

Ronald Bogue

Thinking with Deleuze



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Preface

The essays of this collection represent a decade-long attempt to think with Deleuze, both alongside him and through him, following diverse lines of his thought and deploying certain concepts to extend that thought into areas he did not explore. Each essay offers a separate point of entry into Deleuze's thought, but all focus ultimately on Deleuze's effort to 'think otherwise' and thereby invent possibilities for life, in the hope that such possibilities eventuate in a people to come and a new earth.

In a broad sense, the present effort to think with Deleuze is a continuation of my work since 2004. When my first book, *Deleuze and Guattari*, appeared in 1989, there was very little on Deleuze available in English. The book was commissioned as a contribution to the series *Critics of the Twentieth Century*, and hence it provided analyses of Deleuze's literary studies of Proust and Sacher-Masoch and Deleuze and Guattari's volume on Kafka. But the absence of secondary literature on Deleuze and Guattari and their marginal status in what was then referred to as critical theory meant that any consideration of Deleuze and Guattari as literary critics would have to be situated within a broad introduction to their thought in general – and, in fact, well over two-thirds of the book was devoted to that purpose. The publisher's page limit, however, precluded a consideration of the full Deleuzian corpus, and I chose to trace the outlines of Deleuze's thought by discussing only *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, *Difference and Repetition*, *The Logic of Sense*, *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*.

Upon completing that project, I saw the need for a more

comprehensive exposition of Deleuze's thought as well as a thorough engagement with his approach to the arts as a whole. I therefore embarked on an examination of Deleuze's writings on literature, cinema, music and art, with the goal of providing discussions of each art sufficiently sophisticated to address the concerns of students and practitioners of the art in question, yet accessible enough to be understood by those engaged in other artistic fields and by philosophers interested in Deleuze's aesthetics and its relationship to his thought in general. This effort resulted in a 2003 trilogy on Deleuze and the arts: *Deleuze on Literature*, *Deleuze on Cinema* and *Deleuze on Music, Painting, and the Arts*.

Although I conceived of this trilogy as an exercise in 'reading along with' Deleuze, the emphasis was more on 'reading' than 'along with', in that most of my attention was directed towards an explication of Deleuze's difficult texts and an exposition of the broad tenets of his aesthetics. In this sense, the trilogy was largely a continuation of my initial project of offering an introduction to Deleuze for the uninitiated. It was only in the essays of *Deleuze's Wake: Tributes and Tributaries* (2004) and *Deleuze's Way: Essays in Transverse Ethics and Aesthetics* (2007) that I adopted as a primary goal that of thinking with Deleuze – untangling strands of motifs enmeshed in diverse arguments and using Deleuzian concepts to test their viability in the analysis of subjects Deleuze did not address, such as Nō drama and death metal music. Decisive in these efforts was my encounter with the concept of fabulation, a minor theme in Deleuze's work that had gone largely unnoticed by commentators. This encounter led me to develop an approach to narrative in terms of fabulation and to argue for its use in reading modern fiction. In *Deleuzian Fabulation and the Scars of History* (2010), I detailed the features of such Deleuzian fabulation and utilised them in extended analyses of five contemporary novels.

Central to the concept of fabulation is the goal of inventing a people to come. In the essays presented in this volume, I continue to meditate on the idea of inventing a people to come and all that such invention entails. What I have added to this meditation is a consideration of Deleuze and Guattari's call for the creation of a new earth. The term 'new earth' ('terre nouvelle' or 'nouvelle terre') occurs eight times in *Anti-Oedipus*, in each case as

an indicator that the schizo's deterritorialisation discloses a new, deterritorialised 'terre'. (The English translation masks this repetition, rendering 'nouvelle terre' or 'terre nouvelle' as 'new earth' [AO 131, 299, 321], 'new land' [AO 318, 322] and 'new world' [AO 322].) In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari refer to a 'nouvelle terre' five times (rendered as 'new earth' [ATP 423, 510] and 'new land' [ATP 149, 472, 509]), and they also speak of a 'people to come' ('peuple à venir') – a phrase that does not occur in *Anti-Oedipus* – three times (twice on page 345, translated first as 'people yet to come' and then as 'people to come', once on page 467). But it is only in *What is Philosophy?* that the notions of a new earth and a people to come are brought together. In the concluding paragraph of *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari state that what unites philosophy, the sciences and the arts is the creation of a 'people to come' (WP 218), but in Chapter 4, 'Geophilosophy', they connect that effort to the 'creation of a future new earth' ('la création d'une nouvelle terre à venir') (WP 88). Philosophy must '*summon forth a new earth, a new people*' (WP 99). It must induce absolute deterritorialisation 'even to the point where this calls for a new earth, a new people' (WP 101). The creation of concepts 'in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist' (WP 108), for 'the people to come and the new earth' (WP 109).

Adding a call for a new earth to a call for a new people might seem a mere rhetorical flourish, a means of emphasising the all-encompassing transformations attendant on a truly revolutionary philosophy. In such case, it would make no difference whether 'terre' were translated as 'earth', 'world' or 'land'. But as Deleuze and Guattari suggest in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the concept of a new earth is inseparable from their ontology, which is that of a perpetually self-organising, disorganising and reorganising, metamorphic 'chaosmos'. In Plateau Three, 'The Geology of Morals', they present the earth both as the locus of strata encompassing the physico-chemical, organic and anthropic (or 'alloplastic') domains of an anorganic life, and as 'the Deterritorialized, the Glacial, the giant Molecule [. . .] a body without organs' (ATP 40). In Plateau Eleven, 'The Refrain', they elaborate on the ethological ramifications of Plateau Three's ontology of strata, and in Plateau Ten,

'Becoming-Intense, Becoming-Animal, Becoming-Imperceptible . . .', they detail processes of metamorphosis that traverse all the strata of the natural world. Hence, the call for a new earth is more than a vague utopian slogan. Rather, it is an invocation of absolute deterritorialisation as a cosmic force that plays through rocks, plants, animals and humans. 'We could say that the earth, as deterritorialized, is itself the strict correlate of D [deterritorialisation]. To the point that D can be called the creator of the earth – of a new earth, a universe, not just a reterritorialization' (ATP 509; trans. modified). Deterritorialisation is relative when it induces stratification, but it is absolute when it 'brings about the creation of a new earth, in other words, when it connects lines of flight, raises them to the power of an abstract vital line, or draws a plane of consistency' (ATP 510).

A central concern of the essays in this volume, then, is to connect this view of nature to the political goal of inventing a people to come and to situate the arts in relation to the project of creating a new earth and a new people. The key, I argue here, is to 'think otherwise', and thereby to open possibilities for new modes of existence, to adopt 'protocols of experience' as guides for experimentation in politics and the arts, and to embrace a 'chaosmopolitanism', in which a viable collectivity invents new ways of living in resonance with the chaosmos of nature.

Since the publication of my first book, the secondary literature on Deleuze has increased dramatically, especially over the last decade. Interest in Deleuze and Guattari has spread well beyond the confines of Europe, North America and Australia, with extremely rich uses of their thought being developed in East and South Asia, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America. That expansion is represented in a very small way in this collection by the essay on Chinese-American literature (Chapter 11), delivered at the first Deleuze conference held in the People's Republic of China (Henan University, 2012), and the study of Deleuze and Asian drama (Chapter 12), presented at the First International Deleuze Studies in Asia Conference in Taiwan (2013). In both cases, my effort was to redress the asymmetry so often evident in East–West engagements with philosophy and the arts, in which Asian scholars devote serious study to Western texts while

Occidental scholars largely ignore Asian traditions and practices. The thought of Deleuze has also generated considerable activity in numerous disciplines outside philosophy. This expansion of Deleuze studies is indicated only partially in this volume's chapters touching on issues in film (2, 14), music (4, 5, 6), the visual arts (13), literature (3, 5, 10, 11, 12, 13), law (17), ecology (14), ethology (18) and education (1).

It would take a taxonomic genius – or, more likely, a delusional system builder – to discern a clear pattern in the myriad publications on Deleuze and Guattari that have appeared in the last few decades and that continue to proliferate. Situating this volume within the expanding, heterogeneous, and perhaps impossible areas of Deleuze studies must be limited and incomplete, but a few coordinates may help relate these essays to certain positions that have been staked out in the field. There has long been a tendency to minimise the role of Guattari in the development of Deleuze's thought, and in some cases to argue that Deleuze's collaboration with Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus* signalled the end of his work as a serious philosopher. The best-known expressions of this extreme view are Alain Badiou's *Deleuze: The Clamour of Being* (Badiou 2000), which treats *Difference and Repetition* (1968) as Deleuze's last significant book, and Slavoj Žižek's *Organs without Bodies: Deleuze and Consequences* (2003), which locates the apogee of Deleuze's philosophy in *The Logic of Sense* (1969). I agree with Badiou and Žižek that *Anti-Oedipus* marks a major divide in Deleuze's work, but one that is positive, not negative. What I find most interesting are Deleuze's writings from *Anti-Oedipus* on, a predilection reflected in this collection of essays, which focuses almost exclusively on the publications that appeared during the last two decades of Deleuze's life.

Indeed, far from representing an abandonment of serious philosophising, Deleuze's writings with Guattari, I believe, stand as his greatest achievements in philosophy. Evidence suggests that I am not alone in this judgement. Early studies of Deleuze and Guattari, including Brian Massumi's *A User's Guide to Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1992), Eugene Holland's *Deleuze and Guattari's Anti-Oedipus* (1999) and Ian Buchanan's *Deleuzism* (2000), have paved the way for hundreds of books and articles on the jointly

authored works – testimony to the significance others have found in these texts. Essential for my purposes here is the political dimension of these books, especially as it is laid out in *Anti-Oedipus*'s third chapter, 'Savages, Barbarians and Civilized Men', the Nomadology and Apparatus of Capture Plateaus of *A Thousand Plateaus*, and the Geophilosophy chapter of *What Is Philosophy?*, since the concepts of fabulation and the people to come only gain full coherence within this context. Eugene Holland and Paul Patton have provided invaluable analyses in this area (Holland 1999, 2006, 2013; Patton 2000 and 2010), and those studies have guided my response in Chapter 3 to Peter Hallward's charges of political inefficacy in Deleuze (Hallward 2006) and in Chapter 5 to Philippe Mengue's claims of an anti-democratic bias in Deleuze's thought (Mengue 2003).

Of the four jointly authored works, I regard *A Thousand Plateaus* as the most important, since it provides the basic ontological framework in which to understand the schizoanalysis of *Anti-Oedipus* and the minor literature of *Kafka*, as well as the themes of fabulation, the possible and vitalism that recur in later volumes, especially in *What is Philosophy?* and *Essays Critical and Clinical*. It has taken some time for philosophers to engage *A Thousand Plateaus* seriously, but the recent collection *A Thousand Plateaus and Philosophy* (2018), edited by Somers-Hall, Bell and Williams, perhaps testifies to a shift among philosophers towards a fuller appreciation of the significance of this great work. My reading of *A Thousand Plateaus* follows the lines laid out by those who approach Deleuze and Guattari via chaos and emergence theory, including, among many others, Manuel DeLanda (especially DeLanda's early essay 'Nonorganic Life' [DeLanda 1992]), Jeffrey Bell (*Philosophy at the Edge of Chaos: Gilles Deleuze and the Philosophy of Difference* [2006]), and, above all, John Protevi, whose essays 'Deleuze, Guattari and Emergence' (2006) and 'Deleuze and Life' (2012) aptly summarise his views.

In a very loose sense, this reading is in accord with elements of what has been called the New Materialism (see Coole and Frost [2010] and Dolphijn and van der Tuin [2012]), which has often taken tacit, if not explicit, inspiration from Deleuze. It is also compatible with the work of those who have brought Deleuze and

Guattari into discussions of ecology, animals and the non-human. As Eduardo Viveiros de Castro observes, *A Thousand Plateaus* marks a significant change from *Anti-Oedipus*, one that

reflects a major shift of focus from an intraspecific to an inter-specific horizon: from a human economy of desire – a world-historical desire, no doubt, that was racial and socio-political and not familial, personological, and Oedipal, but a human desire all the same – to an economy of trans-specific affects ignorant of the natural order of species and their limiting synthesis, connecting us, through inclusive disjunction, to the plane of immanence. (Viveiros de Castro 2014: 162)

A Thousand Plateaus's 'economy of trans-specific affects' provides the central theoretical framework for Viveiros's approach to anthropology, which in turn has inspired others to pursue an 'ontological anthropology' beyond the human (see, for example, Kohn 2013 and Holbraad and Pedersen 2017). *A Thousand Plateaus* also plays a major role in the contributions to three recent collective volumes that explore the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's ontology of anorganic life: *Deleuze/Guattari and Ecology* (Herzogenrath 2008), *Deleuze and the Non/Human* (Roffe and Stark 2015) and *Deleuze and the Animal* (Gardner and MacCormack 2017). Although my ends are very different from many of the contributors to these volumes, as well as those of ontological anthropologists, I share their interest in *A Thousand Plateaus*' conception of nature as a chaosmos of mutative forms, forces and processes that traverse the domains commonly designated as physical-chemical, organic, human, technological and so on.

One essential area remains to be explored in these essays – that of the contributions of Guattari's late writings to the chaosmopolitan project initiated in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In Chapter 16, I argue that *A Thousand Plateaus* may be judged 'ecosophic', in the sense given the term by Arne Naess, but I leave unexamined *A Thousand Plateaus*' relationship to the ecosophy of Guattari's *Three Ecologies* (1989), *Chaosmosis* (1992) and the posthumous *Qu'est-ce que l'écophilosophie?* (2013). Guattari subtitles *Chaosmosis* 'an ethico-aesthetic paradigm', and in *Chaosmosis* he asserts that 'the

aesthetic power of feeling, although equal in principle with the other powers of thinking philosophically, knowing scientifically, acting politically, seems on the verge of occupying a privileged position within the collective Assemblages of enunciation of our era' (Guattari 1995: 101). Exactly how this primacy of the aesthetic might play out in the theoretical context of Guattari's late work is an area that holds great promise for future research.

I have organised the essays in six sections. Although each essay is self-contained, reiterated themes and concerns across the essays are meant to reinforce the broad argument that Deleuze's work from *Anti-Oedipus* on is dedicated to the search for new possibilities for life with the goal of fostering a new earth and a people to come. This is how I see the essays working together to support that argument.

I. Introduction: Thinking Otherwise. In *Foucault* (1986), Deleuze says that for Foucault, 'Thought thinks its own history (the past), but in order to free itself from what it thinks (the present) and be able finally to "think otherwise"' (F 119). The same may be said of Deleuze. 'The Master Apprentice', the first chapter in this volume, offers an introduction to Deleuze's 'thinking otherwise' by examining his conception and practice of teaching. In his seminars, he tried to model thought-in-process, to combine rigorous preparation with improvisation in an effort to transcend that preparation in moments of inspiration. He approached the history of philosophy in his courses as a discipline necessary for thought 'to free itself from what it thinks'. This apprenticeship in philosophy he expected of his students, and he himself practised it throughout his career. As master to his apprentices, he taught by inviting his students to think alongside him, for as he says in *Difference and Repetition*, 'we learn nothing from those who say: "Do as I do". Our only teachers [*maîtres*] are those who tell us to "do with me"' (DR 23). What he showed is that to think otherwise one must be a master apprentice, perpetually encountering signs and learning from the world.

II. The Possible and the People to Come. In his later works, Deleuze stressed repeatedly that the goal of philosophy and the arts is to create new possibilities for life and thereby enable the invention of a 'people to come', by which he meant a viable col-

lectivity that does not yet exist. The essays of this section address various aspects of this general goal. Chapter 2 focuses on the ethics of 'choosing to choose', which Deleuze finds exemplified in the philosophy of Kierkegaard and the cinema of Robert Bresson. Deleuze argues that the way of living involved in choosing to choose, that of committing oneself to the perpetual responsibility of choosing, affords a means of restoring belief in this world and its power to open alternatives to the clichéd thought of the present. Chapter 3 looks at the theme of the possible in Deleuze's essay on Michel Tournier's novel *Friday*, and Chapter 4 expands on this notion of the possible, tracing its development throughout Deleuze's career. Chapter 5 directly addresses the topic of the people to come, its relation to utopian thought, and the practical methods that might guide the invention of such a people. Chapter 6 elaborates on these methods of fostering a new people by teasing out the implications of Deleuze's concept of 'protocols of experience' for creative aesthetic and political experimentation.

III. Music and Philosophy. Thinking otherwise for Deleuze often involves a dialogue between philosophy and the arts. Though philosophy and the arts occupy different domains, they share the goal of inventing possibilities for life, and they enrich one another when their differing modes of thought are juxtaposed. The essays of this section detail three encounters between music and philosophy. Chapter 7 fleshes out Deleuze's discussion in *The Fold* of Renaissance and Baroque music and what he sees as their philosophical corollaries – the occasionalism of Malebranche and the monadology of Leibniz. Leibniz's philosophy, Deleuze argues, provides a philosophical counterpart to the Baroque's 'new harmony', while also serving as a means for contemporary thought to go beyond Leibniz in the creation of a 'new new harmony', the harmony of a pluriverse of co-existing impossible worlds. Chapter 8 takes as its starting point a passing reference in *A Thousand Plateaus* to Thomas Mann's novel *Doctor Faustus*, perhaps the greatest literary work ever written about music. Mann describes at length two fictional musical compositions and treats them as symptoms of the failures of modernity and the rise of fascism, but when placed in the context of Deleuze and Guattari's thought, the compositions signal a different conception not only of modernity

and fascism but also of the powers of music to promote new modes of existence. Chapter 9 is dedicated to the opening image of *A Thousand Plateaus*, the score of Piece Four of Sylvano Bussotti's *Five Piano Pieces for David Tudor* (1959). Although Deleuze and Guattari say nothing about this image, I argue that the conception of music inherent in Bussotti's composition reinforces several themes of *A Thousand Plateaus*, and that the score provides guidelines for the reader's performance of the text.

IV. Literature and Philosophy. The first essay in this section concerns Kafka, a writer to whom Deleuze and Guattari devote an entire book and whom Deleuze cites frequently in various works. In this study, I examine the relationship Deleuze establishes between Kafka and Heinrich von Kleist, each of whom is a practitioner of 'minor literature', the one engaging a bureaucratic machine, the other a war machine, in an effort to invent a people to come. Kafka's object is to disclose in his fiction both the 'diabolical powers of the future' and the revolutionary possibilities inherent in his world, whereas Kleist's project is to invent a war machine that does not self-destruct but offers creative means for aesthetic and social transformation. The section's last two essays attempt to extend Deleuze's thought on literature by incorporating it into a discussion of two Chinese-American writers and three forms of Asian drama. In *Dialogues*, Deleuze speaks of the 'superiority of Anglo-American literature', citing that body of literature as one that engages a creative line of flight. In Chapter 11 I first determine the specificity of American as opposed to English literature and then show how the works of Maxine Hong Kingston and Tao Lin fulfil the promise of American literature as a minor literature that generates possibilities for a people to come. In Chapter 12, I review Deleuze's remarks on thought as theatre in *Difference and Repetition* and his thought about theatre in 'One Manifesto Less', and then reflect on the affinities his conceptions of theatre and thought have with the theories and practices of Beijing opera, Kathakali dance drama and Nō drama, concluding that the Asian theatrical traditions hold great promise for expanding the uses to which Deleuze's theory of affect may be put in our understanding of drama and the arts as a whole.

V. Sight, Sound and Language. For Deleuze, thinking oth-

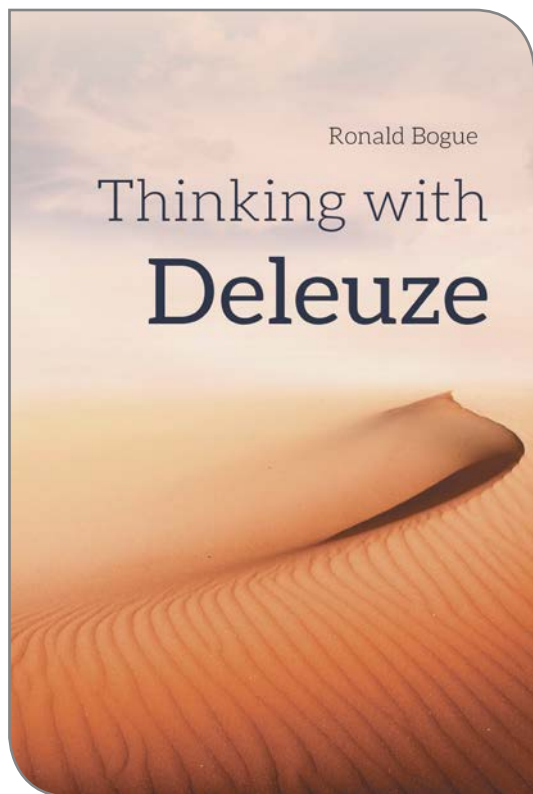
erwise in the arts involves an engagement with sight and sound at the limits of or beyond language. The complexities of the interrelationship of the visual, aural and linguistic are especially evident in the conceptual motif of the landscape, the subject of Chapter 13. Deleuze and Guattari identify painting as the deterritorialisation of the landscape, but they also speak of musical landscapes, and in his cinema books Deleuze makes the landscape an important element of the audiovisual configurations of what he calls the action-image and the reflection-image. In Deleuze's remarks about the landscape in literature, the tensions between language and sight-sound reach the breaking point, as he posits a seeing and a hearing that are not outside language, but that constitute the outside of language. Those tensions are explored further in Chapter 14, which offers a Deleuzian analysis of Jean-Luc Godard's 2014 3D film *Adieu au langage*. As Godard's title suggests, the film is a meditation on language and the need to bid it farewell in order to attain new modes of seeing and hearing. What Godard's images provide, I argue, is a visual and sonic world beyond our common-sense senses, one that restores our belief in the creative possibilities of this world. The same issues arise in Chapter 15, where I address the question of what Deleuze means when he says in a late essay that literature aspires to create Visions and Auditions, which are like a painting and a music that constitute the outside of language. Deleuze did not live long enough to elaborate on these concepts, but I conclude that they are closely tied to his thought about the image and its function in what he calls 'fabulation', which he sees as central in the effort to invent a people to come.

VI. Nature. In *What is Philosophy?*, Deleuze and Guattari say 'We lack creation. We lack resistance to the present. The creation of concepts in itself calls for a future form, for a new earth and people that do not yet exist' (WP 108). The five essays in this section investigate the relationship between Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of nature and their project of creating a new earth. In the first chapter, 'A Thousand Ecologies', I show that *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* articulate an ecological view of nature, but one that is at odds with 'deep ecology' and its efforts to escape 'speciesism'. Their aim, I argue, is not to approach

nature from a non-human perspective, but instead to transform the category of the human through a process of becoming-other in interaction with the natural world. Chapter 17 proposes that Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of nature be considered a 'chaosmopolitanism', a contemporary counterpart of Cynic and Stoic cosmopolitanism that conceives of philosophy as a way of living in resonance with the chaosmos of a dynamic, emergent and metamorphic nature. This chaosmopolitan view of nature, I claim, entails a normativity that supports a politics of liberation. In Chapter 18, I address Donna Haraway's critique of Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'becoming-animal'. After identifying her misconceptions about the concept, I suggest that her notions of the cyborg and companion species may prove useful in delineating the roles domestication and technology might play in an expanded articulation of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of nature. Chapter 19 focuses on Deleuze's vitalism and his identification of Raymond Ruyer's philosophy of biology as a modern version of Leibniz's monadology. Deleuze claims that both Ruyer and Leibniz embrace the vitalism of a 'force that is but does not act', but I conclude that Ruyer differs from Leibniz in his conception of force, and that this difference is symptomatic of divergent orientations in Ruyer's and Deleuze's philosophy of nature. The final chapter offers an exegesis of Plateau Three of *A Thousand Plateaus*. Titled 'The Geology of Morals (Who Does the Earth Think It Is?)', this plateau provides a comprehensive account of nature in terms of strata and stratification. In this account, the domains of the inorganic, the organic and the human constitute strata within which there is a constant play of forces of coding and decoding, territorialisation and deterritorialisation. This plateau helps clarify the relation Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy of nature has to their project of inventing a new earth and thereby allows us to conceive of their geophilosophy as a central component of their chaosmopolitanism.

My hope, above all, is that the essays of this volume may help elucidate the pivotal role the arts play in the political project of inventing a people to come and the broader chaosmopolitan project of promoting an ecologically viable new earth. That role is complex and variable from art to art. In cinema, it may be

that of instilling belief in this world or making visible all that is intolerable; in literature, that of imagining alternative mentalities and politics; in music, that of inventing a new harmony of impossibilities. But, in all cases, the arts function as means of thinking otherwise, as ways of seeing, hearing, speaking and feeling differently, and thereby engendering new modes of existence.



Thinking with Deleuze

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