

# The multilinear actor-network-apparatus

*A play of lines beyond the black box*

# *What is the apparatus?*

## *A formation, tangle, network...:*

The apparatus is “the system of relations” which can be established between elements in “a thoroughly heterogeneous ensemble” which has risen at “a given historical moment” in response to an “urgent need” (Confessions of the Flesh, 1977)



Disciplinary institutions



(Western) sexuality

# *What is the apparatus?*

## *A perpetual genesis*

Begins with “a first movement which is the prevalent influence of a strategic objective”

*E.g. to cure criminals*

“Next, [...] it is the site of a double process” (re-genesis)

(a) **Functional overdetermination**: each effect enters into resonance or contradiction with the others → causes re-working that surface at various points

*From cure of criminals to production of crime*

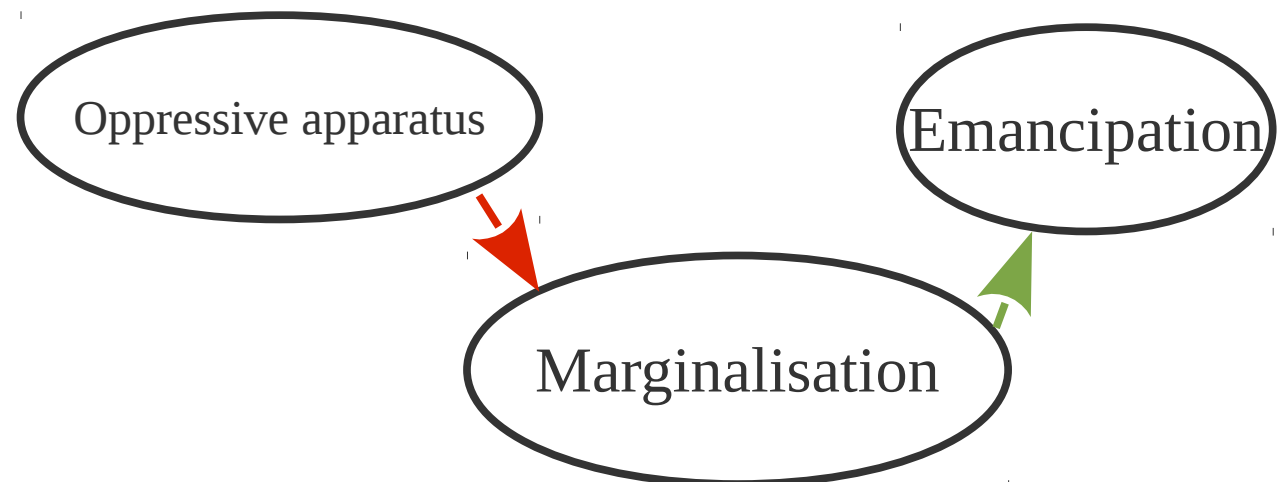
(b) **Strategic elaboration**:

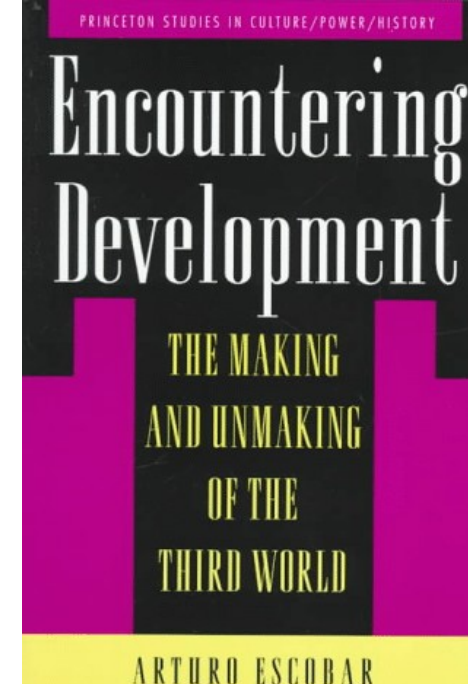
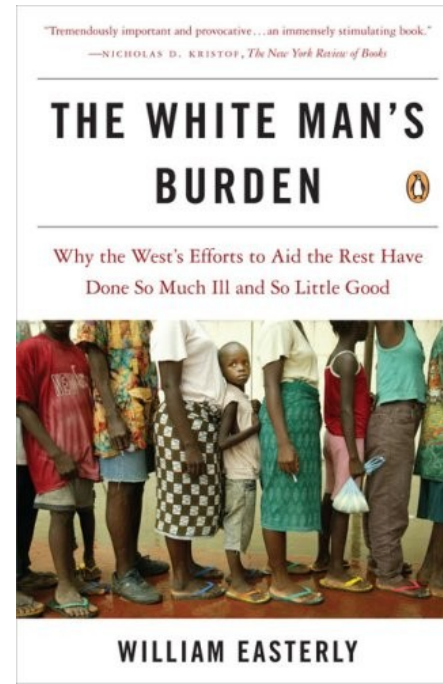
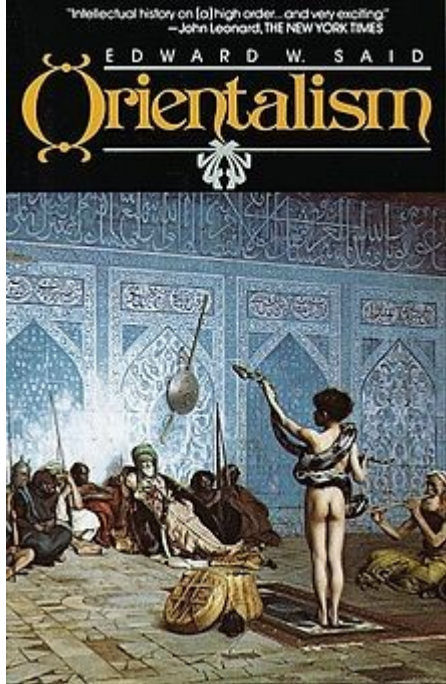
*Re-utilisation of unintended, negative effect → the delinquent milieu*

*(Confessions of the Flesh, 1977)*

# Classic application

- **Prison** rose to cure criminals
  - The instrument effect, *however*, became to create a less dangerous or even productive crime
- **Development** rose to cure poverty and stabilise the world (following WW2)
  - The instrument effect, *however*, became socio-political controllable poverty





The development discourse

Oppression

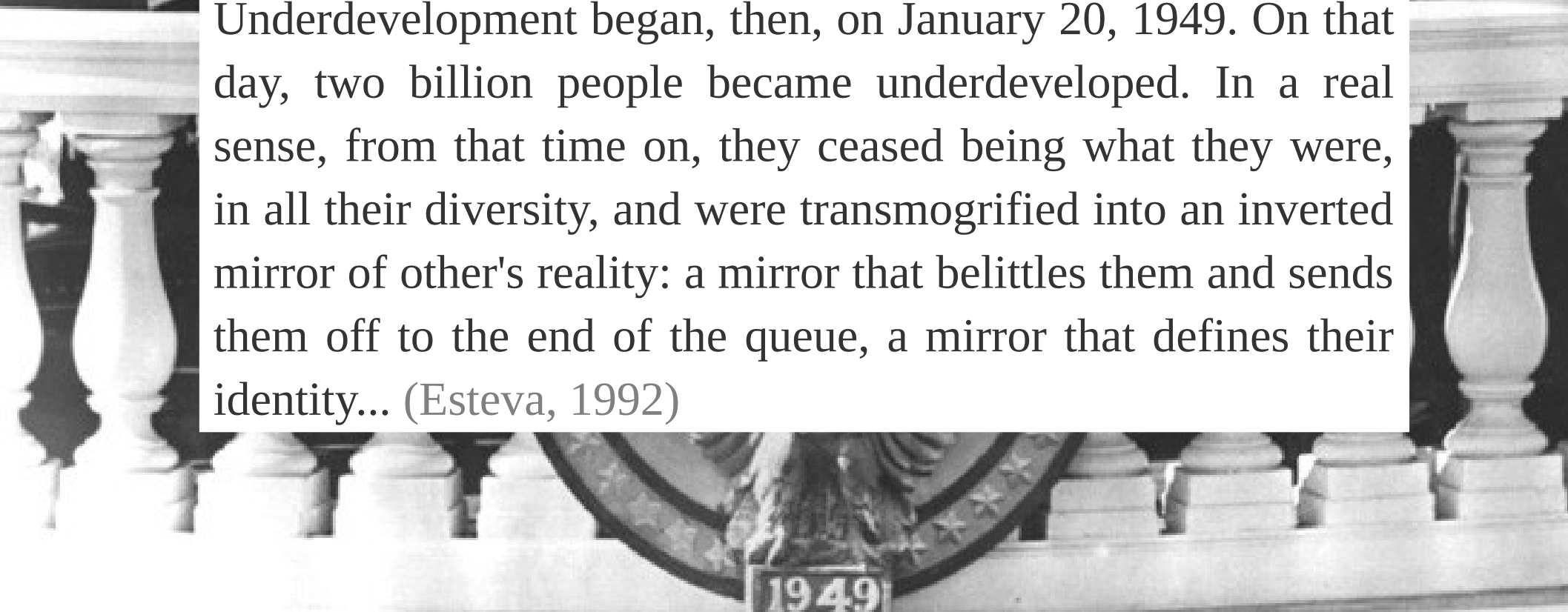
Forced identities,  
naturalized politics,  
restricted actions

Disrupt Western  
ways of relating

Emancipation



Underdevelopment began, then, on January 20, 1949. On that day, two billion people became underdeveloped. In a real sense, from that time on, they ceased being what they were, in all their diversity, and were transmogrified into an inverted mirror of other's reality: a mirror that belittles them and sends them off to the end of the queue, a mirror that defines their identity... (Esteva, 1992)



# *Critique of the critique*

- **The repressive hypothesis**

- “incapable of doing anything, except to render what it dominates incapable of doing anything either, except for what this power allows it to do” (Will to knowledge)

- **Who or what is powerful?**

- “Power is everywhere; not because it embraces everything but because it comes from everywhere” (Will to knowledge)

- **Power relations are at flux, the weaker party did not surrender**

- “what presides over all these mechanisms [of the prison] is not the unitary functioning of an apparatus or an institution, but the necessity of combat and the rules of strategy...we must hear the distant roar of battle” (Discipline and Punish)
- ..in order to understand what power relations are about, perhaps we should investigate the forms of resistance and attempts made to dissociate these relations. (The Subject and Power)

- **Comparative apparatuses? Not a *theory* of apparatuses but a *history* of apparatuses**

- I'm *not* seeking to construct this notion of confession into a framework enabling me to reduce everything to the same thing, from the confessors to Freud. On the contrary...it is a matter of ***making the differences*** stand out more clearly (Confession of the Flesh)
- **Immanence criteria**



*Ivan da Costa Marques:*

# *A line of flight in a development apparatus*

A (colonized) poor woman who lives in a favela (shanty town) in Rio de Janeiro, wins a prize of about R\$3.000,00 and a TV station goes to her hut to interview her. The (colonizer) journalist asks:

What are you going to do with the prize money?

The woman replies:

I'm going to buy a television set.



The camera takes a 360° shot of the whole hut. The journalist asks:

But you don't have a refrigerator!

The woman retorts:

I don't need a fridge to preserve the kind of food I eat.





# *The apparatus is becoming-Other*

- Back at the functional overdetermination
  - “...instead of manipulating and inducing actions in a calculated manner one must be content with reacting to them after the event. It would not be possible for power relations to exist without points of insubordination which, by definition, are means of escape”  
(The Subject and Power)
- Development is a ”bread crumb thrown into an ants' nest. Pushed and pulled in all directions”.



# *What about ANT*

- **Does the actor-network compare to the apparatus?**
  - It would not be possible for [translations / black boxes / passage points] to exist without points of insubordination which, by definition, are means of escape

Each apparatus/**actor-network** is thus defined by its content of newness and creativity, which at the same time indicates its ability to change or even to break for the sake of a future apparatus/**actor-network** [...] it is necessary to distinguish what we are (what we are already no longer), and what we are in the process of becoming..

(Deleuze: What is the dispositif)

# *ANT classic*

In our definition of resources, genes, power, language, capital and technology, for instance, are all seen as strategic means of enhancing one's influence over others in increasingly more durable ways [...] a social link that becomes increasingly harder and harder to break.

(Strum & Latour, 1987)

**The distant roar of battle is blackboxed..**

Punctualization creates nodes in a network hierarchy. From the obligatory points of passage, the network radiates outward ... the production of such dominant systems is all that can possibly occur

(Lee & Brown, 1994)

# ***The Black Box Genesis***



# *(post-) ANT*

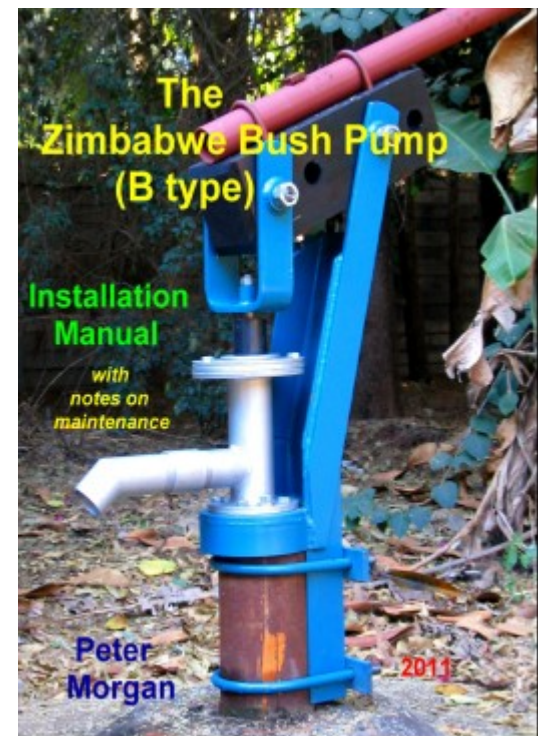
- Enter multiplicity, fractality, partiality....
  - “Moving outside the established chreods, between the obligatory passage points, is a deterritorialization of the network ...

we would like to suggest that there is a whole range of events taking place through what we might call *fractal strategies*...

not quite at the level of total silence...  
but certainly not at the level of domination“

(Lee & Brown 1994)

**The distant roar of battle is again audible**



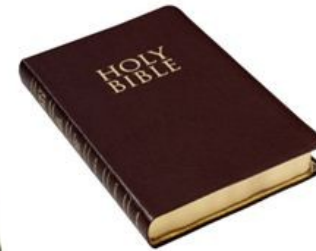
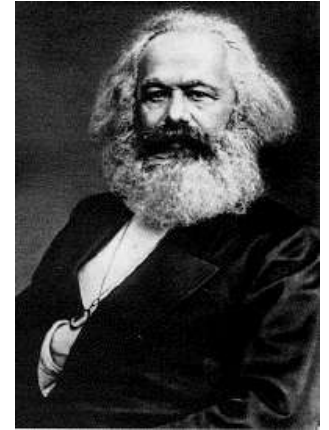
# *Unsettling the black box*

Foucault by way of **Deleuze** to aid ANT

- What is an apparatus?
  - A multilinear whole.
- What is a line?
  - Something that “follow directions, trace processes that are always out of balance, that sometimes move closer together and sometimes farther away ... each line is broken, subject to changes in direction..” (they are trickster-like translations...)
- How to study lines?
  - One has to be positioned on the lines themselves..; and these lines do not simply compose an apparatus but pass through it and carry it north to south, east to west or diagonally
- Are they all the same?
  - [The apparatus] is composed of lines of different natures... Foucault successively distinguishes Knowledge, Power, Subjectivity [but] always finds a new dimensions or a new line in crisis.
- Deleuzian lines
  - Archive (history) vs. becoming
  - Molar: well-determined, well-planned, it all adds up
  - Molecular: “It is hard to tell who is who anymore, or what anything means”
  - Lines of flight: “I may be running, but I'm looking for a gun as I go”



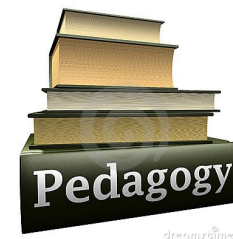
# Why?



One Laptop per Child study



Elements of study





# *To address an urgent need*



A multilinear tangle producing a multiple laptop

<http://www.laptopstudy.net/#apparatus>