Preface

In the transdisciplinary [Many Paths project](https://blog.libscie.org/why-were-starting-the-many-paths-project/) (initiated by Hans van Dijk, Martin Götz, Chris Hartgerink and Marino van Zelst), researchers from all field are invited to share their take on the relation between power and corruption. I think one of the most peculiar and difficult theories of power and corruption was deployed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus:* *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, first published in 1972 in French, *Capitalisme et schizophrénie. L'anti-Œdipe*, and followed up by the second volume with the title *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (*Mille plateaux*, 1980).

I still lively remember the sheer energy, the spillover of knowledge and playful enjoyment I experienced while working my way through the books the first couple of times. This ultra-rich book is full of excessive ideas and multiplicity philosophers (such as Nietzsche, Peirce, Foucault, Lévi-Strauss), psychoanalysts (Freud, Lacan, Klein, Reich, Jung) and referrals to the madness of writers such as Artaud, Beckett, Proust and Lawrence.

Nonetheless, almost two decades later, I must confess that I’m still not completely convinced if *soixante-huitards* Deleuze and Guattari provide a truly meaningful and useful theory of power. I attended multiple conferences, summer schools and colloquia, and read large chunks of the existing body of secondary literature, but still the philosophy remains an enigma. In my opinion, too many commentators tend to get stuck in over-enthusiastically repeating the buzz words and neologisms, instead of explaining what really happens. Others simply reject Deleuze, and find more manageable and reader-friendly theories of power in classic philosophy: in Machiavelli, Hobbes, or Rawls, and so on. Is there still value in a theory that criticizes but also draws so much on Marxism, and psychoanalysis with notions of desire, schizophrenia and paranoia?

At the same time, every syllable of Deleuze and Guattari still oozes the societal and political engagement, and the sense that the two philosophers were onto something. On something that needed to be said, needed to be thought, in order to deal with modern power and today’s politics, and to deal with corruption, or in their words: fascism.

This is the very start of my rendez-vous with Deleuze and Guattari, and my re-reading of *Anti-Oedipus*. I hope that my expanded knowledge of their lives, historical contexts, their sources of inspiration and their adversaries can help me to understand the book and their take on power. And I also hope that others on this platform will join me, help me, comment and co-create, and be part of this endeavor into the universe of capitalism and schizophrenia. Because would this not be the only right way to enter this universe, ‘with quite a crowd’, ‘since each of us is several’?