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assemblage that operates as specific conceptual combinatories in addressing specific problems. The coherence of the particular combinatory would be grounded in the respect for the general principles outlined above. Assemblage is one of the terms that today signals the emergence of a new episteme that would be transmodern.

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One of the key problems of global knowledge concerns the circulation, adoption and adaptation of concepts in translation. The English word *assemblage* is gaining currency in the humanities and social sciences as a concept of knowledge, but its uses remain disparate and sometimes imprecise. Two factors contribute to the situation. First, the concept is normally understood to be derived from the French word *agencement*, as used in the works of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari (who, furthermore, do not use the French word *assemblage* in this way). Tracing the concept in its philosophical sense back to their texts, one discovers that it cannot easily be understood except in connection with the development of a complex of such concepts. *Agencement* implies specific connections with the other concepts. It is, in fact, the *arrangement* of these *connections* that gives the concepts their sense. For Deleuze and Guattari, a philosophical concept never operates in isolation but comes to its sense in connection with other senses in specific yet creative and often unpredictable ways. This *in connection with* already provides something of the sense of *agencement*, if one accepts that a concept arises in philosophy as the connection between a state of affairs and the statements we can make about it. *Agencement* designates the priority of neither the state of affairs nor the statement but of their connection, which implies the production of a sense that exceeds them and of which, transformed, they now form parts.

Secondly, the translation of *agencement* by *assemblage* can give rise to connotations based on analogical impressions, which liberate elements of a vocabulary from the arguments that once helped form it. One of the earliest attempts to translate Deleuze and Guattari's use of the term *agencement* appears in the first published translation, by Paul Foss and Paul Patton in 1981, of the article 'Rhizome'. The English term they use, *assemblage*, is retained in Brian Massumi's later English version, when 'Rhizome' appears as the Introduction to *A Thousand Plateaus*. Since then many (though by no means all) translators and commentators have agreed, in a loose consensus, to keep to this early translation of *agencement* by *assemblage*, while acknowledging that the translation is not really a good approximation. *Agencement* is a common French word with the senses of either 'arrangement', 'fitting' or 'fixing' and is used in French in as many contexts as those words are used in English: one would speak of the arrangement of parts of a body or machine; one might talk of fixing (fitting or affixing) two or more parts together; and one might use the term for both the act of fixing and the arrangement itself, as in the fixtures and fittings of a building or shop, or the parts of a machine.

In contrast, the word *assemblage* in English means more or less the same as its actual French counterpart, *assemblage*, a word that Deleuze and Guattari use less often and certainly never in a philosophical sense. It has a more restrictive range of uses in English. The French will talk about an assemblage of different grape varieties or ingredients in a recipe and its senses cover blending, collating, gathering and joining. Although it designates a collection of things in English too (as one

of the noun forms of assemblage), it is conventionally restricted to more technical terminology: as the collection of remains found on an archaeological site (in a French pronunciation: *a-sā-blāzh*); and in art theory (in both French and English) it is a term associated with collage and other avant-garde or pop art styles, designating works assembled out of diverse objects (like Jean Arp's *Trousse d'un Da*, an assemblage of driftwood nailed onto wood with some remains of old painting).

As an imaginative resource for framing objects and operations of the social sciences, *assemblage* remains suggestive. Its use as a translation of *agencement*, though not entirely without justification, is nonetheless in danger of missing what is really forceful with regard to knowledge in Deleuze and Guattari's usage. The most direct connection that *agencement* has for Deleuze would be to his work from the late 1960s on the philosophy of Spinoza and the *common notion*. It also has a very precise correspondence to the notions of *event*, *becoming* and *sense*, which Deleuze discusses at length in other works of the same period. A *common notion* represents the situation when two or more bodies have something in common. All bodies have in common the states of extension, motion and rest; but when two or more bodies come into contact or otherwise enter into a relationship they form a composition. A *common notion* is the representation of this composition as an independent unity. The unity, for instance, of a poison and the body poisoned can be regarded as a state of becoming and an event which is reducible to neither the body nor the poison. The body and the poison, rather, participate in the event (which is what they have in common). Deleuze brings together readings of several sources, including Lewis Carroll's *Alice*, the philosophy of the Stoics and the writings of surrealist Joë Bousquet, to explore the character of unities like this in terms of their *eventness*, their *sense* (*sens* in the senses of both direction and meaning) and their *becoming*. While *Alice* is growing larger she is in a state of becoming both larger than she was and yet not as large as she will be. The state of becoming regarded as a compositional unity thus affixes the two senses of being-larger-than and being-smaller-than. This being between, and the paradoxical senses it produces, can be brought into contact with the Stoics who regarded, for instance, the state produced when a knife cuts through flesh as a separate, abstract state, which Deleuze develops in terms of the *event*. The *wound* as an event which brings the knife and the flesh together can be reduced to neither knife nor flesh. A third sense is produced that corresponds precisely to Spinoza's *common notion*, and which gives rise to the second-order conceptual level of

'adequate ideas'. Knowledge of the world would thus be formed of second-order ideas: concepts that are adequate – a good fit – to the unities composed by bodies in connection.

The implications for knowledge (although these states have powerful implications for ontological questions too) are profound. The traditional arrangement implies a subject of knowledge separated out from his objects, which he transforms by making them his project. But this is a kind of *agencement* too – an event, a becoming, a compositional unity – with sense and a common notion, to which adequate ideas might be affixed. The sense of such a knowing cannot any longer be attributed to the knower, who participates in a further stage of becoming not reducible to his knowledge. Deleuze and Guattari, first in their 1975 book on Franz Kafka, and then in *A Thousand Plateaus*, mobilize this sense of *agencement* and the term itself begins to shift, to break up and to participate in further connections. The 'collective *agencement* of enunciation' designates the language system to which all speakers of a language belong; the 'social *agencement* of desire' designates the individual's relation to his objects; and the 'machinic *agencement*' exceeds both the planes of enunciation and desire, recombining them in further enunciative events.

The translation of *agencement* by *assemblage* might have been justified as a further event of *agencement* (*assemblage*) were it not for the tendency of discourses of knowledge to operate as statements *about* states of affairs. The statement, as Deleuze and Guattari tirelessly insist, tends to undo assemblages, to take things apart, to divide things from each other, to divide, fundamentally, the subject of the statement (the sense and reference of a statement) from its enunciation (the conditions on which one can make a statement at all). If the sense of the term *assemblage* gathers to itself the unity and homogeneity of a theoretical concept at the level of the statement (which is what *agencement* allows) then it is also possible to problematize the term, to hook it back up with the fittings, fixtures and diverse arrangements that help constitute it and help to keep it current.

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