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The inhuman challenge: Writing with dark desire

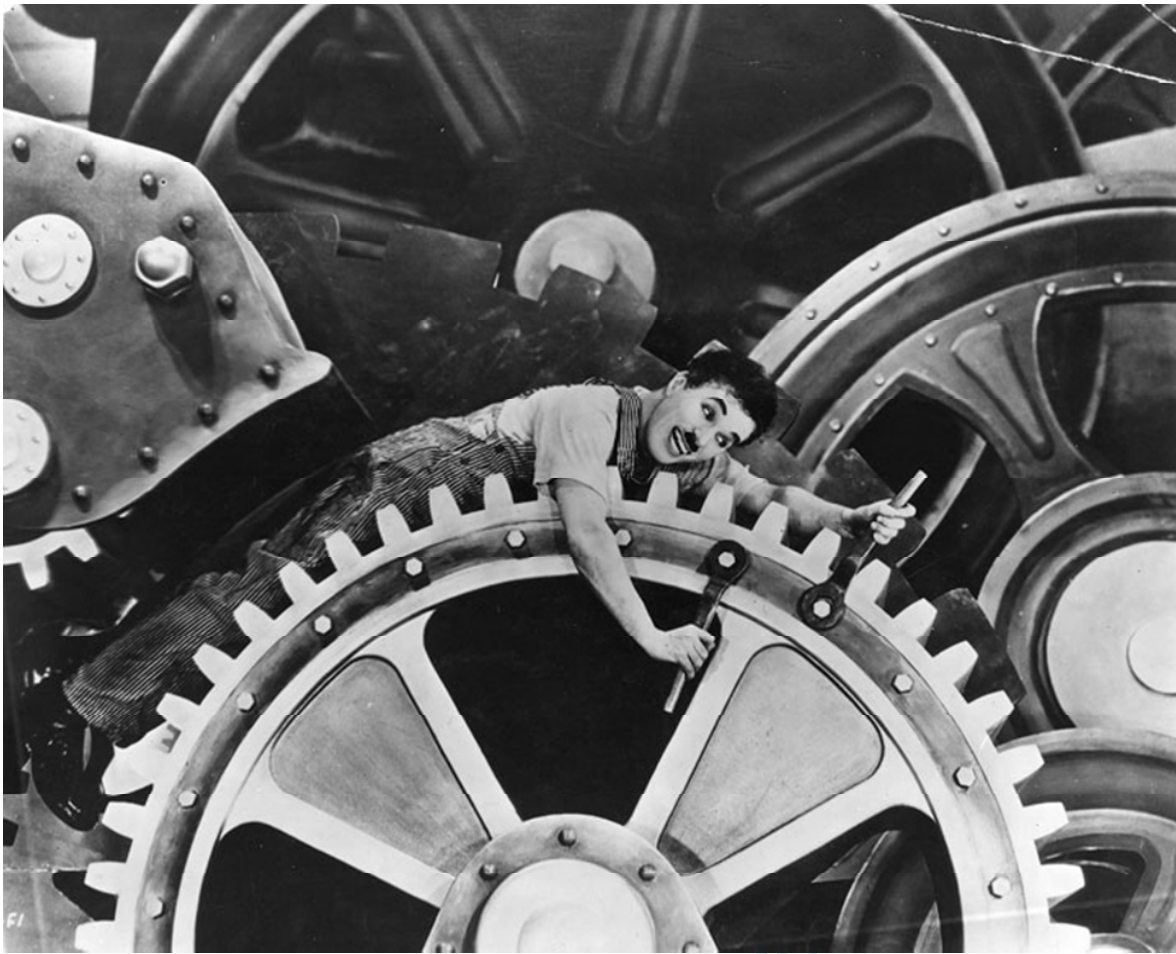
Abstract

Adaptations of Deleuze's and Guattari's immanent philosophizing on desire have risen to challenge joyous, affirmative readings of their work by bringing the dark, destructive aspects of desire into focus. We find an innate potentiality within such accounts, as they are themselves spoken by the inhuman within us – the forces which render our subjective intentions obsolete. To supplement more traditional forms of academic expression, we advocate for a style of writing that can bring about 'shocks to thought' and connect with the inhumanity of desire in a direct fashion. We see this as an *activating form* of aesthetic violence that channels dark desiring itself, and thus challenges conventional literary approaches that seek to 'raise awareness'. An inhuman textuality that recognizes our own obscenity in disgust and through repulsion, serving to uncover that which may otherwise remain unthinkable to depart from the trappings of that which is often taken for granted in organisational research.

Keywords

Inhuman, desire, Deleuze and Guattari, accelerationism, affect, style

The inhuman challenge: Writing with dark desire



In a famous scene from the film *Modern Times*, the character of Charlie Chaplin becomes so intimately involved with fixing the gears of a factory machine that he virtually fuses within its workings. Yet, his expression remains eerily joyous – a manic grin lines his face as he gets evermore entangled, marking a distinct *thrill to disappear* within its metal bowels. Following Deleuze and Guattari (hereafter D+G), who set forth desire as an immanent force that flows in machinic connections, Chaplin’s grin can be seen as an expression of visceral enjoyment. It is a *machinic desire*, an unconscious and automatized lashing out with no representational or cognitive qualities. It is thus not a desire for either ‘this’ or ‘that’, but rather an innate connectivity with

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3 everything and nothing. Such lines of thought, often constructed under loose rubrics such as non-
4 representational theory (e.g., Beyes and Steyaert, 2012; Komporozos-Athanasidou and Fotaki, 2015),
5 affect theory (Beyes and De Cock, 2017; Fotaki et al., 2016; Hjorth and Pelzer, 2007; Karppi et al.,
6 2016) or object-oriented ontologies (Dzidowski, 2015; Humphries and Smith, 2014), have risen to
7 challenge the modernist echoes of human rationality in organizational theory. Following a common
8 reading of D+G as advocates of freeing repressed desires, affective experimentation, and ethicality
9 (Culp, 2016; also Munro and Thanem, 2017), attention has commonly been directed towards
10 espousing desires' affirmative potentials. This approach also champions thought that attempts to
11 think beyond binaries, resulting in foregrounding precognitive affect and emancipatory and creative
12 self-organization (Botez and Hietanen, 2017; Hietanen and Rokka, 2017; Linstead and Thanem,
13 2007; Pullen et al., 2016; Thanem, 2006).

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29 While this liberatory potential 'within' being seems to offer an attractive sense of optimism for any
30 authors who seek to "contest the parameters of Western humanism from within without setting fire
31 to the premises" (Murphet, 2016: 653), the *inhuman* dimension of Chaplin's grin points us to far
32 more grim and destructive spaces. The inhuman *is* the desiring intensities and machinic impulses
33 where subjective experiences are peripheral at best. It is excessive by nature, an unconscious flow
34 outside of rationality and reason, marking an obscenity that works "in spite of and around the
35 human, within and as the human" (Grosz, 2002: 467; also Rehn and O'Doherty, 2007). Although
36 our timid souls are immediately inclined to all that is 'good' about the human (as we have been
37 taught), we do believe that there is an urgent need to further elucidate these intensities in the global
38 technologization of capitalism (in the total abstraction of financial capital, global digital
39 communications, automation and by making the subject into an ever-divided commodity). The
40 underlying itch being that the intensification of capitalist technologies has put a spell on us – a
41 desiring spell that through machinic repression invokes a curious joy, akin to how totalitarian and
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3 populist regimes have always been able to attract the desires of people in libidinal ways (D+G,
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5 2013a; Schuster, 2016; Žižek, 2002).
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9 By following recent D+G scholarship that places a particular focus on the inhuman aspects of
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11 desire, and especially its recent manifestations as ‘semiocapitalism’ (Berardi, 2010; Genosko,
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13 2011), ‘Dark Deleuze’ (Culp, 2016; also Swarbrick, 2018) and ‘accelerationism’ (e.g., Mackay and
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15 Avanesian, 2014), we explore these dark, desiring intensities and how writing through their
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17 violence can provide ‘shocks to thought’, which rupture prevalent “relations, identities, signifiers,
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19 and connected meanings” (Prichard and Benschop, 2018: 103). Through this, we endeavour to
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21 establish some theoretical grounds for a form of activism that through a particular style of writing
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23 and reading embraces the obscene while eschewing the assumed rationality and benign
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25 purposiveness of human agency (also Rehn and O’Doherty, 2007). Although its unsavoury flair
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27 may evoke repulsion, we argue that it is more inclined towards our own inhuman tendencies within
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29 contemporary capitalism and that these tendencies should be foregrounded rather than negated. Our
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31 approach both challenges and supplements previous work that has focused on the creative, joyful,
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33 and emancipatory aspects of D+G’s work, as we acknowledge the *inhumanity of immanent desire*
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35 that ‘enjoys’¹ excesses of all kinds and its violent engagements with *thrill of annihilation* (also
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37 Land, 2005). While organizational scholarship has explored the excesses of desire from a safe
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39 distance (Munro and Thanem, 2017; Rehn and O’Doherty, 2007), it has failed to recognize the
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41 inhuman challenge that is closing in. *It hasn’t gone nearly far enough!*
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48 By occluding the inhumanity of desire, agentic subjectivity has never truly been questioned and the
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50 tone has remained one of rational awareness-raising (also Linstead and Brewis, 2007; Munro and
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52 Thanem, 2017). The problem with these well-intentioned accounts is thus a tripartite misprision of
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56 ¹ ‘Enjoyment’ here refers to an intense libidinal investment (‘jouissance’ in psychoanalytic terms), not personal
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58 pleasure or contentment.

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3 the inhumanity within desire – the idea that capitalism is an ‘external’ threat (that can be identified),
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5 the humanist overemphasis of agency (action!) and the modernist-cum-neoliberal insistence on a
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7 choice-making individual that seeks to do good. The inhuman challenge insists that the illusory
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9 individual was never there and even that its remnant has become increasingly ‘dividualized’ in the
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11 technological immediacy of contemporary capitalism (Berardi, 2010; Deleuze, 1992; Stiegler,
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13 2011). The inhuman challenge reveals that our machinic desire thirsts for our own repression with
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15 glee and, more importantly, that we are aroused by it in ways which are no way metaphorical; “it is
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17 this perversion of the desire of the masses that needs to be accounted for” (D+G, 2013a: 42). Thus,
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19 rather than attempting to ‘raise awareness’ or to speak to a human agency at the helm, we seek to
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21 incite a scholarly style which both recognizes and attempts to ‘speak’ with this aspect of desire
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23 more directly. We will begin by elaborating on the dark reading of D+G that gives us a theoretical
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25 grounding for the inhuman desire, and later on we attempt to establish a form of scholarship that
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27 can meet its excesses and obscenity head on.
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33 **Awakening the dark side of D+G**

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37 While the inhuman challenge draws from a broad array of sources, its locus remains in D+Gs’
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39 theorizing of desire and capitalism in *Anti-Oedipus* (1972/2013a) and *A Thousand Plateaus*
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41 (1980/2013b), where the idea of desire as inhuman force is set ablaze. While an affirmative reading
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43 of these seminal works finds indefinite potentials for liberating desire, and it is indeed D+G (2013b)
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45 themselves who occasionally advocate for ‘caution’ in experimenting with one’s desiring urges
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47 (also Schuster, 2016), the inhuman reading displaces the human as a locus of desiring activity. D+G
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49 construct an immanent ontology of desire that does not emerge through a structure or *lack*, but
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51 rather denotes a machinic tendency that emerges in the juxtapositions of simultaneous structural and
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53 non-structural tensions. Desire is thus not a response to something missing, but rather an
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3 unconscious, additive and automatized tendency, aiming for its own proliferation (also Linstead and
4 Brewis, 2007). For D+G, a human is an accumulation of such machinic urges making connections
5 with other machines, a *desiring-machine* that eagerly fuses with its surroundings (such as Chaplin's
6 mouth-machine with the factory's aggressive-force-feeding-machine in *Modern Times*). This
7 conception of being makes any coherent individuality an ontological myth, masking a stuttering
8 organic machine-pile that at best is oscillating between neurosis, perversion, and psychosis
9 (Schuster, 2016)².

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20 Yet these desiring-machines are always breaking down due to their terribly tension-laden
21 relationship with the *Body without Organs* (BwO). The BwO can be imagined as an immanent
22 plane where matter "pass and circulate" (D+G, 2013b: 153) as intensities without stratification
23 (formation) and significance (interpretation). The BwO is a haunting presence of nothingness,
24 which indeed denotes both the impossibility and possibility of desire. It reveals itself as the death of
25 desire in a curiously productive manner, the desiring-machine lunging further into machinic
26 connections while also constantly and seductively enticing it to break down - the splendour of
27 desire in the moment of a sacrificial collapse. As the locus of both death and the vitalist impetus of
28 desire, it is a violent desiring surge of living itself (also Thanem, 2004). Examples will follow.

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41 Thus, while conventional organizational theory tends to find its starting point in subjectivity, for
42 D+G the idea of a coherent subject is rather a *residuum*, a mythical 'leftover', that emerges as a
43 representational outcome of desiring flows in constant becoming. By assuming the form of an
44 illusory representation, this constant *subjectivation* is nevertheless important for maintaining an

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52 ² Being is a violent encounter with embodied, machinic desiring urges that are so overwhelming that the human cannot
53 maintain stability. Thus, it can only oscillate between an anxiety of not knowing what it wants and what is wanted from
54 it (neurosis), a manic impulse to control and organize its surroundings (perversion) and losing itself in the moment in a
55 flow of becoming where being is no longer separated by language or representation (psychosis). Jacques Lacan once
56 quipped that these indeed are the only forms of 'normalcies' of *being* (inseparable from desire within psychoanalytic
57 theory) that can exist (see Schuster, 2016).

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3 idea of unity as our desperate attempt in the ever-changing flows of shifting intensities that engulf
4 us constantly (also Guattari, 2011, 2014). However, the emphasis on machinic flows forces our
5 attention away from ‘agents’ towards what *kinds of possibilities the context allows for*
6 *subjectivation to emerge as* (also Bueno, 2017; Langlois, 2011). To describe our contemporary
7 context, D+G delineate a fully financialized and globally integrated capitalism which does not
8 operate by decodable representations and structures, but rather acts as a haunting ‘atmosphere’ that
9 constantly whispers to our unconsciousness and harnesses its desiring urges (also Guattari, 2011;
10 2014), an idea later conceptualized as *semicapitalism* (e.g., Berardi, 2010, 2017; Bueno, 2017;
11 Genosko, 2011).

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24 The notion of semicapitalism can be traced to a McLuhanian (1964) lineage of thought as “it is not
25 the net but its shadow; it is not the form but its function” (Genosko, 2011: 152). It does not
26 represent, but rather *a-signifies* on an affective level (also Bueno, 2017; Genosko, 2008; Lazzarato,
27 2014) and is increasingly not concerned about ‘persons’, but the possibility to ‘dividualize’
28 subjectivity into parts for commodification (see Deleuze, 1992; also Cluley and Brown, 2015). It is
29 ever-present beyond recognition. While credit cards promise ‘freedom’ on a symbolic level, their
30 affective semiotic denotes a machinic enslavement of unending debt, and while the stock markets
31 can produce representations of indexes and rates, its unconscious message is one of intensifying
32 omnipresence, ceaselessness – it is not there to serve you but for you to serve (also Hietanen and
33 Andéhn, 2017; Langlois, 2011). Through semicapitalisms’ machinic tendencies, subjectivation
34 constantly desires its own affirmation in such repressive orders through ‘joyful’ encounters (see
35 Sampson, 2016), or even simply by manically connecting with obsessive consumption patterns
36 facilitated by the global instantaneity of online media and technologies (Berardi, 2017). Immanent
37 connectivity precedes consciousness. This is why desire for D+G is an auto-erotic *inhuman* force
38 within us that connects with capitalist desiring directly in ways that are not compatible with the
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3 representational ideas of individuality or rationality. The inhuman is rather that which displaces
4 such notions, by exposing the limits of a causal relationality between thinking and acting, being and
5 being 'better' (more 'aware'?). It is catalyzed through a-signifying relationalities which know no
6 bounds. Within a semiocapitalist system, the possibilities of dialectical resistance are thus pre-
7 emptied, as the assumed villain does not carry the sign of the oppressor while reactive antagonists
8 have been dividualized into the libidinal flow *itself* (also Berardi, 2017).

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11 In this sense, semiocapitalisms' machinic emergence "tends toward a threshold of decoding that
12 will destroy the socius in order to make it a body without organs and unleash the flows of desire on
13 this body as a deterritorialized field" (D+G, 2013a: 47). Thus 'human' organizing is rendered as an
14 automatized activity of unremitting desiring matrixes which infuses expressions of subjectivity into
15 the ever-intensifying algorithmic interfaces of machinic spaces (Berardi, 2017; Stiegler, 2011). On
16 this delicate verge of destruction, capitalism incessantly regenerates itself through novel forms of
17 desiring-production. Capitalist desire demands its own ceaseless accumulation, for the capitalist is

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33 "a conqueror [...] a monster, a centaur: his forequarters are nourished [...] under the law of the commodity
34 standard, and his hind-quarters by looting overexcited energies" (Lyotard, 2004: 212).

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37 At the limits of this thrilling excess we encounter a subjectivity in desperate flux, whose desires
38 have infused with optimizing, or even satisficing, subject or organization, where affective
39 theorizing of organizing has become subsumed into the machinic tendency itself. Still, Guattari
40 observes that "a strange passivity haunts our lives" (Guattari, 2014: 7), but what is it in this
41 passivity that seems teeming with 'enjoyment'? The question is, what is it in desire that desires its
42 repression? Why "do people still tolerate being humiliated and enslaved, to such a point, indeed,
43 that they actually want humiliation and slavery not only for others but for themselves?" (D+G,
44 2013a: 42). Here, the systemic function of semiocapitalistic subjectivation not only comes to
45 fruition, but is spared meaningful resistance as the oppression it exerts is paradoxically welcomed
46 by the desires of its victims.

Enjoying our capitalized subjectivation

In an inhuman reading of D+G, the answer to why our desire eagerly desires its own repression lies precisely in the tension between desiring-machines and BwO. In all the ‘violence’ and instability inherent in humans’ desire, “its turbulence and fragmentation is such that it is able to gain a grip on itself only by attacking and repressing its rebel organs [...] Desire desires its own repression because it already represses itself” (Schuster, 2016: 172). Undermining this desiring tension becomes auto-erotic production, and thus “Repressing desire, not only for others but in oneself, being the cop for others and oneself – that is what arouses” (D+G, 2013a: 394). This is why D+G (2013b) find it helpful to exemplify the thrill of (self)annihilation through the manner in which the masochist (in a perverted fashion) organizes its experience beforehand in minute detail (‘give me 100 lashes, then turn me around and sew my lips closed etc.’), while awaiting in grand anticipation for the event when there is *only* the vibrating sense of pain. It is that moment when the desiring-machine loses itself and inhabits the BwO – a moment of release and the disappearance of subjectivity, or “the *field of immanence* of desire, the *plane of consistency* specific to desire (with desire defined as a process of production without reference to any exterior agency)” (D+G, 2013b: 179). In its endless desiring-production and decoding of all what has consistency (including the social) capitalism gives the desiring-machine a promise that resembles the BwO – to disappear in relentless cycles of accumulation and to become dismembered in an ever-penetrating commodification of the social and the bodily. This is why

“to be sure, it is not for himself or his children that the capitalist works, but for the immortality of the system. A violence without purpose, a joy, a pure joy in feeling oneself a wheel of the machine, traversed by flows, broken by schizzes” (D+G, 2013a: 394).

This is the same desire we see in the ‘joyful’ expressions of Hitler’s audiences (also Sørensen, 2005) or in consumption encounters that rely upon enjoyment as the loss-of-self in pain (see Scott

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3 et al., 2017). Thus, it is through increasingly technologically-mediated semiocapitalist relations
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5 where a *capitalized subjectivity* emerges, one who has completely embodied capitalism's monstrous
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7 desire of indefinite accumulation ('~~I am~~ *productivity* itself!'). This refrain within capitalist orders
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9 works to occlude other desiring potential, because when capitalism has affectively commodified our
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11 unconscious longings, it is only a desire that enjoys this repression and seeks more of it that sustains
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13 itself (*is there enjoyment in karoshi?*). As D+G note, 'it was there all along' and what has happened
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15 is that *all possible subjectivation is replaced by the desire of capital itself*. And desiring-machines
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17 follow these desires, not simply because they are forced to do so, but rather because

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20 "one can enjoy swallowing the shit of capital [...] swallowing tonnes of it till you burst [...] And of course we
21 suffer, we the capitalized, but this does not mean that we do not enjoy" (Lyotard, 2004: 113-114)

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24 This circle of additive desire continues on even when we are faced with all the inequality and
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26 destruction caused by corporate capitalist production and consumption (see Žižek, 2002; also
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28 Cluley and Dunne, 2012), often by maintaining a critical distance to it as an alibi and thus never
29
30 engaging with it fully (Stavrakakis, 2007). Simultaneously, we are all but passivized as an
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32 embodiment of the commodity form and unable to conceive of a single plausible alternative to the
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34 Western capitalist order (Fisher, 2009; Genosko, 2009; Swarbrick, 2018). Today, "there is only one
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36 culture: capitalistic culture" (Guattari and Rolnik, 2008: 33) that in its excesses is increasingly
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38 "behaving like a capricious and psychotic animal" (Rehn and O'Doherty, 2007: 106), and what is
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40 more, this order is increasingly marked by a sinister affective horizon where it is increasingly the
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42 case that optimistic futures have already been cancelled (e.g., Fisher 2014a, 2014b; Noys, 2016;
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44 Watson, 2016). For the inhuman challenge, this marks how the stuttering and constantly
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46 overwhelmed desiring-machine has found its counterpart in the raging decoding and dividing of the
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48 self in ever-intensifying semiocapitalism. Our desires are leading us to this point *en masse* as if it
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50 was instinctual!
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3 The inhuman challenge may indeed surprise us and understandably put us on our mettle – so
4 accustomed are we to think otherwise in organizational theory. Indeed, should not desire resist any
5 injustice brought upon it? However, our ‘good’ inclinations will not likely do away with the
6 inhuman challenge, not do our ethical narratives of resistance seem to have much bearing on a
7 semiocapitalism that increasingly knows only of the ‘joys’ of immanent connectivity and speed
8 (also Sampson, 2016). The real question is, how and for what reasons do we hang on to our
9 humanistic prerequisites? Real concerns, academic habit, or even scholarly self-indulgence? While
10 our trembling inclinations scream in rejection of this ‘science fiction’, it seems evermore fictitious,
11 for in the cancellation of the future it is already itself out-of-date as fiction, and now all we seem to
12 have is a future that has itself succumbed to retrospection (also Fisher, 2014a, 2014b; Noys, 2016).
13 For the inhuman challenge, all focus on the affirmation of human creativity and desire looks
14 increasingly like an old-fashioned ideology (Murphet, 2016). The inhuman capitalized desire cannot
15 ‘read’ the D+G view of the human and stop half-way.

33 **Pharmaka for consideration**

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37 The inhuman challenge’s attack against the rationality and coherency of the agentic individual
38 leaves us trembling. A deep disgust for humanity is aroused through its condescending, illusory
39 omnipotence as it lends that which we thought of as (the) future of unstable machinic bodies and
40 desiring impulses. Chaplin enjoys. It strikes mercilessly against those who see promise simply
41 using D+G as a source of immanent affectivities for valorising creative potentials and non-
42 hierarchical collective politics within organizational theory. Some noteworthy scholars of the D+G
43 lineage (e.g., Braidotti, 2011; Stiegler, 2011) have also followed these affirmative paths by calling
44 for a complete rethinking of aesthetico-ethical paradigms and new ways of living in the form of
45 ‘absolute deterritorializations’ (D+G, 1994; also Munro, 2016). Alas, their request seems

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3 implausible in the face of semiocapitalist enjoyment. Still, whilst we must salute their optimism the
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5 cancellation of a future proceeds and we're increasingly *too young* to see it. Indeed, as Culp (2016)
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7 insists, "enough with rhizomes" (p. 38), particularly when they are seen as affirmative opportunities
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9 to find new circuits 'within' systems of immediate semiocapitalist reterritorialization (see Styhre
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11 and Sundgren, 2005). In the face of semiocapitalism, this 'happy' creative rhizome is a
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13 smokescreen, a tool of new passivizing sincerity. It is indeed true, that "affirmative politics requires
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15 us to reconsider otherness" (Pullen et al., 2016: 120), but the inhuman challenge forces us to
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17 envisage barren lands where there is decreasingly an 'other' to make note of — apart from the
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19 digitalized immanence of "information replacing nature, and the brain-city, the third eye, replacing
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21 the eye of nature" (Deleuze, 1989: 265). Semiocapitalist desire is not resisted because our desire
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23 desires its flows.
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29 Thus, by not recognizing the inhuman challenge to its full extent, organizational scholarship has
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31 readily overlooked the 'dark side' of desiring (also Linstead and Brewis, 2007), and typically
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33 reduced the *dark* to the 'dysfunctional' aspects of organizing (Linstead et al., 2014; Rehn and
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35 O'Doherty, 2007), perhaps even to everything that stands in the way for a 'better world for all' (see
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37 Prichard and Benschop, 2018)? For us, this neglect is alarming as it underestimates how the endless
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39 productive flows of semiocapitalism have become encoded in desire. It has already been pointed out
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41 that criticism has become increasingly all-too soft and compromising, and that focus should not be
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43 put on 'contributing' to thought that manifests itself in safe resonance within the semiocapitalist
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45 framework that already engulfs it (Culp, 2016; also Munro and Thanem, 2018). Insofar as
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47 academics will be preoccupied by writing, it would seem that a different form is needed to re-
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49 introduce the urgency of the situation in its painful despair, by catalysing 'the powers of the
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51 negative' (Brassier, 2010) and where "the style, the invective" (Fisher, 2014b: 340) would itself
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53 break out of compliance to the form of rationality that secures its position in extant orders of power
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3 (see present essay for an example that has already failed)³. As Culp (2016) snaps, in spite of how
4 we are taught to regurgitate how “Good things come to those who are constructive!” (p. 10), we
5 should rather be at work “cultivating a hatred for it” (p. 8), that is, to come out with desiring
6 potentials that would be “something more exciting than capitalism, itself: its destruction” (p. 50).
7 While D+G noted how they have ‘never seen’ someone who has ‘truly’ liberated desire, it must be
8 remembered that they are not advocating an irreversible infusion with the BwO into a suicidal
9 collapse. Yet, they do wish that we could break out of how the affective theatre of semiocapitalism
10 has turned our desires, in both our habits (praxis) and subjectivations, into puppet play by replacing
11 our unconsciousness with capitalist accumulation. Indeed, they simply wish for us to

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22 “Shit on your whole mortifying, imaginary, and symbolic theatre. What does schizoanalysis ask? Nothing
23 more than a bit of relation to the outside, a little reality” (D+G, 2013a: 381)
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26 If capitalism is a destructive ‘sorcerer’s apprentice’ in D+G, then why could our craft of writing not
27 attempt to perform the same function? This would entail a commitment to the idea of the ‘shock to
28 thought’ (Deleuze, 1989), which entails a violence to existing ideas that is not entangled with the
29 extant hierarchies and structures that forms thought as we *know* ‘it’. A shock to thought can only
30 come out of an embodied event or encounter, where desires find speeding intensities and the body
31 becomes ‘visible’ in its violent contortions. We see no other way to begin of thinking the
32 ‘unthought’ then by being butchered open by it (see Negarestani, 2008), and on those planes one
33 must already know excess and one must be already always ‘mad’. Here, we find a potentiality for
34 an *activating form* of writing that attempts to both recognize and tap into the inhuman aspects of
35 desire through violent-thought-disturbance. While organizational scholars have started to
36 experiment with alternative stylistic expressions (see Katila, *forthcoming*, Pullen, 2018,), the idea of
37 its ‘shock to thought’ in connection to inhuman desire has not been its focus. The dark register of
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56 ³ It remains striking how the invective of affective violence *par excellence* in organization theory has been the joyously
57 vituperative remark by Van Maanen (1995) of Pfeffer in his *Style as Theory* page 133, paragraph 4.
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2
3 D+G allows us to start to experiment on such planes through the pleasures of excess, violence, and
4
5 repression, through that which makes the inhuman within us vibrate.
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9 One is often in need of guides when leaping, and recently Julian Murphet (2016) ‘modestly’
10
11 insisted that the problem with much of the inhuman scholarship is that while it attempts to go
12
13 beyond affirmative affectivity, it features a style that *still remains* grounded in rational
14
15 argumentation, where the *tone remains all too human* in its ‘disposable sincerity’, and thus the
16
17 “lethal dose is linguistic, not ontological” (p. 661). For Murphet, an inhumanism that takes itself
18
19 seriously, and is not just indebted to making itself backward-compatible to maintaining a *status quo*
20
21 with a creative flair, can find new resources in the inherent inhumanity of *satire* as a form of
22
23 writing. While his main concern is stylistic, his distaste for the centrality of the human actor
24
25 remains trenchant, for
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28
29 “Humanism is a smokescreen of sentimental affection for the universal in “man,” draped over the
30
31 pornographic spectacle of his rape of the universe. Satire, conversely, is viscerally disgusted by the universal
32
33 in “man”; it loves only the particular, the irreducible quality of truth, that flashes out momentarily like a gleam
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35 of gold from the mountains of ordure and the oceans of vomit and blood” (Murphet, 2016: 662)
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39 Making exemplary cases of Jonathan Swift and Karl Marx, he notes that this satire takes its form by
40
41 writing from outside of the human position in its very articulation and never forgets its disgust of
42
43 the hypocrisy of humanism that remains
44
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46
47 “the constant ideological apology, among dominant classes, for an ever-spreading world system bent on the
48
49 systematic conversion of living labor powers into consumable values—that is to say, on the structural treatment
50
51 of the vast majority of human beings not as members of the set “humanity,” but precisely as exceptions to it:
52
53 beasts, things and integers, manipulatable code” (Murphet, 2016: 665)
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56
57 Perhaps one strategy for doing the inhuman challenge justice, without succumbing to the barren
58
59 landscapes of annihilation, can thus be literary so as to attempt to answer the “demands [of]
60
61 innovative and experimental approaches” (Fotaki et al., 2016: 8). In this case the experimentality
62
63 would likely take a decidedly unsavoury tone in a work of polemical disgust that would
64
65 nevertheless not be directed at any particular human ‘target’ of ridicule. Its irony would lie in its
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3 repulsion for the myth of our hypocritical exceptionalism, and its style would demonstrate it by
4 writing our all-important rational reason outside. A violent ‘shock to thought’ that “forces thought
5 to think the whole” (Deleuze, 1989: 157) which operates on the threshold of the impossibility of
6 thought and where that impossibility *itself* forces thought to form new affective relationalities. This
7 is an inhumanity wishing to continue a dialogue with an awakening through disgust, or “the
8 uninhibited excretion of pigshit, i.e., immaculate defecation” in order to “write affectively, to turn
9 the wound against all scars, to write in blood” (Sørensen, 2005: 129).

10
11 Thus, if the dark recesses of desiring are taken seriously then there is a need to *write* and *read* our
12 work as neurotics, perverts, and psychotics who continue to enjoy swallowing the shit of capital, for
13 as we have learned, desire will not answer to rational argumentation or ‘raising awareness’ (also
14 Skonieczny, 2017). We need to *write* and *read* from the perspective of a semiocapitalist becoming
15 where our subjectivity looks like a weary cliché, from the perspective of dismembered desiring
16 urges whose parts have already all been commodified – from the perspective of global news
17 communications, social media, finance markets, and the military-industrial-complex (or the
18 academic publishing apparatus) that feed off us as teeming inputs enjoying their own disappearance
19 in their desiring flows. We need to *write* and *read* in forms that do not assure us of the lie of the
20 subject-verb-object causality of language. While the inhuman challenge generally remains wary of
21 any affirmative logics that come in the form of agentic human subjectivity, it is here where it can
22 connect with the D+G ideas of experimentation in an excessive form that coincides with desires’
23 excesses.

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50 Of course, in academia we tend to rather stay away from such trembling moments (Sørensen, 2005),
51 and rather obediently work to get ready to Parker’s (2014) accounts of our glorious future
52 vocations. There may even be gargantuan amounts of lurking ‘enjoyment’ in replicating the ever-
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1
2 proliferating capitalist machine of knowledge ‘production’⁴. But let us be clear – the inhuman
3
4 challenge is vociferous and will not stop at half-measures; when we are finally granted access to the
5
6 toilet of our desiring-production we will not be satisfied with a flush that only continues to function
7
8 thanks to nontrivial amounts of gaffer tape. It does not liberate (subjective) desires nor does it ride
9
10 the coat-tails of talk about precious rhizomes, but rather finds machinic desire as the thrilling locus
11
12 of disappearance. It wants as its prey all our nude vulnerability and a deluge of shit that will not go
13
14 silently into the night. It is this pharmakon so as to mirror its other, semicapitalism “as megadeath-
15
16 drive as Terminator: that which can’t be bargained with, can’t be reasoned with, doesn’t show pity
17
18 or remorse or fear and absolutely will not stop, ever” (Fisher, 2014b: 344). This does not in any way
19
20 imply a one-sided dismissal of the affirmative, joyful and humanist D+G though, but urgently
21
22 advocates a sensitivity to the dark recesses of desire in globalized capitalist flows that have already
23
24 morphed the polis into ‘control societies’ (Deleuze, 1992).
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31 While this text has been an attempt to expeditiously theorize the tactics of writing the inhuman and
32
33 not in any way the actual delivery itself, we were nevertheless delighted by one review comment
34
35 that feeds our neurosis-cum-psychosis perfectly. The comment started off with our work being
36
37 “rude, pessimistic, depressing, repressive and painful cry of sad passions which denies that
38
39 capitalism can be destroyed unless the human is annihilated with it”. We are not happy it has come
40
41 to this (for we are also still too *old*), but we are euphoric that it is already working like sand in the
42
43 gears of affirmation. Yet (we) want more. More desiring-production, more intensities. Strip us bare
44
45 before a world in which the human as centre already is over in irredeemable ways! To fully dismiss
46
47 how the inhuman reveals itself ‘within and as us’ would be akin to approaching Chaplin’s movies
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51 ⁴ It is in these moments we know that it is the system of desiring intensities that has risen to speak. Academics in a bar
52
53 on Friday, the mood is getting hazy allowing for triumphant justification of intoxication. Voices are raised, seniority,
54
55 power and relative insight, no doubt. But no-one ever spoke there, even when gazes intensified and subdued moments
56
57 of resentment flared. All what the desiring-machine longs for. Yet it was the machine that spoke. A collective machine
58
59 where any amount of hours and a still assumed camaraderie were filled with changes in journal metrics, strategizing
60
61 messages of contribution and targeting particular associate editors with particular texts. In terms of immanence
62
63 enjoyment was everywhere. Desire needs none of ‘humanist’ content.

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2 solely as slapstick comedy while missing their powerful societal critique (see Žižek, 1990). In
3
4 Modern Times, he himself incorporates a capitalized subjectivity that lives in immanent relations.
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6 Every moment engulfs him as by accident, every reaction to any situation is haphazard. Yet, what
7
8 he embodies is the role of a 'stain', something that upsets the continuous flow of events (also
9
10 Swarbrick, 2018; Žižek, 1990). It is not a representational stain, but rather something unbearable in
11
12 the sense that it shocks our sensibilities without a clear locus of decided agency. It is a shock to
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14 thought, a haunting notion of seeing ourselves through a mirror in capitalism. Form(s) of inhuman
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16 scholarship might attempt to do the same.
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