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Deleuze, Occupy, and the Actuality of Revolution

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Abstract
While the philosophical *idea* of the return of revolution is becoming increasingly more popular and relevant today, the current body of literature thinking through it has tended to under-theorize and often neglect a crucial dimension of this return: the *actuality* of the revolution itself. This paper argues that we can locate a supplement to this problem in Deleuze and Guattari's constructivist political analysis. In particular, this paper demonstrates how Deleuze and Guattari's political analysis can help us illuminate the actuality of one of the most interesting revolutionary movements underway today: the Occupy movement.

Introduction

It is becoming increasingly clear that the age of revolutions is not over. In the past decade alone we have witnessed the creation of a worldwide movement against neoliberalism, the popular overthrow of the Icelandic, Nepali, Tunisian, and Egyptian governments, as well as a continuous wave of riots, strikes, and occupations across the world, emerging with a frequency and intensity historically unmatched since the last great social movements of the 1960s and 70s. The World Trade Organization has gone bankrupt, the global stock market is in steady decline, and welfare states across the world have begun stripping away public services at an unprecedented rate in order to bail out failing financial institutions. In October 2011 we witnessed the largest global protests in world history against economic inequality and political misrepresentation: the Occupy movement. Given the rise in global unemployment, poverty, housing foreclosure, and environmental devastation that surrounds these events, the structural viability and desirability of state and capitalist forms of political life are being increasingly put into question. As Slavoj Žižek put it in his speech at Zuccotti Park, "the taboo is broken, we do not live in the best possible world. But there is a long road ahead. There are truly difficult questions that confront us. We know what we do not want. But what do we want? What social organization can replace capitalism? What type of new leaders do we want?" (Žižek 2011a). It is time again to return to the question of revolution: "is another world possible?"

A growing number of contemporary political philosophers have already begun holding events and developing a robust body of research on the meaning of this contemporary return to revolution. This is exemplified not only by their public statements in support of the global Occupy movement and the Arab Spring (Hardt and Negri 2011a, 2011b; Žižek 2011a, 2011b; Butler 2011, Badiou 2011a, 2011b) but by the highly publicized and sold-out conference, 'On the Idea of Communism' at the Birkbeck Institute for the Humanities in 2009 and its sequel 'Communism, A New Beginning?' at Cooper Union, New York, in October, 2011. These two conferences brought together some of the world's leading philosophers on the subject of emancipatory politics in the 21st century—Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, Antonio Negri, Michael Hardt, Jean-Luc Nancy, Jacques Rancière, Peter Hallward, Terry Eagleton, Gianni Vattimo, Bruno Bosteels, Jodi Dean, Étienne Balibar, and Alberto Toscano. Further, a number of volumes have also appeared in recent years that directly address the importance of returning to the concept of revolution and communism beyond the framework of the socialist party, state, or vanguard organization (Žižek 2009, Žižek and Douzinas 2010, Badiou 2010, Hardt and Negri 2009, Bosteels 2011, Rancière 2010, Laclou 2007, Hewlett 2010).

However, while the philosophical question of the possibility of revolution is becoming increasingly more popular and relevant, the current body of literature thinking through it has tended to under-theorize and often simply neglect a crucial dimension of this return: the actuality of the revolution itself.[1] By the "*actuality* of revolution" I mean the degree to which a revolutionary idea articulates and is articulated by a set of concrete and embodied practices. Opposed to establishing the philosophical foundations for politics, or merely showing the aporetic conditions of impossibility for such foundations, or even affirming the purity of a potential or hypothetical idea of revolution, the actuality of revolution is the process that *gives a body* to a revolutionary idea: a body that is articulated and transformed by local and concrete struggles. Put simply, where and to what degree do we see the "idea of revolution" in *action* today? Where and to what degree do we see the emergence of new revolutionary strategies that further elaborate and transform this idea?

Within the tendency of contemporary European philosophy to under-theorize the actuality of revolution, there are two philosophers whose work has become a focus of contestation in this regard and who thus offer us an exemplary point of departure for beginning a philosophical investigation into the concrete modalities of the revolutionary idea: Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.[2] Through an analysis of the heated debate over the meaning of Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy of revolution, this paper argues that we can locate both the danger of merely affirming the potentiality of revolution as well as a new way to understand the actuality of revolution. In order to accomplish this, this paper is divided into three parts. The first part of the paper argues that the neglect of the actuality of revolution, or what Bruno Bosteels (following Alain Badiou) calls "speculative leftism," can be located in three specific ways in Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy. The second part of the paper argues, however, that we can also locate in these debates the emergence of an alternative "constructivist" dimension of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of revolution. Finally, the third section of the paper argues that it is the constructivist dimensions of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy that offer us some of the most promising directions toward understanding where and to what degree we can find the "idea of revolution" in *action* today. In particular, I demonstrate this by using two key concepts of their constructivism to illuminate one of the most interesting revolutionary movements underway today: the Occupy movement.

I. Beyond Speculative Leftism

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We are witnessing today the emergence of a new popular idea of revolution distinct from the idea of revolutionary socialism bound by the political body of the party, state, or vanguard organization.[3] But more importantly, we are also witnessing the emergence of new kinds of equally distinct concrete political bodies, within and alongside the old ones, that have not yet been sufficiently theorized. The recent philosophical return to the idea of revolutionary communism has the strength of isolating within communism several of its political "invariants" (like equality, universality, and solidarity) (Badiou 2010, Rancière 2006) while simultaneously subtracting from it many of its (often undesirable) concrete historical articulations: its authoritarianism, its gulags, its hierarchies, and its internal suppressions.[4]

However, the subtraction of the historical actuality of revolution also poses a new danger defined by Alain Badiou in *Being and Event* (2005): "We can term *speculative leftism* any thought of being which bases itself upon the theme of an absolute commencement. Speculative leftism imagines that intervention authorizes itself on the basis of itself alone; that it breaks with the situation without any other support than its own negative will" (2005, 210).[5] Expanding and applying this concept further, Bruno Bosteels has recently argued that this tendency toward the uncompromising philosophical purification of a potential radical politics without concrete expression can be located in the work of many contemporary European thinkers: Rancière, Žižek, Nancy, Hardt and Negri, Deleuze and Guattari, Roberto Esposito, and even, to some degree, Badiou himself (Bosteels 2011). Insofar as the work of these thinkers tends to privilege the "generic," "hypothetical" (Badiou), "a-temporal," "formal" (Žižek), "absolutely deterritorialized" (Hardt, Negri, Deleuze, Guattari) and ultimately non-concrete character of revolutionary events, they are guilty, according to Bosteels, of a "philosophical appropriation of radical emancipatory politics, as if this radicality depended on philosophy in order to be able to subtract itself from the questions of power and the State" (Bosteels 2011, 33).

Further, speculative leftism, according to Bosteels, has tended to follow an "ontological turn" based on an "acknowledgment or coming to terms with the inherent gap or ghostly remainder in the discourse of being *qua* being, whereas a rightist orientation would be one that disavows, represses, or displaces this gap or remainder" (Bosteels 2011, 53). However, as Bosteels quotes Roland Végsö,

> Because one of the basic insights of deconstruction is that the primary ontological terrain of the constitution of subjectivity is that of radical undecidability, it is impossible to found politics on an ontology. That is, there is no logical move from radical undecidability to a leftist politics. This is why deconstructionist ontology (or hauntology) cannot be inherently leftist. Of course, it can be used for leftist purposes, but that use must be determined on a normative and not on an ontological level

(quoted in Bosteels 2011, 56).

While I share Bosteels' critique of the tendency toward speculative leftism in these thinkers, I think that many of these philosophers also equally provide us with the resources to move forward toward understanding the actuality of revolution (without falling prey to mere historicism). For example, all of the following philosophers offer us possible points of departure: Badiou insists on studying the consequences of revolutionary events within the current situation or world, particularly those of the Paris Commune, the Cultural Revolution, and the recent Egyptian revolution (Badiou 2011a); Rancière insists on the possibility of "examining the existence of historical forms of politics," despite the fact that he admits he has not done this as carefully as he has with the history of aesthetics (Rancière 2009, 287); Foucault's "ontology of actuality" (Foucault 1984, 45–6) could be redirected toward the analysis of militant struggles, revolutionary organizations, and counter conducts in addition to the typical analysis of prisons, power, and neoliberalism; and even Žižek's notion of a "communist patience" is based on the pre-evental activity of gathering together all the concrete points of capitalist resistance (Žižek 2010).

Deleuze, Guattari, and Speculative Leftism

But perhaps more than any of these thinkers, Deleuze and Guattari offer us the strongest point of departure to begin an analysis of revolutionary actuality; not at all because of their emphasis on deterritorialization, desubjectification, and ontological multiplicity (which are undeniable dimensions of their thought), but because the heated debate around their political work reveals an exemplarily axis of tension that exists in contemporary political theory (and practice): the tension between the affirmation of potentiality and difference and the need for a concrete political organization of some kind to realize this difference. Ultimately, it is their positive emphasis on philosophical "constructivism," and their "overthrow of ontology" in favor of the primacy of politics that will allow us to reconcile this tension. In particular, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1987) demonstrates an illuminating methodological shift from Deleuze's earlier philosophical works to a logic of heterogeneous assemblages (in politics, art, music, biology, linguistics, mathematics, literature, animality, history, etc.). Instead of merely affirming the speculative leftist thesis that we must come to grips with or affirm ontological difference-in-itself or pure multiplicity, understood only philosophically, in *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari insist that multiplicity must be "constructed" through concrete assemblages of different (largely non-philosophical) types that function according to their own logics. Each chapter is thus historically situated, dated, and assembled from the concrete elements of politics, painting, novels, geology, etc.[6]

Deleuze and Guattari's political writings, including *A Thousand Plateaus*, have been the subject of significant attention and criticism. Since 1999, three full-length books have been dedicated to a critique of Deleuze's philosophy: Alain Badiou's *Deleuze: the Clamor of Being* (1999); Slavoj Žižek's *Organs Without Bodies* (2004); and Peter Hallward's *Out of This World: Deleuze and the Philosophy of Creation* (2006). From these works, and several other critical essays, (including Bosteels 2005, Hallward et al 2010) we can discern at least three distinct criticisms that, while perhaps not an entirely balanced assessment of Deleuze (and Guattari), do outline several legitimate dangers raised by their philosophy: political ambivalence, virtual hierarchy, and subjective paralysis.[7] While these critics tend to overstate their case, I also think they do well to highlight, through their critiques, several more broadly applicable political dangers that must be overcome if we are going to understand the actuality of revolution in contemporary politics.

(1) Political Ambivalence

"Affirming Difference in the state of permanent revolution [*affirmer la Différence dans l'état de révolution permanente*]," as Deleuze says in *Difference and Repetition* (75/53),[8] may escape the previous problems of vanguardism and the party-state, but it also poses a new danger: that the "pure affirmation of Difference" will be ultimately ambivalent. Revolution may provide a new non-representational space of liberty, or it may provide a ruptured "open" domain for a

new discourse of rights and military occupation by the state, or it may merely reproduce a complicity with the processes of capitalist deterritorialization necessary for new capitalist reterritorializations. Slavoj Žižek, in particular, frequently attributes this capitalist ambivalence to Deleuze and Guattari's politics (2004, 184). But to say, with Alain Badiou, that affirming the potentiality for transformation as such is to affirm a "purely ideological radicality" that "inevitably changes over into its opposite: once the mass festivals of democracy and discourse are over, things make place for the modernist restoration of order among workers and bosses," would be to overstate the problem (Badiou and Balmès 1976, 83).

Rather, it would be much more appropriate to say, with Paolo Virno, that "[t]he multitude is a form of being that can give birth to one thing but also to the other: ambivalence" (Virno 2003, 131). Accordingly, the affirmation of this ambivalence as a political commitment, and the "politico-ontological optimism and unapologetic vitalism" it assumes in Hardt, Negri, and Deleuze's work, according to Bruno Bosteels, remains radically insufficient (2004, 95). While the purely creative power of the multitude may be the condition for global liberation from Empire, it is also the productive condition for Empire as well. With no clear political consistency to organize or motivate any particular political transformation "vitalist optimism" is politically ambivalent, speculative, and spontaneous. Showing the non-foundational or ungrounded nature of politics provides no more of a contribution for organized politics than does the creative potentiality of desire. "A subject's intervention," Bosteels suggests, "cannot consist merely in showing or recognizing the traumatic impossibility, void, or antagonism around which the situation as a whole is structured" (2004, 104). Rather, following Badiou, a "political organization is necessary in order for the intervention, as wager, to make a process out of the trajectory that goes from an interruption to a fidelity. In this sense, organization is nothing but the consistency of politics" (Badiou 1985, 12). And in so far as Deleuze and Guattari, and those inspired by their work, do not offer developed concepts of political consistency and organization that would bring differential multiplicities into specific political interventions and distributions, they remain, at most, ambivalent toward revolutionary politics.

(2) Virtual Hierarchy

In addition to this first danger of revolutionary ambivalence, Deleuze's concept of revolution, according to Badiou and Hallward, risks a second danger; namely, that of creating a political hierarchy of virtual potential. Badiou argues at length in *The Clamor of Being* that,

> … contrary to all egalitarian or "communitarian" norms, Deleuze's conception of thought is profoundly aristocratic. Thought only exists in a hierarchized space. This is because, for individuals to attain the point where they are seized by their preindividual determination and, thus, by the power of the One-All—of which they are, at the start, only meager local configurations—they have to go beyond their limits and endure the transfixion and disintegration of their actuality by infinite virtuality, which is actuality's veritable being. And individuals are not equally capable of this. Admittedly, Being is itself neutral, equal, outside all evaluation … But 'things reside unequally in this equal being' (Deleuze 1994, 60/37). And, as a result, it is essential to think according to 'a hierarchy which considers things and beings from the point of view of power'

> (Deleuze 1994, 60/37; Badiou 1999, 12–13).

The political thrust of this argument is that, if we understand revolutionary change as the pure potential for change as such, and not actual change for or against certain forms, then, contrary to any kind of egalitarianism, there will instead be a hierarchy of actual political beings that more or less participate in this degree of pure potential transformation. The more actual political beings renounce their specific and local determinations and affirm their participation in the larger processes of difference-in-itself, the more powerful they become. Thus, if the point of examining any local political intervention is in every case to show to what degree it renounces its concrete determinations and might "become other than it is" (as a virtuality or potentiality), there is, according to Badiou, a risk of "asceticism" and hierarchy in such a relationship of potential (Badiou 1999, 13).

Similarly, Peter Hallward has argued that Deleuze's political philosophy is "indifferent to the politics of this world" (2006, 162). Hallward claims that "once a social field is defined less by its conflicts and contradictions than by the lines of flight running through it" any distinctive space for political action can only be subsumed within the more general dynamics of creation, life, and potential transformation (2006, 62n16). And since these dynamics are "themselves anti-dialectical if not anti-relational, there can be little room in Deleuze's philosophy for relations of conflict and solidarity" (2006, 162). If each concrete, localized, actual political being is important only in so far as it realizes a degree of pure potentiality of a virtual event, "and every mortal event in a single Event" (Deleuze 1990, 178/152), then the processional "telos" of absolute political deterritorialization is completely indifferent to the actual politics of this world (2006, 97). By valorizing this pure potentiality for transformation as such against all actual political determinations, Hallward argues, Deleuze is guilty of affirming an impossible utopianism. "By posing the question of politics in the starkly dualistic terms of war machine or state," Hallward argues, "by posing it, in the end, in the apocalyptic terms of a new people and a new earth or else no people and no earth—the political aspect of Deleuze's philosophy amounts to little more than utopian distraction" (2006, 162).

(3) Subjective Paralysis

The differential reading of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of revolution may be able to avoid the problem of representational subjectivity—that it can reject or affirm particular desires but never change the nature of the "self that desires"—but it does so only at the risk of diffusing the self into an endless multiplicity of impersonal drives: a self in perpetual transformation. This leads to the third danger, that of subjective paralysis. Firstly, to read Deleuze and Guattari's theory of revolutionary subjectivity as the "simple fact of one's own existence as possibility or potentiality" (Agamben 1993, 43), or as Paul Patton calls it, one's "critical freedom" ("the freedom to transgress the limits of what one is presently capable of being or doing, rather than just the freedom to be or do those things" (2000, 85) suggests an ambivalence of action. What are the conditions and factors by which one might decide to take an action or not? Emancipation and enslavement in this sense are merely just different things to be done.

Secondly, without a pre-given unity of subjectivity, how do agents *qua* multiplicities deliberate between and distinguish (in themselves) different political decisions? Without the representational screen of reason, or the state-guaranteed grounds of political discourse, what might something like a dispute or agreement look like? If "becoming other is not a capacity liberated individuals possess to constitute themselves as autonomous singularities," but "what defines 'autonomy' itself" (2006, 146), as Simon Tormey argues, then the political danger, according to Hallward, is that the subject is simply replaced by the larger impersonal process of transformation as such: "pure autonomy." The radical affirmation of the ambivalent and unlocalizable processes of subjective potentiality (*qua* pure multiplicities)

seems then to have nothing to contribute to an analysis of the basic function of participatory democracy and collective decision-making, which remains at the core of many of today's radical political struggles (See Starr, Martinez-Torres, and Rosset 2011). Insofar as a theory of subjectivity is defined only by its potential for transformation, it is stuck in a kind of paralysis of endless potential change no less disempowering than subjective stasis. Or, as Hallward frames this criticism, Deleuze "abandons the decisive subject in favor of our more immediate subjection to the imperative of creative life or thought" (2006, 163).

These criticisms articulate three dangers to be avoided, both in reading Deleuze and Guattari as well as in the practical philosophy of revolution.

II. Toward a Constructivist Theory of Revolution

The ongoing debate over the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy, and in particular their concept of revolution, continues to be a productive one. To add to these debates, this section of the paper argues that we can see emerging through them the possibility of a new "constructivist" reading of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of revolution.

In "Deleuzian Politics? A Roundtable Discussion," published in the journal *New Formations* (2010), Éric Alliez, Claire Colebrook, Peter Hallward, Nicholas Thoburn, and Jeremy Gilbert discuss at length precisely the problematic that I am arguing constructivism aims to resolve: the tension between mass movements and political organization (a debate perhaps going back to the 19th century conflict between Marxists and Anarchists). Put simply, how can the marginalized people of the world join together in common struggle and confront their oppressors without sacrificing the autonomy and singularity of their unique existence? On the one hand, Claire Colebrook argues strongly in favor of the singularization and "virtualization" (152) of political movements against their classical forms of self-identity and equality in a concrete people or party. "The important notion here," she argues, "is potentiality: one doesn't just speak of 'any man whatever', 'any subject whatever', or 'any individual' whatever, but of a pure potentiality" (152). This potentiality, "has to be absolutely opposed to the idea that revolution has to occur through some collective organism. … Deleuze and Guattari's conception answers well to our historical situation, in which no one revolutionary organism or body is ever going to do any work" (151). While Colebrook does admit the "strategic need for molar or identifiable movements," she also argues that "such a movement is also going to destroy itself precisely by being identified and stable" (151). Thus, according to Colebrook, "you're always going to have a gathering together for a body, but that also has to remain completely provisional and completely open to the multiple forms of individuation which might constitute it" (158).

On the other hand, Peter Hallward, whom Colebrook accuses of rallying around some of the most dangerous ideas in political history like "collective will," "volunteerism," "the party," "dialectics," "equality," and "universality," has his own criticisms of Colebrook's Deleuzian potentiality. Hallward responds,

> Completely open and completely provisional—who has an interest in that? In my experience, if you talk to people who are engaged in labour struggles—for example trying to organize a group of immigrant workers in California—or to people who are fighting to strengthen the social movements in Haiti or Bolivia, what they constantly say is: 'we are too weak and what we need is some form of continuity and strength, and our enemies are constantly trying to bust it up, to break it up, to fragment it, to divide us, to make it provisional, to reject any kind of consolidation of the instruments that we need to strengthen our hand'

> (158).

While Colebrook's reading of Deleuze and Guattari may be able to respond to our historical condition insofar as it remains one of political heterogeneity and openness to the potentiality of constant transformation, what resources does Deleuze offer us to understand the concrete composition of contemporary revolutionary struggles? Hallward continues,

> So of course there is work to be done, of inventing new political forms, of discovering what might be, in Gramsci's terms, our political 'organisms', our organizational forms which are capable, to some extent, of sustaining a collective determination or a collective will to force through political change, in the circumstances in which we now find ourselves … if that's what you're looking for, then in my opinion, Deleuze and Guattari don't add very much

> (154).

Even if Deleuze and Guattari add anything at all, Hallward argues, it is "undercut by the things that they undermine" (153). Although Hallward concedes to Nick Thoburn that Deleuze and Guattari do offer us some contributions toward a political philosophy of composition (he does not specify what these are), Hallward concludes by posing the issue as a matter of emphasis, both in terms of reading Deleuze and Guattari and in terms of understanding the actuality of revolution.

> … if we agree that the whole thing boils down to the question of what can we do, what is to be done, and some kind of collective agency that includes different kinds of components: what is [it] that we want to emphasize? Do we want to emphasize dissipation or distribution or multiplicity of decentralization and complexity, or do we want to emphasize strategic unity, concentration of power, etc. To my mind, emphasizing the latter runs up against the danger—and it is an inevitable danger that you have to confront directly—of over-centralization, and with it the danger of coercive unity, a concern for identity or uniformity

> (180).

While one can certainly locate a polarizing dimension to this debate, there are also resources from which to build a common ground between the absolute potentiality of a completely provisional and virtual revolution versus the hierarchical, fixed, uniformity of the party, state, and vanguard. Éric Alliez, in particular, considers the "critique which reads Deleuze and Guattari as only interested in escape, deterritorialization, and getting 'out of this world' . . . as based on caricature" (155). In particular, "*A Thousand Plateaus*," Alliez continues, "is still important precisely because it is constantly problematizing the relationships between the molar and the molecular, between deterritorialization and reterritorialization, and trying to make a very precise social and historical analysis the key for any revolutionary praxis that refuses the constituted disjunction between the social and the political" (155). Similarly, the question for Hallward in the end remains, "how can something come together, something whose identity emerges, if it has one, through its self-determination, not through some existing predicates or existing particularities, that is then able actively and forcibly to engage with the things that oppress it and dominate it?" (160) This is precisely the question I would like to

respond to with the notion of "constructivism," drawn from Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus* and following Alliez and Hallward's point of agreement. Hallward says,

> I agree that that is the best way to work within this tradition. If you aim to use Deleuze politically then this is the best way to do it: to think about what kind of resources he and Guattari give us for understanding how political composition works, how capitalism works, how political organizations might become more supple and inventive, and so on
>
> (153).

Following this point of agreement I would like to offer such a reading of Deleuze. I term this a "constructivist" reading, a term borrowed from Deleuze and Guattari's own writings. By "constructivism," however, I do not mean what is traditionally understood as "social constructivism" in sociology and philosophy—namely, that revolutions are by-products or "social constructs" produced by human minds, institutions, historical contexts, cultural values, and so on. Such theories presuppose precisely what needs to be explained in the first place: mind, society, culture, and history themselves. Rather, I define constructivism following Deleuze and Guattari's own definition, as *the diagnosis and assembly of heterogeneous elements into new kinds of philosophical and political consistencies* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 93/73). These new forms of diverse consistency are neither purely unified and representational, nor are they purely differential or fragmented.

III. Deleuze, Occupy, and the Actuality of Revolution

In the next and final section of this paper I focus on two of the key concepts that constitute Deleuze and Guattari's political constructivism and that are particularly useful for an analysis of the actuality of revolution: deterritorialization and consistency. In particular, I would like to demonstrate the theoretical strength of these concepts for understanding the Occupy movement as a distinctly revolutionary movement.

The year 2011 was a year of incredible, worldwide revolutionary activity. During the writing of this article, the largest global occupation movement in history crystallized in October of 2011. Inspired by the Arab Spring, the occupations in Wisconsin, the riots against austerity measures in Europe and the UK, the occupations by the Spanish *Indignados* and the Greeks at Syntagma Square, the Occupy movement has spread to over 2,556 cities across 82 countries, and over 600 communities in the United States (Occupy Together 2011). The Occupy movement is based on popular outrage at the growing disparity of wealth and power between individuals and corporations, as well as the failure of political representatives to resolve the problems of increasing unemployment, housing foreclosures, paralyzing student debt, and the aggressive defunding of social services. But, as some theorists have correctly remarked, the Occupy movement is demonstrably more than a mere protest against greedy bankers and corrupt politicians: it is a sustained movement that is responding to the problems of global capitalism and the institution of political representation itself (Hardt and Negri 2011a; Žižek 2011a; Graeber 2011).

Rather than proposing a list of formal demands or lobbying political parties for reforms to the system (although such reforms would likely not be unwelcome), the Occupy movement has mostly resisted such negotiations as potential co-optations. If the problem were simply corruption or greed one would expect to hear a unified message for reform and legislation. This message could then be adopted by party politicians and mobilized in the next election. The fact that the Occupy movement has not delivered a clearly unified set of demands indicates a deeper mistrust of the very form of political representation itself that would respond to such demands. Additionally, the method of intervention chosen – "unlawful occupation" – should also indicate a breakdown of the normal legal channels that are supposed to respond to the will of the people. Instead of demanding reforms from representatives or even trying to create its own representatives or leaders, the Occupy movement has seized public space and tried to create its own form of direct democracy based on consensus decision-making, equality, and mutual aid. In societies that have failed to provide many of its members with the basic necessities of life and failed to listen to their demands, the Occupy encampments around the world have decided to provide these things for each other. They have created kitchens, libraries, clinics, and media centers open to everyone who needs them. The Occupy movement thus demonstrates that state capitalism itself is the cause of the current crisis. Not only does it express a popular acknowledgment that we do not live in the best of all possible worlds, it also demands that we start creating some alternatives to the current system here and now, and not wait around for political representatives or corporations to fix the problems they created.

Another world is no longer merely possible, it is becoming actual. But where is the capture of the state, the political representation of the party, the centrality of the proletariat, or the leadership of the vanguard so definitive of classical revolutions? Given the failure of such tactics over the last century, coupled with the socio-economic changes brought by neoliberalism in the 1980s, revolutionary strategy today has developed in much more heterogeneous and non-representational directions. So then, in what precise sense can we say that the Occupy movement is revolutionary? This is where Deleuze and Guattari's political constructivism is illuminating.

Revolutionary Deterritorialization

The first, and perhaps the most contested, concept in Deleuze and Guattari's work that proves useful for understanding the actuality of revolution is the concept of "deterritorialization." This concept has been so muddled by interpretation that a litany of its abuse is too long to list here.[9] Instead, let me offer a very brief definition of it before I say why this concept is important for understanding the actuality of revolution. Simply put, deterritorialization is Deleuze and Guattari's concept of change. In *A Thousand Plateaus* it is their answer to the question, 'how is it possible for a revolution to transform the present'? In order to clarify the concept of revolution, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between four very different types of deterritorialization: (1) "relative negative deterritorializations" that change the dominant political power only in order for the dominant political power to better adapt and reproduce itself; (2) "relative positive deterritorializations" that do not reproduce the dominant political power, but do not yet support a revolutionary event; (3) "absolute negative deterritorializations" that do not support any political situation, but undermine them all; and (4) "absolute positive deterritorializations" that do not reproduce a dominant political situation, but instead create a revolutionary event. Without distinguishing between these four types of political change one risks confusing or conflating types of political change. Each of these types of political change are present to some degree in a concrete revolutionary struggle. Importantly, absolute positive deterritorialization is the dominant type of change in revolutionary events. If we want to understand the strengths and dangers of actual revolutionary situations we have to analyze and clarify all four types of change that compose them.

(1) Relative negative deterritorialization is a change that is able to break free from the processes of dominant political power (party, state, capital, etc.) but only momentarily and in such a way that the change simply allows dominant political powers to adapt and expand. "D[eterritorialization]," Deleuze and Guattari say, "may be overlaid by a compensatory reterritorialization obstructing the line of flight: D[eterritorialization] is then said to be *negative*"(Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 634/508). A relative negative deterritorialization is thus a normalizing transformation internal to the functioning of the dominant modes of power. Deleuze and Guattari define three types of such relative negative changes in *A Thousand Plateaus*: (1) *territorial changes* that do not try to totalize or destroy novel political changes, but adapt by creating an alliance with them and treating them like another territory (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 549/440).[10] (2) *Statist changes,* on the other hand, are political changes that either totalize other changes by incorporating them or by simply destroying them. The state does not create territorial autonomy to the emergence of new forces but instead becomes a centralized point of accumulation for all territories. This point of accumulation, in turn, captures all of the qualitatively different territories by removing their heterogeneous qualities and stratifying them into a single hierarchical stock under a central apparatus (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 533/427–28). (3) *capitalist changes* are the most adaptable to constant change. They deploy an aggressive transformation of qualitative relationships: through the privatization of social life, free trade, advertising, the mobilization of labor and capital, and through imperialism. However, they also re-capture these changes as abstract quantities (commodities) for exchange on the world market (1983, 294/247).[11] Power, for Deleuze and Guattari, is thus never total or homogenous—it always functions through internal adaptations that expand and reproduce it: through relative negative deterritorializations.

The Occupy movement expresses, or risks expressing, all four kinds of political transformation to at least some degree. Ultimately, I argue that what makes it revolutionary is that it most *strongly* expresses the revolutionary transformations Deleuze and Guattari characterized as "absolute positive deterritorializations." By critiquing and exceeding the limits of elected representatives, the Occupy movement first of all risks creating a new political transformation that is captured by new party leaders: either by creating a vanguard that speaks for the movement or by subordinating its aims to an electoral candidate. Further, the Occupy movement risks creating relative negative deterritorializations insofar as it rallies a popular critique of economic inequality and political misrepresentation that could be advantageous to electoral politics. Some Democrats have already taken advantage of this popular sentiment and boasted their comprehension and even responsiveness to the concerns of "the 99%" (Huffington Post 2011). As elected representatives, they promise to represent the interests of the 99%. Republicans also stand to gain from the 99%, but in an entirely different fashion: by taking advantage of anti-Obama sentiment shared by many Occupiers. Capitalist reterritorializations include the possibility of corporate financing of the movement that might rob it of its autonomy. Further, the private profits derived from protest paraphernalia such as the Guy Fawkes masks worn by Occupiers around the world are ways for capitalists to directly profit from anti-capitalist sentiment. These three aspects of the Occupy movement are able to take a novel political change and turn it to the benefit of the already dominant forms of power: the co-optation of a vanguard, the submission to electoral politics, or financing/being financed by capitalists.

(2) Relative positive deterritorialization, according to Deleuze and Guattari, is a political transformation of the dominant mode of power that escapes adaptation and incorporation but fails to sustain a revolutionary event (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 634/508). Relative positive deterritorialization on its own is thus only the mere affirmation that something has escaped the dominant regimes of political power at the borderlines. This kind of change is ultimately insufficient to sustain a revolutionary struggle insofar as it fails to create a new political world. It is thus a mistake to think that just because something has escaped political representation that it is inherently revolutionary. This type of political change, for Deleuze and Guattari, is so "extremely ambiguous," that its borderline is split in two: on one side it exists as an "anomalous [*anomal*]" element unaccounted for within the state of affairs but still recognizable as an exception, and on the other side it exists as an "exceptional individual" that holds together the increasing connections of a new world in formation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 302/247). Insofar as it ceases to be a definable aggregate in relation to the majority, it both reveals the possibility of further connection as well as the possibility of co-optation (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 356–357/291).

We can see this type of transformation in the Occupy movement. While the majority of Americans (54%) support the Occupy movement, they are divided regarding its methods (*Time Magazine* 2011). The Occupy movement thus expresses, to some degree, an ambivalent change that is split in two. On the one side, it expresses a critique of economic disparity and political representation: grievances that are not being properly responded to in the dominant political situation. There is a popular voice and struggle not immediately representable within the current state of affairs. On the other side, however, the Occupy movement expresses an alternative, irreducible to capitalism and the state: a new form of organization based on direct democracy, consensus, mutual aid, and equality. But there is also a division internal to the Occupy event itself: between those who believe that the problem is one of corruption and resolvable through reform, regulation, and electoral politics and those who believe that Occupy signals a revolutionary call for a new type of political organization altogether. Insofar as the Occupy movement does not overcome this split, the mere possibility that it might become revolutionary is not sufficient to constitute it as a revolutionary movement.

(3) Absolute negative deterritorialization is a political transformation that escapes all the borderlines of territorial, state, and capitalist power and representation.[12] But in doing so, it not only fails to sustain a revolutionary event, it also deterritorializes too fast, too much, and becomes self-destructive. By failing to create an alternative to the dominant political order it ends up ultimately strengthening that order. It becomes too fragmented and thus an easy target for relative negative political changes. "Staying stratified—organized, signified, subjected—is not the worst that can happen," Deleuze and Guattari say, "the worst that can happen is if you throw the strata into demented or suicidal collapse, which brings them back down on us heavier than ever" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 199/161).

Insofar as the Occupy movement refuses in principle to ally itself with other movements and persons (community groups, reformists, unions, or even electoral politics), it risks deterritorializing too far, too quickly, and becoming self-destructive. A strategic refusal to offer a unified set of demands may be useful in some cases and not in others. But when the refusal to give demands or work with others who do not share all of one's own commitments becomes an absolute principle, we can see a radical self-marginalization and possible eventual self-destruction of the movement. Offering demands or working with unions who endorse Obama is not the worst thing that can happen—the worst thing would be that the movement becomes so "radical" that it is unable to sustain popular support and solidarity, and it dies

at its own hands. The movement can become so "pure" that when the cops come, no one is left to help defend the camp. Further, if the Occupy movement decided that building alternative institutions (kitchens, libraries, clinics, media centers, etc.) compromised the radical spontaneity of the movement, the movement may also not be able to sustain itself.

(4) Absolute positive deterritorialization is a kind of transformation that not only escapes the dominant political order, but also connects up to an increasing number of other escaped or freed elements whose ultimate collective aim is the transformation of the dominant political order (territorial, state, and capital). It accomplishes this through the *prefigurative* construction of a new world (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 177/142). But it would be a mistake to think that this radical transformation is a kind of *ex nihilo* miracle or absolute Other/Outside of political representation. For Deleuze and Guattari absolute deterritorialization is already presupposed as part of all other forms of social organization (1983, 208/176). Revolutions simply harness and recompose the changes that are already happening in society. Absolute positive deterritorialization is thus in no way transcendent, oppositional, or merely potential, but rather a kind of immanent and creative process from within the situation that harnesses all of its inevitable breakdowns and exclusions. It does so not in order to develop a new form of political representation, or to stabilize the old ones, but to create a new political body.

In the case of the Occupy movement this type of political transformation is by far the most dominant, relative to the other three types of political transformation. To a strong degree the Occupy movement has been able to connect itself up to a global group of allies across the political spectrum against political and economic inequality. It is by far the largest occupation movement in history. One of the reasons for this is that it has not turned away groups with differing political aims.[13] Further, not everyone who participated in the Occupy movement refused to make demands. In fact, we might more accurately characterize the movement as having a surplus of demands. While still split to some degree between revolutionary and reformist tendencies, the Occupy movement has managed to move beyond isolated one-day protests and to sustain a large *occupation movement*. The occupation has thus been able to make a strong case not just for its distance or difference from state capitalism, but for the existence and actuality of an alternative to it. Politicians and corporations have failed to serve the people and so the people have tried to prove that they can do it better themselves without the mediation of politicians and capitalists. By occupying public spaces and organizing the world they want to see (based on direct democracy, consensus decision-making, equality, trust, and mutual aid), the Occupy movement prefigures a new politics. The Occupy movement actualizes the revolution in the future anterior: as that which *will have been* the beginning of a new form of political organization. Instead of merely demanding the things it wants (in protest), it has decided to make them within and alongside the current world. Occupy has taken up a large group of deterritorialized people, places, and things that are marginalized or excluded from the dominant powers of politics and economics and recomposed them into alternative structures under popular control. Some of these structures include the General Assembly, consensus decision-making, free kitchens, clinics, libraries, and media centers, open to all who are hungry, sick, thoughtful, or want to publish media of their own. To a strong degree it has not merely reproduced the dominant forms of political representation or created new ones; instead, it has created a non-representational form of direct political participation. This will be developed further in the next section.

Actual revolutionary deterritorialization is thus *the process by which concrete political agents and objects break free from existing modes of political representation by creating a prefigurative alternative composition within and alongside older ones*. This is quite different than speculative leftism because it does not merely break free and affirm a general possibility of further change—it creates an actual and concrete alternative. In fact, the creation of an alternative is what makes this fourth type of transformation specifically revolutionary (and not just political in general). Thus, through these illustrations we can see that to politically and philosophically valorize "deterritorialization" in general is a completely ambivalent and unhelpful gesture. Without further clarification of what types of deterritorialization are operating in a specific situation and to what degree, and without an emphasis on how these deterritorializations are positively assembled, the concept of deterritorialization falls prey to the three criticisms made of Deleuze and Guattari in part I.

Revolutionary Consistency

The second and most important concept in Deleuze and Guattari's work for understanding the actuality of revolution is the concept of "consistency." This concept is invented in *A Thousand Plateaus* to resolve precisely the problem debated above: how to create a political composition or collective that is neither representational nor merely potential or negatively deterritorialized. Revolutionary consistency, for Deleuze and Guattari, describes a type of political composition that offers new conditions for political life (not just a transformation of the already present conditions). These new conditions are not based on a "more just" condition of political action whose foundational principles are still mediated through representatives (the vanguard, politicians, or capitalists). The goal of revolutionary consistency is not simply to establish anti-, or counter-compositions, whose sole purpose is to undermine all forms of political representation and await the possibility that something new, and hopefully better, may emerge. Rather, consistent revolutionary compositions are built and sustained through a process whose founding conditions are constantly undergoing a high degree of direct and immanent transformation by the specific concrete practices and people who are effected, to varying degrees, by its deployment. A consistent political composition is thus not an ontological thesis regarding a "completely open and provisional" political principle of change. Rather, it is a regional or local composition that is open to further changes as they are added, one at a time, around a common cause.

Revolutionary consistency, in short, is a political "feedback loop" between the abstract event of a revolution and the concrete persons and things that both actualize and transform it. A revolution, in other words, has no representatives to interpret the will of the people; it is self-organized by the people themselves. Deleuze and Guattari offer us three concepts that express the structure of this relationship: what they call the "abstract machine," the "concrete assemblage," and the "persona."[14]

(1) **The Abstract Machine**: Revolutionary events are abstract in the sense that they are not things among other things—rather, they give a proper name to the existence of another world. This is a world that exists here and now, but whose "essence" is nowhere except in the concrete consequences of the event. Occupy, as a revolutionary movement, gives a proper name to the possibility and actuality of the people to organize themselves in relationships of political and economic equality—something that previously seemed impossible. But the proper name, "the 99%" is also real-abstract (*vrai-abstrait*) insofar as it indicates a specific but highly flexible condition that allows for the real

appearance of "new space-times" and new subjectivities to be organized around its proper name (Deleuze 1995, 239/176). Occupy is thus an abstract machine in the sense that it is marked by a singular and asignifying proper name like the names of military operations or the names of hurricanes, as Deleuze and Guattari say (1987, 40/28, 322–323/264). This name is "asignifying" in the sense that it does not represent or symbolize any essential meaning that inheres in the event. Rather, the proper name of "the 99%" is spoken *through* as a flexible or mutable condition that changes each time there is a new deployment of its consequences (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 179/142). There is no program or absolute set of rules to "be part of the 99%" given in advance. What makes someone part of the 99% is not a demographic statistic or income level, but rather their commitment to the consequences that they (and others) see following from the event. In fact, even the 1% can be part of the 99% (see the website, "We are the 1 percent: We stand with the 99 percent.tumblr.com"). This is also the sense in which Deleuze and Guattari say the event is both singular and universal (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 474/382). It is singular in the sense that it has a unique name that distinguishes it from the regimes of political representation, but it is universal in the sense in which it is open to the participation of anyone, anywhere. This does not mean that everyone is necessarily part of the 99%, but that there are no essential barriers to participation like there are with statism (not everyone can be a citizen) or capitalism (not everyone can be a capitalist). If anyone from the 1% wants to camp in a public park and advocate for economic equality, they are invited. Occupiers in New York have even chanted to the police "you are the 99%".

(2) **The Concrete Assemblage**: Accordingly, the concrete elements of the assemblage that articulate the consequences of the abstract event cannot be considered as "normative" or "goal-driven" actions, since they are continually transforming the conditions or goals that are supposed to normalize and direct their actions. These mutual transformations, however, should not be mistaken for a kind of pragmatic "revisionism" where a hypothesis is "tested," found to work or not work, and then rationally (or otherwise) revised accordingly in order to ground a narrative of political "progress." Rather, abstract events transform and are transformed reciprocally by those who effectuate them and who are effected by them (without knowing their ends in advance). "When people demand to formulate their problems themselves," as Deleuze and Guattari say, "and to determine at least the particular conditions under which they can receive a more general solution," there is a specifically non-representational form of self-management and democratic participation (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 588/471; Deleuze 1994, 206/158).

Each concrete machine may certainly have different capacities to be affected, but there is no single element that is independent from or in charge of representing the others. Rather, in each case, one must "count its affects," [*on cherche á faire le compte de ses affects*] (Deleuze & Guattari 1987, 314/257). The procedure of counting the affects of a revolutionary event is thus the process of building a concrete body/composition for this event: what actions does the event call us to take? Who are our allies and enemies in this struggle? What does the event mean, here, and in this case? However, since there are no static normative ends that inhere in the revolutionary event itself (we do not know in advance what the revolution will mean),[15] the revolution must be built piece by piece and experimented with in actual struggles.

The Occupy movement has a concrete assemblage that articulates the concrete practices and actions of the event. These consequences are not given in advance by a program but rather continue to modify what the event means each time they effect a new deployment (since the event has no essential meaning). The kitchens, libraries, tents, slogans, signs, assemblies, marches, blogs, twitter feeds, art, and songs are all part of the concrete elements that give an actual body to the more abstract proper name of the event. When one group of students in New York decide to occupy their school in protest of increased tuition and student debt and claim this as a consequence of being the 99% and another group in California decide to do the same without a program or representative, etc., there is a creation of consistency or resonance of evental concretization (not vanguard leadership). How does the demand to abolish student loan debt become part of the meaning of the 99%? By more and more people concretely taking such actions, and others supporting them in solidarity. Each time a new concrete consequence is drawn (a labor strike, a port shutdown, a movement of personal bank accounts to credit unions, etc.), the Occupy movement takes on a larger and more robust consistency and meaning. Even the formal structure of the Occupy encampments follows this "feedback loop" structure. General assemblies are open to everyone and decisions are made through consensus (everyone comes to agreement, not just the majority). The rules or decisions of the collective are always up for revision and transformation without the use of representatives who mediate the direct will of the participants. There is no essential "party-line" or fixed set of commitments one must have, although actions that would exclude or reduce collective participation—like racism, sexism, homophobia, etc.—are not allowed. Spokes-councils or smaller groups break off and work on specific projects and then return to the General Assemblies for a final consensus-decision in an unmediated feedback loop of democracy very different than representative democracy or vague affirmations of potential change.

(3) **The Persona**: A revolutionary body politic is a continually transformed condition and set of concrete consequences, but it is the revolutionary subject that connects the two together (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 73/75). Rather than representing or speaking about a political event, the political persona, for Deleuze and Guattari, is the immanent agent of an operation that connects the abstract event to the concrete consequences (cf. 1983, 22–23/16). For Deleuze and Guattari, the revolutionary political 'subject' is not simply 'de-centered;' it is a co-adaptive component of a particular collective enunciation or political consistency in the third person (He, She, They) and the indefinite (One, Everyone, Anyone). 'I won't say I anymore,' Deleuze and Guattari say in *Anti-Oedipus*, 'I'll never utter the word again; it's just too damn stupid. Every time I hear it, I'll use the third person instead [*je ne dirai plus moi, je ne le dirai plus jamais, c'est trop bêt. je mettrai à la place, chaque fois que je l'entendrai, la troisième personne, si j'y pense*]' (1983, 30/23). The important and ironic point is that it is not a matter of never using the first person pronoun again, but that the speech acts of personae always be considered as most primarily 'speech act[s] in the third person where it is always the conceptual persona who says, "I" [*je*]' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994, 63/64). It is not the case that the first and second person pronouns, 'I' or 'You,' have no meaning; rather, the point is that they are derived or conditioned on a more primary third person of the event. 'I' and 'You' function as different features of political events that engage in negotiation and conflict, immanent to the collective assemblage at hand, not as features of an independent consciousness, ego, radical alterity, or transcendence outside the assemblage. While the first person generally indicates a self-conscious subject of enunciation who makes decisions on a political arrangement independent from it, and the second person designates the projection of the first, the third person persona indicates an indefinite group-subject always in co-adaptation with the body politic.

The Occupy movement has produced a very specific type of collective subjectivity exactly along these lines: "the occupier." Piece by piece the occupiers show the concrete consequences of the Occupy movement by effectuating some actions, some slogans, some demonstrations, and not others. But these elements, as results of direct democracy and consensus, in turn transform the Occupy movement itself. Occupy has no existence outside of its effectuations *by occupiers*. The transformation of the evental condition "Occupy" then transforms the occupiers who must in turn redeploy new concrete effectuations based on this change. Occupy thus leads itself by obeying itself in a kind of feedback loop with no program or vanguard at the helm. It is in this sense a process of participation where event, consequence, and subject all enter a mutual transformation.

The occupier also breaks with a tradition of revolutionary subjectivity based on individualism and military styled self-discipline. Instead, the occupier acts in the third person and creates a new kind of discipline: the collective discipline of the event. This does not mean of course that occupiers never say 'I,' or 'You;' it simply means that these features are derivative or secondary to the more primary third person that acts as the agent of a connection between an event and its consequences. Conflicts and agreements still take place between specific 'I's' and 'You's' but only as conflicts and agreements of the event they participate in: not outside it, or upon it, but within and through it. Just as Occupy uses the participatory General Assembly to replace normal *conditions* of representation and exclusion (present in statism and capitalism) or when they use of the mutual aid in the commons (clinics, kitchens, libraries, free schools, etc.) to replace the *concrete practices* of private and public property, so Occupy creates occupiers to replace the representational subject of liberal and capitalist individualism. This process of revolutionary subjectivation is accomplished concretely through the practical use of the People's Mic and through the use of masks.

The People's Mic began in Zuccotti Park in New York City where the use of megaphones was prohibited. The speaker's voice was then amplified by the entire crowd who would repeat each word, one sentence at a time, after the speaker so everyone could hear/speak. The collective repetition not only of the speaker's words but of the words of hundreds (sometimes thousands) of other people has the effect of resonating and literally internalizing the voice of the collective "we." The act of collective speaking is part of the actual production of a third person subjectivity which is neither I nor you, but we, without exclusion. Here the subject is not merely "decentered," but is brought into consistency with the event, its consequences, and the other occupiers. When a thousand people say "I" together, this "I" is a multiple "I" composing a collective "we": the People's Mic.

Another actualization of the third person subjectivity of the occupiers is the use of masks (Guy Fawkes masks as well as ski masks and bandanas) to make themselves anonymous. This is not the kind of popular strategy one finds in the previous revolutionary sequences of the French revolution (liberalism), Leninism, or Maoism (communism). The face of the individual was part of their accurate representation by the state or the vanguard. The practice of collective masking in the Occupy movement is hostile to vanguardism and representation insofar as it creates a visual equality between subjects without leaders. It de-individualizes first person subjects in favor of third person collective subjects of the event. We might imagine how confusing it would be to try and follow a single person when everyone was wearing the same black ski mask or Guy Fawkes mask. "Are you the one leading us? No, I thought you were leading us?" The point is to create a locally generic subjectivity of Occupation and express it collectively,;that is, to lead, but to lead by obeying those you are leading, as the Zapatistas (who also use the strategy of masking), might say: "*mandar obedeciendo*" (Comandante Tacho 2007). By covering their faces as a political action the Occupiers are able to create a unique political anonymity (open to anyone, and yet unambiguously for Occupation!) that rejects both liberal and "merely decentered" models of subjectivity, in favor of a subject of the event itself.

Revolutionary consistency can thus be defined as *the feedback loop between the abstract possibility of a new world and the concrete subjects and consequences of this world*. To affirm the mere philosophical and completely open/formal/generic potentiality of revolution without a study of the concrete actuality of its consequences and to what degree these consequences transform and shape its future potential is to fall prey to the three dangers previously leveled against Deleuze and Guattari by their critics.

Conclusion

In Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy we can see both a tendency toward the pure affirmation of difference or "speculative leftism" as well as a tendency toward a constructivist analysis of the actuality of revolution. Given the dangers of the former, I believe it is now time to take up and emphasize the project of the later. The question of revolution today is no longer, "how is the revolution possible?" but rather "what are the actual dimensions of the revolution already underway?"

This is much closer to what Badiou, Hallward, Toscano, and Bosteels claim to be looking for in their own political concepts of "consistency," "commitment," and "solidarity," than the pure becoming often associated with Deleuze and Guattari. The current revolutionary sequence that began in 1994 with the Zapatistas has, according to Alberto Toscano, "sketched out new regimes of organization, new forms of subjectivity … at a distance from the accepted forms of mediated representation … [such that] that we might begin to think beyond the intra-State logic of representation" (2004, 224). The task of a revolutionary political philosophy today must thus begin with an analysis of these new organizations and subjectivities. As the heir to Zapatismo and the Alter-globalization movement, the Occupy movement is our event and cannot be fully understood without an analysis of its actuality. Drawing on Deleuze and Guattari's political constructivism, I believe we can provide such an analysis.

The valorization of "lines of flight," "rupture," and "heterogeneity" as they break free from or within power, without a positive account of how such lines compose a new consistency of their own, are—and here I am in agreement with Badiou and others—"the concrete definition of revolutionary failure," (Badiou 2004, 80). Revolutionary struggles must be sustained beyond the scope of isolated outbursts against or within power. Without a cohesive theory of how to diagnose, transform, and create these new political *bodies* connected through mutual global solidarity, we cannot hope to understand the actuality of the present revolutionary sequence.

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Notes

1. The concept of the actuality of revolution appears in Jodi Dean's book *The Communist Horizon* (2012) as well as in Bruno Bosteels book *The Actuality of Communism* (2011), where he cites Jodi Dean's manuscript. The present essay marks the continuation of this investigation into the concept of the actuality of revolution.

2. See sections II and III for a more complete and cited discussion of these disputes.

3. See (Hardt and Negri 2011a, 2011b; Žižek 2011a, 2011b; Butler 2011, Badiou 2011a) for discussions of how the Arab Spring and the Occupy movement have circumvented the traditional political bodies of the party, state, and vanguard organization. One might also include the Zapatistas (Burbach 1994, 1996, Notes from Nowhere 2003); the alter-globalization movement (Harvey 2010; Graeber 2002; Grubacic and Graeber 2004), and (Klein 2011) on the relationship between all three (Zapatistas, Alter-globalization, and Occupy).

4. However, this strategy also poses a new danger for the philosophy of revolution: the danger of neglecting the concrete historical manifestations of revolution altogether in favor of a purely formal or "regulative idea" of revolution without actuality or historicity (Žižek 2009, 87–88). Jason Read has gone as far as to describe a Deleuzian revolution as "a becoming revolutionary without the revolution" (Read 2010, 98). This notion strikes me at best as ambivalent to revolutionary praxis and at worst directly counter revolutionary. As Žižek similarly warns against Badiouian idealism, "one should be careful not to read these lines in a Kantian way, conceiving communism as a "regulative Idea:" thereby resuscitating the specter of an "ethical socialism" taking equality as its a priori norm-axiom. One should rather maintain the precise reference to a set of actual social antagonisms which generates the need for communism-Marx's notion of communism not as an ideal, but as a movement which reacts to such antagonisms, is still fully relevant." (Žižek 2009, 87–88).

5. Speculative leftism is also defined by Rancière cited in (Bosteels 2011, 23)

6. *A Thousand Plateaus* is the actualization of their philosophy. This is precisely why they then felt the need to write their final book together on the only plateau that had been left out of *A Thousand Plateaus*: the plateau of philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari 1994)!

7. To be clear, I do not agree that these three criticisms accurately capture the problems of all of Deleuze and Guattari's work. *A Thousand Plateaus*, in particular, marks a shift away from Deleuze's earlier solo works that were self-defined as the 'merger of philosophy and ontology' (1990, 201/179). While I disagree that Deleuze's previous works can be characterised as entirely 'apolitical,' as Badiou has argued (Badiou 2009), Deleuze had in fact developed very few political concepts, usually favouring more ontological or aesthetic ones. By contrast, *A Thousand Plateaus* clearly prioritises politics over ontology. Against accusations of 'ontological vitalism' and 'other-worldly politics' made by Peter Hallward, *A Thousand Plateaus* claims (1) to overthrow ontology: to replace the logic of the 'is' [*est*] with the logic of the 'and' [*et*]; and (2) that 'politics precedes being' [*avant l'être, il y a la politique*] (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 37/25, 249/203). *A Thousand Plateaus* should therefore be read more primarily as a political text than an ontological one, thus distancing it significantly from Deleuze's earlier solo works as well as from much of Badiou, Hallward, and Žižek's critical commentary that tends to focus almost exclusively on his pre-*A Thousand Plateaus* writings. While this by no means allows us to ignore the political dangers Badiou and others outline, it is important to recognise that the constructivist turn that occurs in Deleuze and Guattari's political philosophy has yet to be taken seriously (against the continuity thesis, for example, that is argued for explicitly by Hallward and implicitly by many others: that a single central thought guides all of Deleuze's work, such as immanence, the virtual, life, and so on).

8. I hereafter cite all works by Deleuze and Deleuze and Guattari using the French pagination first and the English pagination second.

9. What is needed perhaps is for someone to write a full length monograph on the concept of deterritorialization.

10. I explore each of these in depth in (Nail 2012).

11. "It axiomatizes with one hand what it decodes with the other." (1983, 294/247)

12. Absolute deterritorialization though, does not simply come after relative deterritorialization. Rather, "relative Deterritorialization itself requires an absolute for its operation," and "conversely, absolute Deterritorialization necessarily proceeds by way of relative Deterritorialization, precisely because it is not transcendent" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 636/510).

13. Although the presence of anti-Semites and libertarians at Occupy encampments has certainly raised problems.

14. There are several types of abstract machines according to Deleuze and Guattari. The concept abstract machine and concrete assemblage as I use them here should be understood as referring only to the "consistent type" of machines (as opposed to the primitive, state, capitalist, or fascist types).

15. The Egyptian revolution and other leaderless revolutions did not have "the communist party-state, the dictatorship of the proletariat, or the subject of the "worker" as the pre-given axes of struggle" they had to invent their own axis of struggle.

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