Diagrams of the Mind

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> Latin diagramma, *figure*, from Greek, *a figure*
> *worked out by lines, plan*, from diagraphein,
> *to mark out, delineate* : dia-, *dia-* + graphein,
> *to write*; see gerbh- in Indo-European roots.
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> (*The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*)

I.

In the landscape of contemporary artistic and critical operations, by which we can understand those practices that seem increasingly difficult to separate from theoretical work, as well as those theories that refuse the state of merely abstract reflections on already existing practices, the diagram—a writing or drawing "*dia*," "through," a schema that is worked out or traversed by lines that are not only physical but also immaterial, lines of flight as well as lines that constitute dead ends and machines of capture—has become an eminently useful concept. From visual arts to architecture, from philosophy to theories of organization, the diagram has escaped the condition of something merely graphic, a representation of a set of relations established elsewhere, and has become more akin to an instrument of thinking, or even something that engenders thought itself.[1] In Warren Neidich's "Diagrammatic drawings" we find a distinct take on this theme, a way to use the diagrammatic mode of thinking in order to connect areas of research, discourse, and practice, which in the contemporary division of labor between on the one hand the sciences, on the other hand the humanities and the arts, seem destined to either remain deaf to each other, or produce the fantasy of asymmetrical reductions and appropriations. Bringing together concepts from neurology and the life sciences, political philosophy and aesthetic theory, theories of immaterial labor and post-Fordist production, Neidich creates a maze of concepts and connections that may at first sight seem bewildering, and even more so since he explores them not just as theoretical concepts, each located within their particular sphere, but as physical and corporeal zones that we can and indeed do inhabit, and that we traverse in the most minute of our everyday activities. But in doing so, he suggests that the transversal activity of the artist is a highly productive way of transgressing such limits, not in order to simply undo them— which most often means that one domain overtakes the other—but to produce certain resonances and encounters, captures and assemblages that extract a power from each domain in order to project it into a new sphere. Philosophy, science, and art, Deleuze and Guattari claim in the final collaborative work *What is philosophy?*, each have their distinct properties and procedures—philosophy constructs concepts, science establishes functions, and art tears perceptions and affections away from the subject in order to elevate them into "percepts"

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[1] The division between mere representation and the capacity to engender thought was of course never clear-cut, and the current extended use of the idea of the diagram may be seen as an actualization of possibilities that were there from the start, in the first Greek experiments with representation through graphs and letters. For a fascinating study of this topic, which traces the role of the—today no longer extant—diagrams in the texts of Greek mathematics, see Reviel Netz, *The Shaping of Deduction in Greek Mathematics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), esp. chap. 1, "The lettered diagram."

and "affects," composites that have their own temporality and a proper way of "conserving" experiences in a virtual state—they are parallel activities none of which is inferior or superior to the others. But as three distinct modes of approaching "chaos," they also extract things from each other, they discover zones of indistinction, and it may be the task of all three to reflect—in a way that at a certain moment must suspend the securities and professional assurances of each—on such unforeseeable encounters. It is to such encounters that the practice of "diagrammatic drawing" may be related, in marking limits, thresholds, and breaks, but also establishing connections and allowing remote areas to communicate; it delves into a peculiar potential of the diagram that has attracted the attention not only of practitioners within the visual arts, but also philosophers and social scientists.

II

The word "diagram" seems indeed to have entered current thinking about art, architecture, and the visual/spatial arts through then influence of Deleuze, and particularly his book on Foucault (although the concept had already been used extensively both by Deleuze himself and in his collaborative work with Guattari, as we will see),[2] which picked up and extended a few seemingly off-hand remarks in Foucault's *Discipline and Punish*, which describe the relations of power in Bentham's plan for a Panopticon prison as a "diagram." In his analysis of the carceral and disciplinary techniques of the late 18th century, Foucault stresses that we should not see the diagram as a merely geometrical entity, and thus as connected to any particular form of architectural or spatial shape, but as a more abstract way of ordering, a "type of location of bodies in space, of distribution of individuals in relation to one another, of hierarchical organization, of disposition of centers and channels of power, of definition of the instruments and modes of intervention of power, which can be implemented in hospitals, workshops, schools, prisons."[3] Or, formulated in the terminology that Deleuze and Guattari had already developed, the diagram can be understood as an "abstract machine" out of which relations of power emerge, and which is capable of assuming many different physical morphologies: it is the very condition of possibility of a stable physical order, but also that which envelops every order with a "becoming" of forces, a dimension of the virtual that makes all stable forms susceptible to change and disruption.

In the specific case of Bentham, the essential feature of the Panopticon diagram is its capacity to exert a maximal influence over a population by the minimal use of physical force, or, more precisely, to situate the prisoner within a permanent visibility that renders the application of power automatic. The Panopticon does this by transferring the active force to an "object" that thereby becomes individualized and "subjectivized" as the bearer of responsibility and locus of agency, which also means that the subject becomes endowed with a certain freedom. This is why Bentham can suggest that the Panopticon's outcome is a global increase in freedom and prosperity for all individuals: it invigorates economy, perfects health, and diffuses happiness throughout the body politic by installing a reflexive capacity in its subjects that renders them more productive.

Deleuze picks up on this—probably incidental—use of the term "diagram" in Foucault, and wittily connects it to a probably just as incidental use of the word "monogram" in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*. The Kantian monogram is used to characterize the temporal schema projected by the imagination— "an art concealed in the

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[2] Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, trans. Seán Hand (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988). Following Deleuze's book, the diagram has been used extensively in architectural theory; among the first to do so was Greg Lynn in a discussion of the work of Ben van Berkel, "Forms of Expression: The Proto-Functional Potential of Diagrams in Architectural Design," *El Croquis* 72, 1995. For an survey of recent uses, see the contributions in *Any* 23, "Diagram Work" (1998).

[3] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1991), 205.

depths of the human soul, whose real modes of activity nature is hardly likely ever to allow us to discover, and to open to our gaze," Kant says—that ensures the passage from intelligibility to sensibility, or more precisely, from the categories of the understanding to the manifold of intuition. In this sense, the schema is not simply an empirical image, but, Kant proposes, "a product and, as it were monogram, of pure a priori imagination," and as such it is that "through which and in accordance with which images themselves first become possible."[4]

If the Kantian monogram is the purveyor of a certain unity of knowledge, the Foucauldian diagram (at least as developed by Deleuze) is rather what makes possible a manifold of practices, but also, through linking these practices together, that which transforms the fleeting and ephemeral events of discourse into stable "archives." Power can be understood as a diagram that moulds and formalizes *matters* (the visible and the sayable, light and language, the two pure "Elements" of knowledge that Deleuze perceives as the Foucauldian sequels to reason and sensibility in Kant), and Deleuze likens it to a "cartography" coextensive with the social field, a mapping of those forces that traverse it, hold it together, but also provide it with a mobility and possibilities of reversals and disruptions. "A diagram is a map, or rather several superimposed maps," he writes,[5] the "the map of relations between forces, a map of destiny, or intensity, which […] acts as a non-unifying immanent cause which is coextensive with the whole social field. The abstract machine is like the cause of the concrete assemblages that execute its relations; and these relations take place 'not above' but within the very tissue of the assemblages they produce."[6] If this machine, like Kantian schematism, can be said to be "blind", it is precisely in the sense that it is what makes us see and talk. Power is always actualized as a form (knowledge as structured into archives of light and language), otherwise it would remain in a pure virtual state, but inversely there would be know stable forms of knowledge unless they were immersed in relations of power. But if there is a mutual imbrication and "capture" between knowledge and power, this does not mean that they can be reduced to each other (a frequent misreading of Foucault is that he would say that knowledge is *nothing but* power)—in fact they remain irreducible to such an extent that they only communicate via a "non-place" or "disjunction," Deleuze suggests, which is why no assemblage of knowledge and power ever remains stable, but only exists in relation to those singularities that it attempts to capture and formalize.

Understood in this way, the diagram always has two sides. On the one hand, it integrates singular points by binding them in a curve or form in general; on the other hand it is an "emission" of singularities, and as such it is connected to a more profound Outside (*le Dehors*), a chaos or an "abstract hurricane" out of which it emerges through "draws" (*tirages*). This connection to the outside it what makes the diagram akin to philosophical thought, Deleuze suggests, which is why the act of thinking in itself constitutes an act of *resistance*: it is open to a formless future, to those virtual forces of becoming that constitute the "double" of history, but in this it is also and always a perilous act, with the risk of plunging us into mere chaos and death. Here, Deleuze notes, there is an encounter between Foucault and Heidegger, in that they both determine the possibility of thought through a

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[4]   *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp-Smith (London: MacMillan, 1929), A 142/B 181. Further on, in the section on the Architectonic of Pure Reason, Kant makes use of the schema as a way to formulate the structural and not simply aggregative unity of reason, and distinguishes between a schema whose unification is "empirical" and only yields "technical unity," and one "which originates from an idea [and] serves as the basis of architectonic unity, that which we call science, whose schema contains the outline (*monogramma*) and the division of the whole into members in conformity with the idea" (A 833/B 861).

[5]   Deleuze, *Foucault*, 44.

[6]   Ibid., 37.

fundamental relation to an Outside that is an un-grounding, that dispossesses consciousness.[7]

This aspect of formlessness and chaos is in fact reminiscent of an earlier use of the concept of the diagram in Deleuze, in book on Francis Bacon, *Logique de la sensation*. The reading of Bacon's diagram prefigures the analysis of Foucault, but also points in a slightly different, although perhaps eventually complementary, direction. The context is the painter's resistance to photography: the ubiquity of the photographic image in contemporary culture, Bacon says, tends to fill the canvas with clichés and readymade forms. This means to reduce "sensation"—which is what Bacon attempts to capture, in a quest for a "logic" that (at least in Deleuze's reading) leads him to an incessant and critical dialog with phenomenology and with Cézanne—to one singular level, and renders invisible those intensities and transformation that produce violent differences and spasms, sudden drops and increases in energy.[8] The problem for Bacon is thus never the empty canvas, as in the drama of reduction to flatness in modernist painting that had developed on the basis of Clement Greenberg's theories, where the reduction to the materiality of the support and the act of inscribing marks leads us from late modernist monochromes back to Mallarmé's pristine sheet of white paper that both calls upon and rejects the act of inscription. But neither is the issue to get "into" the painting—as in the opposite existential rhetoric of Harold Rosenberg, whose idea of "action" emphasized the other side of Abstract Expressionism, the self-creation of artist and artwork in the same ambivalent movement of expression. The painter, Deleuze says, is already inside, and fundamentally so against his will, because of the world of clichés, and the question he faces is rather how he, at a certain moment *before* painting, can get *out* of it. The strategy that Bacon adapts for attaining such a distance is to reintroduce a moment of chance in opposition to the merely "probable" (before we start to paint it is *probable* that we will reach certain forms, given what we have set as a task, for instance to paint a portrait), a chance that operates through the distribution of singular marks and allows the energy of the "figural" to erupt at a level situated below the form or the figurative.[9]

Bacon's technique is to use such randomly produced marks and stains of color in order to disfigure the all-too probable figure based on resemblance and representation, and Deleuze suggests that this should be seen as a "diagram," or a freely produced schema of possibilities that makes the initial and familiar form deviate from itself. The term appears occasionally in Bacon's conversations with David Sylvester (which are Deleuze's primary source), but its strategic importance seems to be an invention of Deleuze. The diagram is a "catastrophe" of the canvas, Deleuze proposes, in the etymological sense of an "overturning," an event that violently disrupts forms: "It is as if one would suddenly introduce a Sahara, a Sahara-zone, into the head; is if

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[7] A further and final encounter would be located at the level of the necessary *return* from such an Outside, where a relative and precarious interiority must be constituted, if death and dispersal is not to have the final word. In Deleuze and Foucault, but to a certain extent also in Heidegger, this return is made through the figure of the *fold*, although each of them determines this in a different way. For a discussion of the idea of folding in this respect, see my *Essays, Lectures* (Stockholm: Axl Books, 2007), 150ff.

[8] The reading of Bacon is in fact one of the places where Deleuze engages in one of his most productive debates with phenomenology, although it is only rarely named in the text. For a discussion, see Alain Beaulieu, *Deleuze et la phénoménologie* (Mons: Les Editions Sils Maria, 2004), 160-169.

[9] The idea of the "figural" is derived from Jean-François Lyotard's early work *Discours, figure* (Paris: Klincksieck, 1971), where Lyotard attempts to combine, but finally also transgress, phenomenology and psychoanalysis. Lyotard would later abandon these theories, and their potential for articulating a theory of the visual arts has remained strangely uncharted. Together will Daniel Birnbaum I hope to be able to explore these issues further in a coming book; a brief sketch of the argument can be found in our essay "Thinking Philosophy, Spatially: Jean-François Lyotard's 'Les Immatériaux' and the Philosophy of the Exhibition," in J. Backstein, D. Birnbaum, and S.-O. Wallenstein (eds.): *Thinking Worlds: The Moscow Conference on Philosophy, Politics, and Art* (New York and Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2008).

one introduced a rhinoceros skin, seen through a microscope."[10] These marks are non-signifying traits, attacks, or random inscriptions, and understood in terms of the diagram their task is to introduce new possibilities—indeed a chaos of sorts, but also the beginning of a "rhythm" that allows the painting to integrate, hysterically, its own *catastrophe*, as Deleuze puts it. The painter passes through a catastrophe in his use of the diagram, but in the process of retrieving the form, he discovers the Figure, liberated from the confines both of abstraction, where the hand is subordinated to a higher signification and an "optical" order governed by binary or digital codes (with Mondrian as the paradigm case), and from the temptation to allow the diagram as such to take over, which produces the opposite descent into a purely manual space (with Pollock as the paradigm case). Bacon's path—which should obviously be seen not in terms of any aesthetic or artistic superiority, but simply as his own path, where he discovers a "logic of sensation" peculiar to his work: Deleuze always stresses that great artists are incomparable—is to preserve and enhance the tension between form and disfiguration, instead of transcending it in either direction.

This, Deleuze suggests, is why Bacon and those that follow his path focus on color, as an intensity that acts directly on the nervous system. It is also why line and drawing in a particular and restricted sense. i.e., as *disegno* opposed to *colore* within the system set up by the Renaissance theorists, can be understood is secondary to color as intensity, and the reason for Deleuze's emphasis on the primacy of the haptic over the optical. This distinction, with roots in Alois Riegl and Wilhelm Worringer, is however here given a new twist that eventually overcomes the division between the terms. The haptic is all about proximity, the fusion of painter, object, and spectator in an "aformal" element—which for Deleuze must be distinguished from the "informal" in postwar French abstraction (to which much of his rhetoric may seem close, at least if viewed from a more "normal" art-critical perspective)—that introduces a Sahara of continual variations: to paint Sahara, nothing but Sahara, even in a single apple… The optical would on the other hand entail the emphasis on the distance in figure-ground relations, the introduction of narrative content and a whole space of representation. But if opticality traditionally asserts a priority of the line, then Deleuze, drawing freely on Worringer's *Abstraktion und Einfühlung*, finally discovers another type of line that no longer connects pre-existing points in a system of coordinates, but becomes a nomadic force that generates the points rather then joining them within an already given grid (which is one of the ways in which Deleuze describes the difference between a "smooth" and a "striated" space, in the vocabulary he borrows from Pierre Boulez). An instance of this he also finds in Klee, whose *Schöpferische Konfession* contains the famous phrase that Deleuze cites on many occasions, and which here too guides the aesthetic of force developed in the particular reading of Bacon: "art does not render the visible, art renders visible" ("Kunst gibt nicht das Sichtbare wieder, sondern macht sichtbar").[11] The eye and the hand, the optical and the manual, are then finally superseded in a third element, to which Deleuze points in the concluding paragraph, where he speaks of "the formation of a third eye, a haptic eye, a haptic vision of the eye, a new type of clarity. It is as if the duality between the tactile and the optical had been visually transcended in the direction of a haptic function

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[10] *Francis Bacon: Logique de la sensation* (Paris: Éditions de la Différence, 1981), 65. Bacon himself refers to his fascination with the texture of rhinoceros skin in the interviews with Sylvester. The idea of "Sahara" is also the organizing idea in one of the best monographs on Deleuze's aesthetics, Mireille Buydens, *Sahara: L'esthétique de Gilles Deleuze* (Paris: Vrin, 1990).

[11] Cf. Paul Klee, "Schöpferische Konfession", in *Schriften. Rezensionen und Aufsätze* (Cologne: Dumont Verlag 1976), 118-122. On the idea of line in Klee, cf. Deleuze, *The Fold*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1993), chap. 2.

that emerges from the diagram."[12] Color and line can finally not be opposed, since they are part of one and the same event, one and the same logic of sensation.

If the Foucauldian diagram has to do with the formation of archives of knowledge, and as it were constitutes the differential element of force into which practices and discourses are located, but also points in the direction of an act of thought, a "Fiat" that exceeds both knowledge and action, the Baconian diagram can perhaps be taken as a particular version, a local practice, whose condition of possibility however resides in the general, "aformal" dimension in which it always plunges.

And finally, if we were to lead both of these versions of the diagram back to their common root, we should go back to the most general presentation of the term in *A Thousand Plateaus*. In the fifth plateau, "587 B.C.—A.D. 70: On Several Regimes of Signs," it appears to be a particular aspect of the "abstract machine", and here we get a series of definitions, the most succinct of which is perhaps that the diagram is that which has "neither substance nor form, neither content nor expression," and "retains the most deterritorialized content and the most deterritorialized expression, in order to conjugate them."[13] Understood in this way, this diagrammatic and/or abstract machine "does not function to represent, even something real, but rather constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality. Thus when it constitutes points of creation or potentiality it does not stand outside history but is instead always 'prior to' history. Everything escapes, everything creates — never alone, but through an abstract machine that produces continuums of intensity, effects conjunctions of deterritorialization, and extracts expressions and contents" (p. 157). But in traversing the different "plateaus," we also encounter many other instances of diagrams, related but surely not identical: the "short-term memory" of the "rhizome or diagram type" opposed to a "long-term memory" that is "arborescent and centralized" (p. 17); the abstract machine which "cuts across all stratifications, develops alone and in its own right on the plane of consistency whose diagram it constitutes" (p. 62); a Foucauldian use which inverts the terms, and defines the diagram as "a single abstract machine for the prison and the school and the barracks and the hospital and the factory" (p. 74); "the abstract Machine, or abstract Machines, insofar as they construct that body [without organs] or draw that plane or "diagram" what occurs (lines of flight, or absolute deterritorializations)"; a "true abstract machine [that] pertains to an assemblage in its entirety" and which is "defined as the diagram of that assemblage" (p. 101; cf. 110f); a diagram that is opposed to a stratified semiotics, although "even an asignifying diagram harbors knots of coincidence just waiting to form virtual centers of significance and points of subjectification" (p. 153); the list could go on. A close analysis of the minute shifts in terminology throughout the book, or any precise distinction between diagram and machine, would however probably lead us astray and simply create a kind of pseudo-clarity: the terminologies of Deleuze (and Guattari) remain in constant flux where old terms are picked up in new constellations in which their significance is enriched, and what we should attempt to catch, is rather something like a tension or a movement toward a certain experience of thought, and not a precise definition that would immobilize the movement.

III
How can we make use of this manifold of possible diagrams, which in itself seems to be diagrammed, or

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12   *Logique de la sensation*, 103.

13   *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 156. The following quotes from this book are given with page reference in the text.

traversed by a kind of diagrammatic movement? Warren Neidich's drawings, multicolored abstract schemas containing large subsections connected by multiple passages and sometimes minute connections, have gone through various stages, from the physical to the immaterial. As an ongoing mapping of our cultural condition, they are necessarily interminable, and even called upon to exist in terms of various supports and framing. Connecting continents with names like the Cultured Brain, the Global Generator, the Becoming Brain Drawing, and finally the Earthling Drawing, they resuscitate some of the humor of the variously named parts in Duchamp's *Large Glass*, but perhaps even more the infernal logic of Öyvind Fahlström's attempts from the later period of his work to produce flow-charts, for instance in the form of Monopoly games, which would map the world of capital and politics. The world system is both a paranoid machine revolving around the law of a Symbolic order (the flag, the nation, the president, the phallus, the great Signifier…) that constantly reproduces binary forms, closed segments, discontinuous architectural and organizational fragments, as well as a schizoid undoing of the machine—the other side of the diagram, which makes all the segments resonate, opens transversal communications, and shows us that a system is defined more by its leakages and lines of flights than by its hard and "segmented" order.[14]

The diagram has its pedagogical dimensions, it is an index or a "showing," which is why the act of pointing, the indexical movement, is an integral part of the artist's strategy to lead us into the diagram. From a random point of departure—all introductions to the labyrinth are of equal value, just as every exit is an entrance and every entrance an exit—we are lead onwards into an encyclopedia, which takes us from the "extensive" to the "intensive," from a space that contains the world, to ideas of the world, to techniques for altering both of them, and finally to modes of resistance to such transformations.

Much of Neidich's work takes its departure from the idea of "noology" and "noo-politics," as this has been developed by for instance Maurizio Lazzarato, but he extends and radicalizes it into his own idea of "neuropower."[15] Moving from the theory of cognitive capitalism to neuropower, Neidich invites us to reflect on the way in which images, brands, and various visual technologies impact directly on our brain, bypassing the censorships and reflective mechanisms of consciousness, but also on what kind of "image of thought" that this makes possible, not just as a passive causal effect, but as an active and constructive response. In a wider context, the visual arts, architecture, advertising, and media in general can be seen as part of the same process, whereby our minds are "sculpted" in order attain new levels of action and reaction. The neural interface—and we should remember that the science of neurology is precisely contemporary with cinema, which is surely not coincidental: the most powerful image technology for the re-visioning of the outer world is intertwined with the tool for

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[14] This too is of course one of the great themes of Deleuze and Guattari's work, from the 1975 book on Kafka, through *A Thousand Plateaus* and onwards. For a discussion on segments vs. lines of flight, cf. in particular plateau 9, "Micropolitics and segmentarity." I have attempted to develop this theme in relation Fahlström's idea of games in "Every Way in is a Way out," together with Erik van der Heeg, in ***Öyvind Fahlström***, exh. cat. (Valencia: IVAM Centre Julio Gonzalez, 1992).

[15] Here I draw on a manuscript by the artist, forthcoming in *Atlantique* in spring 2008. Many works and reflections that address these issues can be found in Neidich's earlier book *Blow-Up: Photography, Cinema and the Brain* (New York: DAP, 2003). Deleuze and Guattari develops the idea of "noology" particularly in *What is philosophy?*, but then theme is announced already in works from the late 1960s, for instance *The Logic of Sense* and *Difference and Repetition*. For Maurizio Lazzarato's idea of "noology" as a "second *bios*" relating to the brain, cf. for instance *La politica dell'evento* (Cosenza: Rubbittino, 2004), and *Les Révolutions du capitalisme* (Paris: Empêcheurs de penser en rond, 2004). For a discussion of these themes, as they have been developed by Lazzarato, Paolo Virno, and a whole series of thinkers and activist in the Italian "post-workerist" (*postoperaista*) movement, see the translations and introductory essays in *SubStance*, #112. Vol. 36, no. 1, 2007. For a discussion of the related idea of "autonomy" in relation to Italian architectural debates, se Pier Vittorio Aureli, *The Project of Autonomy, The: Politics and Architecture Within and Against Capitalism* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2008)

investigating the substructure of our inner mental space—has become a site of conflict, even of political struggle, at a level which extends below that of human subjectivity and integrates consciousness in a process of transformation which is neither nature nor culture. Neuropower, as Neidich understands it, would inscribe itself on the most fundamental level of mental life, where our most basic affects and ideas are organized, where memory, fantasy, and intelligence emerge, and where a certain "neural plasticity" is at work.[16]

To such a process one might react differently—from the rejection that any artistic engagement in a domain such as "neural plasticity" no doubt provokes within a traditional humanist culture, to the complete immersion one encounters in the contemporary neo-Futurist techno-culture. Warren Neidich's way into this universe seems to be a kind of reflective fascination, combining both a theoretical desire to conceptualize and a profound physical attraction. For better or worse, we are inside a violent mutation of our sensorium, and there is no way back to a theory of subjectivity and experience that would remain untouched by it.

The question that his work poses is a crucial one: what position do the visual arts occupy, indeed what position can they at all occupy, in this vast transformation, which concerns not only images as we normally apprehend them through media or in institutionalized spaces of art, but in fact extend into the sphere of what used to be called the unconscious, the articulation of life and consciousness on a pre-subjective level, and even into the basic biological features of living beings? Should art and artists attempt to provide pockets of resistance, residual modes of experience that yet remain to be colonized by technology; should they inversely intensify these processes, perhaps in the sense of the "nihilism" earlier encountered by Nietzsche, and show us that the death of the supersensuous world opens up a world of perspectivism ruled neither by God nor Man, but by chance and necessity; or must they be content with simply recording and reflecting on a process whose determining factors are located elsewhere, in the flows of Capital itself, which then would appear as the successor of God and Nature, as the great Other to which we all must subject, both in the sense of mere subjection and the active response of becoming-subject?

The option suggested by Warren Neidich's work seems to be that there must be some other way to enter into this process—or better, since we are ineluctably part of it, to *inhabit* it, with body and mind alike—to steer it into the direction of a possible General Intelligence. Here he draws on ideas that have been developed by Paolo Virno in his analysis of post-Fordist labor as subjectivity and the development of a new "virtuosity."[17] The idea of inhabiting, although doing so in a more thoughtful and reflective way, perhaps indicates that the model of resistance and dialectical negation is no longer directly useful here (although I think it would be premature to simply *abandon* it). Since late modernist theory, the capacity of the work of art to open up a space freedom has predominantly been understood in terms of its interiorization of the formal contradictions of society, whereby it would create a reflective distance towards the real. Today, the rethinking of critical theory that has been underway at least since the 1970s and posthumous publications of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*, to some seems to

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[16]   Here too there is decisive inspiration from the work of Deleuze, particularly the two books on movement and time in cinema. Cinema, Deleuze argues, does not accommodate itself to pre-conceived theories of perception and synthesis, such as phenomenology and psychoanalysis, it traces and establishes new connections in the brain itself, and this is why it always has a close connection to philosophy. In producing new space-times, cinema forces us to once more ask Heidegger's question "what is called thinking/what calls upon us to think?" ("Was heisst Denken?"), not as a resistance to technology, or even as an attempt to think the "unthought essence" of technology, but as a way to intensify the possibility of expanding thought on the basis of the most recent image technologies, which obviously have developed a long way since Deleuze's two books were first published in 1983 and 1985. For a recent discussion of image, time, and perception in relation to post-Fordist capitalism, see also Maurizio Lazzarato, *Videofilosofia. La percezione del tempo nel postfordismo* (Rome: Manifesto Libri, 1997).

[17]   See for instance his *A Grammar of the Multitude* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004).

necessitate a dismantling of the very idea of resistance and the critical, which in many cases (for instance, in the ideas of the "postcritical," the "operative," and the "instrumental" in recent architectural discourse) appears to border on sheer acquiescence and subjection to the forces that be, although dressed up in a vocabulary of networks and intelligent production. Beyond such alternatives, the proposal of these diagrammatic drawings, as well as of those diverse theoretical models that they engage, must be understood in terms of a mutation into some other stance, based neither on rejection or affirmation, but on the possibility to release a different potential inside the forces of Capital.

Warren Neidich's diagrams insert themselves in this complex and still highly indeterminate mutation of Capital and its concomitant modes of perception, experience, and action in an active fashion, and their suggestion seems to be a demand that we should not only *think* more intensely and question our own propositions, and that we should not be afraid to discard inherited ideas of what constitutes mind, subjectivity, and experience, even the "human" as such, but that this rethinking as such is already an act of resistance, albeit in a new way, and that it invites us to conceive of artistic work as a tool for thinking that goes beyond the institutional framework of art and artist alike. The "redistribution of the sensible," of which Jacques Rancière speaks, and to which Neidich refers in several of his texts, must in this perspective be understood as transcending the sphere of art as well as politics, since it eventually affects the very fabric of life, the underlying substructures of the mind. The political challenges of such a redistribution are of course formidable: how should we conceive of an ethics or a politics, how should we account for the formation of a possible ethical or political agency, when the "multitude" that it must organize and integrate—without reducing it into the all-too classical form of a subject, individual or collective—extends beyond what we normally circumscribe by the use of our inherited humanist categories?

In asking such questions, and doing so within a horizon of certain *optimism*, Warren Neidich shares the utopian convictions of many of today's radical political thinkers, which call upon he "virtuosity" inherent in "immaterial labor," or the potentials that are set free by the advent of "Cognitive Capitalism." Whether this is a radical shift, or a mirage produced by the inexorable logic of Capital itself, as many of those who uphold the ethos of the traditional Left have argued, remains to be seen. Suffice it to say that whatever it is that is happening to us, it releases a certain transformative energy that needs to be cultivated, and that plunging into chaos may be a risk that we may need to take.

Warren Neidich's diagrammatic drawings are schemas for thinking, ways of connecting parts of our culture and history which for those entrenched in the average curricula of academic thought appear as hermetically sealed off from each other. Charting new and even non-existent territories—for to think, write, and create, as Deleuze and Guattari says, has to do with mapping and measuring territories, and above all those that do not yet exist—they incite us to trace new connections, although without providing any definite answer to what the outcome will be. The artist points his finger and leads us into the diagram; it is up to us to perform the rest.