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Editorial: Deleuze and Politics

By Karen Houle

Paul Patton, a professor of Philosophy at the University of New South Wales, is perhaps best known for his translation of Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* (Deleuze 1994), although he has made other notable efforts on behalf of disseminating continental thought, including translating Baudrillard's *The Gulf War Did Not Take Place* (1995), editing *Deleuze: A Critical Reader* for the Blackwell Critical Readers Series (1996), and editing the untimely *Nietzsche, Feminism and Political Theory* (1993). In addition, Patton has written a number of excellent, widely-reproduced papers in which he backlights key, load-bearing concepts from Deleuze and Guattari such as "the War Machine," "the event," and "difference," while preserving their shadowy idiosyncratic beauty as only a scholar of Patton's calibre can do. Eugene Holland succeeds similarly well with concepts from Anti-Oedipus in his Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus: Introduction to Schizoanalysis* (1999).

Now, in *Deleuze and the Political* (2000) Patton, with the same patience, skill and intellectual generosity, takes on an enormous, multi-levelled task. This task consists of: 1) extracting from Deleuze and Guattari's "apparently endless series of new terms"(11) the "political concepts"; 2) systematically clarifying these concepts both for readers already familiar with Deleuze and Guattari and for many who will come to this work with none (the "Thinking the Political" series which this is a part of, is "designed to present the work of the major Continental thinkers of our time, and the political debates their work has generated, to a wider audience in philosophy and in political, social and cultural theory."); 3) translating these concepts "into the language of Anglophone political theory" without sacrificing the "remainder that does not translate," without effacing for the sake of philosophical cross-pollination the "series of points at which the normative dimensions of their work do not correspond to those of Anglo-American political theory" (2); 4) mapping the "continuities as well as divergences" (49) between Deleuze and Guattarian versions and those of the familiar political concepts (difference, power, desire, transversality, state) and how they appear in the works of, for instance, Hobbes, Rawls, Foucault, Derrida and Nietzsche; 5) actually doing, in the spirit of

Deleuze and Guattari's conception of what it means to do philosophy, (spelled out explicitly in the opening chapters of their *What is Philosophy?*) the work of putting these concepts to work – either the work of causing us to think toward the zones of undecidability in presently employed political concepts, or the work of applying these concepts as tools in particular problems – not just meta-doing; and thus 6) convincing us on many levels and on both sides of the Anglo-Continental Divide that, despite the fact that he in no way conforms to the “standard image of a political philosopher”; despite the fact that he has not engaged with the writings of major political philosophers, “does not address issues such as the nature of justice, freedom or democracy, much less the principles of procedural justification, shows an almost complete lack of engagement with the central problems and normative commitments of Anglo-American political thought. Deleuze is a profoundly political thinker”.

This task takes balls, smarts and imagination. Patton has them all. It is one thing to make the political features of Deleuze and Guattari more legible, more intense to continental-sympathizers. Patton's book, on these grounds alone, succeeds and in this, joins the company of Negri and Hardt's *Empire* (2001), *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, edited by Judith Butler, Slavoj Žižek and Ernesto Laclau (2000); *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics*, by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe (2001); *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, a series of cross-fire discussion papers between Derrida, Laclau, Rorty and Mouffe, edited by Simon Critchley (1996). Whether, (cf. task # 3 and #5) Patton does justice to Deleuze and Guattari in the interest of doing justice to the intelligibility of Deleuze and Guattari for questions of justice, whether he sacrifices some of the untranslatable “remainder” in the interests of exegetical gain, indeed whether anyone could do otherwise, is a question to which I will return shortly.

It is quite another thing to care to make Deleuze and Guattari intelligible and usable to those with professed allergies to French philosophy, to those whose chief operational zone, whose values and methods are defined, in some cases, in outright opposition to the style and the principles that have blown into Anglo-thought from the Continent, like, some would say, dandelions. Some empirical evidence: I study philosophy. I am interested in political problems. In 1993, I attended an international conference on Political Theory and Activism. The keynote speaker was a famous environmentalist/feminist. The venue was a massive hall packed with over 1500 people. She began her speech by mocking academics, not all academics mind you, just the French ones. The philosophers. To crudely paraphrase: “Our girls are raped and sold. Our forests are raped and sold. Millions of people are starving. And they are writing about (long, pregnant pause) “the Body Without Organs”! She huffed indignantly and tossed the end of her sari around her solid, Real body, for emphasis. The crowd went wild with the thrill of mass mockery. I felt like a thief in a 50's movie where the guilty evidence lights up in the purse of Audrey Hepburn, or the key glows, fully visible, in the pocket of some androgynous bellhop. In my backpack was my dog-eared copy of *A Thousand Plateaus*. I knew this didn't bode well.

At a more local level, probably every one of us who takes an avid interest in

Derrida, or Irigaray or Deleuze (or any of the other spawn of Nietzsche), who is known for this avidity and who audaciously claims occupancy (squatting) in an established field of inquiry – political theory or religious hermeneutics – has their versions of a daily water-cooler comic book vignette not unlike the following: I'm photocopying something from *Difference and Repetition*, and the fellow waiting to copy something less pornographic, perhaps *Political Liberalism* or the *Baghavad Gita* idly snoops about my copied piles, a supercilious grin on his face, then nudges me hard in the ribs, saying in his best Oxford/Dracula voice "watch out for the D-a-r-k Precursor! S-c-a-a-a-r-y!!". Patton takes these hooligans on qua worthy agonist. In this, he joins other high profile political theorists highly respected within the Anglo-zone, who have professed continental thought has something to offer Anglo-political thinking: Iris Marion Young, in *Inclusion and Democracy* (2000) and Seyla Benhabib, in *Democracy and Difference* (1996) are two notable examples. Charles Taylor, is of course, another cross-dresser.

It is still another thing to do all this in a manner which does not aim for the lowest common denominator in Deleuze and Guattari, or in Rawls or in thinking political thinking. Deleuze and the Political, for the most part, meets the challenges of this complex task. This is particularly true of tasks #1, #2, #4, #5 (and hence #6): extraction, clarification, contextualization, application (and hence confirmation).

Deleuze and the Political is divided into six chapters. The Introduction is invaluable for orientating the reader to Deleuze against the kinds of political thinker he has been rumoured as, and toward what kind he might turn out to be. Patton signals to us early on that there is indeed an "immanent evaluative" structure in Deleuze and Guattarian thought, and that it is carried by, and also modelled by, their newly-rendered concepts: minority, becoming-revolutionary, deterritorialization, machinic assemblage. What each of these concepts does, what that evaluative structure is, and how we draw evaluative force from it, is elaborated in the second chapter, on difference, in the third chapter, on power, in the fourth chapter, desire, becoming and freedom, and a concentrated section on forms of deterritorialization (106-107). Right off the mark, Patton locates their two-fold relation to capitalism. He writes, "Deleuze reaffirms his sympathy with Marx and describes capitalism as a fantastic system for the fabrication of great wealth and great suffering. He asserts that any philosophy worthy of being called political must take account of the nature and the evolution of capitalism." (6) Patton then deftly sketches how Deleuze and Guattari's account of capitalism's nature and evolution differs from Marxist accounts in that it "favours a differential typology of the macro- and micro-assemblages which determine the character of social life ... rejects any internal or evolutionist account of the origins of the State ... according to which the form of the state has always existed even if only as a virtual tendency" (6) This brief sketch alone will intrigue readers to pursue this thread, which finds its full elaboration in Chapter 5, "Social Machines and the State."

As for suffering, its possible relief, and what that means for us as a political vocation, we learn that it too lies, if anywhere, in the fact that concepts, phenomena, systems, subjectivities, by virtue of their composition, contain within them the permanent, multi-levelled possibility of change. Crucially, for "the

political” what this means is that they are ever-contestable. The general task of the political, then, is a: “patient and meticulous practice of genealogy” (63) modelled by Deleuze according to which, we may limn, and contest: “the quality of the forces present and their affinity with one or other character of the will to power ... the dynamic aspects of the interplay between the qualities of will to power and those that supervene on force relations... .” (62-3) It is by virtue of these practices that we “trace the paths upon which things change or become transformed into something else,” (66) that is, orientate ourselves as bodies capable of transformation and contestation. Patton suggests that this is not so much a voluntary application of method as it is a peculiar co-ordination of self to world which drives one more readily toward puzzlement and therefore, toward creativity (19-20). What these ontological facts ask of us depends upon where we are situated when the possibility of change becomes an answer to a problem posed to us which we are not too stupid to notice.

In the first chapter, “Concept and Image of Thought,” we are confronted with Deleuze and Guattari’s assessment of the history of philosophy as a history of the dominance of immobile and immobilizing “images of thought.” By this, “Deleuze means more than just a representation of thought, but something deeper that’s always taken for granted, a system of co-ordinates, dynamics, orientations: what it means to think and orient oneself in thought.” (18) The image of thought which has dominated the history of western philosophy, including its branches of political thinking, is the one which equates thinking with knowing/judging/recognizing and therefore understands philosophy’s special vocation to be the discovery and announcement of the true, the rooting out of the false, and the policing of the perimeter, against further encroachment by error. This dogmatic image, claim Deleuze and Guattari, limits philosophy’s own capacity for thought (25) precisely because of the way it edifies itself. That is, it does not conceive itself as containing, or being required to cultivate, within itself the necessity or, the capacity to, radically critique itself. It is an Idea of thinking minimally susceptible to variation, and hostile to the very elements which induce, in thought, engagement with, and responsiveness to the unknown. Worse, it tenders an irresponsible conception of the “thinking subject.” No matter how sincere the intention, how noble the principles, this subject can not effectively disrupt this constitutive self-positing and self-confirming hegemony. Chantal Mouffe (2000:32-33), in *The Democratic Paradox*, comes at this conclusion from another angle. She argues that, in the Rawlsian conception of rationality, in the exorcism of the pluralism of potentially adversarial idiosyncratic interest to the private, and in the role that consensus plays as the telos of free public democratic reason, the ideals of democracy can never be realized. She writes: “postulating that there could be a rational definite solution to the question of justice in a democratic society ... leads to the closing of the gap between justice and law that is a constitutive space of modern democracy... . [T]he notion of the ‘constitutive outside’ forces us to come to terms with the idea that pluralism implies the permanence of conflict and antagonism ... by showing that a non-coercive consensus is a conceptual impossibility, it does not put in jeopardy the democratic ideal, as some would argue. On the contrary, it constitutes an important guarantee

that the dynamics of the democratic process will be kept alive.” The dream of mastering or eliminating undecidability is the very condition of possibility of decision and therefore of freedom and pluralism (34). Patton’s inspired account of “the image of thought” and how this “image” enters social assemblages, delimiting the range of what constitutes what can be thought adds a crucial element to expressly political critique’s like Mouffe’s.

Deleuze and Guattari offer a view of philosophy as a unique locale from which “the absolute deterritorialization of the present can be effected in thought.”(9) They do not privilege philosophy over art or science; rather, lexify their different distinct objects and vocations. Philosophy’s “exclusive right to concept-creation” (24) derives from the nature of the deterritorialization and reterritorialization of thought it can effect. According to Deleuze and Guattari, to court the radically untimely and to respond by creating new concepts (not just “the polishing of old ones,”12) is philosophy’s work. While the true might be disrupted, the uninteresting and the stupid might also be displaced. How this governing image constitutes philosophy as an essentially political vocation answering adequately the problem of suffering lies precisely in the fact that philosophy, here, can effectively constitute the very gaps and mobilizations in thought required for criticism and renovation of the “majoritarian,” wherever that occurs. And, Deleuze and Guattari take pains to remind us and to explain the nature of that reoccurrence within what claims to be revolutionary thought and action. There are two excellent illustrations of the possible manifestations of this minoritarian approach, as forms of political action, in *Deleuze and the Political*. At the end of Chapter Two, “Difference and Multiplicity,” Patton uses this framework to expand upon strategies that “minorities” might take. In Chapter Four, “Desire, Becoming and Freedom,” Patton does some of his best juggling across the great divide when he draws the notion of “critical freedom” out of this Nietzschean gap-producing ontology and plugs it right into the hole created by the notion of “the revisability of one’s conception of the good,” a shadowy concept lurking in J.S. Mill, and articulated by Rawls, James Tully and (though Patton doesn’t mention him) David Gauthier (83-87).

In the second and third chapters, Patton clearly spells out that to understand the political in Deleuze and Guattari we have to understand that, and how, the burden of normativity is borne by the ontology of multiplicities, assemblages, difference; in particular, by the capacities of the molecular as compared to the molar. Molecular assemblages are the kind of assemblage which, in Deleuze and Guattari’s ontology, have the quality of giving rise to more connections (to the outside) and to the potential for change in nature, which is to say that these forms are most likely to give rise to revolutionary-becoming, the principle adjoining all possible variants of “the political” in Deleuze and Guattari. Patton clarifies that, contrary to the charge, this does not mean that they are a “new species of anarchist.” This is principally because the aim of revolution is not wholesale social change (8). Rather, revolution is tactical and local: “cartographic.” When we open up the possibility of new forms of individual and collective identity, new earths and new peoples might be summoned (9). The new people might be the old people anew. The new law might be the old law anew: yet,

this is not “the return of the same but rather the production of sameness through the returning of that which differs.”(35) The difference between the continuity of the same, and the disruption of the same by the differences of which they are composed, a molecular disruption, makes all the difference, politically speaking. An opening toward possibility is an opening toward the possibility of the political. Not knowing what that is or will be, a present can always be tactically “held” open via energetic attention to qualitative difference such that the *to-come*, whether it be a revised conception of the good, (83-87) or a reformed subjectivity, or an adjusted collective will toward reshaping the political landscape, can come.

Patton’s inspired detailing of the principle of difference in (primarily)Deleuze, and how this principle operates, generates three of the book’s most significant contributions to thinking the political. First, it directs the traffic around “the politics of difference” into fruitful and unfruitful streams. The unfruitful stream confuses difference with alterity or distinctness. Second, it gives us a clear way out of the annoying eddies which traps poststructuralists and modernists alike, after the trend set by Parmenides and Heraclitus, swirling rather dully around “questions of difference.” For example, Judith Butler’s *Gender Trouble* scolds Kristeva for positing “the locus of multiple drives” and then “subordinating these to the self same.” Butler writes: “her opposition between the Semiotic and the Symbolic reduces here to a metaphysical quarrel between the principle of multiplicity that escapes the charge of non-contradiction and a principle of identity based on the suppression of that multiplicity. Oddly, that very principle of multiplicity that Kristeva everywhere defends operates in much the same manner as the principle of identity.” (Butler 1990:89) Yes, perhaps. But Butler drops the question. The insights (or frustrations) which drive theorists of difference like Kristeva to continue to insist upon the principle of difference as a kind of skeleton key for the political, are vindicated in the excruciatingly careful articulation that Deleuze (and Patton) give it. Third, and relatedly, the political links to the affirmation of difference which Patton fleshes out here, clarify and substantiate intriguing but somewhat more confusing claims made elsewhere. I have already mentioned *The Democratic Paradox* (2000). I would add Giorgio Agamben’s *The Coming Community* (1993), Diana Fuss’ *Identification Papers* (1995), Slavoj Zizek’s *Looking Awry* (1991) and Derrida’s *The Politics of Friendship* (1997).

The final chapter of *Deleuze and the Political*, “Nomads, Capture and Colonisation,” is an extensive analysis of a particular contemporary political problem – coming to terms with Aboriginal land claims and entitlement. This chapter is Patton’s reply to the “imperative of pragmatic evaluation” in Deleuze and Guattari. Patton uses a “history and politics of deterritorialization” to read these dynamics. He has often focussed on this one particular political challenge to test the adequacy of Deleuzian concepts like “the nomad,” and Guattarian methods like “the nomadological perspective” for their explanatory and directive power. Here, he attempts to recuperate the prerogative of the use of the term “nomad” against two chief criticisms this concept has faced: that it is a colonizing term and that it is anthropologically suspect. I’m not sure that critics will be satisfied by his arguments here. The re-reading of the encounter between colonizers and colonized as the encounter between two different abstract machines, however, does indeed

improve upon the strictly historical point of view, in that it highlights new “paths upon which things change or become transformed into something else,” thus offering a new map of where the present gridlock might be transformed yet again into something else. This chapter, more than any other, will be satisfying to those interested in the practical upshot of what Deleuze and Guattari offer politically, since it not only specifies an exactly situated set of problems, but takes care to frame them in an empirically and historically precise manner.

In these respects, *Deleuze and the Political* does indeed deliver on its promises. This seems particularly true for political theorists new to Deleuze and Guattarian thought, though it demands a commitment to work extremely hard on the part of that reader. His overall approach is to introduce the new concepts, explain them thoroughly, and weave them into the wider account by revisiting them again and again. While demanding, its rigour practically guarantees the novice will not run off screaming: “jargon!” On occasion, however, Patton does not show the degree of judicious restraint he claims to have been exercising (134) with respect to the concepts he does choose to introduce. This is true of the sudden appearance of “the dark precursor”(39) and the “quasi-cause.” (93) Their appearance here is not only jarring for the initiate, but unhelpful for those looking to Patton for his usual deft rendering. Better to have left these out.

Nevertheless, *Deleuze and the Political* sets the bar for what it would take, both on the part of the writer and on the part of his or her to-come audience, to make the case that Deleuze and Guattari, are “profoundly political philosopher[s]” whose work can and should be taken into account by those trained in the Anglo-American tradition of political philosophy vis-à-vis the very kinds of problems (formalism, aboriginal jurisprudence, multiculturalism, hate speech, universalism and representation) which presently logjam more conventional approaches to political thought. Patton’s book is the first place to send those who would like to see what “new resources and new directions for thinking the political”(132) contemporary Continental thinking has to offer.

As a framework for seeing some of the limits of Patton’s book, I’d like to foreground the question I hinted at earlier. My question is about the limits of working across the Anglo-American and Continental bodies of thought within academic discourse in the manner that *Deleuze and the Political* and other books in the series such as Yannis Stravarakakis’ *Lacan and the Political* (1999) and Richard Beardsworth’s *Derrida and the Political* (1996) are attempting.

Academic discourse is without question one of the social fields in which the apparatus of capture is the dominant rather than the marginally actualized form of virtual machine. Insofar as universities “create homogeneous and measurable spaces ... the drawing of boundaries and the installation of common measures which enable the determination of similarities and differences,” (113) they manifest the state-form with their own characteristic forms of violence: isolation from social forces and social movements under the aegis of that same image of thought which underwrites isolation as an “essential condition of the activity of thinking”(5); speaking for others; acting on behalf of others; legitimating what is already known (25). Patton does not speak to any of this directly, but he certainly knows that Deleuze has, and he explicitly reproduces Deleuze’s no-holds-barred account of

what those claiming to be philosophers must do yet are largely not doing, and so Patton invariably knows that a book of philosophy, too, is part of a problem requiring a qualitatively new response qua philosopher.

Against this understanding, we are required to ask anew, retroactively, of the project: what would it take to make a thinker like Guattari systematically intelligible to the dominant body of contemporary political thought, to “establish a uniform space of comparison”(129) without effacing some of the untranslatable features of Deleuze and Guattarian thought? That is, without diluting precisely what seems to be the political features we have just learned to limn in assemblages. How does one refuse the “primary stages” of the apparatus of capture – uniformity and appropriation – while at the same time trying to sidle up to it for the admirable purpose of critical engagement? How does one both keep the right distance in order to ward off appropriation or relative deterritorialization, yet close enough to discover or create the connections, the possible lines of flight between them? On what terms and with what address must one approach the Sovereign in order to draw critical attention toward the zones of undecidability and contradiction inherent in it, and hence to instigate the possibilities of reconfiguration and transformation?

The nomadic qualities of Deleuze and Guattarian thought, and the sorts of effects that these can give rise to (mutual becoming, vectors of deterritorialization, qualitative transformation) must, in a philosophical work about the political in Deleuze, be present in some (new) way in order to meet the conditions he himself sets on what it means to do philosophy and on what it means to enact the political: it must generate cognitive and critical smooth space in the juxtaposition of radically distinct conceptual frameworks, in the construction of new assemblages. In what “ways” might these be present? Rhetorically? Performatively? Argumentatively? What are Patton’s various strategies in these regards?

Consider a hallmark Deleuze and Guattarian concept, the assemblage. With the “assemblage,” and the “qualitative” versus “quantitative multiplicity,” Patton has built the base for what the political means/involves within their thinking. An assemblage is a multiplicity, a “more or less concrete arrangement of things”(44) having a form, a content and most importantly, a quality. A book is an assemblage. There are two kinds of assemblages, two very different kinds of multiplicity: extensive, molar multiplicities that are organisable and display a stable nature, and there are intensive, molecular multiplicities that are not unifiable, not totalizable and cannot be divided without changing in nature (42). These two kinds of assemblages appear in Deleuzian thought as the distinction between arborescent (quantitative) and rhizomatic (qualitative) multiplicities. The former are “hierarchical systems with centres of signifiacance and subjectification” (Deleuze and Guattari 1987:16) whose various parts are connected according to an invariant principle of unity. The latter are less determinate objects or regions, defined not by an overarching principle but “by the outside: by the abstract line, the line of flight ... according to which they change in nature and connect with other multiplicities.”(Ibid 8) The ethos of becoming-other underwrites new possibilities for life, most effectively realizable through molecularity. A book, qua assemblage, might be fashioned to, and prone to exhibit one quality rather than another. The

same can be said for bodies (Ch. 3 &4) for social forms (Ch. 5), for law (Ch. 6).

A Thousand Plateaus, as a book, not only made this case *about* assemblages, but made the case for assemblages, *as* a peculiar assemblage. Although one *could* initiate engagement via the front, and work through to the back, the arguments building from or *about A Thousand Plateaus*, in tandem with the authors' point-by-point multi-directional eco-logic, one could also read beginning and ending anywhere, through any combination of plateaus; an entirely different, yet nevertheless precise, motion (a stroll) always somewhere newly between where they seemed to be headed and where you were. That text was, naturally, deliberate and coherent design on the part of Deleuze and Guattari, who charged: "It is not enough to say that concepts possess movement, 'you also have to construct intellectually mobile concepts'." (Deleuze 1994:122) Patton confirms that "*A Thousand Plateaus* is the realisation of this goal. It does more than simply record the movement to which concepts are subject in the course of the history of philosophy. It creates concepts that are defined by their relations to the outside and hence their capacity for movement and transformation." (17) The complex and unique successes of *A Thousand Plateaus* can be largely attributed to its rhizomatic capacity to induce becoming, in the concepts transmogrifying across plateaus and in the intellectual mobility of the reader.

Deleuze and the Political, on the other hand, while an excellent book, is no rhizome. The reader enters the text cleanly, like a trained diver, at the introduction, and with the aid of that introduction, can best approach the first chapter. Having mastered the first chapter, the reader can better understand the second, and the third, all the better to see you with my dear, and so on until the end, when one is released from Patton's chain of reasoning, quite convinced of its soundness. One doesn't emerge with a dizzy head full of mobile concepts in quite the same way, although the mobile concepts from Deleuze and Guattari, rendered intelligible in this relatively molar fashion, perhaps find a line of flight in this rendered molarity, counter-actualizing (109) themselves from their micropolitical incarnations.

Since, as previously mentioned, *Deleuze and the Political* was written with non-Deleuzians in mind, it is doubtful that this particular kind of project *could* have been fashioned successfully as a molecularity, which makes two wonder, again, what (other) effective strategies of micro-resistance/ becoming qua book-as-assemblage, might be? This is a complex question, the complexity of which, in a way, Patton's conservative editorial apparatus rhetorically affirms. He reminds us a number of times throughout the book that the nature of anything is "determined by the character of the forces in play around it at any given moment." (56) That "the distinction between qualities of force and those of will to power is not one that can simply be read off the relative strength of the forces in play on a given occasion." (62) And that "[t]o be capable of such variation does not imply a commitment to experiencing it at every opportunity, just as a radical change in the circumstances of a life does not necessarily imply critical freedom on the part of the subject." (85) What these cautions tell us is that any one kind of approach is not itself subversive: some kinds of apparently radical approaches are instantly domesticated and circulate as instruments of the molar while others, unpredictably, disrupt in the

desired ways. To borrow from Judith Butler, a typology of book strategies wouldn't suffice for "the political" since "this depends upon context and reception." (Butler 1990:139)

Happily, this question, which I foregrounded here as (if) a matter of textual strategy, emerges in a different guise in the final chapter of *Deleuze and the Political*, and in fact, confirms this cautionary note about molecular vs. molar strategy with a vivid example. Patton's assessment of the qualitatively distinct natures of the social forms that underwrote the settlement of occupied lands in the first place (primitive territorial machine meeting despotic machine) puts us in a position to critically reflect upon the juridical strategies now "available" to Aboriginal people vis-à-vis land title and constitutional rights. The various strategies available to Aboriginal peoples (non-participation, violence, approaching the standard bearer), their limits, the deep conceptual nature of those limits and what each strategy might accomplish could be (perhaps with some sympathetic abstraction) mapped onto the range of options and outcomes available to continental thinkers interested in gaining the ear of Anglo-American political theorists. In that final chapter, having traced the forces, Patton makes his somewhat surprising case for the strategy of approaching the law. He writes:

The discussion of colonisation and native title jurisprudence ... was not a simple application of the concept of capture to the colonial case, but rather to show that capture takes on a specific legal form in the case of constitutional colonial states, and to suggest that in this context the jurisprudence of aboriginal or native title amounts to a smooth legal space with the potential to alter significantly both the rights of indigenous peoples and the constitutional form of those states (134, emphasis added).

The book's final recommendation reframes the merits of Patton's own textual strategy. Significantly, it reminds us that the most difficult but ideal orientation of one thing to another is that which is maximally conducive to "double-capture": "... one of the ways in which the powers of an individual body may be transformed by entering into a relation with the powers of another without incorporating or weakening the other body." (54)

The possibility of transformation must be distributed symmetrically across both philosophical readerships. Patton's book, on many registers, exhibits and fosters that capacity in its own ways.

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Notes

1. Patton collapses Deleuze and Guattari into “Deleuze” although the concepts discussed and the sources relied upon (*Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* chief among them) were co-created and co-written. Where quoting Patton, I will not insert “Guattari.” Where I discuss them, I’ll distinguish whether they were singletons or double-headed twins.

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