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Finding a Way Out: Proustian Semiotics in Deleuze and Guattari

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Abstract. We argue in this article that Gilles Deleuze's *Proust et les signes*, itself consisting of three chronologically separate instalments, should be seen in tandem with a later analysis of Marcel Proust's *À la recherche du temps perdu* in Félix Guattari's *L'Inconscient machinique*, and that, taken as a complex assemblage, these interventions cohere around a radical exit from the reign of the linguistic signifier and thus from a semiotics based on the primacy of language. Proustian semiotics, as rendered by Deleuze and Guattari, is "antilogos", both in its shattering of any single sign-system, and in the proposition of the dimension of pathos, which accompanies and undermines discursive surety.

We will be concerned here with the "Proustian semiotics" developed in the writings of Gilles Deleuze (1925-95) and Félix Guattari (1930-92) as a complex, multiform and interconnected machinery which, although it develops over time and in the works to which Deleuze and Guattari append their names in the singular and as a pair, nevertheless constitutes a multi-modal operating system built out of the component parts encapsulated by the three proper names Proust-Deleuze-Guattari. To set out the context of this complex machinery, we will begin by offering a provisional chronology, pivoting around the crucial encounter between Deleuze and Guattari in 1969. Subsequently, our exploration will focus on the successive versions of Deleuze's *Proust et les signes* (1964, 1970 and 1976) and elements of Guattari's *L'Inconscient machinique: essais de schizo-analyse* (1979). These works will be read with due attention to the multiple, transversal lines that extend across the richly variegated network of Deleuze and Guattari's solo and co-authored writing. More specifically, we will examine the singular account of the sign and its relation to learning and to thought as it is elaborated in Deleuze's book on Proust, the different "mondes" (Deleuze 2007, p. 11)[1] or "domaines" (pp. 50, 209) which, for Deleuze, make up the radically fragmented semiotic terrain of *À la recherche*, and finally the ways in which these insights are developed in later writings to inform the Guattarian notion of "sémiotisation" and to support an image of Proust as a "spécialist[e] des objets mentaux hyper-déterritorialisés" (Guattari 1979, p. 257)[2]. As this brief outline suggests, and as we hope to show in more detail in what follows, rather than applying a ready-made theory of signs to *À la recherche*, Deleuze and Guattari read Proust's novel as an operational analysis of signs, as a machine for their production and interpretation. For them, *À la recherche* is a work that both describes and can enable an exit from semiotic subjugation. Taken as a whole system, the machinery made up of the components of Proust, Deleuze and Guattari turns out to constitute the purposeful explosion of a sign system grounded in the linguistic signifier, a radical subversion of the project of semiotics. Our approach thus insists on the inseparability of Deleuze's Proust from Guattari's Proust, and proposes, moreover,

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[1] All subsequent page references to *Proust et les signes* are to this edition and are given in parentheses, without a name or date.

[2] All subsequent page references to *L'Inconscient machinique* are to this edition and are given in parentheses, without a name or date.

that the force of the Proust-Deleuze-Guattari machine can be most aptly grasped as a progressive dismantling of semiotics, a way out of the sign[3].

Marcel Proust et les signes, as it was first published in 1964, was Deleuze's fourth monograph, following works on Hume, Nietzsche and Kant. Along with *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (1962), it is one of the first works in which Deleuze outlines the basis of an independent philosophy that gains fuller articulation in *Différence et répétition* (1968) and is actualized in *Logique du sens* (1969). The former volume, whose third chapter, "L'Image de la pensée", reprises the title of the "Conclusion" to *Marcel Proust et les signes*, intervenes between the first and second editions of Deleuze's volume on Proust. Now titled *Proust et les signes*[4], the 1970 edition includes a further chapter, "Antilogos ou la machine littéraire", which bears the influence of Guattari's work in institutional psychotherapy and of his critical engagements with Lacanian psychoanalysis – as well as with the form of structuralism he finds in Deleuze's work – in such essays as "Machine et structure", published in 1972[5]. In this chapter, then, Deleuze's excavation and analysis of a revolutionary "image de la pensée" that, according to him, *À la recherche* both proposes and inaugurates (an anti-representational image of thought as the product of a violent encounter with different semiotic worlds), is extended towards the "machinic" theory he would elaborate with Guattari in *L'Anti-Œdipe*[6]. In other words, the 1970 edition of *Proust et les signes* is fundamentally marked by the encounter between Deleuze and Guattari in 1969, and by their reciprocal engagements with each other's work.

Despite a brief reference to Guattari's notion of "transversalité" in the second edition of *Proust et les signes* (see p. 201n.1)[7], the concept of the machine, itself developed by Guattari with reference to *Différence et répétition* and *Logique du sens*, is of more consequence and more profoundly shapes that edition and the second part of the book. The intervention of the machinic, moreover, radically extends the movement of Deleuze's reading of Proust away from an adherence to structuralism and to a structuralist conception of both the sign and the composition of the literary work, even though the terms "signe" and "structure" are maintained. The third edition of *Proust et les signes* appeared in 1976 and is divided into two parts ("Signes", equivalent to the 1964 edition, and "La Machine littéraire"), appending as a conclusion a further essay originally published in Italian in 1973, "Présence et fonction de la folie: l'araignée"[8]. The volume which constitutes the currently available and "complete" version of the work thus ends in the

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[3] To our knowledge, we propose here the first consideration of Deleuze's and Guattari's engagements with Proust together, as elements of a holistic system. While independent discussion of Guattari's writing on Proust is relatively scarce (Stivale 2006; Baldwin 2015; Laberge 2018 and see later), Deleuze's *Proust et les signes* has generated a comprehensive critical bibliography. Salient examples would include Colombat (2000); Conley (2000); Faulkner (2008); ffrench (2009); Bray (2012); De Bestegui (2012); Sauvagnarges (2018); Dutton (2022). Our contention is that approaching Deleuze's Proust from the angle of a dismantling of semiotics, alongside Guattari's engagements, offers more than an incremental addition to this literature. Moreover, if it *looks as if* Deleuze's *Proust et les signes* offers a semiological reading of *À la recherche* which complements the narratological approach of a Gérard Genette (1966-72), or the thematic approach of a Georges Poulet (1963) or a Jean-Pierre Richard (1974), and which resonates with the multiple semiological and post-semiological Proustian entries in the work of Roland Barthes, we will show that this is only a surface impression, and that semiotics is there only for the purposes of its dissolution.

[4] This contraction signals an avoidance of the biographical resonant with Roland Barthes's and Michel Foucault's critiques of the author figure; see Barthes (2002a), Foucault (2001a).

[5] Initially written as a lecture for Lacan's École freudienne de Paris in 1969, the paper was rejected but later published under this title. The story goes that having expected a critique of Deleuze's engagements with psychoanalysis, Lacan was disappointed that Guattari's text was also implicitly critical of the structuralist underpinning of Lacanian theory as such, even while employing salient Lacanian operators such as the "objet a". For further discussion of the fallout from the appearance of Guattari's essay and subsequent publication of *L'Anti-Œdipe: capitalisme et schizophrénie I* (1972), see Dosse (2007, pp. 221–47).

[6] For a comprehensive account of the concept of the machine and its incidence in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, especially of the programmatic role of the latter's "Machine et Structure", see Thornton (2017).

[7] Guattari's essay entitled "La Transversalité" appeared in the first issue of the review *Psychothérapie institutionnelle* in 1964. It is reprinted in Guattari (2003a).

[8] See Deleuze (1973).

strange territory of animality and the vegetal, and with the involuntary signs of pathos and madness[9]. Finally, with a similar focus on machines and delirium, Guattari's own extended analysis of *À la recherche* in *L'Inconscient machinique* (entitled "Les Ritournelles du temps perdu") develops the notion of a "sémiotisation" that counters the effects of semiotic disintegration ("collapsus sémiotique") within a neurotic "trou noir passionnel" (p. 285)[10]. In this lengthy and undervalued contribution to the critical writing on Proust, which both extends his work with Deleuze in *L'Anti-Œdipe* and elsewhere (including *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* (1975)), and anticipates some of what is said in *Mille plateaux: capitalisme et schizophrénie II* (1980) concerning revolutionary processes of "devenir" and the dangers of "visagéité", Guattari reads Proust's novel as a crucial component in a dynamics of liberatory deterritorialization and opposing forces of reterritorialization in the era of capitalism. For Guattari, Vinteuil's "petite phrase" or refrain is one of two intersecting, generative and variable semiotic figures in *À la recherche*; the other is the component of faciality ("traits de visagéité"; see p. 265) in the experience of Swann and of Proust's narrator that is responsible for structuring and oppressively neutralizing the force of other semiotic components in the novel.

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As suggested above, Deleuze's reading of *À la recherche* takes place in the context of a developing philosophy of difference and singularity, an original philosophical ontology and method, which reaches fuller fruition in *Différence et répétition* and takes on new dimensions after the encounter with Guattari in 1969. But what kind of semiotics are we dealing with in Deleuze's *Proust et les signes*? Where does its difference lie?

The Proustian sign, as configured by Deleuze, does not signify or refer; it is primarily a "rencontre" (p. 25), an event[11]. In all parts of the book, Deleuze eschews the vocabulary of signification (the pair of signifier and signified) at a time when post-Saussurean semiology was enjoying an ascendancy of a kind in France (Barthes's programmatic *Éléments de sémiologie* was published in 1964), emphasizing instead a form of semiotic heterogeneity (to which we will return) and the narrator's operations of interpretation and decipherment, slanted towards the motif of developing and unfolding – whence the prevalence of the phonemic element *pli* in the book (*compliquer, impliquer, expliquer*)[12]. Proust's *À la recherche* thus offers Deleuze the opportunity, amidst a flourishing structuralist semiology, to propose an adventure with signs that summarily sidesteps the whole apparatus of signification, structure and system. Indeed, while Deleuze appears to deploy the language of signs and revelation in his reading of Proust (and while the expression "et les signes" is included in the title of the work across all its versions), Deleuze's engagement with the semiotics of *À la recherche* proposes a new philosophy of signs and of reading that challenges the dominance of that language and departs radically from it[13]. The book thus simultaneously reflects and

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[9] The first translation into English of *Proust et les signes*, by Richard Howard, appeared in 1972 and corresponds to the French edition of 1970. The "complete text" edition, which includes the final essay on the spider and madness, also translated by Richard Howard, was first published in 2000 and is the currently available version.

[10] The title of the first chapter of "Les Ritournelles du temps perdu" is "L'Amour de Swan [sic] comme collapsus sémiotique". For a draft version of the work on Proust in *L'Inconscient machinique*, see Guattari (2011, pp. 301-25) ("La Petite Phrase de la sonate de Vinteuil").

[11] See Colombat (2000) for a useful account of Deleuze's deployment of the notion of the sign, which emphasizes the influence of Spinoza and Deleuze's work on his philosophy. On Spinoza, see also further on.

[12] See ffrench (2021) for a discussion of the motif of the fold in Deleuze's writing on Proust. See also Conley (2000) for a beautiful essay on Deleuze and literature which considers the multiple resonances across Deleuze's writing on Proust and his later work on Leibniz in *Le Pli: Leibniz et le baroque* (1988).

[13] In many ways, but with significant differences, this is also true of Julia Kristeva's magisterial reading of Proust in *Le Temps sensible* (1994), where she insists, for example, that "Proust ne cesse de 'déchiffrer', mais son monde n'est pas fait de 'signes'. En tout cas, ce ne sont pas des signes-mots ni des signes d'idées, encore moins des signifiants ou des signifiés" (p. 307). It is surprising, given the Deleuzian inflection here, that Kristeva names Deleuze as a critic who has "gone so far" as to see Proust as a Platonist (p. 313), since Deleuze explicitly deflects this idea. While Kristeva's insistence, via Merleau-Ponty, on the advances Proust makes in the "fixation des rapports du visible et de l'invisible" (p. 303) has some resonance with Guattari's election of Proust as a "spécialiste des objets mentaux

disrupts a contemporary fetishization of formal semiotic systems, transforming them in new and distinctive ways. Two examples, one from each part of the book, can serve to illustrate this point.

Deleuze describes *À la recherche* as a "système des signes" (p. 103), but he also observes that this system is characterized by multiplicity and plurality[14], and that any communication between its multiple fragments is always non-linear and indirect, transversal (see e.g. p. 156). The radicality of *À la recherche*, for Deleuze, lies in part in its mixed semiotics, in its exemplification of what he and Guattari will later (in 1976) theorize as the workings of a "machine abstraite", a "rhizome". The important point for us here is that the semiotics in question is not focused solely on the linguistic sign[15]. Indeed, "[i]l y a peu d'auteurs autant que Proust", Deleuze suggests in *Dialogues* (1977), "qui aient fait jouer une multitude de régimes de signes pour en composer son œuvre" (Deleuze and Parnet, 1996, p. 145). As Anne Sauvagnargues puts it, signs for Deleuze's Proust are not reduced "au linguistique ni au psychique" but are understood "sur le mode d'une éthologie complexe et bigarrée de signaux, de rougeurs, marques involontaires, codages sociaux, traces matérielles, sensations et paysages psychiques" (Sauvagnargues 2009, p. 54). There is not one sign system in *À la recherche*, there is no common language, but rather multiple sign-worlds (the social world, the world of lovers, the world of material impressions, the world of art), each with its own laws. But even these designations are too generalized, since, Deleuze insists, there is a "monde" specific to Norpois, to Cottard, to Saint-Loup, to the Verdurins and the Guermantes, to Charlus and Albertine, and each of these micro-worlds possesses its own specific materiality and its own semiotic laws: "les signes sont spécifiques et constituent la matière de tel ou tel monde". Proustian signs develop in different ways, obey different laws of composition, and have different temporalities according to the world in which they arise: "la pluralité des mondes est que ces signes ne sont pas du même genre, n'ont pas la même manière d'apparaître, ne se laissent pas déchiffrer de la même façon, n'ont pas avec leur sens un rapport identique" (p. 11).

In his reading of Proust, in other words, Deleuze has no single or unitary conception of *langue* as a system of signs. For him, such a system or structure inevitably reduces the process of decipherment to a straightforward allocation or assignation of signifiers to their signifieds according to their place in the system, however unstable or plural it is. It also presupposes a unity, the unity of logos (we recall that the first chapter of the second part of *Proust et les signes* is titled "Antilogos"). This leads us to our second, related example. In the prefaces to the second and third editions of *Proust et les signes*, Deleuze explains the partition of the book into its two parts: if the first part is concerned with the emission and interpretation of signs in *À la recherche*, the second "traite d'un problème différent", that of "la production et la multiplication des signes eux-mêmes, du point de vue de la composition" (p. 5) of the novel. Although this insight relates to both parts of the work, the emphasis on composition and production in the second part foregrounds the idea that the semiotics of *À la recherche* does not refer or relate to a meaning or reality which is external to it, but produces, and causes to function, its own semiotics, delivering a meaning which is the effect of its own semiotic machines. Throughout his book, Deleuze remains relatively uninterested in the content of Proust's speculative pronouncements or in his philosophy of art, of literature, or of the novel, and the more conventional tools of literary criticism are conspicuous by their absence. He is interested, instead, in how *À la recherche* works, in the functioning, or

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hyper-deterritorialisés", the point of divergence here would revolve around Deleuze-Guattari's insistence on the progressive deterritorialization operated in *À la recherche*, versus Kristeva's insistence on the substantiation of the experience of time in the flesh (*la chair*).

[14] "Pluralisme dans le système des signes" is the title of the seventh chapter of *Proust et les signes*.

[15] See Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (1976), which reappeared as the introduction to *Mille plateaux* in 1980. In this text, Deleuze and Guattari contrast the operations of the rhizome with the binary stasis of arboreal structures within Chomskyian linguistics. While Chomsky's "grammaticalité", they say, favours the form of a syntagmatic tree, "commençant à un point S pour procéder par dichotomie", the rhizomatic method ("une méthode de type rhizome") can only analyse language by decentering it, by plugging it into "d'autres dimensions et d'autres registres", be they linguistic, political, artistic, or scientific. Rhizomes, or "multiplicités" (Deleuze and Guattari 1980, p. 14), are defined in terms of external connectivity: the rhizome implies contact and movement between different milieus and registers, between areas that may otherwise be thought of as distinct and discrete.

operation of what in *Pourparlers* (1990) he calls its "sémiologie générale" (Deleuze 1990, p. 195). The mode of Deleuze's engagement with Proust's work is one that the novel's *modus operandi* itself demands (it does not arise, at least not solely, in relation to an exogenous purpose of the critic), and for Deleuze, Proust's novel, like other works of modern literature and art, is distinctive because of what it does, what it produces, rather than what it means, signifies or represents[16]. The modern work of art (of which *À la recherche* serves as the paradigmatic example), Deleuze insists, "n'a pas de problème de sens, elle n'a qu'un problème d'usage" (p. 176).

In line with this critical approach, which is resolutely clinical, vital and practical rather than speculative, Deleuze does not read the signs of *À la recherche* as constitutive of a straightforwardly unified structure or system, linguistic or otherwise. While he argues that the unity of *À la recherche* is located in "la structure formelle de l'œuvre d'art, en tant qu'elle ne renvoie pas à autre chose" (p. 201), Deleuze's conception of *À la recherche*'s formal structure is at odds with a typically structuralist account of unity in the work of art, according to which, as András Bálint Kovács suggests, "a system is a structure, and a structure is organized according to a unifying principle – understanding and interpreting a system amounts to understanding its unifying principle" (Kovács 2010, p. 37). Rejecting all attempts to identify a predetermined "unité qui unifierait les parties, un tout qui totaliserait les fragments" of the novel, Deleuze argues that the only unity at work in *À la recherche* is the unity of *each* multiple, "l'unité *de* ce multiple-là, *de* cette multiplicité-là" (p. 195)[17]. Moreover, these unities are permitted to communicate transversally without suppressing their "différence ou distance" (p. 202). Proust's novel, in other words, is irreducible to a transcendental unity, and its signs develop their systematic character only in the form of differences.

Deleuze's work on the semiological plurality and transversality of *À la recherche* can thus be understood as a movement away from the tenets of structuralism and as a continuation of his attempt, in *Différence et répétition*, "to explain what a system is like that does not exclude the one, the same, or the similar, but rather, contains them only as a partial aspect" (Kovács 2010, p. 37). Furthermore, and in hindsight, we can see that a typically Derridean thematics of speech and writing, presence, *différance* and deferral (see e.g. Derrida 1967a, 1967b) is also set aside, as is Barthes's somewhat anxious search for a semiology pertinent to the "obtus" (see Barthes 2002b, p. 488). The whole matter is re-set by Deleuze as a question of "apprentissage", that is of learning by experience, sparked by the event-signals of the material which are as if visited upon the unsuspecting subject, who is, we should add, not yet a subject[18].

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For Deleuze, Proust's take on signs and learning (the apprenticeship, he writes, "concerne essentiellement les signes" (p. 10)) is of major philosophical significance. Deleuze reads the logic of apprenticeship and subjectivity in Proust as a singular impetus for a new image of thought, an invention that poses a vibrant challenge to philosophical tradition as it launches an attack on a "philosophie classique de type rationaliste" (p. 115). For such a philosophy, Deleuze suggests, thought is a function of the good will of friends who consciously decide to look for truth (see p. 116). Throughout his reading of *À la recherche*, Deleuze places the emphasis on the exteriority of the sign and the violence of the encounter with it; the apprentice becomes a subject through interactive engagement with a resistant and foreign material, rather than through obeisance to a revealed sign or order-word of a ready-made set of signifiers[19]. In *À la recherche*, Deleuze argues, the meaning and truth of signs are not to be sought through a voluntary act of interpretation or will to truth on the part of the subject. Rather, the sign is the object of an encounter, which forces the subject to search, to explicate it and to develop it. Moreover, the notion

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[16] Sauvagnargues calls this approach "immanente et directe" and adds that it is "visible seulement dans ses résultats et non réflechie comme méthode" (Sauvagnargues 2009, p. 52).

[17] All emphasis in original unless otherwise indicated.

[18] See Campbell (2020) for an insightful account, resonant with our point here, of the evolution of Deleuze's conception of the sign across his work.

[19] What we call "interactive engagement" here might be seen as an early version of what would later be refigured as an "agencement" or "assemblage" (see e.g. Deleuze and Guattari 1975, 145-57, and further on).

of the sign as a betrayal of its truth ("[l]a vérité ne se trouve pas par affinité, ni bonne volonté, mais *se trahit* à des signes involontaires" (p. 24)), as opposed to the revelation of a truth, in turn pertains to a further, adjacent philosophical objection that Deleuze seeks to make in his book, and indeed throughout his work. This point is signalled by the title of the first chapter of the book's second part: "Antilogos". To the foundational act whereby Plato brought together truth, meaning and language in the form of logos, Deleuze opposes a specifically "modern", Proustian conception of truth which seeks to capture the sense that "le monde est devenu miettes et chaos" (p. 134). This world is inhabited by signs belonging to an entirely different "domaine": "[si]gnes de violence et de folie, qui constituent tout un pathos, contre et sous les signes volontaires agencés par 'la logique et le beau langage'" (p. 209). As we have already seen, the fragments of this dislocated world are not, for Deleuze, to be thought in the melancholic, redemptive vein of remnants of a lost totality which might or might not be regained. They are singular events and betrayals of a deeper operation of incessant partitioning and division.

This non-melancholic and non-redemptive vision of the fragment connects with the form of learning and thinking that is exemplified in the semiotic apprenticeship of the Proustian narrator, which has a pedagogical relevance for Deleuze. As we have just seen, the "formation" Deleuze has in mind here, for which *À la recherche* is a form of manifesto, is not that which involves the accumulation of knowledge from books or from scholars, but one that depends on a co-implication of the learner with the material, an encounter out of which the subject and object emerge retrospectively, as adjuncts. The opposition – between knowledge learning and experiential learning – is itself dramatized in *À la recherche*. The major figures of the novel – including the "specialists" Norpois, Cottard, Vinteuil, Elstir and the major figures Saint-Loup, Charlus and Albertine – are masters of materials from whom the narrator will learn, and whom he will surpass in his own trajectory. The hierarchy of signs Deleuze postulates in Proust's work also implies a hierarchy of different modes of learning, in a process which moves through different "errors": from *observation*, based on the assumption that knowledge is to be gained from the object itself; to *imagination*, based on the assumption that knowledge arises "internally", through subjective associations; to *thinking*, which proceeds only by virtue of violence and action (through the "rencontre" and the event of interpretation), conceived as creation, as the production of writing itself.

Apprentissage is a deliberately chosen term, since what Proust's narrator learns he does so by being, like an apprentice, taken on or taken into the different worlds with whose habits and practices he will become familiar. These "mondes" are made of signs or signals. They are akin to Jakob von Uexküll's *milieux*, a reference which, albeit retrospectively, haunts Deleuze's formulations in the book[20]. With Proust's apprenticeship, Deleuze reads *À la recherche* as being oriented towards the future rather than "tournée […] vers le passé" (p. 10). Here Deleuze develops an early version of what will later be called a pragmatics, in this case a semiological pragmatics or pragmatics of the sign: the sign is a material which one encounters, and which one gets to know through modes of interpretation[21]. He describes these modes using a quasi-physical terminology that is philosophical (neo-Platonist) in provenance: the sign is explicated or unfolded from its original complexity or *complication* (p. 58). Two further examples, from *Proust et les signes* and *Différence et répétition*, relating to carpentry and to swimming, will serve to make this point clear, and to bring out the resonances across Deleuze's "critical" and "philosophical" writing:

> Apprendre concerne essentiellement les *signes*. Les signes sont l'objet d'un apprentissage temporel, non pas d'un savoir abstrait. Apprendre, c'est d'abord considérer une matière, un objet, un être comme s'ils émettaient des signes à déchiffrer, à interpréter. Il n'y a pas d'apprenti qui ne soit "l'égyptologue" de quelque chose. *On ne devient menuisier qu'en se faisant sensible aux signes du bois, ou médecin, sensible aux signes de la maladie.* La vocation est toujours prédestination par rapport à des signes. Tout ce qui nous apprend quelque chose émet des signes, tout acte d'apprendre est une interprétation de signes ou de hiéroglyphes. L'œuvre de Proust est fondée, non pas sur l'exposition de la mémoire, mais sur l'apprentissage des signes. (p. 10; our emphasis)

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[20] See Buchanan (2008) for a substantial discussion of Uexküll's place in Deleuze's work.
[21] For a clear and instructive account of Deleuze and Guattari's embrace of a pragmatics drawn (albeit heretically) from the semiotics of Louis Hjelmslev, see Caló (2021).

> Le mouvement du nageur ne ressemble pas au mouvement de la vague; et précisément, les mouvements du maître-nageur que nous reproduisons sur le sable ne sont rien par rapport aux mouvements de la vague que *nous n'apprenons à parer qu'en les saisissant pratiquement comme des signes*. C'est pourquoi il est si difficile de dire comment quelqu'un apprend: il y a une familiarité pratique, innée ou acquise, avec les signes, qui fait de toute éducation quelque chose d'amoureux, mais aussi de mortel. Nous n'apprenons rien avec celui qui nous dit: fais comme moi. Nos seuls maîtres sont ceux qui nous disent "fais avec moi", et qui, au lieu de nous proposer des gestes à reproduire, surent émettre des signes à développer dans l'hétérogène. En d'autres termes, il n'y a pas d'idéo-motricité, mais seulement de la sensori-motricité. Quand le corps conjugue de ses points remarquables avec ceux de la vague, il noue le principe d'une répétition qui n'est plus celle du Même, mais qui comprend l'Autre, qui comprend la différence, d'une vague et d'un geste à l'autre, et qui transporte cette différence dans l'espace répétitif ainsi constitué. *Apprendre, c'est bien constituer cet espace de la rencontre avec des signes*, où les points remarquables se reprennent les uns dans les autres, et où la répétition se forme en même temps qu'elle se déguise. (Deleuze 1968a, p. 35; our emphasis)

We can see from both these passages that what is specific to the sign is that *it is emitted*, and that this emission is the event of an encounter which gives rise to a practice. In both texts, we are dealing with an attention to the genealogy of signs (the question of who or what produces them) and with a pragmatics, the focus of which is less what signs mean or what they refer to, and more what one is to do with them: what can a body do with a sign[22]?

This question connects with Deleuze's critical/clinical project. Without this being indicated explicitly (Nietzsche's name does not appear in *Proust et les signes*), Deleuze's approach to Proust's semiological pragmatics, and to the whole conception of learning and apprenticeship in *À la recherche*, owes a great deal to his own *Nietzsche et la philosophie* (1962), and in particular to his discussion there of philosophy as a "symptomatologie" or "séméiologie" (Deleuze 2005, p. 3). In this book, Deleuze announces the long-term methodological double of the critical and the clinical that will span his work. The critical/clinical method embraces the fraught relations of body and language, the duality of affect and proposition, which Deleuze's work regularly interrogates. In this light, the literary writer, as well as (perhaps even more than) the philosopher, is a diagnostician, adept to a greater or lesser degree in the interpretation of signs, where signs are symptoms of an affective force at work, one which has taken possession of the body[23]. An *active* form of philology ("philologie active" (Deleuze 2005, p. 84)) stipulates that linguistics will not seek meaning from the perspective of the listener, the scholarly linguist or third party who surveys language as an abstracted system. Rather than the question "what is it?" (or, by extension, "what does it mean?", "to what does it refer?", "what does it represent?"), active philology, a precursor of Foucault's discursive and genealogical method (see Foucault 2001b), asks "who?", "how much?", "how?", "when?", "what is willed in what is said?", or "what relations of force are at stake?" (see Deleuze 2005, p. 87)[24]. Deleuze's Nietzscheanism brings forth a notion of the sign as the expression of an affective force, of interpretation as a taking possession of this force, and of interpretations of interpretations as relations of force, severed from obeisance to knowledge and truth[25].

How, then, is this notion activated in *Proust et les signes*? Deleuze reads Charlus and Albertine's various "discours" as if Proust − or his narrator − were a symptomatologist, alive not only to the abstracted content or meaning of language but also to the affective forces by which speech and bodies are animated. He argues, for example, that the majestic discourses of Charlus, "le maître apparent du Logos" (p. 209),

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[22] This phrasing is a deliberate echo of one Deleuze uses in his engagements with Spinoza, "Qu-est ce que peut un corps?"; see, for example, Deleuze (1968b, p. 197) and (Deleuze 1981, p. 28).

[23] Deleuze will also develop this perspective in his 1967 book on Sacher-Masoch (Deleuze 1967; see pp. 15-16) as well as in the later collection *Critique et clinique* (Deleuze 1993; see p. 14).

[24] For a different deployment of the notion of "active philology" in French thought of the period, in the work of Roland Barthes (himself profoundly influenced by Deleuze's *Nietzsche et la philosophie*), see Weller (2019). See n. 25 below for more on Roland Barthes.

[25] D. Smith 1996 provides a comprehensive account of the reception of Nietzsche in French thought of this period. Furthermore, the importance of Pierre Klossowski's work on Nietzsche, especially *Nietzsche et le cercle vicieux* (1969), for Deleuze and for many others cannot be underestimated (see D. W. Smith 2007).

are progressively punctured by "les signes plus mystérieux d'un non-langage qui le travaille" (p. 215), while with Albertine, "les signes de langage et de non-langage s'insèrent ici les uns dans les autres, en formant les constellations limitées du mensonge" (p. 216). The sign in Proust is, once more, not uniquely or primarily discursive or linguistic. The signifying discourse of both Charlus and Albertine is accompanied, interrupted and undermined by other signs that "nous entraînent dans un autre domaine" (209) – the domain of pathos. Through his reading of Proust, then, Deleuze conceives of a semiotics made up of language and non-language, of the "quoi" of logos and the "qui" of pathos, a semiotics which is not ruled over or mastered by the sovereignty of the linguistic signifier[26].

Alongside Nietzsche, Spinoza is the philosopher who most consistently accompanies Deleuze across his oeuvre, and although it is Leibniz who Deleuze will more explicitly signal in *Proust et les signes*, the notion of the sign that Deleuze deploys in *Proust et les signes* also shows a strong Spinozist inflection, insofar as it must be understood not as a form of representation but as an *expression*. We can glimpse here an early adumbration not only of the "signes asignifiants" or the critique of the "despotisme du signifiant" and of "mots d'ordre" that Deleuze and Guattari will develop in later works[27], but also of the opposition of logos and pathos, the mobilisation of non-linguistic signs in *À la recherche* that is, Deleuze suggests elsewhere, one of the novel's many laws[28]. There are clear resonances and overlappings between what Deleuze writes on essences in *À la recherche* and the exposition of the "problem" of expression in Deleuze's 1968 secondary doctoral thesis *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*. These connections may allow us to see that although Deleuze uses the term "signe[s]" in the work on Proust, we should understand the term as more akin to expression and expressivity. In other words, the "signes" encountered by the narrator of Proust's novel are expressions of essence, enveloped in words, in characters, encounters, in material impressions and in art, which call for their unfolding (*explication*) or development. As Deleuze writes in *Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*: "Expliquer, c'est développer. Envelopper, c'est impliquer. Les deux termes pourtant ne sont pas contraires: ils indiquent seulement deux aspects de l'expression" (Deleuze 1968b, p. 12). Deleuze uses the same terms, and the related term *complication*, in his discussion of essences and the signs of art in *Proust et les signes* (see pp. 51-65). In the light of this proximity between Spinozist expressionism and what Deleuze will call the "interprétation de signes ou de hiéroglyphes" (p. 11) in *À la recherche*, we are authorized to inflect our understanding of signs in Proust towards Spinoza's conception of expression, as Deleuze renders it, and to highlight the critique of signs in Spinoza. As Deleuze writes, referring to Spinoza: "[j]amais ne fut poussé plus loin l'effort pour distinguer deux domaines: la révélation et l'expression. Ou deux relations hétérogènes: celle du signe et du signifié, celle de l'expression et de l'exprimé". Signs, in Spinoza's thought, are always commandments, demanding obeisance; they tell us nothing about the attributes of God. They relate to "[u]ne Parole impresse,

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[26] The relationship between logos and pathos is also a central concern in Roland Barthes's notes for a seminar in 1977 on what he calls the "Discours-Charlus". Barthes's analysis bears the influence of Deleuze's writing on Charlus's signs of pathos and also connects that reading, in ways that Deleuze himself does not (at least not explicitly), with Deleuze's discussion of force in his book on Nietzsche. Without reference to Deleuze's work, Barthes suggests that while the "unités mates" of Charlus's "discours" (Barthes 2002b, p. 204) are amenable to a traditional form of "l'analyse structurale" (p. 205), these dull units are supplemented by the "forces du discours", by an extreme force of enunciation, a "moire affective" (p. 209), that cannot be accounted for by a form of critical analysis that is "planimétrique, tabulaire" (p. 219). For Barthes, we might say, the culturally coded matte of Charlus's logos is supplemented by the forceful, uncoded mottlings of pathos. For further discussion of Barthes on the "Discours-Charlus", see Baldwin (2019, pp. 58-64).

[27] On these concepts, see, for example, Deleuze and Guattari (1972, pp. 48, 63, 87–88, 99); Deleuze and Guattari (1975, p. 24); and Deleuze and Guattari (1980), especially the chapter "20 novembre 1923: postulats de la linguistique", pp. 95-99.

[28] In an unpublished and undocumented lecture delivered at the Institut Français in London in 1971, entitled "Proust et la loi", Deleuze says that "sous les signes signifiants et leur cohérence qu'ils doivent au rapport en eux de l'intelligence et de l'intelligible, quelque chose d'autre se passe, un autre domaine de signes, un autre régime, des signes de trahison, des signes pervers. Des signes, alors appelons-les […] des signes figures-morcelés, par opposition aux signes signifiants. Ce n'est pas ce qu'il [Proust] préfère […], ce n'est pas ce qu'il trouve joli. Pour lui, c'est la loi. Passer des signes signifiants aux signes souterrains que ces signes signifiants cachent" (Deleuze 1971: 16:55-17:44).

impérative, opérant par signe et commandement: elle n'est pas expressive, mais frappe notre imagination et nous inspire la soumission nécessaire". The thematics of revelation, moreover, are problematized. In contrast to the "Word" of God as revealed through Scripture, Spinoza posits "une Parole expressive, qui n'a besoin de mots ni de signes" (Deleuze 1968b, p. 48). The point to underline here is that while Spinoza, as read by Deleuze, opposes the language of signs and the language of expression, in Deleuze's Proust signs are inflected towards Spinozist expressionism; Deleuze's Proustian signs are therefore, as we have underlined, not primarily linguistic, but involve a complex dynamic of language and non-language, of logos and pathos.

A telling moment in relation to the opposition between logos and pathos, which will point us in the direction of Guattari's reading of *À la recherche* in the final part of this article, comes in Deleuze's discussion of two semiotic modes in the Greek world, the "langage des signes" and logos as "belle totalité" (p. 135). The former are qualified as "des fragments et lambeaux comme objets d'aphorismes, dans des symboles comme moitiés décollées, dans les signes des oracles et le délire des devins" (p. 135). There persists a sense that these remnants can be restored and reconciled, and the melancholy of Greek statuary, Deleuze suggests, expresses as much. To support his point, Deleuze refers to Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* (458 BC), the first part of the *Oresteia*, in which the chorus contrasts the mendacious and unreliable language of the fire of beacons, which announces the king's return and the rumour associated with it, to the "real news" brought in words by the herald:

> Aux signes du feu qui annoncent la victoire à Clytemnestre, langage menteur et fragmentaire bon pour les femmes, le coryphée oppose un autre langage, le logos du messager qui rassemble Tout en Un dans la juste mesure, bonheur et vérité. Dans le langage des signes, au contraire, il n'y a de vérité que dans ce qui est fait pour tromper, dans les méandres de ce qui la cache, dans les fragments d'un mensonge et d'un malheur: il n'y a de vérité que trahie, c'est-à-dire à la fois livrée par l'ennemi et révélée par profils ou par morceaux. (p. 135)[29]

Proust's *À la recherche*, we should understand, is to be thought as dislocated from the reference to logos, to the transparency and unity of signs, and read in terms of its excavation of the sign as the betrayal of a different order of semiosis: the order of "des signes involontaires" (p. 214), of pathos. Once unanchored from any obeisance to logos, to the goodwill of the thinker, the signs which proliferate in the novel, and which are produced by it, succumb to the risk of delirium, as suggested above by Deleuze's reference to "les signes des oracles et le délire des devins". We can connect this to a point made later by Deleuze, in the supplementary coda to the 1976 edition of *Proust et les signes*, about late nineteenth-century and early twentieth-century psychiatry: "[à] la fin du XIXe siècle et au début du XXe, la psychiatrie établissait une distinction très intéressante entre deux sortes de délires des signes, les délires d'interprétation de type paranoïa, et les délires de revendication du type érotomanie ou jalousie" (pp. 214-215). Deleuze thus points again to a symptomatological semiotics, in which signs are betrayals of illness, and furthermore, in this instance, of a "sign-delirium" which disrupts the normative semiotics and the despotism of the signifier. Here, the paranoid and the erotomaniacal semiotic disturbances pertain to the "folie" of Charlus and Albertine respectively (as we have seen, the voluntary signs of logos within the former's discourse are betrayed by signs which escape mastery and lay bare the signs of pathos "au cours d'une longue décomposition sociale et physique" (pp. 209-10)). The "clinical" dimension of Deleuze's reference on this occasion does not indicate obeisance to a specific psychoanalytic or psychiatric theory, but is rather an indication of the semiotic richness of the dimension of pathos, which is described in the following terms:

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[29] A footnote here refers us to a 1967 lecture by Deleuze's former colleague at the University of Lyon, Henri Maldiney, on these verses, "analysant l'opposition du langage des signes et du *logos*" (p. 135n. 1). Save for the reference to Aeschylus, the reference is left out of the translation of the "complete text" of *Proust et les signes*. Another quotation from *Agamemnon*, "pathos mathei" (wisdom only through pain), was a key reference for Maldiney and may illuminate Deleuze's turn to pathos as opposed to logos.

le logos est un grand Animal dont les parties se réunissent en un tout et s'unifient sous un principe ou une idée directrice; mais le pathos est un végétal fait de parties cloisonnées, qui ne communiquent qu'indirectement dans une partie mise à part, à l'infini, si bien que nulle totalisation, nulle unification ne peuvent réunir ce monde dont les morceaux ultimes ne manquent plus de rien. C'est l'univers schizoïde des boîtes closes, des parties cloisonnées, où la contiguïté même est une distance: le monde du sexe (p. 210).

This evocation of the vegetal, schizoid and sexual realm of pathos supports Deleuze's figuration, a few pages on at the end of *Proust et les signes*, of Proust's narrator as a spider, attentive to the slightest vibrations on the web she has woven and is in the process of weaving[30]. The signs which the work interprets, unfolds and produces are thus rendered as vibratory intensities, emitted by the spider's own creations (Charlus and Albertine among them), as so many instances of her own delirium. Deleuze thus renders *À la recherche* as a semiotics of pathos, of behaviours, phenomena, experiences, and affects at a level below or aside from logos.

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The clinical dimension outlined above is very much in evidence in the other substantial part of the "dossier" of Deleuze and Guattari's engagements with the semiotics of *À la recherche*, constituted by the second part of Guattari's *L'Inconscient machinique*, "Les Ritournelles du temps perdu"[31]. The dynamics of logos and pathos are however set in different terms and in a different matrix, transformed through the conceptual pair of deterritorialization and reterritorialization and through the global project of *schizoanalyse* launched with Deleuze and Guattari's *L'Anti-Œdipe*, pursued in *Kafka: pour une littérature mineure* and brought to mature fruition in *Mille plateaux*. The question of territory, which is resonant with the evocation of the spider and her web at the end of *Proust et les signes*, is crucial, since it embeds the conception of the sign and its concomitant semiotics in the different model of flows, intensities and impulses arising within different milieux, then to be fixed and captured in specific social formations. The implication of this, if we consider Guattari's writing on Proust as part of the larger body of the Proust-Deleuze-Guattari "operating system", as we have called it, is a significant widening and politicization of the reading and analysis of *À la recherche*. The novel now becomes the object of a series of experimental engagements in Deleuze and Guattari's writing with the semiotic economy and dynamics of capitalism, alongside the work of Joyce, Kafka and Beckett. Crudely speaking, if capitalism works through the decoding of fluxes of all kinds (monetary fluxes, subjective fluxes, symbolic and familial fluxes), it also re-codes or re-territorializes these fluxes, these energies, in order to fix, control and stock them, to siphon them off to the benefit of the "corps sans organes" of Capital. In Guattari's rendering, Proust's novel proposes a powerful analysis of this dynamic, focused on "modes de subjectivation et de sémiotisation" (p. 258) relative to the historical and cultural moment, of modernity. It is also more specifically focused

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[30] Sexuality is an essential element of the account given by both Deleuze and Guattari of the trajectory of *À la recherche* away from fixed and coded systems. In the later parts of *Proust et les signes*, for example, while insisting, as he does here, on the "monde du sexe" as one characterized by the incommensurate regimes of Sodom and Gomorrah (male and female homosexuality respectively), Deleuze goes on to emphasize the way in which the novel passes beyond the guilt associated with these identities and worlds to reach a zone of "innocence" in "l'univers silencieux végétal" (p. 210). In a parallel fashion, Guattari's analysis of the process of the refrain in the life of the narrator engages a "devenir féminin créateur" (p. 324). It is in this sense that we intend the expression "trans-sexual" further on.

[31] As we have indicated above, the focus on Proust is present in a less developed form in Guattari's posthumously published *Lignes de fuite*, which is a report on "Assujettissement sémiotique et équipments collectifs", written in the late 1970s for CERFI (Centre d'études, de recherches et de formation institutionnelles). This report proposes analytic tools for the "pragmatic" analysis of the "social unconscious" (see Caló 2021). It also includes a section on an example of a "composante pragmatique" of this unconscious, "les traits de visagéité". The section on Proust appears as part of this latter focus. *L'Inconscient machinique*, it is worth noting, can be considered Guattari's first publication as a stand-alone volume, his previous works *Psychanalyse et transversalité* (1972) and *La Révolution moléculaire* (1977) consisting of previously published essays and unpublished fragments.

on immaterial or "incorporeal" objects – on "des objets mentaux hyper-déterritorialisés" (p. 257) and "des composantes extérioceptives" (p. 258).

Two global points can be made here about Guattari's approach to the semiotics of *À la recherche*. Firstly, that it rejects a *modus operandi* reliant on a separation between the "literary" or "aesthetic" domain on the one hand and the "scientific" and "political" domain on the other. For Guattari, Proust's novel is an analysis in itself, or as he puts it "une prodigieuse carte rhizomatique" and a "monographie schizoanalytique" – the (schizo-)analysis of signs it produces is on a par with the scientific explorations of Freud or Newton (p. 257). As such an analysis it is less an object of study or of semiotic analysis for Guattari than a method or methodological precursor, an exemplary functioning machine, just as for Deleuze *À la recherche* is a significant ally in the endeavour to propose a new image of thought.

The second point is that the pairing of "subjectivation" and "sémiotisation" reprises the dynamics of deterritorialization and reterritorialization set in place in Deleuze and Guattari's earlier work, while prefiguring the concerns of *Mille plateaux*. Just as, in *Proust et les signes*, Deleuze couches the arc of the novel in terms of a progressive apprenticeship in the interpretation of signs, oriented towards the immaterial domain of art, and just as, for Deleuze, the narrator moves ever closer to the de-subjectified place of the spider awaiting the merest vibration of the web she has woven, Guattari renders the stakes of *À la recherche* in terms of the dynamic conflict of the tendency to individualize, to draw semiotic impulses and events in and back to the self, and of the tendency of these impulses themselves to lead elsewhere, away and out of the subject, as lines of flight towards "other possible worlds"[32]. And finally, just as the arc of Deleuze's three-instalment volume moves increasingly away from the specific case and towards the "laws" of the subjective, social, temporal and aesthetic environments and objects embraced by the novel, Guattari considers *À la recherche* as the narrative, of sorts, of a displacement from the "science de l'individuel" towards the dimension of the transversal or rhizomatic: "Toute son analyse [de Proust] le conduit vers la saisie de machinismes abstraits trans-subjectifs et trans-objectifs, dont il nous fournit une description rigoureuse, et cela, il va sans dire, d'une suprême élégance" (p. 261).

How, then, is this displacement put into practice? The dynamic of subjectivation and semiotization is rendered in Guattari's account through the pair of faciality (*visagéité*) and the refrain or ritornello (*ritournelle*)[33]. If semiotization, for Guattari, consists of varied components (*composantes*) which deterritorialize and "se transversalis[ent]" (p. 263), facialization, at least in the case of Swann, blocks such impulses by "territorializing" them upon the face, that of Odette in this instance. Put more simply, the forces and impulses which have the potential to transform and liberate a subject – Swann or the narrator – are either neutralized in the neurotic obsession of jealous love[34], or actualized in a movement beyond the face, beyond the subject, and towards the immaterial realm of art and creation. While Guattari hints at other possible (all interconnected) routes for the analysis of this deterritorializing semiotization, including the function of the paintings of Elstir, and significantly the trans-sexual "feminization" or *devenir-femme* to which the narrator accedes after breaking free of the "mare perverse" (p. 323) of Montjouvain, Guattari's primary object is music, specifically the variations of the "petite phrase" of Vinteuil. Guattari thus proposes a micro-analysis in nine parts of the several instances in which Vinteuil's "petite phrase" makes its appearance, contrasting the "collapsus sémiotique" into which Swann is drawn by his obsessional capture by the face of Odette with the narrator's more complex and more "successful" transition to a "machinisme abstrait de la création" (p. 342).

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[32] Our loose translation of "un autre monde de possibles", the subtitle of Guattari's *Lignes de fuite*.

[33] It would be possible to map out the continuities between Guattari's dynamic of faciality and the (musical) refrain and Deleuze's concerns in *Proust et les signes* and elsewhere, but we are unable to undertake this within the limits of this article. Points of contact, as it were, would include the recurrent evocation of the narrator's first kiss with Albertine and the decomposition of the face that it effects; the role of music as a prime example of the deterritorializations operated by art, especially insofar as it is, in Deleuze's terms, "non-pulsé" (see Deleuze 2003, p. 143); and the role of the "trou noir", in fear of which the child constructs the first refrain as an initial territorialisation, a motif evoked by both Deleuze and Guattari separately (see Deleuze 1977; Guattari 1979, p. 109).

[34] Guattari calls this a "trou noir névrotique" (p. 264), "passionnel" (p. 285) or "sémiotique" (p. 273).

While we are not at liberty here to enter fully into the detail of Guattari's analysis in a way that would do justice to it[35], it will be useful to consider in concluding the ways in which, just as Deleuze's *Proust et les signes* deploys, as we have claimed, a radically different semiotics from that which might be recognized under that name, Guattari's engagement is equally transformative. First of all, we can note that the terminology and conceptual apparatus of semiology does not dominate in Guattari's analysis of *À la recherche*, and to this extent it differs from *Proust et les signes* in relinquishing the concept of the sign, however changed, for the new terrain of the machine and the diagram, terms which Guattari uses to describe the novel's operational abstractions. This suggests a perspective on *L'Inconscient machinique* and its final part, as well as on the variations of *Proust et les signes*, which might construe the whole operation as a strategic extraction from the mould of semiotics as such through a progressive and concerted transformation of its operative concepts, towards what Guattari calls a *pragmatics*[36].

Secondly, we can note that the Saussurean and structuralist mode of semiology is referenced at one point as a way of understanding or engaging with the "petite phrase" that is superseded in Swann's engagements with it and left behind as a blind alley. Remarking that *À la recherche* was begun around the same time as Saussure's *Cours de linguistique générale* (see p. 259n. 3), Guattari says that while Swann is momentarily tempted by a "phonological" analysis of the five notes of the "petite phrase" akin to the kind of work associated with the Prague Linguistic Circle, Swann realises this does not engage with the material reality of the sequence, and that this approach misguidedly substitutes for it values arising from his intelligence (see pp. 259-60). The "evanescent" quality of the little phrase "ne relève pas uniquement d'une analyse discursive telle que peut la soutenir le langage humain" (p. 260). The musical phrase must thus be rendered in terms of a semiotics which extends beyond discursive language and comprises *a-signifying* signs. It is this zone of unassigned sensations, those for which there is no designated signifier, which must be brought into play to enrich language and generate a new discursivity: "C'est à elle [cette réalité 'à l'étant naissant'] qu'on devra s'adresser pour enrichir le langage, pour le féconder et engendrer une nouvelle discursivité en prise directe sur ce que j'ai appelé l'économie du désir" (p. 260). We might call this a semiotics pushed, pragmatically, into the zone of deterritorialized immateriality.

A third point is that the direction of travel of the semiotization which the "petite phrase" supports, that is to say the transformative production and liberation from assignable signifiers that it operates, is towards the rhizome. What we mean by this, in the specific context of the Deleuze-Guattari-Proust network we have been considering, is that it opens out beyond the individual subject, and beyond the unique domain of the linguistic sign. According to one set of terms, specific to Guattari, this involves a movement from the individual (neurotic) subject – Swann and his tendency to subjectivize the experience of Vinteuil's music, aided and abetted by the *folie à deux* with Odette – towards the "agencement collectif d'énonciation" (p. 262n. 6), the assemblage that the "petite phrase" makes transversally with all of the other components of the narrator's trajectory. The collective assemblage of enunciation is not an emission or interpretation of signs by or for the subject alone, nor is it made entirely of linguistic signs. It is a rhizome insofar as it connects and mobilizes elements of language, gestural, postural, respiratory, musical and all kinds of other elements, including "blocs" (p. 311) of childhood (Combray and Montjouvain, for example), and because it remains unconstrained within the dualistic worlds or sexualized zones of Sodom and Gomorrah; the semiotic fluxes it liberates descend into the vegetal and the molecular.

We might thus see, in conclusion, that the "carte rhizomatique" (p. 257) which Guattari seeks to make of *À la recherche* enables and demands a semiotics up to the task of engaging with the a-subjective, the a-

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[35] As far as we are aware, the only extant discussions of Guattari's Proust are those of Stivale (2008), Baldwin (2015) and Laberge (2018). The work calls for a more developed consideration, which would necessarily have to work through the second part on Proust in tandem with the substantial theoretical pragmatics proposed by Guattari in *L'Inconscient machinique* as a whole and elsewhere, including in his work with Deleuze. Here we are only scratching the surface.

[36] See p. 338, for example: "On n'interprète pas un contenu, on n'en recherche pas le paradigme signifiant, on le fait travailler dans une autre matière. On relève ainsi en lui des possibilités nouvelles, du 'jamais vu', de l'inouï. Ce contenu n'est pas réductible à une essence universelle. En dernière instance, il se résout en un champ pragmatique, un nœud de propositions machiniques".

signifying, the trans-sexual, and that it can be as if superimposed on the web of the spider evoked by Deleuze at the end of *Proust et les signes*. Far from an orthodox semiological analysis of the sign-structure of *À la recherche*, which would seek to reconstruct it as a unified totality or logos, and distinct also from approaches which read it as another exercise in redemptive aesthetics, Deleuze and Guattari's Proustian semiotics proposes the novel to be a profoundly transformative analytic machine which puts into effect a liberation from semiotic subjection[37]. The narrator's proposition that "[c]haque lecteur est, quand il lit, le propre lecteur de soi-même" (Proust 1987-89, IV, p. 489) takes on a different complexion in this light. It is a question not of finding time again but of *becoming* such a reader, of – as Deleuze and Guattari describe Kafka's enterprise (1975, p. 15) – finding a way out, *trouver une issue*.

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[37] We acknowledge the need for further exploration of the incidence of Proust in the work of Deleuze and Guattari, both jointly and independently of one another, beyond the corpus of works brought into play here. A telling note appears, for example, almost at the end of their joint enterprise, and with relevance for semiotics, in *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?* Deleuze and Guattari write there of art and literature as the *invention* of affects, not as the *representation* or *signification* of a pre-existing world or state of things. They suggest, for example, that Proust proposes jealousy not as an unfortunate consequence of love but as its truth and its destiny, qualifying this with the expression "l'affect comme sémiologie" (Deleuze & Guattari 199, p. 165). If the object of semiology is an affect, and one which is invented, this departs radically from the notion of the sign as such.

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