BLOOMSBURY REVELATIONS

DELEUZE AND FÉLIX GUATTARI

ANTI-OEDIPUS

'Being anti-oedipal has become a life style, a way of thinking and living.'

MICHEL FOUCAULT

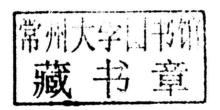
BLOOMSBURY

Anti-Oedipus

Capitalism and Schizophrenia

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari

Translated from the French by Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane Preface by Michel Foucault



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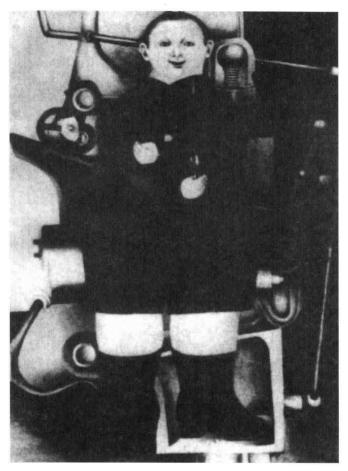
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Anti-Oedipus



Boy with Machine, Richard Lindner (1954, oil on canvas, 40" x 30", Drs. Rosier and Lefer, M.D., P.A. Pension Trust)

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Preface

Michel Foucault

During the years 1945–1965 (I am referring to Europe), there was a certain way of thinking correctly, a certain style of political discourse, a certain ethics of the intellectual. One had to be on familiar terms with Marx, not let one's dreams stray too far from Freud. And one had to treat sign-systems—the signifier—with the greatest respect. These were the three requirements that made the strange occupation of writing and speaking a measure of truth about oneself and one's time acceptable.

Then came the five brief, impassioned, jubilant, enigmatic years. At the gates of our world, there was Vietnam, of course, and the first major blow to the powers that be. But here, inside our walls, what exactly was taking place? An amalgam of revolutionary and antirepressive politics? A war fought on two fronts: against social exploitation and psychic repression? A surge of libido modulated by the class struggle? Perhaps. At any rate, it is this familiar, dualistic interpretation that has laid claim to the events of those years. The dream that cast its spell, between the First World War and fascism, over the dreamiest parts of Europe—the Germany of Wilhelm Reich, and the France of the surrealists—had returned and set fire to reality itself: Marx and Freud in the same incandescent light.

But is that really what happened? Had the utopian project of the thirties been resumed, this time on the scale of historical practice? Or was there, on the contrary, a movement toward political struggles that no longer conformed to the model that Marxist tradition had prescribed? Toward an experience and a technology of desire that were no longer Freudian. It is true that the old banners were raised, but the combat shifted and spread into new zones.

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Anti-Oedipus shows first of all how much ground has been covered. But it does much more than that. It wastes no time in discrediting the old idols, even though it does have a great deal of fun with Freud. Most important, it motivates us to go further.

It would be a mistake to read Anti-Oedipus as the new theoretical reference (you know, that much-heralded theory that finally encompasses everything, that finally totalizes and reassures, the one we are told we "need so badly" in our age of dispersion and specialization where "hope" is lacking). One must not look for "philosophy" amid the extraordinary profusion of new notions and surprise concepts: Anti-Oedipus is not a flashy Hegel. I think that Anti-Oedipus can best be read as an "art," in the sense that is conveyed by the term "erotic art," for example. Informed by the seemingly abstract notions of multiplicities, flows, arrangements, and connections, the analysis of the relationship of desire to reality and to the capitalist "machines" yields answers to concrete questions. Questions that are less concerned with why this or that than with how to proceed. How does one introduce desire into thought, into discourse, into action? How can and must desire deploy its forces within the political domain and grow more intense in the process of overturning the established order? Ars erotica, ars theoretica, ars politica.

Whence the three adversaries confronted by *Anti-Oedipus*. Three adversaries who do not have the same strength, who represent varying degrees of danger, and whom the book combats in different ways:

- 1 The political ascetics, the sad militants, the terrorists of theory, those who would preserve the pure order of politics and political discourse. Bureaucrats of the revolution and civil servants of Truth.
- 2 The poor technicians of desire—psychoanalysts and semiologists of every sign and symptom—who would subjugate the multiplicity of desire to the twofold law of structure and lack.
- 3 Last but not least, the major enemy, the strategic adversary is fascism (whereas Anti-Oedipus' opposition to the others is more of a tactical engagement). And not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini—which was able to mobilize and the use of desire of the masses so effectively—but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behavior, the

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fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us.

I would say that *Anti-Oedipus* (may its authors forgive me) is a book of ethics, the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time (perhaps that explains why its success was not limited to a particular "readership": being anti-oedipal has become a life style, a way of thinking and living). How does one keep from being fascist, even (especially) when one believes oneself to be a revolutionary militant? How do we rid our speech and our acts, our hearts and our pleasures, of fascism? How do we ferret out the fascism that is ingrained in our behavior? The Christian moralists sought out the traces of the flesh lodged deep within the soul. Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, pursue the slightest traces of fascism in the body.

Paying a modest tribute to Saint Francis de Sales,* one might say that *Anti-Oedipus* is an *Introduction to the Non-Fascist Life*.

This art of living counter to all forms of fascism, whether already present or impending, carries with it a certain number of essential principles which I would summarize as follows if I were to make this great book into a manual or guide to everyday life:

- Free political action from all unitary and totalizing paranoia.
- Develop action, thought, and desires by proliferation, juxtaposition, and disjunction, and not by subdivision and pyramidal hierarchization.
- Withdraw allegiance from the old categories of the Negative (law, limit, castration, lack, lacuna), which Western thought has so long held sacred as a form of power and an access to reality. Prefer what is positive and multiple, difference over uniformity, flows over unities, mobile arrangements over systems. Believe that what is productive is not sedentary but nomadic.
- Do not think that one has to be sad in order to be militant, even though the thing one is fighting is abominable. It is the connection of desire to reality (and not its retreat into the forms of representation) that possesses revolutionary force.

^{*}A seventeenth-century priest and Bishop of Geneva, known for his Introduction to the Devout Life.

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- Do not use thought to ground a political practice in Truth; nor
 political action to discredit, as mere speculation, a line of thought.
 Use political practice as an intensifier of thought, and analysis
 as a multiplier of the forms and domains for the intervention of
 political action.
- Do not demand of politics that it restore the "rights" of the individual, as philosophy has defined them. The individual is the product of power. What is needed is to "de-individualize" by means of multiplication and displacement, diverse combinations. The group must not be the organic bond uniting hierarchized individuals, but a constant generator of de-individualization.
- Do not become enamored of power.

It could even be said that Deleuze and Guattari care so little for power that they have tried to neutralize the effects of power linked to their own discourse. Hence the games and snares scattered throughout the book, rendering its translation a feat of real prowess. But these are not the familiar traps of rhetoric; the latter work to sway the reader without his being aware of the manipulation, and ultimately win him over against his will. The traps of *Anti-Oedipus* are those of humor: so many invitations to let oneself be put out, to take one's leave of the text and slam the door shut. The book often leads one to believe it is all fun and games, when something essential is taking place, something of extreme seriousness: the tracking down of all varieties of fascism, from the enormous ones that surround and crush us to the petty ones that constitute the tyrannical bitterness of our everyday lives.

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Introduction

Mark Seem

"We must die as egos and be born again in the swarm, not separate and self-hypnotized, but individual and related."

HENRY MILLER, SEXUS

The anti-ego

"Lie down, then, on the soft couch which the analyst provides, and try to think up something different. The analyst has endless time and patience; every minute you detain him means money in his pocket. . . . Whether you whine, howl, beg, weep, cajole, pray or curse – he listens. He is just a big ear minus a sympathetic nervous system. He is impervious to every-thing but truth. If you think it pays to fool him then fool him. Who will be the loser? If you think he can help you, and not yourself, then stick to him until you rot." So concludes Henry Miller in Sexus, and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari are quick to agree in their attack on psychoanalysis' own Oedipus complex (the holy family: daddy-mommy-me), an attack that is at times brutal and without pity, at other times sympathetic and full of a profound love of life, and often enormously amusing. An attack on the ego, on what is all-too-human in mankind, on oedipalized and oedipalizing analyses and neurotic modes of living.

^{*}Reference notes on page xxvii.

In confronting and finally overturning the Oedipal rock on which Man has chosen to take his stand, *Anti-Oedipus* comes as a kind of sequel to another similar venture, the attack on Christ, Christianity, and the herd in Nietzsche's *The AntiChrist*. For who would deny, *Anti-Oedipus* begins, that psychoanalysis was from the start, still is, and perhaps always will be a well-constituted church and a form of treatment based on a set of beliefs that only the very faithful could adhere to, i.e., those who believe in a security that amounts to being lost in the herd and defined in terms of common and external goals? But where do such beliefs originate? What are they based on? For it is absolutely hopeless to think in terms of security, as Miller states in *Sexus*; "there is none. The man who looks for security, even in the mind, is like a man who would chop off his limbs in order to have artificial ones which will give him no pain or trouble" (page 428). No pain, no trouble—this is the neurotic's dream of a tranquilized and conflict-free existence.

Such a set of beliefs. Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate, such a herd instinct, is based on the desire to be led, the desire to have someone else legislate life. The very desire that was brought so glaringly into focus in Europe with Hitler, Mussolini, and fascism; the desire that is still at work, making us all sick, today. Anti-Oedipus starts by reviving Reich's completely serious question with respect to the rise of fascism: 'How could the masses be made to desire their own repression?' This is a question which the English and Americans are reluctant to deal with directly, tending too often to respond: "Fascism is a phenomenon that took place elsewhere, something that could only happen to others, but not to us; it's their problem." Is it though? Is fascism really a problem for others to deal with? Even revolutionary groups deal gingerly with the fascisizing elements we all carry deep within us, and yet they often possess a rarely analyzed but overriding group 'superego' that leads them to state, much like Nietzsche's man of ressentiment, that the other is evil (the Fascist! the Capitalist! the Communist!), and hence that they themselves are good. This conclusion is reached as an afterthought and a justification, a supremely self-righteous rationalization for a politics that can only "squint" at life, through the thick clouds of foul-smelling air that permeates secret meeting places and "security" councils. The man of ressentiment, as Nietzsche explains, "loves hiding places, secret paths and back doors, everything covert entices him as his world, his security, his refreshment; he understands how to keep silent,