39 working like sand in the gears of affirmation. It wants more. More negativity as desiring-
40 production, more unsavoury intensities. Strip us bare before a world in which the human as centre
41 already is over in irredeemable ways! To fully dismiss how the inhuman reveals itself ‘within and
42 as us’ would be akin to approaching Chaplin’s movies solely as slapstick comedy while missing
43 their powerful societal critique (see Žižek, 1990). In *Modern Times*, he himself incorporates a

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59 particular associate editors with particular texts. In terms of immanence, enjoyment is everywhere. Desire needs none of
60 ‘humanist’ content.

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3 capitalized subjectivity that lives in immanent relations. Every moment engulfs him as by accident,
4 every reaction to any situation is haphazard, a shameful bumble. Yet, what he embodies is the role
5 of a 'stain', something that upsets the continuous flow of events (also Swarbrick, 2018; Žižek,
6 1990). It is not a representational stain, but rather something unbearable in the sense that it shocks
7 our sensibilities without a clear locus of decided agency. It is a shock to thought, a haunting notion
8 of seeing ourselves through a mirror in capitalism. Form(s) of inhuman scholarship might attempt to
9 do the same.
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