

THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF BELONGING
and the Logic of Relation

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Which came first? The individual or society?

Which is the chicken and which is the egg?

Too much cultural and social theorizing has proceeded as if this were a reasonable place to begin. On one side are those who look first to the individual, and see feathers. When notions such as function, exchange, contract, or reason are used to explain the constitution of society, the individual is the chicken. The inaugural gesture is to conjure away society with the fiction of an atomistic flock of individuals who forge a relation with one another on the basis of a normative recognition of shared needs and common goods. These “foundationalist” approaches have been roundly criticized, in particular since deconstruction, for appealing more or less explicitly to a myth of origins. But what has not been remarked often enough is that approaches defining themselves against the individual-chicken wing in their own way just as foundationalist.

Approaches privileging such notions as structure, the symbolic, semiotic system, or textuality look first to what the other wing puts second: an intersubjective frame. Society now figures as an a priori, a principle of intersubjectivity hatching individual subject-eggs. The “foundation” in this case is not a mythic origin, but a foundation it is nevertheless. It effects an inversion of the first foundationalism. The inaugural gesture in this case is to conjure away the individual, in order for it to return as determined by society rather than determining of it. The individual is defined by its “positioning” within the intersubjective frame. The foundation is transposed from a time axis to a spatial one, becoming topographical, the lay of the social land: we are no longer in the once-upon-a-time, but in the always-already. For in this approach, the individual is in a sense pre-hatched, since the topography determining it is itself pre-determined by a mapped-out logic of base-line positions, and combinations or permutations of them.

Along came a third, mutant wing that saw this quarrel as little better than the Swiftian controversy between whether it is better to spoon the egg out of the narrow end or the wide end. Why can't they see that it's best to break it in the middle? More recent theories privileging notions of hybridity, bordering and border culture, and queering attempt to defuse the chicken and the egg scenario by valorizing the in-between. The ultimate aim is to find a place for change again, for social innovation, which had been squeezed out of the nest by the pincer movement of the needful or reasonable determination of a legislative norm on one side, and topographical determination by a constitutive positionality on the other. But to the extent that the in-between is conceived as a space of interaction of already-constituted individuals and societies, middle-feeders end up back on the positional map. The tendency is to describe the in-between as a blending or parody of the always-already positioned. Social change is spatially relegated to precarious geographical margins, where unauthorized positional permutations bubble up from the fermenting mixture. Even more precariously, in the case of theories of subjectivity as performance, change is confined to sites whose "marginality" is defined less by location than the evanescence of a momentary parodic rupture or "subversion." How the subversion could react back on the positionalities of departure in a way that might enduringly change *them* becomes an insoluble problem. Concepts of mixture, margin and parody retain a necessary reference to the pure, the central, and the straight-laced and straight-faced, without which they vaporize into logical indeterminacy. Erase the progenitors, and the hybrid vanishes: no terms have been provided with which to understand it in its own right. The middle wing ends upon the same plate as the others: determination. When everything is served up in founding terms of determination – "of" or "by" – by design or by default – change can only be understood as a negation of the determination: as the simply indeterminate. This dilemma haunts all three wings in different ways, and *its* valorization is characteristic of postmodern celebrations of aporia.

Similar conundrums haunt other oppositional pairings contemporary theorists try to think with or around: body and culture, community and state, East and West.

There may be another approach, close in many ways to the mutant third wing of the hybrid, but mutated again, with a different philosophical twist – away from determination. From one point of view, the weakness pointed to in theories of performance is a strength. Articulating change in a way that retains a necessary reference to the already-constituted preserves a crucial role for formations of power, and marks a refusal of spontaneism or voluntarism. The problem arises when no way is provided to conceptualize the in-between as having a logical consistency, and even ontological status, of its own. The necessary connection to the already-constituted then becomes a filiative dependence to which the “subversion” must continually return in order to re-engage itself. The foundation eternally returns.

What would it mean to give a logical consistency to the in-between? It would mean realigning with a logic of relation. For the in-between, as such, is not a middling being, but rather the being *of* the middle – the being of a relation. A positioned being, central, middling or marginal, is a *term* of a relation. It may seem odd to insist that a relation has an ontological status separate from the terms of the relation. But as the work of Gilles Deleuze repeatedly emphasizes, it is in fact an indispensable step toward conceptualizing change as anything more or other than a negation, deviation, rupture or subversion. The terms of a relation are normally assumed to precede their interrelating, to be already-constituted. This begs the question of change, because everything is given in advance. The interrelating simply realizes external configurations already implicit as possibilities in the form of the pre-existent terms. You can re-arrange the furniture, even move it to a new location, but you still have the same old furniture. Assuming the precedence of terms in the relation is common to approaches characterized as empirical. Taking pre-given terms, extracting a permutational system of implicit positionings from their form, projecting that system to metaphysical point before the the givenness of the terms, and developing the projection as a generative a priori mapping – these moves are common, in varying ways, to phenomenological, structuralist, and many poststructuralist approaches. They retroject a stencil of the already-constituted to explain its constitution, thus setting up a logical time-slip, a vicious hermeneutic circle. What is given the slip, once again, is change.

It is only by asserting the exteriority of the relation to its terms that chicken and egg absurdities can be avoided, and the discussion diverted from an addiction to foundation and its negation to an engagement with change as such, with the unfounded and unmediated in-between of becoming. The need for this diversion is nowhere more evident than in terms like “body” and “culture” or “individual” and “society.” Is it possible even to conceive of an individual outside of a society? Of a society without individuals? Individuals and societies are not only empirically inseparable, they are strictly simultaneous and consubstantial. It is an absurdity even to speak of them using notions of mediation, as if they were discrete entities that enter into extrinsic relation to one another, let alone to wonder which term takes precedence over the other in determining stasis and change. If they cannot be seen as terms in extrinsic relation, then perhaps they can be seen as products, effects, co-derivatives of an immanent relation that would be change in itself. In other words, they might be seen as differential emergences from a shared realm of relationality that is one with becoming – and belonging. Seen from this point of view, the “terms” might look very different, to such an extent that it might be necessary to redefine them thoroughly, reconfigure them, or perhaps forego them. What follows is just a beginning.

An example: Michel Serres’ ball. Soccer ball. Bruno Latour is well known for taking up Serre’s concept of the quasi-object, introduced through the example of a ball in a sports game. Serres and Latour used it to rethink the relation between the subject and the object. More recently, Pierre Lévy has used the same example to redeploy the relation between the individual and the collectivity.¹ What follows flows from Lévy, moving toward a notion of collective individuation around a catalyzing point. Here, that point will be called not a quasi-object but a part-subject.

To the question of what founds a formation like a sport, or what its conditions of existence are, an obvious answer would be “the rules of the game.” But in the history of sport, as with virtually every collective formation, the codification of rules *follows* the emergence of an unformalized proto-sport exhibiting a wide range of variation. The formal rules of the game capture and contain the variation. They frame the game, retrospectively, describing its form as a

set of constant relations between standardized terms. A codification is a framing derivative that arrogates to itself the role of foundation. It might be argued that all foundations are of this nature: ex post facto regulatory framings rather than effective foundings. Once they apply themselves, the rules do effectively frame and regulate the play, taking precedence. Their precedence is retrospective, or fictional, but effective. It has all the reality of a formation of power, of which usurpation might be argued to be the model – usurpation of variation.

If the rules are ex post facto captures that take precedence, what do they take it from? From the process from which the game actually emerged, and continues to evolve, to the extent that circumstances arise that force modifications of the rules. The foundational rules follow and apply themselves to forces of variation that are endemic to the game, and constitute the real conditions of the game's emergence. The rules formally determine the game, but do not condition it (they are its formal cause, not its efficient cause).

So what is the condition? Quite simply, a field. No field, no play, and the rules lose their power. The field is what is common to the proto-game and the formalized game, as well as to informal versions of the game coexisting with the official game and any subsequent evolution of it. The field-condition that is common to every variation is unformalized, but not unorganized. It is minimally organized as a polarization. The field is polarized by two attractors: the goals. All movement in the game will take place between the poles, and will tend toward one or the other. They are physical limits. The play stops when the ball misses or hits the goal. The goals do not exist for the play except tendentially, as inducers of directional movement of which they mark the outside limits (winning or losing). The goals polarize the space between them. The field of play is an in-between of charged movement. It is more fundamentally a field of potential than a substantial thing, or object. As things, the goals are signs for the polar attraction that is the motor of the game. They function to *induce* the play. The literal field, the ground with grass stretching between the goals, is also an inductive limit-sign, rather than a ground in any foundational sense. The play in itself is groundless and limitless, taking place above the ground-limit and between the goal-limits.

Put two teams on a grassy field with goals at either end, and you have an immediate, palpable tension. The attraction of which the goals and ground are inductive signs is invisible and nonsubstantial: it is a tensile force-field activated by the presence of bodies within the signed limits. The polarity of the goals defines every point in the field and every movement on the field in terms of force – specifically, as the potential motion of the ball, and of the teams, towards the goal. When the ball nears a goal, the play reaches a pitch of intensity. Every gesture of the players is supercharged, toward a goal or toward repelling one. The ball is charged to the highest degree with potential movement toward the goal, by its position on the field, by the collective tending of the team homing in for a score. The slightest slip or miscalculation will de-potentialize that movement. When that happens, a release of tension as palpable as its earlier build-up undulates across the field.

If the goal-posts, ground, and presence of human bodies on the field induce the play, the ball catalyzes it. The ball is the focus of every player, and the object of every gesture. Superficially, when a player kicks the ball, the player is the subject of the movement, and the ball is the object. But if by subject we mean the point of unfolding of a tendential movement, then it is clear that the player is not the subject of the play. The ball is. The tendential movements in play are collective, they are team movements, and their point of application is the ball. The ball arrays the teams around itself. Where and how it bounces differentially potentializes and de-potentializes the entire field, intensifying and de-intensifying the exertions of the players and the movements of the team. *The ball is the subject of the play.* To be more precise, the subject of the play is the displacements of the ball, and the continual modifications of the field of potential those displacements effect. The ball, as a thing, is the object-marker of the subject: its sign. Like the goal and the ground, the ball as a substantial term doubles the subject of the play, which itself is invisible and nonsubstantial, the catalysis-point of a force-field, a charge-point of potential.

Since the ball is nothing without the continuum of potential it doubles; since its effect is dependent on the physical presence of a multiplicity of other bodies and objects of various kinds; since the parameters of its actions are regulated by the application of rules; for all these reasons

the catalytic object-sign may be called a part-subject. The part-subject catalyzes the play as a whole, but is not itself a whole. It attracts and arrays the players, defining their effective role in the game, and the overall state of the game at any given moment, by the potential movement of the players with respect to it. The ball moves the players. *The player is the object of the ball.* True, the player kicks the ball. But the ball must be considered in some way an autonomous actor because the global game-effects its displacements produce can be produced by no other game element. When the ball moves, the whole game moves with it. Its displacement is more than a local movement: it is a global event.

If the ball is a part-subject, each player is its part-object. The ball does not address the player as a whole. It addresses the player's eyes, and ears and touch, through separate sensory channels. These separate sensory impressions are synthesized, not into a subjective whole, but into a state of intensive readiness for reflex response: they are synthesized into an actionability. The response is expressed through a particular body part, in the case of soccer, the foot. The ball addresses the player in a limited way, as a specific kind of actionability flowing through the player's body following very particular channels. The kick is indeed an expression, but not of the player. It is an "ex-expression" of the ball, in the etymological sense, since the ball's attractive catalysis "draws out" the kick from the player's body and defines its expressive effect on the globality of the game. The player's body is a node of expression: not a subject of the play but a material channel for the catalysis of an event affecting the global state of the game. Whereas the ball is a catalyzer, and the goals are inducers, the node of expression is a transducer: a channel for the transformation of a local physical movement into another energetic mode, that of potential energy. Through the kick, human physicality transduces into the insubstantiality of an event, releasing a potential that reorganizes the entire field of potential movement.

The players, in the heat of the game, are drawn out of themselves. Any player who is conscious of himself as he kicks, misses. Self-consciousness is a negative condition of the play. The players' reflective sense of themselves as subjects is a source of interference that must be minimized for the play to channel smoothly. When a player readies a kick, she is not looking at

the ball so much as *she is looking past it*. She is reflexively (rather than reflectively) assessing the potential movement of the ball. This involves an instantaneous calculation of the positions of all the players of the field *in relation to each other* and in relation to the ball and both goals. This is by nature a vague perception more than a conscious calculation, because there are too many terms to be reflectively processed, and each term is a variable rather than a constant. Since the players are in perpetual motion, their relation to each other, the ball, and the goals is also in constant flux, too complex to measure, only registerable as heightenings and releases of eddies of intensity in the midst of which appear openings for the potential movement of the ball. The player must let his trained body synthesize his separate perceptual impressions into a global sense of the intensity. The sensing of the intensity, will be vague but goal-directed in such a way as to draw a maximally exact reflex expression from him. He looks past the ball – directly sensing the potential as such, as an immeasurable but actionable degree of intensity affecting the polar continuum of the field. The player must pare himself down to a channeling of the play. The player's subjectivity is disconnected, as he enters the field of potential in and as its sensation. For the play, the player *is* that sensation. The sensation is a channeling of field-potential into local action, from which it is again transduced into a global reconfiguration of the field of potential. Sensation is the mode in which potential is present in the perceiving body. The player does not play on the ground. He looks past it and past the ball, to the field of potential – which is insubstantial, real but abstract. He plays the field of potential directly.

It would be a mistake to equate the reflex with the purely physical. Perception is never only impression. It is already composite. Studying each impression are shards of intentions and conscious memories, most presently bearing on pre-game strategy – shimmers of reflection and language. These do not frame the perception, so much as they enter its field, partialized by the separation of the sensory channels in-gathering the impressions they ride. Sharded elements re-mix to shared effect. Toward that effect, in that sensation, a heterogeneity of levels contract into the body, from which they reissue in *an* action – in a unity of movement through which their multiplicity is singularly expressed. The physicality of the reflex is the shared passage through

the body of a disparateness of elements and levels. The “rather than” reflective of the reflexive does not mark an exclusion or opposition, so much as a conversion. The reflex action is the differentiation of human actuality, including elements of reflection and language, re-channeled through the body. The body figures not as an object, one substantial element among others, but as a part-object, a conversion channel, a transducer – of the substantial elements of mixture, along with the shards of already-abstracted elements they carry, into sensed potential.ⁱⁱ

Potential sensed, the player plays its field directly. Potential is the space of play. Or would be, were it a space. It is a *modification* of a space. The space is the literal field, the ground between the goals. Any and every movement of a player or the ball in that space modifies the distribution of potential movement over it. Each such modification is an event. The play is the event-dimension doubling the empirical event-space in which the the substantial terms in play physically intermix. The dimension of the event is above the ground, between the goals, between the players, and around the ball on all sides. It is that through which the substantial elements interrelate and effect global transformations. It is nothing without them. They are inert and disconnected without it, a collection of mere things, no less isolated for the shards of reflection and language they ferry. It is the event-dimension of potential – not the system of language and the operations of reflection it enables – that is the effective dimension of the interrelating of elements, of their belonging to each other. That belonging is a dynamic corporeal “abstraction”: the “drawing off” (transductive conversion) of the corporeal into its dynamism (= the event). Belonging is unmediated, and under way, never already-constituted. It is the openness of bodies to each other and to what they are not – the incorporeality of the event. In direct channeling. That is, in a directional channeling: ontological vector. The transductive conversion is an ontological vector that in-gathers a heterogeneity of substantial elements, along with the already-constituted abstractions of language (= meaning), and delivers them together to change.

Although the event-dimension of potential is in-between, it is in no sense a hybrid or mixture. It is inseparable from, and irreducible to, the collection of substantial and already-abstracted elements through whose inductive, catalytic and transductive mixing its potential is

released and reconfigured. The field of potential is the *effect* of the contingent intermixing of elements, but is logically and ontologically distinct from them. In itself, it is composed not of parts or terms in relation, but of *modulations*, local modifications of potential that globally reconfigure (= affects). The field of potential is exterior to the elements or terms in play, but is not inside something other than the potential it is. It is immanent. It is the immanence *of* the substantial elements of the mix to their own continual modulation. The field of immanence is not the elements in mixture. It is their becoming. In becoming is belonging.

Only apparently do the players relate to each other empirically as discrete terms, mediated by reflection and language. They relate to each other in their collective becoming, as a distinct ontological level doubling their substantial being. It is this collective becoming that is the condition of a formation like a sport, common to the proto-game, the official game, unofficial versions coexisting with it, and subsequent variations of them all. Although inseparable from the empirical elements of whose contingent mixing it is an effect, the field of immanence is super-empirical – in excess over the substantiality of already-constituted terms. As a dimension of becoming gathering proto-, present, and post-, it is also transhistorical – uncontainable in the closure of any particular historical moment. It is super-empirical and transhistorical without being foundational. For it is *the contingent effect of that which it conditions*. This is a logical circularity, but it is not a vicious one, because it is also an ontological circuit around an opening: a phase shift between the substantial and the potential without which the movement would be simple repetition of pre-given terms entering pre-authorized, pre-meant relations. The circuit is between the substantial – or more broadly the actual (including the already-constituted abstractions of meaning) – and the potential. The phase-shift of the substantial to the potential is the opening through which empirical contingency – the intermixing of already-constituted bodies, things, and signs – expresses itself as coordinated becoming. This *expression* is the effective condition of collective change (open-ended belonging).

Change is emergent relation, the becoming sensible, in empirical conditions of mixture, of a modulation of potential. Post-emergence, there is capture and containment. Rules are

codified and applied. The intermixing of bodies, objects, and signs is standardized and regulated. Becoming becomes reviewable and writable: becoming becomes history.

It is only by leaving history to re-enter the immanence of the field of potential that change can occur. Even in a codified and regulated sport, there is an opening for this. It is called style. Style is what makes the player. What makes a player a star is more than perfection of technique. Technical perfection merely makes a player most competent. To technical perfection the star adds something extra. Perhaps a way of catching the eye of players on the opposite team to make them self-conscious and throw them off. Perhaps a feint added to every kick. Or an imperceptible spin. Little extras. Small but effective ways of skewing the potential movements composing the field. The star player is one who modifies expected mechanisms of channeling field-potential. The star plays against the rules. But not by breaking them. He plays around them, adding minute, unregulated contingencies to the charged mix. She adds “free” variations: “free” in the sense of modulatory actions unregulated or unsubsumed by the rules of the game. A star style is always a provocation to the referee, who must scrutinize and judge barely tangible extras that are very little separately, but as disproportionately effective channelings of potential add up to an advantage. If the provocation goes too far, new rules need to be invented to subsume the modulation devices. An example, from a different sport, is the invention of styles of power-serving in tennis that brought the sport to the verge of crisis – a crisis of boredom at one-shot volleys – and led to calls for a reform of the sport. The crisis was the effect of individual star styles going by names such as McEnroe and Borg.

It is through stylistic free variations that an already-constituted sport evolves. The “individuality” of the style is a collective individuation: it is “collective” in its absolute dependence on an intermixing of the multiple and heterogeneous elements of the sport; and it is an “individuation” in the sense that it is the motor of the sport’s unique evolution. A style is a germinal individuation *of the sport*. The single body channeling the evolutionary potential is a node of expression of a collective becoming. A body has style only in and through its role as

part-object. The star is the one who most effectively melds with the collectivity, towards its becoming. That becoming is inextricably aesthetic (stylistic) and ontological (emergent).ⁱⁱⁱ

The mention of the referee sniffing after little extras might be seen as a back-door admission that the rules of the game are indeed determining. Is not the referee on the field, applying rules and regulating movements? Doesn't it all come back to the rock-solid foundation of the rule of law?

Look at what a referee actually does. A referee *stops* the action. The referee stops and reflects. The intervention of the referee is an interruption that opens the way for an application of the rules. A different kind of opening, onto an inverse movement. The rules, it was argued above, are retrospective. They are a codifying follow-up to emergence that folds back on becoming. The operation of the application is to isolate a move in a way that pins responsibility for its sensible effects on a single playing body. What the move and the body are being isolated from is the immanence of the field of potential. The disciplinary stoppage momentarily depotentializes the field in a way that makes its intensive elements *appear* to the trained perceiver as separate terms in extrinsic relation to one another. Channelings of global modulations of the field whose conditions are thoroughly collective are reduced to local moves of individual origin and deviant effect. It is now the player, not the sport, that is individualized, by the disciplinary, regulatory, group-authorized and group-recognized application of the rules. This individualization is a fiction – an effectively regulating fiction – predicated on a stoppage of the play. The rules of the game and their application are transcendent to the play. It is the intervention of a transcendent operation in the continual variation of the field of immanence that makes the nodes of expression appear as discrete, substantial terms in extrinsic relation to each other. From the point of view of the rules, the codifiable form of that extrinsic relating determines the intrinsic properties of the play: fair or foul. The field of immanence is interrupted by an operation of transcendence that institutes a regime of intrinsic-extrinsic relationality predicated on the interruption of immanent relationality. The authorized set of movements between already-constituted terms is reaffirmed. The dimension of the play is reduced to a repetitive space of disciplinary regulation. Change,

variation, is captured and contained. Immanent modulation of the play cedes to an overarching model of the game.

The capture and containment is not simply negative. Its very transcendence becomes a productive element in the mix whose effect is the field of immanence. The rules become an integral part of the play, without ceasing to be a transcendent intervention. Just as in reflex language becomes body, in play transcendence as such becomes-immanent. It circuits into immanence. The rules are a preservative organ of the field of play. They are the condition of the play's identity across its serial repetitions in disparate times and places. The positivity of the rules is in preservation. This is also, precisely, their negativity. Codifying capture cuts both ways. Negatively, it stops and contains variation. Positively, it preserves the game for repetition. If the game were not repeated, variation would never have a chance to restart. No occasion would arise for variation to reassert itself. From one point of view (the rule-makers' and referees') variation is a departure from identity. From another point of view, identity is a moment (a productive lapse) in the continuation of variation.

The second point of view is the creative, or aesthetic. Except that the creative is not a point of view. It is not a perspective on the game, or on anything. It is amidst. A dynamic midst. The being of the collective middle: belonging in becoming. Perspective is the sign of a separation from change.^{iv} It is a mark of codifying capture: a demarcation of the space of interruption. *A perspective is an anti-event-space*. Just as transcendence becomes a productive element of the mix to immanence, the anti-event-space of perspective becomes a productive element of the event-space. The ground includes the viewpoints on it. Officially speaking, what would a soccer field be without a referee? Unofficial. The inclusion of that anti-event-space in the event-space not only allows particular moves in the game to be qualified as to type (attributed intrinsic properties of fairness or foulness common to any number of other moves). It typifies the game as a whole: as "official," as in conformity. The anti-event-space is the injection of *generality* into the *particularity* of the game, with which it channels into the *singularity* of the play (the game as *such*, *this* game ... *an* event). The history of the game operates, through

codification, between the level of the general and that of the particular. The game's becoming is the transductive conversion of the general-particular (the historical) into what it is not (singular). In general, nothing happens. In particular, things are typically about to happen or have already happened (fair or foul, win or loss). *Happening* is singularly outside "such" as "this," model and type, above, around, between. In the making, in the midst, in the openness of outcome.

There are other perspectives on the game besides the referee's. The fans also individualize players, and teams, attributing them intrinsic properties and ordering the seriality of their extrinsic relations into the linearity of a recognizable history (a model progression). The way in which the audience's perspective is included in the game is not through regulatory application, but by affective means. The excitement or disappointment of the stadium audience adds auditory elements to the mix that directly contribute to modulating the intensity of the field of potential. The audience feedback is itself modulated by the spectators' accumulated individualizations of the game – their already-constituted knowledge of and attachment to the histories of the players and teams.

The point of view of the TV audience is different. Its individuations do not fold directly back on the field of play. Quite to the contrary, through the TV audience the play folds out of its own event-space, into another. The televised game enters the home as a domestic player. Take for example American football. Super Bowl Sunday, the peak event of the football season, corresponds to a peak statistic: year after year, that day logs the highest incidence of domestic violence. The home entry of the game, at its crest of intensity, upsets the fragile equilibrium of the household. The pattern of relations between house-held bodies is reproblematised. The game event momentarily interrupts the pattern of extrinsic relations generally obtaining between domestic bodies, as typed by gender. A struggle ensues: a gender struggle over clashing codes of sociality, rights of access to portions of the home and its contents, and rituals of servitude. The socio-historical home place converts into an event-space. The television suddenly stands out from the background of the furnishings, imposing itself as a catalytic part-subject, arraying domestic bodies around itself according to the differential potentials generally attaching to their

gender type. For a moment, everything is up in the air – and around the TV set, and between the lounge room and the kitchen. In proximity to the TV, words and gestures take on unaccustomed intensity. The home space is repotentialized. Anything could happen. The male body, sensing the potential, transduces the heterogeneity of the elements of the situation into a reflex readiness to violence. The “game” is rigged by the male’s already-constituted propensity to strike. The typical pattern of relations is re-imposed in the unity of movement of hand against face. The strike expresses the empirical reality of the situation: recontainment by the male-dominated power formation of the domestic. The event short-circuits. The event is recapture. The home event-space is back to the place it was: a container of asymmetric relations between terms already constituted according to gender. Folding back onto domestication. Coded belonging, no becoming.

The transmission of media images has transductively converted sports potential-and-containment into gender potential-and-containment. The event has migrated, changing in nature as it went. Media transmission is the becoming *of the event*. All of the operations figuring on the playing field re-figure in the striking field. Re-figure, and re-configure: induction, transduction, catalysis; signs, part-object, part-subject; expression application (folding back), coding; capture and containment. When the event-dimension migrates to a new space, its elements modulate. There is no general model for the catalysis of an event. Every time an event migrates, it is re-conditioned. In the home-space, the television and the images it transmits are inductive signs. The images are also transducers. And they contribute to the catalysis of the domestic event. The television set combines sign, part-object, and part-subject functions, making it a key term in the home space. In spite of multiple operations attached to it, the television is a less powerful catalyzer than the soccer ball. Although domestic violence events are widespread, they do not occur with the regularity with which soccer play is triggered by the arrival of the ball in a event-primed stadium. In both cases, the overall field of potential within which the event transpires is composed of sub-fields. For example the application in the stadium of the rules of the game, and the audience reactions, can be seen as having their own fields of potential, primed by inductive

signs proper to them, and having their own specialized transducers. Every field of potential occurs at the intersection of a plurality of sub-fields of potential, each composed of a heterogeneity of elements. The fields intersecting around the home event-space are just as complexly layered as those of the stadium, if not more so. However, its sub-fields (home architecture, dwelling habits, unconscious gender patterning, conscious gender ideology, and so on) are more loosely held together. The home space is not *codified* – there is no rule-book governing the production of the event of domestic violence (or, on the other hand, of caring). Domesticity is *coded*. Coding is also modelling, but not through formal regulation. The modelling occurs through the accumulation of already-constituted relations, contracted into bodies as habit (which includes belief: habituated meaning). Of course, formal regulation is part of the mix (civil law covering marriage and cohabitation and criminal law covering personal injury). But overall, the power formation of the domestic operates through the informal production of *regularities*, as opposed to the formal application of *regulations*.

There is a constant communication between and co-functioning of power formations which operate predominantly through accumulation and regularization, and those which operate through application and regulation. Broadly, power formations of the regulatory kind are *Static--* State, proto-State and State-like formations. The Static is defined by the separation of a dedicated institution of application: a specialized bureaucracy whose judgments fold back down upon the event-space from which it has emerged and diverged, and to which it belongs, in an operation of transcendence. The temptation is to call power formations having to do with regularization social or cultural, since they have no dedicated bureaucracy, other than the State in the narrow sense. But it is self-evident that the “social” or “cultural” do not coincide with the field of regulatory application of the State, even though they cannot be separated from it. That is precisely point: this is precisely why they require separate appellation and analysis. The “social” and the “cultural” leak from State regulation on every side. There are transnational and pre-national cultures, just as there are sub-State social fields, often officially recognized by the State as beyond its purview (the “personal” and “private”). Their official recognition amounts to a partial

– indirect or negative – regulation. For example, negatively, domestic violence may occasion State intervention. Violence, or any interruption of smoothly patterned social functioning, provides the opening into which the State can insert itself into spaces formally defined as non-Static (Foucault’s disciplinary power). Positively, the State can help induce the emergence of smoothly patterned social functioning in State-friendly forms, for example through civil marriage, pro-family policy, and health and welfare measures (Foucault’s biopower). But caring cannot be legislated. Effective expressions of the positivity of belonging elude the State. This is why the State, like any regulatory apparatus, *follows* that which it regulates. Its applications are always retrospective, sniffing out and running after feral belongings it must attempt to recoup, to rechannel into State-friendly patterns. The Static is incapable of perceiving the distinction between an infraction of its rules, and the emergence of a new belonging, a new field of potential. It only knows the negative. It can only construe change negatively, as a prospective transgression of the regulations it will, by right, impose. The Static is by nature reactive (“static” also in the sense of favoring stasis, changing only in response to an outside it can only perceive as an impingement on itself, or as a perturbation). Like sports style, “social” or “cultural” emergence is against the rules – without having broken them. Complicating things further, if the “social” and “cultural” elude the Static, the Static for its part is a component element of the “social” and “cultural.” Its transcendence folds back down on them, becomes-immanent to them. A bureaucracy participates in catalyzing the social or cultural. Furthermore, every bureaucracy has a culture specific to it: its separation from that to which it becomes-immanent constitutes it as a mini-society.

There is another level of complication to calling event-spaces “social” or “cultural.” As event-spaces bifurcate into the regularizing and the regulatory, the event-dimension undergoes a different but associated split. The event-dimension bifurcates into two subdimensions:

1) Coding and codification are forms of event-self-referentiality – the folding back of the event onto itself, toward its repetition. The folding back, the self-referencing, is what converts the event into an event-space. The regularization or regulation effecting this conversion must be

conceived as having its own conditions and field of potential. The physicality of the event-space (house or stadium) is doubled by a dynamic abstraction proper to it, one governing its own repeatability, as distinct from the repeatability of the events it hosts. Every event-space proliferates. Houses come by the suburb, and stadiums in leagues. As coded or codified, the event-space is reproducible. Its reproduction provides an inductive ground for the serial emergence of subsequent events. These are deemed to be the “same” by virtue of occurring in what has become a recognizable space. A type of space. This time in the usual sense. It is the typing of the physical event-space – the invariance (regularity or regulation) of the substantial elements entering the mix – that makes the incorporeal events emerging from it recognizably the “same.” (This is why “isolation,” “defamiliarization,” “distancing” or “decontextualization” – ways of freeing the event from its regular event-space – are so often cited as conditions of “art” as a practice of transformation resisting containment by social or cultural power formations.) The recognizability of the space lends itself to the event, like an after-image of substantial invariance on the incorporeality of variation. The typing of the space tinges the multiple events doubling it with generality, giving already-constituted meaning and reflection a tongue-hold on the unspeakably singular (only sensible) self-expression of the events – each of which retains a residue of uniqueness in excess over its recognition as belonging to a type. Recognition makes an event typical. That is to say, boring. Its residue of uniqueness makes it “interesting” (an attractor, an inducting sensation) for a body positioned outside its space (with a perspective on it). The event-dimension of self-referentiality is the inclusion in becoming (as a multiple-singular; a proliferation of uniqueness) of the anti-event-space of generality (recognizability, sameness) and its perceptual concomitant (perspective). Self-referentiality, as a subdimension of the event, is the field of potential of transcendence-become-immanent. “Interest” is the sign of that inclusion.

2) Media transmission involves another subdimension of the event, interlinking with and inseparable from event-self-referentiality. This is the dimension of event-transitivity. The transitivity of the event is also proliferating. But this proliferation crosses a qualitative threshold. When the event passes from the stadium to the home, piggy-backed on televisual images, it

changes in nature. Whereas self-referentiality has to do with reproduction, event-transitivity has to do with differentiation. In transformational transit, the event returns to its becoming, as pure immanence. The *interval* of transmission is thus very different from the interruption of regulation. In the media interval, the event is a material but incorporeal immanence (an electron flow) moving through a dedicated technological milieu. When it is analogically reexpressed in televisual images, its conditions have drastically changed. Its substantial elements have been homogenized and reduced, to fit sound speaker and screen. The event's ability to trigger a catalytic effect is no longer certain. It is no longer necessarily a part-subject, but must be assisted in that role. Its catalysis must be catalyzed. "Nothing" is ever on TV. It is rarely "interesting." In the new event-space, distraction is more catalytically operational than interest. Television is not predominantly perspectival, as the old catchphrase "window on the world" would have it. What is analogically rendered on screen is only a fraction of the operative event-space – which includes the content of the home, as well as the screen and its content. The home, however, is less a container than a membrane: a filter of exteriorities continually entering and traversing it. Television is more about delivery into a more-or-less open milieu than it is about the perspective of one closed space onto another, or of a closed space onto an open space. The collective expressions occurring in the porosity of the domestic space, including the television as one humble element in a complex and loosely integrated mix, are highly variable. However, the variability and porosity, the fact that the TV-hosting home is not a container, should not be construed to mean that the events regularly triggered with televisual participation are not containment events and that the home is not a formation of power. Containment has more to do with the patterning of exits and entries across thresholds than with the impermeability of boundaries. This is as true for the regulation of codified event-spaces as for spaces characterized by coding. What is pertinent about an event-space is not its boundedness, but what elements it lets pass, according to what criteria, at what rate, and to what effect. These variables define a regime of passage. Self-reference through application, or through regulation by a transcendent formation, can assure a stricter regime of passage (more selective openness). The around-the-

clock access to the home by communicational technologies (mail delivery, telephone and answering machine, fax, email, radio, TV) opens wide its codings to high-volume and highly random passage, of signs if not of human bodies. In spite of the locks on the door, the event-space of the home must be seen as one characterized by a very loose regime of passage. As a regime of openness to sign circulation – to the delivery, absorption, and relay of sounds, words, and visions – the home is a node in a circulatory network of many dimensions (each corresponding to a technology of transmission). Awash in transitivity. The home is a node in an indefinitely extended field of immanence, to which the technologies of transmission give body (provide a dedicated event-space). That technologized field of immanence is punctuated by formations of transcendence (generalities, perspectives; State, proto-State, and State-like formations). But they do not effectively regulate it. Rather, the network distributes (effectively connects) the transcendences. Formations of transcendence are also nodes, encompassed by a technologically body-doubled field of immanence that by nature eludes their rule (however hard they might try at times to tame it--communicational *deregulation* is still the governmental name of the game).

Technologically assisted channeling of event-transitivity constitutes a qualitatively different mode of power than either the regulating codifications of the Static or the regularizing codings of the “social” or “cultural,” at whose self-referential thresholds it is continually knocking. The *transitive* (a less fraught term than “communicational”) must be seen as the dominant mode of power in what some are apt to call the “postmodern” condition. Its network is what connects coding to coding, codification to codification, coding to codification, and each to its own repetitions, in an ebb and flow of potentialization-and-containment. The network distributes. Interlinks. Relates. The network *is* the relationality of that which it distributes. It is the being of collective becoming. Communicational technologies *give body to relationality as such*, and as set in motion – as the passing-on of the event. The passing of the event is distinct both from the technology of transmission that is its corporeal double, and from its delivery on the

other side of the threshold. The passing, event-transitivity in itself, in its becoming, is the interval that encompasses – occupying every threshold.

Every “enclosure” is encompassed by a pure immanence of transition. The medium of “communication” is not the technology. It is the interval itself: the *moveability* of the event, the displacement of change, relationality outside its terms, “communication” without content, *communicability*.^v Encompassed by transitivity (understood in this way as a special kind of transduction), the Static and the regularized transpire in a rarefied atmosphere of modulation. As “communications” ever more insistently pipes itself in through a many-dimensional delivery line, it increasingly thresholds spaces of potentialization-and-containment with indeterminate event-transitivity. Both the singular *and* the general-particular come to hinge on the indeterminate. Or swim in it, since the encompassing threshold is not a door but an inundative medium of flow. “Communications” is the traffic in modulation. It is a special mode of power that lubricates event-spaces in a bath of indeterminacy, smoothing the thresholds of containment. If local or individual style is resistance (understood more in the frictional sense than the oppositional one: a rub against the rules, rather than a breaking of them), then resistance *and* containment are contained – in flow. They are wafted. Their wafting indexes them to the not-self-referentiality of their threshold, the interval: something that is not exactly outside, but is still exorbital to the event-space of arrival. A pseudo exo-referentiality – to the indeterminate. Not the “simply” indeterminate. Not the simply logically indeterminate: the complexly, technologically, ontologically, indeterminate.

From the perspective of containment and regularized modes of opposition to it (counter-containment), this situation can only be experienced as a “crisis.” Everything from architecture to “the family” to religion to “the Left and Right” to government itself fell into a self-declared state of perpetual crisis, all around the same moment – when the thresholding approached saturation point. Yet they are all still very much with us. The change is not a disappearance but an encompassing. What has changed is that none of them, no apparatus of coding or of codification, can claim to encompass, because they are all encompassed. They waft and bathe,

and by virtue of that shared condition, connect. Not negated: networked. Delivered one and all to transitivity, to the indeterminate event (for which “crisis” is as good a name as any).

The networkability of event-transmission must be seen as pertaining not only to mass media images but to information in general, to commodities, and to money: to any sign whose basic operation is to flow, and whose inductive/transductive effect must be “realized” (whose catalytic role must be catalyzed; whose expression must be expressed). All of these event-transmitters carry a high charge of indeterminacy, of unrealized (or in the present vocabulary, “unactualized”) potential. What they are, what their event will be, what will be expressed with or through them, is highly variable, since they are complexly co-catalyzed by the heterogeneous elements populating the proliferating spaces they enter. Event-transmitters are inductive/transductive signs roving for catalysis, across many a proliferation.^{vi} Their readiness to catalyze – their aptitude for part-subjecthood – is also highly variable. The ready-most is money, a sign whose simple appearance in any context is sure to incorporeally transform it in one way or another. The least catalytic is information. Each event-transmitter is sustained and delivered by a dedicated collective apparatus deploying at least one technology of channeling that gives it body in the interval, where it disappears into its own immanence (even low-tech transmitters return to immanence: letters are mailed sealed in an envelope, their meaning re-latent). The intervallic bodies are of many types, ranging from mail boxes and post offices to telephone lines to computers to the many and varied institutions and instruments of finance. These knot together into an expanding capillary network traversing every event-space, with ever-increasing complexity (most recently converging on the World-Wide Web). It is in the complexity of their technological interlinkage that they form an encompassing threshold-space of transitivity that can no longer be ignored as a global power formation in its own right.

This new power formation has an old name: capitalism. For money, as means of payment or of investment, is the only event-transmitter that traverses every event-space and piggy-backs every intervallic body, without exception. Present-day capital is the capillary network of the capillary, the circulator of the circulation, the motor of transitivity – the immanence of

immanence-embodied. The *inside limit of the relational*. The current capitalist mode of power could be called control: neither coding nor codification, neither regularization nor regulation, but *the immanently encompassing modulation of both*.^{vii} The power of control is predicated on decoding (the rendering immanent of signs, become vectors of indeterminate potential) and deterritorialization (the drawing off of the event from its general-particular spaces of expression and, in this case, its consignment to a distributed, intervallic space of its own). The power of control is decoding and deterritorialization, *delivered* (ready for catalysis, into a potentialization-and-containment in a new space; ready for recoding/recodification and reterritorialization). Control is modulation made a power factor (its flow factor). It is the powering-up – or powering-away – of potential. The ultimate capture, not of the elements of expression, not even of expression, but of the movement of the event itself.

It is in no way underestimating capitalist control to call its worldwide trafficking in modulation the stylization of power. It was argued earlier that the model of power was usurpation. What is being usurped here? The very expression of potential. The movement of relationality. Becoming-together. Belonging. *Capitalism is the global usurpation of belonging*. This is not merely a lament: power, it must be recognized, is now massively potentializing, in a new planetary mode. But neither is it necessarily cause for celebration: the potentialization is just as massively delivered to proliferating spaces of containment. It is the inescapable observation that belonging per se has emerged as a problem of global proportions. Perhaps *the* planetary problem. Neither celebration nor lament: a challenge to rethink, and reexperience, the individual and the collective.

Which goes last?

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

- ⁱ Michel Serres, *The Parasite*, trans. Lawrence R. Schehr (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982) 224-234; Bruno Latour, *We Have Never Been Modern*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge, Ma.: Harvard University Press, 1993) 50-55; Pierre Lévy, *Becoming Virtual: Reality in the Digital Age*, trans. Robert Bononno (New York: Plenum, 1998), 151-153.
- ⁱⁱ Chapter 4 below will further develop the distinctions in play here between perception, sensation, and action, as well as the concept of transduction. The re-mixing of reflective elements in sensation and perception is what was termed in Chapter 1 “the feed-back of higher forms.” For more on this concept, see Chapter 8. In chapter 9, the notion of the part-subject is reinvestigated (without using the term) in relation to color.
- ⁱⁱⁱ Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Indianapolis: University of Indiana Press, 1996)10-31.
- ^{iv} Recall’s Reagan’s problem with perspective in Chapter 2. The “reflective” space of the referee’s decisionmaking is a variety of Reagan’s “mirror-vision.” Here, suspension, the referee’s stopping of the action, is depotentializing and establishes the space of reflection or mirror-vision. For Reagan (and in Chapter 4 for Stelarc) suspension is potentializing and establishes a space of transformation. As with most concepts in this book, “suspension” has no identity as a concept. What it is depends on what it does (i.e., what kind of unfolding it interrupts and to what effect). In other words, the concept of suspension is itself relational: it is nothing outside its situated enactments. No identity, only variations. As explained in Chapter 9, this way of employing concepts belongs to a pragmatic philosophy: a concept (any phenomenon) is what it does, and therefore can only be evaluated according to its effects. It has no inherent meaning or truth-value. This kind of pragmatism is a correlate of the “exemplary” method advanced in the introduction. None of the concepts in this book should be taken to be generally applicable (since they aim for the singular). By the same token, differences between occurrences of the same concept should not necessarily be taken as contradictions (but rather as a positive capacity for variation).
- ^v Giorgio Agamben, *Means Without End*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 59, 82-83.
- ^{vi} In the vocabulary of Chapter 9, they are catalytic converters of “contexts” into “situations.”

vii On the concept of control, see Gilles Deleuze, “Postscript on Control Societies,” *Negotiations: 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995) and Brian Massumi, “Requiem for Our Prospective Dead: Towards a Participatory Critique of Capitalist Power,” *Deleuze and Guattari: New Mappings in Politics, Philosophy, and Culture*, ed. Eleanor Kauffman and Kevin John Heller (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 40-63.