

1. In any attempt to open a new practice following Deleuze and Guattari, for any discipline, there will always be the need to consider the problem of method.¹ Their philosophy is doubly counter-institutional: it is critical of institutions and of their propensity to reduce differences to grids, categories and appropriate plans of action; it is a philosophy of the 'minor', in the sense of resistance to majority power in any collective endeavour. Since method has served institutions and philosophy as support for the reduction of multiple differences to more manageable categories and routes to action, and since method is one of the most important ways of constructing a 'major' philosophy, method is always a prompt for suspicion. However, the problem of method after Deleuze and Guattari is made more complicated by a mistaken assumption. It's an easy mistake to make. We could think that there cannot be method after Deleuze and Guattari. The attractiveness of this error stems from many of the critical positions adopted by their philosophies. I'll single out three: the critique of transcendence; the refusal of generality; and the critique of normativity. If method is a transcendent plan to be applied to different situations in the same way, then there is no place for it in Deleuze and Guattari. If method is a way of applying general concepts to particular cases, then method cannot be an outcome of their thought. If method involves a series of norms, in terms of how it works and in terms of what it demands, then method should not be associated with Deleuze and Guattari's work.

2. The mistake in denying any method to Deleuze and Guattari is not strictly about the transcendence, generality and normativity of methods. It is instead about their status and persistence. If method is taken as preeminent and eternal, then its transcendence is made absolute.² Preeminent method implies untouchable general concepts and inviolable norms. Outside some famous modern examples in Descartes and Hegel (and, even then, in highly restricted and tendentious interpretations) there are in fact very few methods given this status. Instead, method has a pragmatic character and a form of impermanence. We adopt methods pragmatically, in the sense of seeing whether they help us achieve goals that are themselves negotiable and changeable. We allow methods to vary over time and discard them once they no longer fulfil the functions we

¹ See Rebecca Coleman and Jessica Ringrose (eds), *Deleuze and Research Methodologies*, Edinburgh University Press, 2013. The editors' introduction is very effective at setting out the new challenges to method presented by Deleuze and Guattari, pp 1-22

² Christian Kerslake gives a helpful discussion of method in Deleuze by returning to Deleuze's 1956 lecture series 'What is Grounding?' in order to explain 'the enigma of Deleuze's rejection of "method"' (Christian Kerslake, *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy*, Edinburgh University Press, 2009, p 8; Gilles Deleuze, *What is Grounding?* trans. A. Kleinherenbrink, Tripleampersand, 2015). Kerslake demonstrates how Deleuze draws a strong opposition between method and system, rejecting the former but not the latter. Quoting Deleuze, Kerslake explains how the act of grounding in philosophy oscillates between knowledge and expression of things, where method 'treats the object as already there' and where 'its principles concern the best way to acquire knowledge from that pre-existing object.' (18) This is an important remark that stands for any approach to method after Deleuze and Guattari. If method is constructed on the assumption that the object or topic pre-exists inquiry as unchanging and independent and hence merely requires knowledge, this will lead to a failure of method as sensibility to the changing circumstances of thought, system and practice around given problems. A final point about Kerslake's reflections on Deleuze and method is that he takes Deleuze's debt to Hegel seriously, thereby dismantling the superficial account of a simple opposition between the two philosophers, especially around questions of method and system.

demand of them. This pragmatic impermanence and experimentation with method is much closer to what Deleuze and Guattari seek positively as the future of pragmatics.

3. So why does the idea of the sanctity of given methods still hold sway? Partly, it is because in institutional contexts methods are a vehicle for order, reliability and power such that they appear to be all-important and unquestionable. Deleuze and Guattari's longstanding critique of order words is important in this context; a method is often communicated as an order ('proceed thus') and this order rests on a system of power with a specific genealogy and structure.³ Methods also hold sway because, in an economic context, methods become a way of guaranteeing quality and identity over time and across distant spaces. For firms, disciplines and organisations in late-capitalism methods are an essential tool of management and production. They can therefore seem inviolable. Again, Deleuze and Guattari are highly critical of this ordering and repetitious aspect of capitalism, seeing it as a necessary and yet decadent aspect of the capitalist system when compared to its disruptive and inventive sides.⁴ Firms and institutions turn to method, as a quasi-religious means to competitive advantage, when margins are already diminishing among competitors with equivalent products.

4. A change of perspective shows just how much this inviolability is illusory. When viewed over time, we see that methods change rapidly not only within a given practice or organisation, but also between completely different methods. There aren't fixed methods of management, treatment, production, sales or service in capitalist firms or in social organisations. Instead, profit and performance drive changes in methods. The pragmatic outcome matters much more than how the outcome is achieved. One way of interpreting Deleuze and Guattari's work is as a series of concepts allowing us to explain and create with the real genealogical multiplicity of methods and practices.

5. The contrast between the imposition of method as a tool for control and power, and the dispensability of any given method when it fails to serve performance and profit, is at the heart of the problem of method for Deleuze and Guattari. Their critical arguments are aimed at the role of method in control, power, capital, performance, organisation and the imposition of norms. The

³ The relation between power and method is demonstrated through the study of language by Deleuze and Guattari. Instead of commanding belief and assent, they insist that language and, by extension, method are used to gain obedience. This is another important lesson for the appeal to method in disciplines. There is no method that isn't in some way a form of compulsion. The question is then how to minimise this claim to obedience sewn into method and language: 'Rather than common sense, a faculty for the centralization of information, we must define an abominable faculty consisting in emitting, receiving, and transmitting order-words. Language is made not to be believed but to be obeyed, and to compel obedience.' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, trans. B. Massumi, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987, p 76

⁴ Deleuze and Guattari define the method of capitalism as an axiomatics where new axioms can always be added to, in order to explain how capitalism can go beyond seemingly insuperable contradictions. Nonetheless, this method is still restrictive and doomed because of the nature of axiomatics itself and its need to exploit and control creativity and novelty. This necessity explains the return of States and their modes of control alongside global capitalism: 'Thus the States, in capitalism, are not cancelled out but change form and take on a new meaning: models of realization for a worldwide axiomatic that exceeds them.' *A Thousand Plateaus*, p 454 This is an important context for thinking about method after Deleuze and Guattari, in any field, since in our epochs of the various realisations of capitalist axiomatics, any practice will have to interact with those axioms and with their States, both as external factors and as internal requirements for the practice itself. Method will always take place in league with a capitalist axiomatics and its attendant States. For a full and illuminating discussion of Capital in *A Thousand Plateaus*, see Eugene W. Holland *Deleuze and Guattari's a Thousand Plateaus: A Reader's Guide*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013

source of this critique comes from observation of many historical organisations and practices, but the most influential field is linguistics, where Deleuze and Guattari develop their idea of pragmatics, against ideas of transcendent or deep structure in language.⁵ We shall see later that we can call these factors behind repetitive method 'hegemonic opinion' in its exclusion of real differences. These forms of opinion are the actual target for the critique, not method itself.⁶ The deep question is not therefore how to avoid method and what to replace it with. It is how to deploy methods such that they do not become instruments of control and repression.⁷

6. The critique of method is therefore only half the story. The mistake is to think that because method has negative aspects it should be avoided in every way. That's not at all the point. There is rather a shift in focus. For Deleuze and Guattari, method doesn't serve measurable and pre-set aims and outcomes. Instead, it can contribute to and hold back creative experimentation. This tries out new ways of living with physical, mental, social and political problems. Method therefore becomes a pragmatic structure that is necessary for thought and action, and yet dangerous for them, where they seek to avoid repressive forms. Method serves affirmation, in the sense of giving structure to creation, but it also carries negation into creativity, through its tendencies to serve power and

⁵ Any method is prone to give rise to order words – *answer this, do this* – through its linguistic practices, but equally every practice can look to the transformations and openings made possible within language as free indirect discourse among changing assemblages: 'The language-function is the transmission of order-words, and order-words relate to assemblages, just as assemblages relate to the incorporeal transformations constituting the variables of the function. Linguistics is nothing without a pragmatics (semiotic or political) to define the effectuation of the condition of possibility of language and the usage of linguistic elements.' A *Thousand Plateaus*, 85 Practice should resist the calcification of its language into order words by analysing and opening up its assemblages to new variables and new transformations. The question of method should not be 'How do we repeat this well?' but rather 'Where might this lead differently, against its tendency to repeat badly?'

⁶ The critique of opinion, common sense and good sense has been a constant in Deleuze and Guattari's work, taking its most pure form in the concern to separate ideas from common sense as operating through representation and recognition, in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*: 'Clarity and distinctness form the logic of recognition, just as innateness is the theology of common sense: both have already pushed the Idea over into representation.' Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. P. Patton, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p 146. Method, for any practice, is always going to be a risk taken with common sense as representation (the representation of types, for instance). It is always going to be a chance taken with the risk of recognition (the ways to recognise cases, for example). Deleuze is not opposed to representation or recognition in every way. He is aware that they are necessary moments in any thought. The danger comes from the institution of a common sense, underpinning temporary and fleeting, necessarily practical and empirical representations and recognitions into what he calls a doxa, where truth becomes a matter of the probable, rather than the object of an encounter. There is no doubt that Deleuze is demanding a lot of us here, in shifting from a model of representation, recognition and probability (*Which of the known categories is this likely to belong to?*) to a model of event (*Through whom, where, how and whence can this take us anew?*) It is important to insist on two points here. First, Deleuze is aware of how demanding this philosophy can be and is in no way enjoining us to abandon recognition and representation, but rather stretch them beyond their limits. Second, from a disciplinary and professional point of view, the critique of common sense is a challenge to how disciplines and professions police themselves according to judgements about 'rogue' departures from an agreed doxa.

⁷ One of the most convincing and extensive discussions of the importance of models for Deleuze, in the context of mathematics, is set out by Simon B. Duffy in his *Deleuze and the History of Mathematics: in Defense of the "New"*, London: Bloomsbury, 2013. The crucial insight by Duffy is that the adoption of mathematical models by Deleuze is always within the ambit of a problematic: 'The redeployment of mathematical problematics as models for philosophical problematics is one of the strategies that Deleuze employs in his engagement with and reconfiguration of the history of philosophy.' p 2

institutionalise it. Thus the conceptual distinction between smooth and striated spaces can be counted as one of the most important innovations brought by Deleuze and Guattari to the problem of method for practices. Any practice will have a tendency to striate its field, to approach it through an epistemological grid, allowing for knowledge, understanding and structured action. Yet, in its experience of the field, the practice will encounter smooth gradients and complex interconnections, such that any striation needs to be treated as, at best, an approximation to this multiplicity of variations and, at worst, as the error of reduction of the field according to a falsifying image.⁸ This means that the problem of method will always also be a problem of sensibility, of openness to the differences our practices are bound to miss, hide, eradicate and, indeed, create.

7. There are two features of method in Deleuze and Guattari's thought that are therefore non-standard and problematic for practice and for pragmatism about method. First, there has to be a creative destruction of method built into method itself. This destruction is radical, in the sense that it is a full break with the control of method, rather than a partial amendment to how it functions, or a built-in steady improvement. For instance, a feedback and amend mechanism would itself be part of the control and organisational aspects of method, to be subjected to destructive practice. Second, method cannot be goal-oriented, if we understand goals to be measurable outcomes or fixed values agreed in advance. The turn to feedback and to meta-level control mechanisms can seem like a liberating and improving development in contemporary method. Deleuze and Guattari teach us that feedback is itself method-driven in ways that can be even more repressive than single level methodological structures, because the meta-level method can combine a stronger claim to be sensitive to differences, while introducing even stronger structural mechanisms and a potentially devastating miscalculation about control over the future.

8. The degree of difficulty involved in the creative destruction of method can be grasped through two paradoxes. First, what is the method of the creative destruction of method? If a philosophy requires method for structure, then it should also require some kind of method for the structure of creative destruction, but this implies a higher level method. This would lead to an infinite regress of methods and destruction. Second, what could it mean to think and act creatively but free of determined goals, even if these goals were settled after the fact? As a minimum, an action should be open to review as to what it has achieved. If we can agree upon this, then we can assess different actions and decide what goals are appropriate for future action. If we cannot recognise or judge the outcome of a creative act in this way, we cannot even judge it to have been an action at all, in the sense of a passage between two states, between prior conditions and later outcomes. A clue to the solution to these paradoxes can be found in Deleuze and Guattari's embracing of concepts such as cut, dice-throw, imperceptibility and lines of escape. Against one of the deepest presuppositions of method, in particular when it maintains an image of its own truth and rectitude, they celebrate the

⁸ 'And no sooner have we done that than we must remind ourselves that the two spaces in fact exist only in mixture: smooth space is constantly being translated, transversed into a striated space; striated space is constantly being reversed, returned to a smooth space.' *A Thousand Plateaus*, p 474. For an excellent collection on Deleuze, Guattari and Space, see Deleuze and Space, Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert (eds), Edinburgh University Press, 2005

pursuit of ways out of method and towards the new *that cannot be recognised as valid from within the method itself*.⁹

9. Despite these paradoxes, the depth of the problem of method for Deleuze and Guattari should not be over-estimated. The problem is at its strongest where method has to be deployed against its own negative tendencies. However, a constant aspect of their thought does not suffer directly from the same hindrance. This is the descriptive and diagnostic side of Deleuze and Guattari's philosophies.¹⁰ The description of symptoms and mapping of machines and functions are among the greatest strengths of the Deleuzo-Guattarian approaches. Though they depend on an accompanying affirmation, the descriptions themselves can be viewed as separate methods. The two sides, descriptive and creative, or diagnosis and escape, are never fully independent. Nonetheless, where method is concerned, it is viable to deploy an accurate and far-reaching toolbox of concepts and structures in description while keeping their creative destruction in reserve.

10. Descriptive and diagnostic tools such as tracing molar and molecular processes in a system, or picking out the tree-like structures and underlying rhizomes of a society, or distinguishing the machine of state and war machines at work in a conflict, or working with the flows and cuts of a machine-like process, show Deleuze and Guattari's methodological inventiveness and acuteness at their best.¹¹ There is a methodological skill in deploying these concepts and structures. It draws on their conceptual creativity to make maps of many interlinked and dominant modes of control and damage in contemporary and historical societies. We can use these tools and concepts together or in complex arrangements and assemblies. Irrespective of what we then do with the analysis, they help us to grasp complex and evolving systems. The legacy of helpful questions and models bequeathed to us by Deleuze and Guattari – with characteristic abandon and generosity – explains the extraordinary reach and promise of their thought. What is the molar here? Where are the molecular flows? How is the tree structure organised and ruled? Where are the rhizomes beneath it? Is this a machine of state or a war machine? What new flows are there here? How are they beginning to be cut into? By who, where, and for what? These are all questions of method and towards methods.

11. The balance between the need to overcome methods and their importance for structure in diagnosis explains the controversial nature of claims to Deleuzian or Deleuzo-Guattarian method. For the former, there is the idea of Deleuze's method as an experimental dialectics based around relations of different kinds of differentiation (differentiation and differenciation)¹² in the emergence

⁹ A reading of Maria Nichterlein and John Morss's *Deleuze and Psychology: Philosophical Provocations to Psychological Practices* is the background to this discussion of method. In particular, I am interested in how we should think about method in a 'critical psychology that is constantly diversifying'. *Deleuze and Psychology: Philosophical Provocations to Psychological Practices*, Abingdon: Routledge, 2017, p 123

¹⁰ For a perceptive discussion of Deleuze and Guattari's work on diagnosis see Aidan Tynan *Deleuze's Literary Clinic: Criticism and the Politics of Symptoms*, Edinburgh University Press, 2012

¹¹ For a good initial introduction to the many concepts created by Deleuze and Guattari, see Adrian Parr (ed) *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Edinburgh University Press, 2005 (and subsequent new and extended editions). For longer discussion of concepts by Deleuze and Guattari experts, see Charles J. Stivale (ed) *Gilles Deleuze: Key concepts, Second Edition*, Edinburgh University Press, 2011.

¹² For introductions to this important distinction in Deleuze's philosophy, see my own *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: a Critical Introduction and Guide, Second Edition*, Edinburgh University Press, 2013,

of individuations.¹³ For the latter, there is the growing dominance of the idea of schizo-analysis – understood loosely as the diagnosis of molar and molecular processes, of major and minor forms, as well as disjunctions and lines of escape – based around *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. However, when either of these methods is given a final formal status, inner and outer tensions emerge. For instance, internally, the dialectical method has deep contradictions around the nature of the new in relation to the logical structure of the method. Is the new subjected to the structure, or is it something that goes beyond any possible structure? Similarly, schizo-analysis has internal tensions around the positivity and negativity of disjunctions or ‘schizes’.¹⁴ Why are some cuts positive in relation to new lines of escape, whereas others prove to be negative? Is the assessment of those values inherent to schizo-analysis, such that we could assign probabilities to positive and negative outcomes in advance? Externally, the difficulties are even stronger, since Deleuze goes well beyond his statements about dialectics in all his books other than *Difference and Repetition*. It doesn’t make sense to call his method dialectics for *The Logic of Sense* or *Cinema 1* and *Cinema 2*, let alone *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*. The same applies to Guattari’s works with Deleuze, since each collective book can be seen as going beyond, and in some ways renouncing the methods of others, while staying true to some more vague idea of conceptual resemblances and political values across the philosophy. Furthermore, it should not be overlooked that Guattari’s work on language, political activity, clinical practice and ecology is more extensive and deeper in terms of method and collective action than Deleuze’s. At least where method is concerned, the tendency to overemphasise Deleuze in the collective work must be resisted.¹⁵

12. If Deleuze and Guattari’s philosophy depends on two approaches to method that complement and oppose one another, and with no recourse to a third term that could resolve their differences, my contention is that their approach to method is necessarily pragmatic. However, as we have seen, this pragmatism is itself special, insofar as it has neither identified goals, nor a method of its own. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari experiment with method and its destruction in individual circumstances and in relation to individual perspectives on complex problems. In trying to define their pragmatism as sharing a common kernel with classical and contemporary pragmatism, I have described philosophical pragmatisms as different interpretations of this primary principle:

or Henry Somers Hall, *Deleuze’s Difference and Repetition: an Edinburgh Philosophical Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, 2013

¹³ In discussing Deleuze’s methodology as a way of reinterpreting figures from the history of philosophy, Daniel W. Smith makes a telling remark about the role of a ‘zone of indiscernability’ between the historical text and Deleuze’s original ideas. This is a good suggestion for understanding method after Deleuze more broadly, in relation to differentiation, since it implies that method should go beyond fixed distinctions between different elements and actors of the method. In order to introduce shared zones of becoming, there has to be uncertainty with respect to boundaries for the method. Daniel S. Smith, *Essays on Deleuze*, Edinburgh University Press: 2012, pp 63-6.

¹⁴ In his discussion of micropolitics, Nathan Widder draws attention to practices that ‘work to disaggregate to stratifications that schematise us’ (143), but he is careful as well to draw attention to the dangers in these practices that can ‘lead to an empty “black hole”’ (145). Widder adds to the discussion of method given here by showing how any form of self-creation and joint creation is political in the strong sense of a matter of ‘contest and engagement with difference’. Nathan Widder, *Political Theory after Deleuze*, London: Continuum, 2012, p 146.

¹⁵ See, in particular, Guattari’s work on ecology, *The Three Ecologies*, trans. I. Pindar and P. Sutton, London: Bloomsbury, 2008

‘Everything evolves amidst a shared problem’.¹⁶ Deleuze and Guattari depart from other versions of pragmatism in taking radical positions on the concepts of evolution, environment, sharing and problems. Evolution is multiple and open-ended, rather than subject to natural law. Environment is both actual and virtual, including ideal and abstract factors. Pragmatism isn’t shared for humans in democracies, but rather shared across all life forms and their interconnected environments. Problems aren’t common sense practical difficulties, but rather genetic and complex conditions for any evolution. Deleuze and Guattari’s adoption of linguistic pragmatics is itself multiple and changeable, caught in its processes of self-destruction.¹⁷ It will therefore always be wrong to seek their general method for a subject or practice. There cannot be one.

13. Given the negative effect of imposing general concepts over individuals, we should abandon the idea of general methods. Instead, we should experiment with which concepts we can adapt from Deleuze and Guattari and which clues to methodological construction and destruction we can glean from a specific pragmatic study of a given problem for an individual event. In what follows, I will therefore track the problem of method as it is worked with in the conclusion to *What is Philosophy?*, ‘From chaos to the brain’, where they write about the relation of thought to brain in the context of art, science and philosophy.

14. The first sentence of ‘From chaos to brain’ shows that the problem of method is central to the question of thought and brain: ‘We only ask for a little order to protect us from chaos.’¹⁸ Deleuze and Guattari’s first pragmatic methodological principle is for a minimum of order, just enough structure to avoid a collapse into chaos. It is important to contrast this principle with one that might appear similar but is in fact the opposite. They could have said ‘We require order’, but this would have left open questions of how much order and of the intrinsic value of order. Maybe we need a lot of order and maybe order is a good thing in its own right. Neither of these options is the case. For Deleuze and Guattari, order is a necessity but in a negative sense: it keeps from us from chaos but at

¹⁶ For a wide range of essays on Deleuze and pragmatism, see *Deleuze and Pragmatism*, Sean Bowden, Simone Bignall and Paul Patton (eds), New York: Routledge, 2015. The essays by Simone Bignall and by John J. Stuhr are particularly good at drawing connections between Deleuze and Guattari’s methods and those developed by Dewey.

¹⁷ In the conclusion to her *Deleuze et l’art*, Anne Sauvagnargues gives the most insightful analysis of Deleuze’s work as pragmatic method. Sauvagnargues’s aim is two-fold. She gives an account of method after Deleuze and she outlines her own method for approaching Deleuze’s work in a manner consistent with it. She draws out the main aspects of this pragmatism as response to ‘problematic knots’ that are prospective and retrospective at the same time, where the pragmatics must ‘accentuate ruptures or continuities, dependent on the chosen axis.’ According to Sauvagnargues, method is relative to a chosen perspective and must remain mobile. She insists on Deleuze’s methodological empiricism and its requirement for heterogeneity as it unfolds. Method should be a perspectival cartography of concepts in a process of becoming. We can take this as a model for other methods, after Deleuze, where pragmatic method observes cuts and continuities in its relation to a chosen sphere by experimenting on new directions and transformations. I cannot do full justice to Sauvagnargues’s acute study in these limited notes, but perhaps the most important practical guidance to retain is her debt to detailed processes of ‘constitutive thresholds’, ‘internal ramifications’, ‘external rhizomatic developments’, connective ‘assemblages’ and a variable body of references. Anne Sauvagnargues, *Deleuze et l’art*, Paris: PUF 2005, pp 255-9. See also, Sauvagnargues practical study of Deleuze’s method in his reading of Proust in her *Deleuze: l’empirisme transcendantal*, Paris: PUF, 2009, pp 61-7.

¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. H. Tomlinson and G. Burchell, New York: Columbia University Press, 1994, p 202 [I have modified translations of this text, since the current translation is, in my view, somewhat inaccurate in some of its phrasing]

a cost to be minimised. Here, then, is a first principle for method after Deleuze and Guattari: *we require method, but it should be minimised*.¹⁹

15. Deleuze and Guattari then go on to explain why we need a minimum of order. The reason is practical, about the life of thought, rather than theoretical and about order itself. Without order, thought falls away and this fall is painful. Chaos draws thought into suffering and threatens its existence: 'anguishing', 'gnawed at', 'thrown about'.²⁰ We'll see later how chaos should not be seen as simply negative, but life depends on a minimum of order, because it always risks losing its consistency in an agonizing collapse. This point is very important for understanding Deleuze and Guattari's pragmatism for two reasons. First, there is negativity to disorder. Second, this negativity is about the threat of a painful breakdown of necessary consistency. We can therefore add a further principle for method. *Method protects life in its individual reliance on consistency*.

16. If we need method to protect us from chaos, why would we not want as much protection as we can get? Why wouldn't we want to maximise order? If there's a wolf pack out there, why wouldn't we build the highest walls we can? The answer is at first hard to make out, but it follows from the nature of ideas. The appearance and disappearance of ideas 'coincide'. By this Deleuze and Guattari mean ideas come out of and fall into chaos. The new in thought is a potential within chaos, determined as infinite variability against a background of complete lack of determination. There's no question that this is a difficult idea, so I will translate it into more simple terms, with all the risks of imprecision this entails. Deleuze and Guattari suggest new changes in thought appear as a change in the intensity of ideas, itself dependent on an infinite reserve of changing intensities free of any actual limits or bearers. This infinite reserve is the positive side of chaos. It feeds into actual thought to bring the new. Yet, because it does so through intensities 'without nature or thought', it is also a condition for collapse. Order and method are therefore pragmatic strategies designed to maximise new intensities while minimising their inevitable collapses. This explains why order must itself be minimised, since the further we protect ourselves from the painful fall into chaos, the further we remove ourselves from the life-giving intensity and renewal afforded by new ideas.

17. The opening lines of 'From chaos to the brain' have hidden references to earlier work by Deleuze and Guattari. First, there are concepts taken from Spinoza. The life of thought as fear of and

¹⁹ In the conclusion to his interpretation of *What is Philosophy?*, Jeffrey A. Bell gives a reading of the 'From chaos to brain' chapter that stresses a search for the good life, rather than the question of method covered here. While our two interpretations are close in agreeing that Deleuze and Guattari situate action between two extremes, I depart a little from Bell's focus on the idea of 'moderation'. Moderation would indicate a middle way, a life of compromises. Methodologically, this would encourage an idea of balance, continuity and mediation. In my view that's not quite what they are indicating, because this would depart much too far from the need to forge new experimental methods and prepare for their destruction and replacement. It's not necessarily a life of moderation that Deleuze and Guattari prepare us for, but a life of oscillation and constant renewal; not a life well lived, but a life lived as badly as we can bear, a life of *its* survived extremes – the judgement of well and badly will always be a majority judgement and whereas balanced extremes are always individual tests. See Jeffrey A. Bell *Deleuze and Guattari's What is Philosophy?: a Critical Introduction and Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, 2016, pp 238-46.

²⁰ *What is Philosophy?*, p 201. My reservations about the translation show through here insofar as the English loses the French use of anguish. This is an important omission because Deleuze and Guattari are alluding to the anguish (*angoisse*) brought about by the threat of chaos. There is a Sartrean and existentialist aspect to this that the translation misses.

resistance to collapse can be traced back to his conatus: it is the essence of every living thing to struggle to increase its power, where power is defined as a capacity to affect and be affected.²¹ Opinion is the lowest form of thought, taking it furthest from its conatus, because opinionated thought turns away from understanding and from new ideas. Men of opinion are decadent fools for Spinoza because they settle for an illusion, the form of knowledge furthest from true understanding. Second, Deleuze and Guattari are referring to processes of order taken from Hume. Ideas acquire order through their association according to resemblance, contiguity and causality.²² This allows them to attain the minimum of consistency to keep them open to the new yet away from chaos. Third, from Kant, but also from Guattari's political studies, objects and sensations are the condition for the emergence of opinion, since objective consistency and its reproduction in the senses secure and bolster opinion as common sense and common order. We can suggest another principle at this point. *Opinion and common sense draw method away from its minimal function and away from the intensity of life.*

18. Throughout *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari have been defining and studying art, science and philosophy as practices opposed to common sense and opinion. They are the thought of the new and of new intensity, but they must also therefore be creativity at its most dangerous, in coming as close as they can to chaos and to the collapse of thought. Against the overprotection of religious dogma, into which all methods can fall, creative art, science and philosophy take risks: 'The philosopher, the scientist, the artist seem to have returned from the land of the dead.'²³

19. The nature of the risk is the fall into chaos and disorder, which must themselves be understood as types of death, though not necessarily of a whole organism or system, but of (at least) a line of thought or a potential. This provides us with another qualification around methods. It can seem extreme, but it is important in view of the role of methods in diagnosis and action. *The limit where methods are brought in and operate minimally is death.* This is a deep insight by Deleuze and Guattari, since it explains the importance of method and the temptation to maximise it, in the sense of seeking as much protection from death as possible.

20. Having positioned method and order in relation to death, Deleuze and Guattari once again address the question of a possible maximisation of order. They do this through very quick but important characterisations of the methods of art, science and philosophy in relation to chaos. I will return to this in the next paragraph, but it is helpful to work backwards from an important explanatory statement: 'One could say that the struggle *against chaos* is not without affinity with the enemy, because another struggle develops and takes on greater importance, *against opinion*, that itself nonetheless claims to protect us from chaos itself.'²⁴ The problem of method takes place between two opponents – chaos and opinion. Both of these involve the death of living intensity; to fall into chaos, or to be entombed in dogmatic opinion. Deleuze and Guattari take sides in these conflicts, but only as a matter of degree ('takes on greater importance'). We should always try to go

²¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. R. Hurley, San Francisco: City Light Books, 1988, p 21

²² Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, trans C. Boundas, New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, p 32

²³ *What is Philosophy?*, 202

²⁴ *Ibid.* 203

as close as we can to chaos and as far away as we can from opinion. Or, stated as a principle of method: *method should be minimised in relation to its attraction to opinion and the loss of intensity.*

21. We can learn about the practice of method from the way art, science and philosophy draw new thought from chaos. Philosophy draws conceptual 'variations' from chaos. This means that, in creating a concept, the philosopher sets off chains of changes in intensity through everything. The variation is a re-evaluation of all values; for example, in the way the creation of the concept of modern subject changes the world, after Descartes's *cogito*. There are two concurrent processes at work in this creation. On the one hand, it brings in new intensities and transforms a world by setting it in motion again: a reinvigoration of life. On the other hand, the new concept and new world has a tendency to slow down and fall into opinion: no longer the appearance of new ways of living, but the deification of one way of living for all times. The former is a life force; the latter represses it. The same is true for science which draws variables from chaos by abstracting them from others and setting them into specific functions, with a tendency to create a limited world based on that function, then falsely extended to all worlds. Art draws varieties from chaos; that is, new sensibilities or new ways of feeling. Referring back to their earlier work on Turner, Deleuze and Guattari explain how art is always on the edge of catastrophe, on the edge of disintegrating into an indistinct background or chaos.²⁵ The opposing danger for art lies in the institution of a sensibility against all others, such that art fails to change and move us, becoming instead an instrument of control through aesthetic opinion.

22. We shouldn't take specific methods from these brief remarks on art, science and philosophy, because they are about the particular challenge of how to model these modes of thought as different from one another in relation to chaos. We can, however, learn further principles for any method in relation to the threat of chaos: *methods should be designed to show both the emergence of intensity from chaos and its fall into opinion for any given problem.* It is worth commenting on how this principle is rarely touched on outside Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy. They are introducing an important novel approach to method here. Usually, a method presents an order and a manner, like a repeatable instruction where both chaos and rigidity are hidden as problems of method; they are kept outside as unspoken threats. Against the idea of method as a clear and bare plan, Deleuze and Guattari teach that we should also understand method as having to reveal its own risks. We should construct methods such that the twin threats of opinion and chaos are expressed within methods in terms of structure and vocabulary. This means being explicit about what a method is guarding against, not as only as a mere threat but also as a resource. We should also be explicit about how the very act of guarding can cause even greater damage. *Every method must show the twin risks of chaotic collapse and opinionated dogmatism at every stage of its expression and construction.* In our modern litigious societies, we already follow this principle in small ways when our methods explicitly cover themselves against failure; for instance, when we have backup plans or when we incorporate awareness of possible injuries in the method itself (in patient waver

²⁵ 'The canvas turns in on itself, it is pierced by a hole, a lake, a flame, a tornado, an explosion. The themes of the preceding paintings are to be found again here, their meaning changed. The canvas is truly broken, sundered by what penetrates it.' Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem and Helen R. Lane, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1977, p 132. For a longer discussion see James Williams, 'Deleuze and J.M.W. Turner: catastrophism in philosophy' in K. Ansell Pearson (ed.) *Deleuze and Philosophy*, London: Routledge, 1997, pp 232-46

forms, in medical practice, or the small print of legal contracts). However, it is very rare for a method to incorporate awareness of its own tendency to dangerous dogmatism.

23. Why should we view opinion and common sense as death? Even if we accept the idea that methods can lead to a low intensity and boring life, one with few differences and little novelty, isn't that one of the things we seek from methods, a little protection from suffering and pain? A large proportion of 'From chaos to the brain' is dedicated to responding to this objection in the context of art, science and philosophy. For art, opinion and convention are the death of art, because art is always about the creation of new sensibility in relation to matter. Once blocks of feelings and matter become mere clichés, there is no art, only standard communication. To escape from this chocolate box effect, the artist must create a new sensation, something that hasn't been felt this way before with this material event. Art starts with cliché, in the sense that any working medium and any environment is full of clichés. A cliché is an association of ageing ideas, de-intensified feelings and objectified materials. Art must then fight against them by bringing in as much destruction as it can into creative practice.²⁶ We could interpret this as a model for method in an art school: *destroy as many conventions and clichés as you can through new creations, always taking the school to the very edge of survival.*

24. If we can see the death in art when it is taken over by common sense, cliché and convention, it is much harder to do so for science. Deleuze and Guattari are well-aware of this and seek to explain the destructive inner tendencies of science through the way it operates against chaos by deploying abstractions, functions and statistics to achieve an agreed scientific opinion. All the better for that agreement we might say, given the increased knowledge of our bodies, minds, of nature and the world that scientific opinion has given us, against the chaos of disease, disaster and tragedy. This would be to miss two ways in which science remains close to chaos. First, in terms of its own functions and variables, science tries to get as close to chaos as it can, seeking greater precision at the cost of greater indeterminacy, finding divergences and differences beneath the more brute accounts given by broad opinion. It is true that science moves towards equilibria, but also moves away from them in order to understand why they are insufficient or inaccurate. Settled scientific opinion is a kind of death of science, as the search for ever better understanding. Scientific advancement is then also a struggle against its fall into dogmatic resistance to new discoveries. Second, in terms of a wider connection between scientific opinion and general opinion, science fights against itself and for chaos because 'man's misfortune comes from opinion'.²⁷ This misfortune takes a specific form in relation to science: determinist predictions and probabilistic evaluation. By this, Deleuze and Guattari are referring to those moments where science moves away from its uncertain and undetermined origins, requiring abstraction and functions.²⁸ When this happens, through an alliance with other forms of opinion, the world is approached as if it could not be other

²⁶ This reaction to the cliché in art can be traced back to Deleuze's work on Francis Bacon: 'The entire surface is already invested virtually with all kinds of clichés, which the painter will have to break with.' Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sensation*, trans. D. W. Smith, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2002, p 31. There is a broader lesson here for all disciplinary methods, since they too are at risk from the cliché which will take on forms specific to each discipline.

²⁷ Ibid. 206

²⁸ This connection between major and minor science, and royal science can be traced back to *A Thousand Plateaus*: 'Major science has a perpetual need for the inspiration of the minor, but the minor would be nothing if it did not confront and conform to the highest scientific requirements.' p 486

than as shown according to limited variables and set functions. This leads to the dogmatic ideas of certainty in predictions and accuracy in probabilities, both of which become sources of misfortune when the predictions and probabilities prove to be wrong. Those shameful moments where science has been co-opted by dominant political opinion around race and sexuality are examples of this misfortune.

25. Deleuze and Guattari's analyses of science in its relation to chaos and opinion form the basis for an understanding method and order as specifically scientific. This is important for reflection on contemporary methods, given the dominance of scientific methods and scientific knowledge in the construction of methods for other areas and problems. Deleuze and Guattari teach us that we should have a principle for the adoption of scientific practices and understanding within method to guard against its own negative tendencies. The principle I would suggest is this: *when borrowing methods and knowledge from science, every construction of a method should build in ways of overcoming the limits imposed by scientific abstraction and ways of questioning and working against the elevation of scientific knowledge into dogma.*

26. There are two sources readily available for this questioning of science. They explain why Deleuze and Guattari speak of three difference types of thought: art, science and philosophy. The fall into restriction and dogma of science can be countered by methods incorporating artistic and philosophical creativity. *Any method, but above all those dominated by science, should include the creation of artistic sensations and philosophical concepts alongside and counter to its scientific aspects.* We only play lip service to this principle in contemporary practices, such that art becomes an illustration for science and philosophy a kind of conceptual hygiene for scientific concepts. If we take Deleuze and Guattari seriously, these subservient roles must be replaced in method itself by more than equal partnership. Instead, art and philosophy must challenge science within any given method. The former can point to sensations and modes of life that have been overlooked or crushed. The latter provides critical and alternative concepts. The position of science within method should always be made uncomfortable. In the same way that science can destabilise and inspire art and philosophy.