

TIMOTHY H. WILSON

Auden: Toward a Minor Literature

Various interpreters have given much thought to the presence of Freud and Marx in the work of Auden.¹ Of course, the nature of this existence is complex and ever changing — i.e., it is not constant from work to work or from reading to reading. However, today's reader possesses an array of textual technologies that were not available to previous readers of Auden. When it comes to analyzing the interrelation of Marx and Freud for Auden, one contemporary set of technologies seems called for more than others: that of Deleuze and Guattari. Theirs is arguably the most profound integration of Marx and Freud that has occurred to date. I say "most profound" in that this integration takes the form of a critique and transformation of the thought of these two intellectual monuments — rather than a blind acceptance as is the case with Marx in relation to Althusser and Freud in relation to Lacan (Lash 5). Why, then, have these Deleuzo-Guattarian technologies not been applied to Auden before? Certainly an interpreter like Stan Smith, writing his book on Auden in 1985, realized that there were other syntheses of Marx and Freud than that of Althusser. Is it because Smith and all before him and after him have been "interpreters" to some extent? That is, perhaps Deleuze and Guattari have not seemed applicable to an area of scholarship so defined by the de-politicizing of a radical body of texts — we will call this body of texts "Auden" for the sake of simplicity — an area of scholarship so defined by the making "symbolic" of a material or political immediacy. For this reason, I refuse to "interpret" Auden; rather, I will examine Auden's early prose as a "minor literature" in the Deleuzo-Guattarian sense.² "The three characteristics of minor literature are the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 18).

1 See the following: Beach 18, 22-7; Callan 58-60; Carpenter 85-95; Cunningham 211, 221-25; Hoggart 111-35; Hynes 87-97; Mendelson 214-16; Perrie 47-72; Replople 3-7, 30-61; Smith 22-23, 33-36; Spears 80-90; and Stead 163-93.

2 In analyzing Auden I will concentrate on his prose material. However, the implications that this minoritarian approach will have on the study of his poetry will also be evident.

I. MATERIALIST ONTOLOGIES

I will explain and explore each of these three characteristics of minor literature as the paper progresses; however, we should first attempt to grasp the ontological foundation upon which this minor literature is based. This ontological foundation, for Deleuze, Guattari, and Auden, is profoundly materialist. Deleuze and Guattari unite Marx and Freud under a Nietzschean banner. In this way, materialism is understood in Nietzschean terms. The materialism of Nietzsche has been demonstrated by Gilles Deleuze in *Nietzsche and Philosophy*. Deleuze's reading of Nietzsche stresses the latter's anti-Hegelianism; that is, his affirmative philosophy differs from Hegelian negation and opposition. Deleuze also stresses that Nietzsche's ontology is one which posits a material plenitude: contra Lacan, there is no such thing as an ontological lack.

Reality consists of a plurality of forces and their relations — this notion of a plurality of forces or material quantities is what is expressed in the term "desiring-machines" used in *Anti-Oedipus*. The will to power relates to this plurality of forces as an immanent principle: it governs the relations of forces and their differences; it evaluates; it "draws the lines," so to speak. This is similar to the role assigned to "desiring-production" in *Anti-Oedipus*. Forces in themselves are quantities; the will to power and desiring-production as evaluative principles give these forces qualities. They determine which forces will be called "active" and dominating and which will be called "reactive" and submissive (Deleuze, *Nietzsche* 42-52).

Thus, desire for Deleuze and Guattari differs from that of Lacan in that it is a positive plenitude. Unlike the negativity and lack of Lacan's desire, theirs is productive: it forges connections and alliances. Deleuze and Guattari's desire also differs from that of Lacan (and Freud) in the nature of its investments. The investment of desire for psychoanalysis is symbolic; for Deleuze and Guattari, on the other hand, this investment is always real:

classical psychoanalysis has stressed the investment of psychic energy in imaginary symbolic objects. For example, in a feminist commune, classical psychoanalysis might view the cathexis of an older woman by a younger woman at least partly in terms of symbolic cathexis of the mother. Deleuze and Guattari would prefer to understand this simply as a real and material investment of libido in the older woman. They would thus reject the "oedipalization" of desire. (Lash 9)

In as much as Deleuze and Guattari's desire operates in the realm of the real and is productive, they distinguish their desire from the psychoanalytic notion of desire which operates in the realm of the symbolic and is merely representational: "[t]he order of desire is the order of *production*; all production is at once desiring-production and social production. We therefore reproach psychoanalysis for having stifled this order of production, for having shunted it

into *representation*" (*Anti-Oedipus* 296). Since desire for Deleuze and Guattari is always real, it is always also political. Desire is not confined to the private realm of familial representations.

This Deleuze-Guattarian notion of desire is strikingly similar to the one at work in Auden's texts. Eros, for Auden, is a profoundly materialist concept; he "does not conceive of this *libido* apart from matter" (Auden 345). Like Deleuze and Guattari, desire for Auden is that which forges connections between forces; it creates, evaluates, produces. "The driving force in living things is a *libido* which is unconscious and creative.... Its first forms of creative activity are in the ordinary sense of the word physical. It binds cells together and separates them" (Auden 345, 339). Similarly, Auden's notion of desire is not one localized in the home. That is to say, the investments of desire are not merely symbolic investments in the mother. For this reason, Auden cannot consider Freudianism "apart from other features of the contemporary environment, apart from modern physics with its conception of transformable energy, modern techniques, and modern politics" (Auden 337). Like Deleuze and Guattari, Auden insists that desire is primarily anti-Oedipal; the Oedipal configuration of desire is a fiction — a mere *idea*, not the actual *material* flows of desire — that is imposed by consciousness:

When the analyst discovers the incest motive in the unconscious, surely he is only discovering a term of humanity's repressed *idea* of sex. It is not even suppressed sex-consciousness, but *repressed* — that is, it is nothing pristine and anterior to mentality. It is in itself the mind's ulterior motive — that is, the incest motive is propagated in the pristine unconscious by the mind itself.... (Auden 346)³

It is not surprising, then, that Auden makes use of a concept which, like Deleuze and Guattari's desiring-production, unites Freud's analysis of desire and Marx's analysis of socio-economic production. For Auden, "Love" is this concept which mixes erotic instinct with communal life: "Love" gave some sort of harmony to the separate themes of Freud and Marx" (Hoggart 133). Love or desiring-production is inscribed on the surface of bodies. The purely physical body is where the libido and the social environment meet and produce arrangements. In other words, the body is the site on which Love (the intersection of libido and social environment) forges connections and disjunctions between forces. The body is where Love "binds cells together and separates them."

3 For another expression of this refusal to confine desire within the home, see Auden 377.

"Many of the damaging effects of family life described by modern psychologists may be the result of our attempt to make the family group satisfy psychological needs which can only be satisfied by the community group."

Deleuze and Guattari refer to this process as "coding" or "territorialization." "Territorialization" is a term used by Lacan to refer to the coding of the flows of a previously chaotic libido into localized centres. It occurs in early infancy and results in the "territories" of desire: Freud's infamous "erotogenic zones" (Silverman 150-55). Deleuze and Guattari extend this notion to the political realm by describing the territorialization of the flows of "desiring-production" — the flows of goods, people, information, etc. The relations of these flows will be different in various socio-psychic arrangements: they can be simply territorialized or coded as in pagan societies; they can be overcoded in the name of a transcendental God, Truth, or Tyrant as occurred from the Roman Empire to the Renaissance; they can be relatively decoded by the effects of abstract equivalence as occurs in capitalism; they can be recoded as occurs in as much as capitalism reclaims the symbols of despotism and locates all desire within the private realm (the family); or they can be absolutely decoded which would result in the free-flowing of desire and production across a body without "erotogenic zones," across a "body without organs."

This is why the schizophrenic is a revolutionary figure for Deleuze and Guattari. The schizo eludes the primary vehicle of psychic overcoding: Oedipus and the castration complex. According to classical psychoanalysis, the psychotic (the schizo) forecloses the perception of an absent penis in the mother (Laplanche and Pontalis 166-68). The schizo, thus, avoids the castration anxiety that plagues "normal" children. In this sense, schizophrenia is a process of deterritorialization.

II. MICROPOLITICS

An individual investment of desire is always political. It is not merely a surrogate desire for the breast of the mother. In this way, a minor literature stresses "the connection of the individual to a political immediacy" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 18). The territorializations, reterritorializations and deterritorializations of desire effect the political realm immediately. That is to say, the inscription of bodies, as noted earlier, is the confluence of the social and the psychic. Thus, the foreclosing of castration and effective avoidance of territorialization is the same process by which a certain set of social relations can achieve absolute deterritorialization.

For Deleuze and Guattari, the "socius" is a set of socio-psychic (political-personal) relations inscribed on the body of the earth, the despot, capital, or the body without organs. (The first three inscribed bodies correspond to three of Marx's modes of production: primitive, Asiatic, and bourgeois). In analyzing the political nature of the micrological — the binding of cells or desiring-machines — that is, in developing a "micropolitics," Auden, like Deleuze and Guattari, delineates four historical arrangements of desiring-production or Love. In other

words, Auden *de-scribes* the production and reproduction of four in-scribed bodies: 1) the Body of the Earth, 2) the Despotic Body, 3) the Body of Capital-money, and 4) the Full Body without Organs (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 282).

1) The first inscribed body is that of the earth. The earth is the quasi-cause of the first historical arrangement: the primitive socius. People and economic and social relations appear to emanate from the earth (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 141). The codes which bind members of this socius are immanent to the physical reality of the socius. In other words, the code does not last beyond the grave. (This is a significant distinction, we shall see, from the despotic socius). This immanent and finite coding means that the primitive socius actively forgets transgressions of its codes. It does not instill feelings of guilt or bad conscience in its members. The members of the primitive socius do not owe an infinite debt to the earth — as the members of the despotic socius do to the despot.

This first historical arrangement is what Auden calls "paganism." Paganism is not impressed by the despotism of Christianity. It is a socius which is constituted through a pre-conscious investment of desire — i.e., before the oedipalization of desire which creates an individual subject, ego, or consciousness. In this sense, paganism is a "primitive-communism," a communal configuration of Love. On the nature of this first configuration of Love, Auden quotes Powicke extensively:

[Paganism] accepts what is offered without any sense of responsibility, has no sense of sin, and *easily recovers from twinges of conscience*. At the same time it is full of curiosity and is easily moved by what is now called the *group-mind*. It is sensitive to the activities of the crowd, is often emotional, and can be raised to those moods of passion, superstition, and love of persecution into which religion, on its side, can degenerate [my emphasis]. (348)

2) The primitive socius is displaced by a transcendent force: the despot. The despot "imposes a new alliance system and places himself in direct filiation with the deity: the people must follow.... *He* is the sole quasi cause, the source and the fountainhead and estuary of the apparent objective movement" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 192, 194). In the primitive socius, connections are immanent and finite; an infraction of the rules means a direct and immediate reprisal. After this (most likely painful) punishment, the infraction is quickly forgotten. With the despotic socius, on the other hand, connections or filiations are transcendent and infinite; that is to say, the threat that binds individuals to follow the imposed code is a transcendent and infinite one: "you will go to hell if you don't follow the commandments."

This second historical arrangement coincides with what Auden calls the first period of Christianity (approx. 0-1500 A.D.).⁴ The political system of this period is "Feudal Hierarchy," and the "Personal Driving Force" — what we have called Love or libidinal-social forces — was configured in such a way that it could only be a "Love of God." That is to say, to live within this socius means the "[s]ubmission of private will to [the] will of God" (Auden 338).

3) Where the despotic socius was constituted through an outside (transcendent) force, the capitalist socius arises from within. The capitalist decoding of flows through universal equivalence marks the limits of the previous two social systems — the horror they avoided by coding flows and then overcoding flows. Capitalism replaces fixed relations with abstract units of equivalence — equivalence of goods, ideas, knowledge: "everything is permitted." Through decoding, capital sets individuals adrift. Members of the capitalist socius do not have meaningful relations, filiations, or connections. However, capitalism always recodes and reterritorializes in the face of an absolute limit: the body without organs. That is to say, although capital subverts all codes, it also recodes the relations of the forces of desiring-production. The schizophrenic is the result of the decoding process of capitalism; she escapes the reterritorializing centre of the family: her desire is not trapped in an Oedipal triangle and is thus dangerous to the State. Deleuze and Guattari, therefore, agree with Laing that revolutionary action requires an ego-loss or a de-Oedipalization: this breakdown of an ego is the job of "schizoanalysis" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 362).

This, of course, is the socius which Auden so vehemently critiques. It exists within what Auden calls the second period of Christian history (approx. 1500-1900 A.D.). Its political system is that of "National Democracy"; its economic system, that of "Laissez-faire Capitalism"; and its personal driving force is the "conscious will" (Auden 338). Capitalism's major problem, according to Auden, is the isolation it causes. By making everyone an absolutely independent entity — by decoding all relations, by dissolving all filiations — capitalism promises everyone freedom. What these individuals get, however, is a sense of alienation.

The most obvious social fact of the last forty years is the failure of liberal capitalist democracy, based on the premises that every individual is born free and equal, each an absolute entity independent of all others; and that a formal political equality, the right to vote, the right to a fair trial, the right of free speech, is enough to guarantee his freedom of action in his relations with his fellow men. The results are only too familiar to us all. By denying the social nature of personality, and by ignoring the social power of money, it has created the most impersonal, the most mechanical and the most unequal civilisation the world has ever seen, a civilisation in which the only emotion common to all classes is a *feeling of individual isolation* from everyone else, a civilisation torn apart by the

4 Auden divides "...the Christian era into three periods, the first ending with the fifteenth century, the second with the nineteenth, and the third just beginning..." (337).

opposing emotions born of economic injustice, the just envy of the poor and the selfish terror of the rich [my emphasis]. (Auden 392-93)

4) Deleuze and Guattari do not give us much information about the socius that would form a full body without organs. We do know, however, that it is that which capitalism fears most; it is an "absolute limit" from which capital turns in terror — this is why capital reterritorializes or recodes desire: blocking its exit from the private or the family. By following the path of the schizo, however, we can avoid this reterritorialization and approach capitalism's limit where "the deterritorialized socius gives way to the body without organs" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 140). Within this socius, desiring-production is absolutely decoded; it enjoys a complete freedom of expression.

This final socius coincides with what Auden calls the third period of Christian history — which began, interestingly, with Nietzsche (Auden 339). Its political system is that of "International Democracy"; its economic system, that of "Planned socialism"; and its personal driving force is that of the "unconscious guided by reason" (Auden 338). More accurately, perhaps, it means that the driving force (Love) is not separated from its expressions or inscriptions; that is, desire (the unconscious) is not distinct from its flows or that which codes it (reason or consciousness). Absolute decoding means that desire's flows are absolutely unrestricted. This, however, is not a celebration of Lawrentian irrationalism or the liberated unconscious. For Auden, this final stage of history means that the unconscious is no longer divided from consciousness; thus, the unconscious does not need to be rigorously coded. "The ideally 'cured' patient would be one in whom the unconscious and the conscious were at one" (Auden 347).

Certainly Auden is largely concerned with describing the shift from the third to the fourth stage of universal history: from capitalism to the body without organs. This is why fascism is a major "enemy" for Auden; he realizes that "[t]he fascist State has been without doubt capitalism's most fantastic attempt at economic and political reterritorialization" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 258). Fascism is a de-politicizing of desire. As Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe points out in *La Fiction du Politique*, this is the function of Fascism's concern with the aesthetic.⁵

Of course, this political reterritorialization is intimately bound with a psychic reterritorialization: a recoding of the flows of desire across bodily spaces, a channelling of desire into the erotogenic zones, the imposition of Oedipal codes, and the relegation of desire to the merely symbolic. Auden resists this aspect of the process of reterritorialization as well. For Auden, the political and the libidinal intersect on the body; thus, an unhealthy politics inscribes itself

5 On Fascism as an aestheticization of violence (and thus a de-politicizing of it) see Chadwick.

physically. An unhealthy political arrangement results in a sick or a "weak" body: "that is indeed to become the Truly Weak Man, to enlist in the great Fascist retreat which will land us finally in the ditch of despair" (Auden 321).

We can see, in this way, that Auden stresses the political and physical nature of desire's investments. In a like manner, Gregory Woods insightfully points out that the "you" in Auden's love poems does not refer to a universal love or lover. Rather, it is the stressing of a physical immediacy. To see the "you" as a universal form of address, Woods points out, depends on a liberal ideology: "that there is no essential difference behavioural or qualitative or whatever, between a homo- and a heterosexual love affair. Love is not affected by the minutiae of its physical expression" (171).

How then will we approach Auden's bodies? Auden's language? We shall see that the terrain of Auden's texts can oscillate between smooth spaces and violent markings, woundings — between the plane of consistency offered by a plateau and the peaks and valleys offered by a climax of socio-psychic energy.

III. REGIMES OF SIGNS

In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari relate their radically materialist philosophy to the philosophy of language. They refer to a "plane of consistency" (PoC) as a material plane of forces which is inscribed by territorializations of desire. We might think, then, of this plane of consistency as the body without organs (BwO) of language. Rather than the Saussurean model of signifier and signified, Deleuze and Guattari follow Hjelmslev in designating content and expression planes — and the forms and substances of each. There is no distinction between expression and content before formalization, which occurs when a grid of "stratification" (territorialization) is superimposed on the plane of consistency (PoC). The "form of expression" and "form of content" are constituted by this grid; the space marked off by the grid, the formed matter, constitutes the "substance" of expression and content. Forms are the coded flows of repetitive patterns and substances are the territories produced by this coding — this is stratification (Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* 41).

Matter: PoC or BwO — unformed, non-stratified body.

Form (Code)	Content	Expression
Substance (Territory)	Social-technical machines that shape the socius.	Production of in-corporeal transformations through signs.
	Individuals or groups with certain positions in a socius.	Discourses and positions of enunciation in which one is placed.

If the plane of consistency has been stratified — if we are dealing with forms of content and expression (non-discursive and discursive assemblages) — then we need to treat it pragmatically; we must consider language as an action within a context.

Perhaps an example of a pragmatic analysis of a speech-act at a wedding would be beneficial. At a wedding ceremony, the words "I do" alter one's life. "I do" binds two bodies — "effects an 'incorporeal transformation'" (Massumi 28). "The 'I' is not a person. It is a social function" (Massumi 29). It is an enunciative position in which bodies are placed. At different wedding ceremonies, "[t]he same 'I' speaks — only through a different body" (Massumi 29). These bodies are permeated and acted upon by "secondhand words." Every particular linguistic activity is this "indirect discourse": bodies making (pre-spoken) statements.

The institution of marriage "must bring a parade of bodies to stand in the same enunciative position" (Massumi 29). In a different context the words will not have the same "incorporeal transformation"; the words will have been the same but the "statements" will have been radically different. The determinant would seem to be the state (or "order") of things in which the words are uttered — the "vertical content" or context. Why then, ask Deleuze and Guattari, has linguistics always avoided this category? Perhaps the stratification of a wedding ceremony could be visualized in this way:

Matter: PoC or BwO — unformed, non-stratified body.

Form (Code)	Content	Expression
	Codes marking space of marriage: i.e., courthouse or church	Incorporeal transformations through signs: "I do."
Substance (Territory)	Particular bodies positioned in a wedding ceremony. (Subject of Statement)	Subjects or positions of enunciation marked off by the discourse: "I do". (Subject of Enunciation).

In the case of a wedding ceremony, the vertical content must lean toward the stratified end of the spectrum if the expression is to have an effect (an "incorporeal transformation"). To this degree, when Derrida reprimands Austin for ignoring the mobility of context (309-30), he is (without being fully conscious of his actions) claiming the ability of all parties to deterritorialize discourse even though they are spoken within it. In claiming that every statement can be ripped from its context and placed in another, Derrida is, like Deleuze and Guattari, asserting that discourse can and should be de-stratified, that its vertical content is fluid, that territorialized subjects facing a stratified state of things can make an about-face and turn toward an absolutely de-stratified plane of consistency (PoC).

Why, then, does the interpreter in us all wish to stratify Auden's texts? What compels us to carve up psychic-symbolic territories which we rule like dictators? In fact, even the most thorough-going post-structuralist interpreter of Auden still possesses this reactive desire to posit stratified enunciative positions in Auden's texts. For instance, Smith admits that the position of enunciation of the poem "September 1, 1939" is unclear — i.e., the context of the poem is de-stratified: "the specificity of Fifty-Second Street and of the date (Hitler's invasion of Poland and the annexation of Danzig) is undercut by the indeterminacy of place (merely 'one of the dives')" (26). However, Smith still asserts that there is a "subject" within this plane of consistency: "[t]he immediate reaction of the threatened *subject* is an act of censorship" [my emphasis] (26). If the context is seen as truly mobile or de-stratified, the positioning of subjects would be untenable.

Certainly Auden would agree with Deleuze, Guattari, and Derrida concerning the mobility of context. This is evident from his many revisions — from the fact that he transferred lines or whole stanzas to new poems. This has always been a problem for Auden interpreters who try to discern a stable strata in which to position Auden — i.e., that of the Marxist revolutionary, or that of the Christian elite. Perhaps this excavation of strata is a useless project; perhaps Auden's texts face a plane of consistency and his points of entry which have blockages or coded routes for the reader are few and far between.

Within his prose, this de-stratification is evident in his aphoristic style. His aphoristic sentences or paragraphs are not intimately bound with the logic of the codes surrounding them. For instance, Auden takes fragments of journal entries from 1929 and places them in a new context:

Man is relatively unspecialised at the periphery and highly organised at the centre, allowing a much greater freedom of environment than is possible to animals such as insects whose appendages are specialised (1929, 297).

In contrast to his greatest rivals for biological supremacy, the insects, man has a specialised and concentrated central nervous system, and unspecialised peripheral organs, i.e., the stimuli he receives are collected and pooled in one organ. Intelligence and choice can only arise when more than one stimulus is presented at the same time in the same place (1939, 373).

How can Auden use virtually the same fragment in two works separated by ten years — and across the divide of his apparent Kierkegaardian leap to Christianity? Perhaps it is due to the de-stratifying nature of the aphorism. On this point, Auden once again shows affinities with Nietzsche. For both Auden and Nietzsche, aphorisms are forces; they are autonomous intensities which flow, connect with, and break from the other aphorisms in their field. However, interpretive grids can be added to this plurality of aphorisms: a will to power as

interpretive principle will determine the order of the relations of these aphorisms. This interpretive grid is a despotic structure, a violent marking of the body, a repression of desire while an afterlife is hoped for — a transcendence of the material world. The nihilism of this will screams for a new evaluation: the life-affirming dance, the song that praises the body, and the joy of laughter. This is what Nietzsche referred to as the Dionysian, the transmutation of pain to joy, of the negative to the positive. Art, especially poetry, completes this Dionysian, life-affirming project.

Art, in this way, can be a transvaluation: a subversion of the existing order of interpretation, of the rigid, binary structures of language. This subversion of the negative simultaneously opens a space for a new evaluation, a new creation, a life-affirming will to power, desiring-production, or Love. Through transvaluation, the existing structures of the world are overcome; the subject itself is overcome in the process of being "artistically creative." Primarily this transvaluation means an active forgetting. Consciousness and memory are largely the creations of the negating interpretive will. Nietzsche shows the relation of memory to a certain violent marking of the body in *On the Genealogy of Morals*:

How can one create a memory for the human animal? How can one impress something upon this partly obtuse, partly flighty mind, attuned only to the passing moment, in such a way that it will stay there? One can well believe that the answers and methods for solving this primeval problem were not precisely gentle; perhaps indeed there was nothing more fearful and uncanny in the whole prehistory of man than his *mnemotechnics*. (496-97)

Similarly, Auden feels that the creation of memory and consciousness ("intellect") was a profound yet dangerous development: "When man became self-conscious, he created his most important detachable organ, the intellect, and since it was itself living, the most dangerous. Intellect alone can co-ordinate desires. It alone can set them at each other's throats" (Auden 297). In a like manner, he says that "[t]he introduction of self-consciousness was a complete break in development, and all that we recognise as evil or sin is its consequence" (339). The body, for Auden, is productive; it forges connections with others through communal love. The mind, on the other hand, separates us, carves us up into individuals:

We have tried to make the body more and more individualistic (hygiene) and the mind more and more communistic (newspapers). The result being that on the one hand we lose the capacity to love and on the other we lose the capacity to think. The love of one's neighbour is a bodily, a blood relationship; the development of the mind is one more and more of differentiation, individualistic, away from nature. It is the body's job to make, the mind's to destroy. (298)

This violent scarring or coding of desire in the creation of memory or consciousness is what the process of deterritorialization helps us to move beyond; it helps us to achieve an "active forgetting." An aphorism, as a momentary intensity, creates this active forgetting. The aphorism can always be revalued, put in a new context. It can be disconnected and reconnected with other aphorisms through the process of transvaluation. Its existence is not predicated upon a continuity with previous and succeeding terms — as is the case with a continuous poetic or prose narrative. It is for this reason that the designating of (Oedipal) subject positions is a futile procedure while reading Auden. Perhaps we would like to discern stable identities for the "I's" and "You's" of his poetry and prose; we would like to be able to assert that the speaker is a "revolutionary," that the speaker is calling us to action. However, the degree of de-stratification present in Auden's texts is too severe to allow us to do that. His contexts are too mobile — from artistic-religious to political to libidinal in the same line or aphorism.

Auden's lines and aphorisms are, thus, a plurality of forces; their connections operate on an unconscious level. Only a strong, affirmative will to power can actively forget previous contexts and joyfully leap to the next. It is the *Übermensch* who takes this leap from peak to peak, from intensity to intensity; it is the *Übermensch* who can overcome and transvalue. "In the mountains the shortest way is from peak to peak: but for that one must have long legs. Aphorisms should be peaks — and those who are addressed, tall and lofty" (Nietzsche, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* 152).

In this way, even Auden's prose becomes poetry — that is, a "poetry of the body." This poetry of the body is one in which the materiality, the physicality, and the pure becoming of the body are affirmed: "[o]nly body can be communicated" (Auden 299). It is also the relation to peaks which the tall and lofty have; in leaping from peak to peak, the affirming will strides across a plateau of intensity; it does not follow the fall and rise of violently marked valleys. Love flows across the smooth space of a body without organs — the non-stratified surface.

With this in mind we can see that Auden fulfills another of the criteria of a minor literature: the celebration of materiality and a de-stratified surface (the deterritorialization of language). That is, Auden's texts

go always farther in the direction of deterritorialization, to the point of sobriety. Since the language is arid, make it vibrate with a new intensity. Oppose a purely intensive usage of language to all symbolic or even significant or simply signifying usages of it. Arrive at a perfect and unformed expression, a materially intense expression. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 19)

Woods is correct to point out that Auden's texts do not refer to a universal Love through the "you" as a form of address. Certainly the "you" is a specific

enunciative position with a particular physical reality. However, it can also be approached as pure materiality, as that which resists the carving up of subject positions, as that which resists territorialization or stratification. In the prose, this is evident in the references to "Man" — we may prefer to substitute "humankind." "Humankind" is not a specific enunciative position; it resists the coding of bodies and discursive positions that accompanies the territorialization of language. However, this does not mean that "humankind" is taken to be merely a signifier — i.e., it is not taken to be universal, ideal, symbolic, and thus, not real. Rather, humankind is understood by Auden only in its physical immediacy. Auden does not discuss a "human spirit" or an abstract quality which separates humanity from animals. These differences can only be understood through a careful analysis of physical organs:

The distinguishing mark of man as an animal is his plastic, unspecialised "foetalised" nature. All other animals develop more quickly and petrify sooner. In other words, the dictatorship of heredity is weakest in man. He has the widest choice of environment, and, in return, changes in environment, either changes in nature or his social life, have the greatest effect on him. (Auden 373)

For this reason, it is perhaps unwise to go on symbolic searches within the poetry of Auden. Caves, valleys, wounds are physical realities within Auden's minor literature. It is the Oedipal psychoanalyst who gains the most through the reterritorialization of these spaces: i.e., "the cave is not a real cave; it is symbolic of an anus or a womb." Through this reterritorialization, the desiring-investments of Auden's texts can be de-politicized. Desire, when left to its own devices, ruptures all attempts to cover existence under the blanket of signification; it shatters the symbolic sign. It remains always material, physical, and political. This is what Deleuze and Guattari, following Lyotard, refer to as a "tensor": an a-signifying intensity, a pure material expression. When this materiality of expression is attended to,

there is no longer a subject of the statement who is a dog, with the subject of the enunciation remaining "like" a man; it is no longer the subject of enunciation remaining "like" a man; it is no longer the subject of enunciation who is "like" a beetle, the subject of statement remaining a man. Rather, there is a circuit of states that forms a mutual becoming, in the heart of a necessarily multiple or collective assemblage.... Generally, we might call the linguistic elements, however varied they may be, that express the "internal tensions of a language" *intensives* or *tensors*. (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 22)

Auden, like Deleuze and Guattari, posits desire as a creative *intensity* — not a lack that motivates signification:

The error of Freud and most psychologists is making pleasure a negative thing, progress towards a state of rest. This is only one half of pleasure and the least important half.

Creative pleasure is, like pain, an increase in *tension*. What does the psychologist make of contemplation and joy? (Auden 299; my emphasis)

Therefore, since writing arises from a will-to-communicate,⁶ and since "only body can be communicated," Auden feels that literature is a physical intensity; it is a communication of materiality, of the body, of desire, of Love.

Following linguists like Vološinov and Labov, Deleuze and Guattari insist that every enunciation is a collective activity — language cannot be separated from its social context; there can be no transcendent rules which are wholly separated from the particularities of linguistic activity; there can be no langue that looks all-knowingly down at the materialities of parole. Thus, there are no meta-discursive subjects, only "collective assemblages of enunciation": a collective of bodies uttering pre-formed discourses. We have seen Auden's collective assemblage of enunciation in the form of his materially intense or "destratified" expression and the physicality of "Man."

However, as I have noted, this material plane can be territorialized. I have also noted that this stratification, by forming contents and expressions, constructs Oedipal subjects of statement and enunciation respectively. It is from this sort of stratification that the Deleuzo-Guattarian attempts to save Auden. The Deleuzo-Guattarian attempts to allow Auden's texts to do their revolutionary work; she does not stratify them by forming de-politicized Oedipal subject positions. The Deleuzo-Guattarian helps Auden's texts "[t]o go hungry, work illegally, and be anonymous" (Auden 321). In this way, perhaps we can approach the phenomenon we call "Auden" differently; perhaps we can approach the texts of Auden as a minor literature. As we have seen, Auden's texts possess minor literature's three characteristics: "the deterritorialization of language, the connection of the individual to a political immediacy, and the collective assemblage of enunciation" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Kafka* 18).

This, then, will not have been an academic essay in as much as it has not carved out "meanings"; the nomad's point of entering Auden does not lead to an interpretation — or even a plurality of interpretations. It is the mining of revolutionary forces. "Reading a text is never a scholarly exercise in search of what is signified, still less a highly textual exercise in search of a signifier. Rather, it is a productive use of the literary machine, a montage of desiring machines, a schizoid exercise that extracts from the text its revolutionary force" (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* 106). Thus, rather than interpreting, this paper has pointed out the folly of interpreting Auden. It has pointed to the smooth material spaces which Auden's texts construct if the reader attends to them.

University of Ottawa

6 Auden connects the "urge to write" with the "need for group communication": "the urge to write, like the urge to speak, came from man's growing sense of personal loneliness, of the need for group communication" (305).

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CHRISTIAN MORARU

"Zonal" Ethics: Gravity's Rainbow, Dislodged Subjects, and Infernal Technology

Gnostics who have been taken in a rush of wind and fire to chambers of the Rocket-throne ... Kabbalists who study the Rocket as Torah, letter by letter — rivets, burner cup and brass rose, its text is theirs to permute and combine into new revelations, always unfolding ... Manichaeans who see two Rockets, good and evil ... a good Rocket to take us to the stars, an evil Rocket for the World's suicide, the two perpetually in struggle. (*Gravity's Rainbow* 727)

The frontier is more undecidable than ever, as it is between the good and evil of all nuclear technology. (Derrida 1984, 22)

At present the exploitation of a man for the purpose of science is accepted everywhere without the slightest scruple. Who still ventures to ask, What may be the value of a science which consumes its minions in this vampire fashion? (Nietzsche 40)

In his interview with Jean-Luc Nancy, "Eating Well," or the Calculation of the Subject," Jacques Derrida points at the problematic¹ relation between ethics and

- 1 Campolo is among the critics who have insisted that "the relationship between deconstruction and ethics is necessarily uneasy. Ethics, as conventionally understood, is a matter of how we 'ought' to conduct ourselves in the world. Ethical thought entails the development of normative strategies directed toward the achievement or approximation of a moral ideal. This moral ideal usually presupposes the ultimate propriety of a pure human essence. It thus marks ethics as fundamentally humanistic, in the sense of being concerned that we realize our worth in our human essence and that we not step outside this essence and become 'inhuman.' Humanistic values, however, are grounded in what Derrida called the framework of