

# Conclusion - An Essay on *Rhuthmology* - The Naturalistic Cluster — Part 2

Monday 11 October 2021, by [Pascal Michon](#)

[Previous chapter](#)

## Main Features of the Naturalistic Cluster

A first important result of our analysis has been to show that, despite obvious differences, Deleuze and Guattari shared fundamental views with Serres and Morin.

2.1 Methodologically and epistemologically, the dynamic perspective advocated in *A Thousand Plateaus* was very close to that defended in *The Birth of Physics* and not far removed from that presented in *Method*, even if the latter might seem almost opposite at first glance.

2.1.1 We remember that, to oppose both pure materialism and pure culturalism, which for him were two sides of the same coin, Morin considered thinking and knowing as activities that never rested and never stopped at any point. Thinking and knowing entailed constant circulation and looping between the three main domains: physics, biology, and socio-anthropology. However, such circulation and looping were supposed to allow the progressive construction of a synthetic view of the universe and of man. This *method* was what he called “en-cyclo-peding” knowledge and what he is still famous for today but not always well understood.

2.1.2 As for Deleuze and Guattari, they explained in their introductory chapter that developing a theory was not a question of *imitating* the structures of the world, like in traditional philosophy, nor even of *mimicking* the multiplicity and the fluidity of the world, like in modernist philosophy, but of *participating* in it. Thought therefore had to find a path similar to that of the world itself and this was possible by considering knowledge as fundamentally “molecular,” “mobile” and “rhizomatic,” which meant putting forward the absolute indeterminacy of the connections between heterogeneous entities and the desire to participate in proliferating multiplicities composed of heterogeneous transforming lines.

2.1.3 This argument was elaborated further in the “Treatise on Nomadology” presented in Chapter 12, which was remarkably illustrated by the Ancient *rhuthmic* physics recently brought to light by Michel Serres. From him they explicitly borrowed the idea that science had followed since Antiquity two opposite models: one “metric,” the other “fluid,” that only the latter favored innovative and disruptive kinds of thought, while the former channeled any critical and imaginative attempt into the deterministic dominant order. From Serres, they also borrowed the main features of this second model. By contrast with “State or Royal science,” which dealt with “ideal essences,” “minor science” and “nomad thought,” such as those developed by Archimedes and Lucretius, dealt with “*vague*, vagabond or nomadic, morphological essences,” which were not inexact nor exact but “*anexact yet rigorous*.” Contrary to State or Royal science, which promoted the Aristotelian hylomorphic model to

describe the relation between form and matter, nomad science was characterized by an attention to the *specificities of the content*, which was not reducible to “homogeneous matter,” as well as to the *specificities of the expression*, which could not be reduced to “pure form.” Generally speaking, nomad science gave primacy to “problems,” “accidents,” “events,” “affections,” and no longer to “theorems,” “essences,” “specific differences,” and “genus.”

2.1.4 In short, the model of minor science, which Deleuze and Guattari called the “dispar,” was a plainly *rhuthmic* model opposed in every respect to the standard model they called for its part the “compars.” It involved a “smooth space” populated, like the sea, by heterogeneous entities, instead of an homogeneous “striated space.” It aimed to “seize or determine singularities in the matter,” by reaching “vague essences” or “hacceities,” instead of “constituting general form[s].” It was used to the “following-up” of multiplicities, singularities and events provoked by exterior “vortical flows” and unexpected “clinamens,” instead of “reproduction,” “deduction” and “induction,” which in “royal science” were deemed independent of the context.

2.1.5 Compared to this promotion of heterogeneous and dispersive forms of knowledge, Morin seemed to go in the exact opposite direction. He strongly advocated a synthetical approach based on recurrence, loops and progressive integration. But, as we have already noticed, this opposition appears much less rigorous if we consider the whole of Deleuze and Guattari’s book which constitutes a sum of fairly well integrated studies which intends to cover the entire universe in a completely unified perspective. In addition, both Deleuze & Guattari and Morin actually tended towards the opposite position. By contrast with Descartes, Morin did not consider method to be exterior to phenomena. He insisted that if there was a “meta-systemic point of view,” it was not hanging over the three main domains on a mysterious exterior position but was located in the circulation itself between those domains: “*The meta-system can only be a retroactive/recursive loop.*” And for their part, Deleuze and Guattari were aware of the limits of the opposition between “dispar” and “compars,” that is why they finally emphasized the necessary interplay between the two forms of science: in fact, they admitted, both were equally useful. Finally, both conceptions of knowledge remained essentially dynamic, at least in two fundamental senses : on the one hand, none of them could rest on eternal ideas or on perfectly stable matter; on the other hand, by advocating dispersion and rhizomatic thinking, Deleuze and Guattari wanted to transform philosophy into an essentially active discourse that would instill action and revolution into the reader’s mind, just as Morin tried to find in the synthesis power of the loop a theoretical way to capture the most essential dynamics of the universe and to re-inject it into the scientific thought. In other words, methodologically and epistemologically speaking, both Morin’s and Deleuze and Guattari’s books were clearly meant as a *rhuthmic* pieces of theory participating directly in material, living and social flows.

2.1.6 In fact, this was not the first time that thinking and knowing were recognized as essentially flowing and that the scientific quality of a thought was explicitly related with its way of flowing, i.e. with its being *rhuthmic*. This had been, in the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the main concern for a few philosophers such as Spinoza, Leibniz, and Diderot (see Michon, 2015a, 2018b). This was also, yet in different ways, a central issue, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century for Bergson and Whitehead. Morin’s as well as Deleuze and Guattari’s attempts were each clearly part of this trend while benefiting from the latest scientific advances of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

2.2 Strikingly, Deleuze and Guattari also shared with Morin a few important operative concepts.

2.2.1 Either under the guise of the “fold” of the primordial molecules upon themselves, or that of the “interaction” between seed and environment, enzyme and prebiotic soup, or that of the “action and reaction” from center to periphery of the stratum, or that of the “interaction” between the animals populating a particular stratum and the “associated or annexed milieus,” Deleuze and Guattari clearly recognized the role of the “loop” principle, without though making it, as Morin, a decisive tool in their description.

2.2.2 Likewise, both Morin and Deleuze & Guattari placed the concept of “machine” at the center of worldviews that similarly encompassed natural cosmos, human societies and states, while admittedly reaching different conclusions which we will comment on below.

2.2.2.1 We remember that Morin introduced the concept of “machine” to overcome the limitations of those of “system” and “organism,” which ensured a holistic view at the expense of the concepts of “action,” “creativity” or “emergence.” This is why he first coined the portmanteau “organization” for “active organization,” then finally suggested to use the term “machine” in order to describe the most general form of beings in a universe fundamentally dynamic and creative. These “machines” were naturally not to be taken as mechanical or clockwork systems as in the 17<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, nor even as cybernetic artifacts as in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but as in the latest biological theory. Machines were productive either of *fabrication* when work was “mainly organizing and multiplying of the same,” or of *creation*, when preponderance was given to “the generativity of the system and the newness of the product.” Every physical or living being, “whose activity included work, transformation, and production,” could therefore be conceived “as a machine.” Strikingly, the term “machine” would then denote, Morin suggested, a “complex sets or arrangements” combining “creation and production.” In this sense, machines were the basic units that allowed the unfolding of the evolutionary process of matter (see Vol. 4, p. 240 *sq.*).

2.2.2.2 Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari used the concept of “machine” in a nonmechanical fashion to denote both the consistency and the creative power of the beings. Any existing concrete system constituted a “machinic assemblage” of “intensive processes” that had to deal, on the one hand, with the actual strata and layers within which it had appeared and, on the other hand, with the virtual “plane of consistency” or “body without organs” to which it remained nevertheless connected. Their existence was therefore caught in a constant dynamic cycle transforming the virtual side of the being into its actual side and vice versa. We saw that this model, borrowing some of its basic ideas from the very first modern process philosophies—principally Spinoza’s—which differentiated between *natura naturans* and *natura naturata*, allowed Deleuze and Guattari to accommodate the findings of the latest biology without yet resorting, as some contemporary biologists had been inclined to do, to the structural model based on biunivocal fixed relationships. The world was not only composed of hierarchically organized beings, nor was it organized like the phonemes of a language, and neither was it completely fluid. It was like a set of mutually expressing strata and layers leaning on a reservoir of potentialities and allowing, in between, the emergence of dynamic machinic assemblages of machinic assemblages. Although they placed more emphasis than Morin on the play between virtual and actual sides of the beings, just like for him the existence of the latter was therefore “machinelike” in the sense that it was determined by constant dynamics of production, reproduction and destruction.

2.3 On the cosmological and ontological levels, Deleuze and Guattari’s appreciation of the recuperation by Serres of the Ancient atomistic physics of Leucippus, Democritus and Lucretius, and of his stress on the role of Archimedes’ fluid mechanics and infinitesimal calculus, was unambiguous.

They spoke warmly of them in different occasions in the book and we can consider their views to be broadly compatible. Concerning Morin, the matter is more complex. As we will see below, Deleuze and Guattari's approach remained at a distance on a certain number of points. Nevertheless, we remember that Morin's neo-Democritean and neo-Lucretian view of the *rhuthmoi* of nature, machines and information almost perfectly extended Serres' inquiry to the latest physics, biology and cybernetics, and therefore this is of no surprise that, although they never mentioned it, Deleuze and Guattari shared also with him a significant number of ontological and cosmological views.

2.3.1 Deleuze and Guattari's most fundamental aim was strikingly similar to that of Morin: developing a new materialist perspective based on an atomistic conception of matter in constant flux, on a renewed conception of the flow of life, and last but not least on an open conception of the becoming. They clearly shared with him a naturalistic and dynamic perspective inspired not only by the Ancient and Modern atomistic physicists, but also by the Modern biologists and a few Modern thinkers.

2.3.2 We remember that, at the very beginning of *Method*, Morin recalled how, from the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, classical physics had been deeply challenged by what he called the progressive "invasion of disorders." Its mechanistic and determinist perspective, which made it compare the world to a clock run by immutable laws, had been confronted to a series of disturbing discoveries: the concept of "entropy" or irreversible loss of energy, the discovery of the relation of this loss to the increase in the internal molecular disorder, the introduction of disorder and probability into micro-physics, and finally the recognition of an unregulated expansion of the cosmos. After its final collapse in the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the classical worldview, which involved stability, order, hierarchy, general determinism, and laws, had been replaced, from the 1950s, by a new worldview based this time on becoming, disorder, multiplicity, chance encounter (see Vol. 4, p. 207 *sq.*). In fact, Deleuze and Guattari did not directly comment on these findings—physics remained unfortunately outside their concerns—but nothing in their own cosmology was in contradiction with them.

2.3.3 Regarding biology, the proximity was even more obvious. Both Deleuze & Guattari and Morin paid homage to Darwin who had extended the *rhuthmic* concept of matter as made of mobile and multitudinous molecules to the organic stratum. Both took advantage of the latest discoveries in molecular genetics. Life was not to be considered any longer as a mysterious power animating matter but as a corpuscular flow organized through codes and unexpected disruptions. Through the concept of "natural selection," living forms were now understood "in terms of populations" and degrees of development "in terms of speed and differential relations."

2.3.4 Like Morin, Deleuze and Guattari aimed to eliminate entirely any vestige of grand cosmological history. Just like him, they rejected the idealist view developed by Teilhard de Chardin during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century according to which the increasing complexity of the cosmos reflected a kind of progressive revelation of God through his creation. From the physical to the biological and from the biological to the anthropological, there was no progress, no spiritual elevation.

2.3.5 Deleuze and Guattari as well as Morin were strongly influenced by the conceptions of time and becoming of philosophers such as Spinoza, Leibniz, Diderot or Nietzsche. Just as time was not for Morin sheer "degradation, progress, sequence nor perpetual cycle" but "rich and complex," that is, allowing accumulation and continuity as well as "emergence" of unexpected phenomena, "novelty" and "creativity," for Deleuze and Guattari time allowed "stratification," "territorialization," and the

constitution of various “arrangements,” but also “deviations,” “asignifying ruptures,” and “lines of flight.”

2.3.6 Based on these premises, Deleuze and Guattari proposed a global conception of the evolution of the organic stratum which essentially coincided with Morin’s view, although the latter was less finely elaborated while, at the same time, backed by a much larger physical conception. The emergence and evolution of life had been much more complex than it appeared in the usual account. Instead of the common depiction presenting the proliferation of life as a tree whose branches had been multiplying and sometimes falling with time, Deleuze and Guattari proposed a picture that was not any more based on the sole classification of species but on an association between an original process philosophy (that advocated the virtual/tensive/actual ontological trilogy, as well as the expression/double-articulation/stratification cosmological trilogy), genetics, the study of genes and heredity in living organisms, and finally ethology, the study of animal behavior in the environment. Life had been emerging through the passage from the great reservoir of virtualities and potentials to actuality (this was Morin’s opinion too, based on Prigogine’s and Atlan’s contributions on emergence and irreversibility), then it had been developing through a series of overlapping layers (evanescent core, epistrata organized in individual existential territories, parastrata enveloping population genetic codes), whose changes, provoked by processes of de- or reterritorialization, or de- or encoding, interacted, developed at different speeds, here blocking one another, there accelerating one another. As for Morin, although in a more detailed manner, the tree of life was replaced by a complex and dynamic view combining ontological, cosmological, genetic and ethological perspectives.

2.4 More surprisingly, despite obvious differences which we will return to later, Deleuze and Guattari’s conception of culture and that of Morin overlapped on a few important points.

2.4.1 We remember that after having developed the intimate link between the concept of “active organization” described in the second part, that of “negentropy” and, finally, that of “information,” Morin considered the evolutionary process that took place between the first informational loops in proto-living beings and the present human language. The latter, he claimed, was only the latest and most complex result of the former. The universal “double articulation” of current human languages, brought to light by André Martinet, had emerged, according to him, during the “biotization” period. (see Vol. 4, Chap. 11)

2.4.2 However, communication was not, he noted, only intra-organismic; it also involved the whole ecological niche in which the “informational living machines” lived. This original “eco-communication” with the environment had grown with the progressive “cerebralization” into a “social communication” with the other individuals of the same species. The eco-systems had thus become “extraordinarily complex communicational universes.”

2.4.3 Based on these premises, Morin criticized cybernetics and mainstream communication theory for not realizing that “information” was an *activity*, that it was always *strategically actualized* according to the pragmatic situation, and that it was not only a transfer of data but was *creative*, that is, *expanding and complexifying* the sphere of existence of the living.

2.4.4 The final result of the random but creative evolution of the bundle life/information through the

individual, the species and the eco-systems was the emergence of the “anthro-socio-noological” complex associating living beings with “a cerebral apparatus of unheard-of hypercomplexity”; “a language with a double articulation” by virtue of which humans can “construct *ad infinitum* very varied and complex noological edifices, narrations, discourses, mythologies, theories, ideologies, etc.”; “a culture” which “in the most archaic human societies” provides “a memotheque,” a collective memory of data concerning “the environment, the climate, fauna, flora, the world, man,” and “a genotheque,” a source of negentropy “furnishing information for all technical, practical, social, mythical operations,” that is know-how and rules, norms and interdicts “which govern the organization of society and are guides to codes or programs for individual and collective behavior”; formidable State machines, proper to the historical megasocieties, with their “dependent [apparatuses] (army, religion)” and other subsidiary machines such as banks, staffs of enterprises, trusts, holdings, political machines, party machines, etc.; urban agglomerations where the interplay of informational communication is effected in a more and more stochastic fashion” and in an ever increasing number of communication channels and practices; and finally, a “noological sphere” or “set of spiritual phenomena” which in historical societies, i.e. endowed with State and cities, grew thanks to language on top of the “memotheque” and the “genotheque.” This sphere was, according to Morin, the “ultimate avatar” of information and comprised “ideas, theories, philosophies, myths, phantasms, dreams” that were “beings of a new type, informational existents”.

2.4.5 Viewed from this global perspective, “information” bridged the divide between physical and human worlds, between the physical and the mind realms. It was fully “grounded in physics,” while pertaining, at the same time, to the “most complex entities in nature.” It was the most powerful tool which allowed us to finally overcome the modern objectivist dualism that has been so many times criticized since the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century without ever being entirely dismissed. However Morin concluded his survey on communication theory by alerting against any physicalist reductionism. Since information was “always tied to negentropically organized beings,” information should be conceived *simultaneously* from the physical and from the anthropo-sociological perspectives. It could not be entirely reduced to physics. Consistently with the epistemological premises introduced in the first and second parts of his book, Morin then emphasized “the necessity of a theoretical mega-system” that integrated both *physis*, and life, and anthropo-sociology. Information and communication theory had to be elaborated from a much larger perspective than a sheer technical view induced whether from telecommunication or from computer techniques. (see Vol. 4, Chap. 11)

2.4.6 Although differing, as we will see later, on the ultimate conclusions that should be drawn from these considerations, Deleuze and Guattari globally held a similar position. They agreed with Morin on the absolute need to take into account the pragmatic framework of communication. They fiercely opposed any idea that culture could be considered as a bunch of semiotic networks because what mattered first was the way the “statements” were produced and used by bodies and powers in order to organize life in various assemblages. Signifying, they said, could not be severed from interpreting and implementing power and social relations. The semiotic conception had to be supplemented by *pragmatics*, which in turn implied history, sociology and anthropology.

2.4.7 Likewise, against the idea, most common in cultural studies of the time, that, due to the principle of arbitrariness of the sign, language and culture were totally independent from the world they insisted, like Morin, that “semiotic systems” and “physical systems” were “in reciprocal presupposition,” and, moreover, that their joint becoming resulted from deeper “*abstract machines*,” in other words, that they should be treated according to the same machinic logic.

2.4.8 This description finally supplemented a view, also close to that of Morin, in which the world, whether under its physical or its cultural forms, was constantly flowing according to various manners and agents capable of modifying these manners, and of which they intended to provide with *A Thousand Plateaus* a kind of “theoretical mega-system,” to use Morin’s words.

2.5 Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of individuation and self, which was appended to their cosmology, their ontology, their theory of machine, and their theory of culture was actually not so far removed from that of Morin, which actually relied on almost the same sources.

2.5.1 Morin concentrated on what he called the “self” [*le soi*] of the individual, a kind of modern version of the essence of the Spinozist “mode” or the Leibnizian “monad.” Apart from the artificial ones, machines were endowed with auto-generativity, in other words, with a way to produce, organize, reorganize, maintain, and even develop, at least for a certain period of time, their “self.” Physical as well as living beings were machines producing “a certain form of equilibrium, a certain form of stability, a certain form of constancy,” through a “recursive loop” integrating multiple and diverse loops (circulation of energy, blood, air, hormones, food, nervous impulses, etc.). For living beings, this state was what Walter Bradford Cannon had named in 1926 “homeostasis” (see Vol. 4, p. 244 sq.).

2.5.2 In a way, Morin could seem to reintroduce a substantial subject. He made the self result from a central “competence” or “aptitude.” But one wonders if this apparent regression was not due only to a certain inaccuracy in Morin’s expression. As a matter of fact, his extreme extension of the concept of machine seemed to exclude any reference to a substantial subjectivity. The former applied, he said, to “all active organizations known in the universe,” except perhaps to the atom. Every star was “the most archaic of machines, the most archaic of regulatory system.” Every atmospheric whirlwind or aquatic swirl was a “wild motor,” or a “protomachine.” Every living being was a “machine” or an “active organization.” Now, since all of these machines were able, thanks to recurring loops, to maintain, at least for a time and despite the perturbations and accidents, their specificity or their singularity, all of them were endowed with a “self.” However this self was not prior to the activity of the machine considered but was clearly a correlate of it. To describe this particular kind of being oneself *in and through* time, that is to say this way of reaching an apparent “steady state” thanks to a “constant instability,” Morin even proposed the term “meta-instability,” which surprisingly was going even further in the direction of desubstantialization of the self than Deleuze and Guattari’s reference to that of “meta-stability.”

2.5.3 Deleuze and Guattari, for their part, proposed a theory of individuation principally based on three concepts: “body,” “refrain,” and “territory.” In the chapter devoted to the latter, they carefully described the carving out by animals—and by extension by human beings—of dynamic territories in natural environment by the complex performances of bodily movements and sonorous expressions. In a sense, it was a remarkable extension, mainly based on ethology, of their previous Tardean sociology to the ecological coexistence of “members of the same species” and of “different species in the same milieu”—that is to say, if we apply back this insight to humans, individuals and groups—through the dynamic and interactive constitution of their respective living spheres.

2.5.4 In other words, while Morin put the accent on the “homeostasis” of living systems, Deleuze and Guattari paid more attention, if we may say so, to the “stability” of the “territory” occupied by these systems. Morin looked at living beings from inside their bodies; they looked at them from the

outside. However, both were anxious to find a *rhuthmic* formula of individuation. Just like the “homeostasis” of living systems was the result of constant and sometimes innovative interactions with the milieu, the “territory” established by a living system through the use of a “refrain” was varying through time according to the interactions with other living beings and more generally with the milieu.

2.5.5 The proximity of Morin’s doctrine of self to that of Deleuze and Guattari becomes even more evident when one compares the forebears they respectively claimed. While Deleuze and Guattari explicitly referred to Spinoza and Leibniz—without yet citing the concept of *conatus* or “striving to persevere in being”—Morin referred to Diderot. But as one may know, the latter drew part of his own theory of self from Spinoza’s concept. Morin’s concept of self was then indirectly but clearly related to those of “mode” or “monad.” As Deleuze and Guattari’s, it was a new answer to an old question concerning the identity of an unstable yet dynamic and persevering being (see Michon, 2015a; Vol. 2, Chap. 3; Vol. 4, Chap. 10).

2.6 Finally, even their ethical and political goals were not entirely at odds with one another. We have already seen in Chapter 6 how close Deleuze and Guattari were in this respect to Lefebvre’s and Foucault’s critiques of the metrics of modern societies and powers, but they also clearly shared a certain number of views with Barthes, Serres and Morin, which were not limited to a common appreciation of the 1968 movement.

2.6.1 We remember that Morin developed a critique of the “machine-like organization” or the “machinality” of modern societies based on “uniformized rule,” “ritual” and “discipline,” that clearly echoed those of Lefebvre, Foucault and Barthes, while adding to them an ecological concern that was absent in the works of his contemporaries. He observed that the evolutionary development of “apparatuses,” which had become overwhelming with “*the upsurge of the social megamachine with its central apparatus, the State,*” had led to both “*the massive enslavement of plants (agriculture) and animals (breeding)*” and “*the enslavement of enormous masses of humanity*” (Morin’s italics). Through its administrative, military, police and religious sub-apparatuses, the State, which was the “Apparatus of apparatuses,” had “enslave[d] society and organize[d] it into a megamachine.” In addition, emphasizing the hubris of the latest industrial societies, Morin warned with great insight that what appeared as simple “regulation” by industrial growth actually “ruined” our “civilizations and cultures” and degraded and threatened with death “living eco-systems” and “by retroaction, humanity itself” (see Vol. 4, Chap. 11).

2.6.2 In Chapter 9, Deleuze and Guattari developed a critique of modern societies and states that was almost similar. They criticized the view—advocated by both Marxist and Durkheimian sociologists who dominated at the time—according to which, since the former constituted by themselves systemic wholes, the latter were their legitimate organizers. Without indulging either in “possessive individualism” which was to rise again in the 1980s, they emphasized the segmentation of modern societies into classes, sexes, circles, and that of individual lives into temporal sections. Society as a whole was both a theoretical fiction and a false value, which resulted in most questionable regimes, whether in the “socialist countries” of the Eastern bloc or in the “liberal countries” of the Western hemisphere. Likewise, the individual as a whole was also a fantasy that had supported capitalism from its very beginnings and which now supported the emergence of ultraliberal and authoritarian states like in Brazil, Uruguay, Argentina or Chile. In short, Deleuze and Guattari asserted that the world, at the end of the 1970s, was both centralized around powerful state powers and fully molecularized into “mass individuals.” The “segmentation” of modern life had



developed along with a tremendous increase in State power which had multiplied into subsystems and had made them “resonate” at its own tempo.

2.6.3 Surprisingly, the proximity was also striking on the programmatic side. Morin’s suggestion to develop “homeorrhetic” societies to replace the “homeostatic” and “authoritarian” model of society which dominated the 20<sup>th</sup> century strongly resembled Deleuze and Guattari’s own political *rhuthmic* agenda. While 20<sup>th</sup> century societies had believed hitherto in sheer “homeostasis,” that is the return of a system to a particular state based on negative retroaction and regulation, they should now consider to become “homeorrhetic,” that is, capable of “returning to their trajectory” while “becoming simultaneously open, creative, and self-regulating” (see Vol. 4, p. 251 *sq.*). The term *homeorrhesis* clearly recalled the pre-Platonic concepts of *rhuthmos* as “way of flowing,” but also that of *idiorrhythmy* elaborated by Barthes. As the reader remembers, the latter had tried to build an ethics and even a politics based on the personal choice of one’s way of living, literally of a proper manner to make one’s life flow within a community (Vol. 4, Chap. 7). Truly, while he considered a social group—even if it was a limited one—in which everyone would be able to freely choose the way his or her life flows, Morin suggested a society whose “steady flow” would not impede the possibility for individuals to diverge from it or even oppose it. Barthes’s perspective was more focused on the individual, while Morin’s was more oriented towards society. Yet in both cases, ethics and politics were thought of as based on the quality of the life flow.

2.6.4 Likewise, Deleuze and Guattari advocated a truly *rhuthmic* perspective based this time on Tarde’s sociology. Opposing Marxist and Durkheimian holistic sociologies as well as individualist sociologies, which were older but were soon to be rejuvenated, they claimed that sociological entities as individuals, groups, societies and powers were not constituted by “representations” and articulated according “segments,” “trees,” or “systems,” nor by substantive beings. They resulted from endless flows of “infinitesimal quanta” of “desires and beliefs” and had, therefore, a supple and dynamic structure. Thereby, power resulted from the constant play between, on the one hand, “an *abstract machine of overcoding*,” which defined “a rigid segmentarity, a macrosegmentarity” linked to the State but not identical to it, and on the other hand, “an abstract machine of mutation,” based on “quantum flows,” which operated “by decoding,” “deterritorialization,” and “lines of flight.” In brief, ethics and politics were determined by the varying quality of the interactions between these two poles. Thus, like Barthes and Morin, but also in a different way like Lefebvre and Foucault, they concluded that the important thing was the quality of the flow of life. “Schizoanalysis” or “pragmatics” was the name they gave to the analysis of society and power according to a *rhuthmic* perspective. It obviously resumed with some basic concerns of Lefebvre-style *rhythmanalysis*, while suggesting entirely new paths to extract it from its metric frame and develop it into a real *rhuthmanalysis* capable of assessing the quality of a particular becoming, its potentials as well as its dangers.

[Next chapter](#)