* Year Zero: Faciality  
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Prof. Nathan Widder  
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*A Thousand Plateaus* locates three fundamental axes of stratification: the organism, signification, and subjectification. In truth, they are always wrapped up in one another. But one can still proceed as if they were autonomous and self-sufficient. There are important upshots to analyzing strata in relative isolation, not unlike what Foucault does by separating discursive and non-discursive domains in *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Specifically, such a move can illuminate the close connections and passages between the strata of signification and subjectification, particularly in a contemporary mixed semiotic where they fully interpenetrate. It can also reveal how, in these conditions, the stratification of the organism follows from the requirements of the signifying-subjectifying mixture. Foucault makes this second point clear when, long after leaving behind the discursive/non-discursive distinction, he demonstrates in *Discipline and Punish* how the modern organization of punishment of the body has as its target not the body but the soul – that is, the subject and its interiority. So too do Deleuze and Guattari when they hold that the disciplining of bodies follows from the need of the assemblages of power that impose signification and subjectification to do away with the corporeal coordinates through which earlier, polyvocal semiotics had operated. By separating the signifying and subjectifying strata from the stratification of the organism, the structure and function of faciality comes to light. Faciality subsumes both the signifier and the subject, making possible their coordination in the assemblages of power that require them.

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The face is a “white wall/black hole system” situated at the intersection of signification and subjectification. Signification, whose semiotic involves every sign referring to another sign and so on ad infinitum, along with a supreme signifier presenting itself as both excess and
lack, requires a white wall on which to inscribe its signs. Subjectification, which gives birth to a subject in a line of flight away from the regime of signification, a subject simultaneously liberated and subjected in this line of flight, requires a black hole into which it can lodge its hidden power. The face provides a “substance of expression” essential to the force of transmission of these semiotic systems. On the one hand, the form of the linguistic signifier “would remain indeterminate if the potential listener did not use the face of the speaker to guide his or her choices (‘Hey, he seems angry…’; ‘He couldn’t say it…’; ‘You see my face when I’m talking to you…’; ‘look at me carefully…’).” On the other hand, the “Hey you!” hail of Althusser’s police officer, which transforms the person on the street into a subject, depends on the “facialized” uniform and badge that express the officer’s authority – or, rather, that present the officer as a proxy for a hidden authority standing behind and above him. The face is thus a second-order redundant structure, a backup system for the redundancies specific to signification and subjectification – the supreme signifier and the authority figure on the street – that reinforces these in the event of their failure.

Concrete faces “are engendered by an abstract machine of facilaity (visagéité), which produces them at the same time as it gives the signifier its white wall and subjectivity its black hole.” The faciality machine is a field of intensive forces that produces the face and related facialized entities. The field neither resembles the regime it engenders nor imposes on this regime a uniform likeness. On the one hand, the bouncing balls that follow Kafka’s Blumfeld, making their presence known by their irritating sound but swinging around to remain hidden behind him every time he turns to look at them, are enough to create a signifying and subjectifying regime: “Nothing in all of this resembles a face, yet throughout the system faces are distributed and facilaity traits are organized.” On the other hand, the face facializes the body, clothing, external objects, and the whole landscape, not by making these resemble faces but instead by giving them “new coordinates” and “an order of reasons.”
The facialized world becomes a milieu of observability, expressing the signifier’s “unlocalized omnipresence” and operating as a point of subjectification: “you might say that a house, utensil, or object, an article of clothing, etc., is watching me, not because it resembles a face, but because it is taken up in a white wall/black hole process, because it connects to an abstract machine of facialization.”

Significance and subjectification refer to distinct assemblages of power – despotic and authoritarian respectively – with distinct principles and thus different forms of the face. Yet each is also part of “a de facto mix” with the other, and as such, “there is no significance that does not harbour the seeds of subjectivity; there is no subjectification that does not drag with it remnants of signifier.” The limit form of the despotic face is forward facing, black holes on a white wall signifying the presence of the despot and his representatives everywhere, and here the subjectifying black hole accommodates itself to the signifying white surface of inscription. Conversely, the limit form of the authoritarian face sees the white wall turn sideways and become a line, whose curvatures form the outline of a profile face with a single black hole as its eye. There are in fact two faces in this scheme, either facing or turning away from each other, since the subject is constituted in relation to another authoritative subject, and here signification accommodates itself to this subjectifying relation. Real semiotics combine these two limit forms in diverse ways, but they always presuppose “assemblages of power that act through signifiers and act upon souls and subjects.” The face “is a politics” because it relates on the one side to an abstract machine that produces it and on the other side to an assemblage of power that requires it. But it is with the capitalist assemblage that these mixture becomes a complete interpenetration, and thus it is here that “the white wall/black hole system assumes its full scope.”

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If psychoanalysis is complicit with the contemporary capitalist order, as Deleuze and Guattari
maintain in *Anti-Oedipus*, it nevertheless indicates this order’s necessary conditions, and specifically how in it signification and subjectification interpenetrate and make common reference back to the face. The subject, Lacan contends, comes into being on the terrain of the Other when the child takes up the position of an “I” in discourse and articulates its needs to others. This articulation requires that the subject suppress the particularity of its needs, since their expression must accord with the generality of common signifiers. Language thus establishes a bar between signifier and signified – the latter here being the particularity the child seeks to communicate – such that the former is determined only in relation to other signifiers and the signified is subordinated and becomes an inarticulable support, a white wall upon which the signifiers operate. However, the universal nature of signifiers further transforms the articulation of need into universal demand, and the child’s voicing of needs becomes also a demand for love from its mother, so that every response to the child is taken as proof or disproof of absolute devotion. But the cancelled particularity of need here reappears as a desire “*beyond* demand,” as no particular response to the child can meet demand’s requirement of absolute and unconditional love: even if the child receives everything it needs and demands, it continues to feel lacking, but this lack remains unnameable because the child has already voiced all its articulable needs and demands. Desire, as lack, becomes infinite, as it revolves around an impossibility.

The subject constituted in language thus arises with a sense of loss, which entails its further subjection. That an unnameable object of desire – an *objet a* – is withheld from it implies that it is desired and enjoyed by an Other. This is not the Other of demand who grants or withholds love, but rather an Other who exercises a power of prohibition. The ground of the child’s subjectivity thus shifts from the mother who provides love to the father who intervenes in the mother–child relationship, and we enter the terrain of Oedipus. The subject’s freedom in speaking is consequently circumscribed by this Oedipal subjection, as it
either searches in vain for a substitute to the prohibited objet a – another who would satisfy desire, but no particular other can be adequate to the task – or prostrates itself before the authoritative Other in an equally futile attempt to become the objet a of the Other’s desire.

The phallus here assumes the status of privileged signifier. It stands first for the power of paternal prohibition, and thus for the desire denied to the subject. But as such it is also the signifier for the unnameable particularity excluded by the subject’s entry into language, and so marks the point at which this unnameable makes itself felt in language, though felt as a trace of what is primordially excluded. The phallus functions through its withdrawal and absence, as the unnameable cannot be given positive representation, and it is thus positioned as both an excess and a lack in relation to the signifying system. As master signifier, it secures the sense of the entire signifying semiotic because it embodies the force that bars the signified from the semiotic structure – it is “a sign of the latency with which any signifiable is struck.” But as this barring of the signified also constitutes the subject, the stratifications of signification and subjectification blend completely.

A subject born from loss is also a subject of trauma. Trauma implies an original unity that has been fractured, but since no real unity existed in the first place, the lost piece that would restore unity to the subject is unrecoverable. The required unity must therefore be imaginary, but it cannot arise on the signifying or subjectifying registers, as these are characterized by splitting. It instead emerges for Lacan in the earlier mirror stage, which precipitates the I in primordial form before it is objectified in a dialectic with the other, and before language, by its universal functions, establishes it as a subject.

The face here becomes the foundation of the mixed semiotic, as the mirror stage develops “from the child’s very early perception of the human form, a form which, as we know, holds the child’s interest right from the first months of life and, in the case of the human face, right from the tenth day.” This interest culminates in “the phenomenon of
recognition, implying subjectivity,” in “the signs of triumphant jubilation and the playful self-discovery that characterize the child’s encounter with his mirror image starting in the sixth month.” The self-identification with the image is the basis, Lacan says, for secondary identifications, the I’s mental permanence, and the relationship the organism establishes between its inner life and external world. But the recognition is also an alienation, since it builds from the infant’s earlier encounters with the faces of others and so its self-identification comes by way of a passage through an outside. The mirror stage experience also divides into an ideal imaginary unity seen in the reflection and the infant’s real lack of coordination and self-control, revealing “a certain dehiscence at the very heart of the organism, a primordial Discord.” This combination of identity and alienation established in relation to the face dominates the child’s early life up to the point where signification and subjectification take hold by way of Oedipus, these later developments in turn retroactively giving the mirror stage its full meaning.

Deleuze and Guattari criticize Lacan for reducing the face to a human form, “appealing to a form of subjectivity or humanity reflected in a phenomenological field or split structural field,” and failing to see that “the mirror is but secondary in relation to the white wall of faciality.” The face as a human face thus misses the field of intense impersonal forces that for Deleuze and Guattari comprise faciality’s abstract machine. That the mirror stage is not really foundational is indicated by Lacan himself when he turns to the role of the adult who places the infant before the mirror. For the infant does not spontaneously recognize and identify with the image, but only by way of the adult’s signification – an encouraging “look, that’s you!” or similar act of validation. And so the Other’s discourse is already part of the equation, and the mirror stage is precipitated by and imbued with what Deleuze and Guattari call “order-words,” which link acts (here the infant’s recognition) to statements and serve as redundancies for signification and subjectivity. Such order-words effect “incorporeal
transformations” that change nothing in the physicality of bodies but everything about their meaning or sense: “that’s you!” – the order-word that transforms the infant and paves the way for later stratifications. The mirror stage is thus always already imbued with specific signifying and subjectifying assemblages of power.

Nonetheless, another kind of faciality seems also to be at work prior to the mirror stage, in the child’s interest from the tenth day of life in the human face. While Lacan merely notes its role in preparing for recognition in the mirror, Deleuze and Guattari in the faciality plateau at least seem to do little more to explore the matter. They suggest only, in the context of recounting American psychology’s interest in the facial relationship between mother and newborn, that it presents a “Four-eye machine,” and they refer to it as part of an abstract machine of “maternal power operating through the face during nursing.” Yet the face here is clearly not just a mechanism for incorporeal transformations, as it operates in a relationship that combines “manual, buccal, or cutaneous proprioceptive sensations; and the visual perception of the face seen from the front against the white screen.” Moreover, the connected mouth–breast is Deleuze and Guattari’s first example of a desiring-machine, appearing in the opening paragraph of Anti-Oedipus, and in this respect its heterogeneous components are better interpreted as forming a rhizome, like that of the wasp and orchid, but coordinated by way of the face. In this context, the face is not part of the productive process – the connective synthesis by which the desiring-machine works – but rather the corollary recording process – the disjunctive synthesis by which the machine is explained – and thus part of the process that gives the machine its sense. This sense may or may not be signifying, and thus may or may not pave the way for an Oedipal coding of the parent–child relationship. It is thereby a faciality that, while it may be seized and taken up by signifying and subjectifying strata, may also connect to other possible stratifications, or to deterritorializations of strata.
Foucault’s presence can be felt at many points throughout *A Thousand Plateaus*, though it is perhaps not often recognized and appreciated. Attention tends to focus on Deleuze and Guattari’s stated points of disagreement on the priority of power versus desire and the nature of Foucauldian resistance versus lines of flight. But there are also clear ways in which the structure of abstract machines and the way they function in concrete assemblages of power reflect Foucault’s account of discursive formations and the role played by their products in the organization of disciplinary and normalizing power relations. This is certainly the case with the abstract machine of faciality.

Foucault introduces discursive formations in place of the standard principles of unity used to organize discourse – such as tradition, author, oeuvre, book, science, and literature – each of which imposes its organization from the outside onto discourse, erects bulky abstractions, and prioritizes continuity over discontinuity. Razing these principles allows the dispersion of discursive formations to appear. But dispersion here has a specific, technical meaning. It is not a scattering of elements in an open space, as one when one says that a crowd disperses or that seeds are dispersed in a flower bed. Rather, dispersion connotes a mixture in which one element remains distinct rather than dissolved into the other – in chemistry, for example, when one liquid is dispersed in another liquid or in a gas, constituting an emulsion or aerosol respectively. The regularities of such dispersions define the discursive formation prior to the unitary organizations imposed on it by the standard principles.

The nineteenth century discourse of psychopathology, for example, mixes heterogeneous discursive regimes, from which emerge the subjects and objects subsequently taken up by the discipline of psychopathology. The “surfaces of emergence” for its objects are found within the family, workplace, and religious community, while the expert subjects of
this new discipline are legitimated as “authorities of delimitation” through the convergence of the discourses of medicine and law, which links together the clinical distinction of health/sickness and the legal distinction of citizen/criminal. This link is then brought to bear on the family, workplace, and religious environments to establish “grids of specification” that define and group various forms of madness. Each of these domains, however, is itself a product of the dispersion/mixing of discursive regimes: the clinic, as the site of production for clinical discourse, forms at the intersection of various medical, political, and juridical discourses, as does the family, workplace, etc. Strife and conflict inevitably plague the intersections that constitute a discursive formation, as its components do not come together cleanly. The health/sickness binary often operates in contradiction to the citizen/criminal binary, for example, and the hodge podge of discourses that legitimate authoritative subjects frequently has nothing to do with any actual knowledge and expertise these subjects are supposed to have. The disciplines such as psychopathology that rest upon these discursive formations thus remain uncertain. Discursive formations do not create subjects and objects as such. Rather, they are the conditions of possibility for these subjects and objects to appear or become visible. As such, discursive relations are neither primary relations of causal dependency among real institutional and social forces nor secondary relations that reflectively organize components of already established discourses. They are neither internal nor exterior to discourse but instead “are, in a sense, at the limit of discourse; they offer it objects of which it can speak, or, rather…they determine the group of relations that discourse must establish in order to speak of this or that object, in order to deal with them, name them, analyse them, classify them, explain them, etc.”

Although the unity of a discursive formation is found in the regularity of its dispersions, this stability nevertheless cannot be discerned by the visibilities that emerge from it. A discursive formation may persist even when its objects mutate or new objects are
discovered, when knowledge changes and old truths are abandoned, and even when new authoritave subjects emerge or old ones return. Instead, Foucault maintains, the unity and coherence of the formation lies in the regularity of its statements. A statement (énoncé) is neither a proposition, sentence, nor speech act, each of which depends on a network of statements. Statements are rather what allow propositions, sentences, and speech acts to “make sense” – sense here being more than a matter of whether these linguistic entities are well-formed or grammatically correct, since even incoherent propositions, grammatically incorrect sentences, and illegitimate speech acts can still have sense. A statement operates by making the connections across heterogeneities necessary to establish a discursive formation, and for this reason, “it is not in itself a unit, but a function that cuts across a domain of structures and unities, and which reveal them, with concrete contents, in space and time.”

The link between medicine and law, already mentioned, enables the propositions and sentences of psychopathology to make sense, just as the link between desire and truth, as Foucault’s later works demonstrate, underpins the sense of various discourses of disciplinary and normalizing society. These links are never articulated in sentences, propositions, and speech acts, but instead are expressed in them, and in this way the statement operates not on the level of what is said but on the level of the sense of what is said: it is because the actual discourses of psychoanalysis, whatever they say, express and reinforce the sense that one’s desires contain the hidden truth about oneself and must be confessed to an authority figure able to interpret them, that these discourses belong to a regime of sexual normalization. The study of a discursive formation, Foucault says, includes study of the rarity of statements, which, in circumscribing the sense of what is said, indicate how discourse may be infinite yet it is still not possible to say anything at any time and from any place. This makes the study of discourse a study of power and politics.

Disciplinary and normalizing power relations function off of the subjects, objects,
forms of knowledge, and sense established by modern discursive formations. They embody what Foucault, following Nietzsche, calls a “will to truth,” which is not a will to have truth but instead an insistence that the world conform to an ideal of truth that operates by standards of normality and deviancy. These standards are indispensable in a modern world that can no longer rely on hierarchical modes of governance that use negative threats of punishment and death, and that requires instead a form of governmentality premised on promoting the life and efficiency of the body politic. This new governmentality works by constituting individuals in such a way that they can be subjected to discipline and normalization, held against standards of normality and rewarded or corrected on the basis of the degree to which they conform or deviate. The most important techniques and practices of power in this context – observation, examination, normalizing judgement, and confession – operate at a microscopic rather than macroscopic level – at the level where authoritative and subordinate subjects, objects of knowledge, and grids of specification are made visible and deployed in order to secure the disciplinary and normalizing sense modern society requires. These mechanisms of power appear in diverse institutions and sites, and it is not surprising that “prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons.” They create an explosion of discourses in the human sciences, and an army of experts in psychology, criminality, sexuality, pedagogy, and population management who all seek to establish standards of normality and to identify, isolate, and classify whatever deviates from them.

Seen in these terms, the abstract machine of faciality is a discursive formation that, taken up in modern assemblages of power, determine the assemblages’ sense, their distribution of content and expression. Once installed, Deleuze and Guattari contend, the facilaity machine assumes two functions: biunivocalization and selection. The first “constitutes a facial unit, an elementary face in biunivocal relation with another: it is a man or a woman, a rich person or a poor one, an adult or a child, a leader or a subject, ‘an x or a
These dichotomies determine the concrete types or norms that define individuals, such as teacher and student, father and son, worker and employee, etc. In the second function the faciality machine “assumes a role of selective response, or choice: given a concrete face, the machine judges whether it passes or not, whether it goes on or not, on the basis of elementary facial units.” The face here becomes a “deviance detector,” subjecting individuals and groups to discipline and normalization based on how they measure up against the standard. Crucially, the faciality machine does not work by exclusion – those subjected to discipline and normalization are not expelled – but by inclusion through facialization. Indeed, the modern mixed semiotic “has an exceptional need to be protected by any intrusion from the outside,” and as such the functions of facialization must expand into all areas of life, just as discipline and normalization expand for Foucault.

The faciality machine’s biunivocalizations and selections are not the same as the dualisms found in signifying language or the selections made by existing subjects; rather, the latter presuppose that faciality has already gridded the terrain on which they operate. The machine, in other words, establishes a grid of specification upon which the differences made by language users are then articulated, this grid not being articulated as such but rather expressed in what is articulated. And just as faciality does not resemble the facialized heads, objects, and landscapes it engenders, the binarities and biunivocalizations of the face are not the same as those of language or the subject, but rather subtend them. These subtended binarities and biunivocalizations are, pace Foucault, expressed in the statements that make language possible: “A language is always embedded in the faces that announce its statements and ballast them in relation to the signifiers in progress and the subjects concerned.” These faces, in turn, “choose their subjects,” determining by way of incorporeal transformations the authoritative or subordinate status of those who speak and those who are subjected.

Statements carry the sense of propositions, but for this reason, “the same proposition
can be tied to completely different statements.” It follows that a proposition can be
disconnected from the statements of one regime and mixed with or transferred to those of
another regime, or even that “one could try to create new, as yet unknown statements for that
proposition, even if the result were a patois of sensual delight, physical and semiotic systems
in shreds, asubjective affects, signs without signifiance where syntax, semantics, and logic
are in collapse.” The mutability of these connections entails a pragmatics of language that
can delineate possible translations, transferences, and lines of flight. This pragmatics is a
politics, just as the face is a politics, these two politics being connected by the statement. A
politics that challenges faciality is one that generates new statements.

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Deleuze and Guattari declare: “If it is possible to assign the faciality machine a date – the
year zero of Christ and the historical development of the White Man – it is because that is
when the mixture ceased to be a splicing or an intertwining, becoming a total interpenetration
in which each element suffuses the other like drops of red-black wine in white water.” The
face “is not universal,” but nor is it the “white man.” Rather, it is the White Man, which is to
say a specificity raised to the universal as norm. The White Man functions as a third eye that
establishes facial binaries, and a deviance detector that determines what must be normalized –
that is, Christianized. There is no contradiction in the fact that the faciality machine is dated
centuries before the capitalist assemblage that realizes it, just as there is no contradiction in
the fact that, as Foucault notes, disciplinary techniques are ancient but disciplinary society is
recent. It simply means that the Christ-face did not function as a faciality machine to express
the sense of pre-capitalist societies, even if it was present in them.

But the question remains: why Christ’s face? The answer lies in the associations
Deleuze and Guattari draw in Anti-Oedipus between the primitive, despotic, and capitalist
social forms and moments in the second essay of Nietzsche’s Genealogy of Morals, which
traces how debt (schulden) is transformed into guilt (schuld) or bad conscience. The primitive social machine, whose polyvocity expresses itself in a system of corporeal cruelty that marks the body by way of “tattooing, excising, incising, carving, scarifying, mutilating, encircling, and initiating” corresponds to the prehistorical system that Nietzsche identifies as the basis of conscience, where memory is “burned into” men to give them “the right to make promises.” In contrast, the despotic machine, which replaces primitive cruelty with terror and primitive polyvocity with signifiance, corresponds to the idea of infinite debt that Nietzsche initially hypothesizes might be equated with guilt before declaring that guilt requires a deeper moralization of conscience that transfigures it qualitatively into bad conscience. What distinguishes primitive and despotic systems from the capitalist machine is that while the former submit desire to codes, establishing value distinctions that police desire by condemning and excluding its most decoded flows, capitalism replaces codes with an axiomatic of exchange value, affirming free and decoded flows of desire but reterritorializing them by way of market logics and the creation of an Oedipal, capitalist subject. Capitalism thereby represses desire not by exclusion but by manipulating it to desire its own repression. The resonances here are also Nietzschean, as Deleuze and Guattari hold desire’s force to be “essentially active, aggressive, artistic, productive, and triumphant,” so that repression amounts to separating this active force from what it can do. Desire repressed in this way is not arrested, but rather channelled into circulation around lacks and lost objects, tied to a desiring subject defined by “collective and personal ends, goals, and intentions” rather than creative impulse, and led to condemn this subject as sinful or guilty.

For Nietzsche, the image that consolidates this self-repression is God on the cross. Infinite debt may be unrepayable because of its infinite size, but the inability to repay does not necessitate any self-condemnation. But the idea of Christ’s sacrifice moves debt onto the register of guilt because its gift of undeserved redemption, which cannot even be put in terms
of a debt, solidifies the idea that humans are unworthy: “God himself sacrifices himself for the guilt of mankind, God himself makes payment to himself, God as the only being who can redeem man from what has become unredeemable for man himself – the creditor sacrifices himself for his debtor, out of love (can one credit that?), out of love for his debtor!” All this, Nietzsche says, reflects a will to self-torment by which man seeks to find himself guilty and reprehensible to a degree that can never be atoned for, to think himself punished without the punishment ever being equal to the guilt. It universalizes ressentiment, which is directed outwards in a limited way in the first essay – its formula being: “they are evil; we are not like them; therefore we are good” – but which is turned back on the self in the second essay, so that all become guilty. This universal guilt, however, is possible only if delight is taken in self-torture – it must be desired. And that is why, for Nietzsche, bad conscience survives the death of God, as it embodies a self-hatred of man in which the difference between theism and atheism is irrelevant. It is also why, for Deleuze and Guattari, Oedipus can replace Christ as the modern figure of guilt, and psychoanalysis can replace the priest as the pedlar of guilty conscience.

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Faciality creates the resigned, docile, neurotic subjects needed for capitalist assemblages to function. These are subjects whose desires are structured around nameless lacks, who are manipulated into a perpetual search for fulfilment whereby they pass from one fetishized object to another, and who are willing participants in their own discipline and normalization. The neurotic subject is the politically harmless and occasionally useful form of deviance that capitalism’s faciality machine produces extremely well, just as, in Foucault’s analysis, the prison succeeds extremely well in producing the politically harmless and occasionally useful delinquent. But just as capitalism produces the very schizophrenia that threatens it, so too are the means to break apart faciality found in its own white wall of signification and black hole
of subjectification.

We might think of dismantling the face in the realm of signification and subjectification as the task of making oneself a body without organs is thought with regards to the stratification of the organism. Just as the latter is not an organless body but a body without organization, the dismantled face would not be a dissolved face but one without the organization of facial traits. The facial tic, for Deleuze and Guattari, represents the continual battle that facial traits wage against facial organization. Facial traits are liberated when they cease being fixed structural components of a mysterious and omnipresent power and follow their own becomings and lines of flight, linking to others so that “each freed faciality trait forms a rhizome with a freed trait of landscapicity, picturality, or musicality.” The slogan for defacialization would then be: do something creative with your facial tic. In this way the face ceases to be a redundancy for despotic signification and authoritarian subjectification, becoming instead a vehicle for creative experimentation.

The dangers of defacialization include madness. The novel always concerns “the adventure of lost characters who no longer know their name, what they are looking or, or what they are doing, amnesiacs, ataxics, catatonics.” Such characters can, under certain conditions, “push the movement further still, crossing the black hole, breaking through the white wall, dismantling the face – even if they attempt may backfire.” But positive defacialization can also liberate what Deleuze and Guattari call “probe-heads.” Probe-heads, or *têtes chercheuses*, are homing devices for guided missiles and bombs. They are literally war machines, and they “dismantle the strata in their wake, break through the walls of signification, pour out the holes of subjectivity, fell trees in favour of veritable rhizomes, and steer the flows down lines of positive deterritorialization or creative flight.” Probe-heads are inhuman, but they challenge the inhumanity of the face with “strange new becomings, new polyvocalities.” They turn the face itself into a probe-head, a machine of deterritorialization.