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This is how it should be done: lodge yourself on a stratum, experiment with the opportunities it offers, find an advantageous place on it, find potential movements of deterritorialization, possible lines of flight, experience them, produce flows of conjunctions here and there, try out continuums of intensities segment by segment, have a small plot of new land at all times.

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (2004), 178.

1.

The *veld* seems flat in this part of the Cape, marked by red soil, naked rock, and low sparsely growing vegetation. The landscape undulates softly towards the mountains that rise abruptly, their rugged surfaces laid bare as if jerking themselves out of the grip of the Earth. But the flatness is deceptive. Here and there are ridges and cracks where the shrubbery thickens, marking the proximity of water that over millennia has carved out hollows in the terrain. It is a landscape to hide in, a landscape to master, or to die in. Already in October at the advent of spring, the morning sun is strong enough to make you abandon your plans and turn back. This was once the foraging landscape of the Cape San, indigenous hunter-gatherers who were gradually pushed back by pastoralist tribes before being brought to extinction by white settlers in the early twentieth century.¹ The folded ground belonged to the First People, to those who stayed behind, when everyone else drifted northwards in what by all accounts must be regarded as the first wave of colonization inflicted upon the world. It's a prime example of nomadic space, basis for a subsistence economy and a way of life stemming from the dawn of human existence.

The trajectories that led me to these grounds – to what appears like a crystalline return to origins – are a meshwork of incidents, interests and work-related striations. Following the advice of Deleuze and Guattari, I'm here to maintain my “small plot of new land” in the reckless pursuit of an on-going project whose aims and outcomes are uncertain. This divergence from my formal profile (elaborated on in countless funding applications) did not come gently, however. If escape is a process of simultaneously losing oneself and forming oneself differently, it necessitates a rupture, the violence of a gap.² Lines of flight are infinitely more painful than how it sounds: I'm here to escape from Cape Town following an accident that in an instant shattered my cognitive capacities.

Far too little has been written on how crime and violence influence the conditions for producing knowledge about the city. Surely there's a history remaining to be written on how the affect of danger – whether anticipated, projected or real – has shaped conceptions about cities and modern planning, ranging from the prohibition of public gatherings and the condemnation of the urban poor to “defence by design.” In terms of research, trauma is normally projected onto the other – the victims of abuse, war or terrorist attacks – and rarely acknowledged as *integral* to science; the element of coldness, indifference and distance to the world that characterises not only trauma patients,³ but also objective knowledge. Does Western science emerge from trauma – embedded in that painful process of distancing mind from body, culture from nature, human from animal? It decisively has a hold on a molecular level, pertaining to researching bodies. For trauma enters discreetly into research, whether as the precautionary “where, how and when” that frame the conditions for fieldwork, or as an accomplished fact – as part of the researcher's mental fabric.

In *The New Wounded: from Neurosis to Brain Damage* (2012) Catherine Malabou analyses how trauma, identified as the core of psychic suffering – whether caused by cerebral injuries, pathologies or socio-political events – dissolves the unity of self, turning you into *someone else*. This formative capacity of the wounded brain – Malabou's “destructive plasticity” – is token for a continuous adaptation and

development that circumscribes the brain as work in a double sense: *our* work, as formed by impressions and experiences, and its cerebral manner of working, of *doing*.⁴ Posing this “work” as the basis for our sense of “self” undermines the distinction between society and biology as makers of human consciousness. In its most extreme, trauma is a transversal experience *par excellence*, the inverse of Félix Guattari’s example of a person transformed by learning to drive a car.⁵ The empowerment and sudden rush of energy in being able to move freely – hence to leave, abandon, arrive and attain – has its counter-form in the incapacitation of the traumatised body. Struck by accident, a victim of crime, your capacity for thinking, sensing, and moving is completely transformed. Your senses of spatial orientation and temporal recollection are drastically impaired, altering your sense of self in ways that unsettle your perception of others who may, or may not, constitute a threat. Having learnt that walking alone in the allegedly post-apartheid city is tantamount to becoming-animal, in the most literal way possible, becoming-prey – as one removed from the flock, the easy capture of one too old, too young, too weak or sick – I made my escape into the desert.

What does it mean to escape the city into the desert? How can the relationship between them be defined? If the city is marked by striation, as Deleuze and Guattari repeatedly assert – a sedentary space “striated by walls, enclosures, and roads between enclosures”; a metric space “counted in order to be occupied” – the desert, like the sea, would be a smooth space: “an intensive rather than extensive space, one of distances, not measures and properties.”⁶ Addressed as a refuge, an abstract void, the vast expanse of the desert seems hitched into a negative clause with civilisation; a transcendental image of sacrifice, redemption, asceticism and purity that resounds through Judeo-Christian culture. The Byzantine anchorites, for instance, would withdraw into a mountain cave and sustain life there for years. Withdrawal served the purpose of isolation from social life, but the extreme ascetic practices (prolonged fasting, exposure to heat and cold, loading the body with iron weights etc.) were also producing isolation in another sense: isolating the spirit from the body by “denouncing the flesh”. By forging a subjectivity distanced from all things human, attaining a position outside or above society, the anchorites could return as important public figures, conducting themselves with “the objective authority of a councillor devoid of earthly interests, a mediator without human loyalties.”⁷ The movement between the desert and the city can thus also be an opportunistic move, involving power and influence. Recognizing the thickness of the desert void immediately complicates the notion of a simple opposition between smooth and striated space.

But the relationship between the city and the desert is also replete with revolutionary implications. Surrounding the events of May 1968 was the circulation of the slogan “Sous les pavés, la plage!” The beach beneath the pavement evokes the freedom of a natural state – beyond, prior to or underneath the oppression of society – in ways that allude to the revolutionary romanticism of Rousseau. The theme reappears in Superstudio’s “moderate utopias” from around the same time, including the famous collage of a technological grid superimposed on an endless desert. The irony and criticality of these images reflect a profound disillusion with modernist architecture and planning. It came paired with visionary scenarios of a new anti-design culture in which everyone was given a sparse but functional allocation of space, free of superfluous objects.⁸ These allusions to a happier natural state – in confrontation with late-modern capitalism and the technocratic bureaucratic state – were paralleled by Marshall Sahlín’s theories on “the original affluent society”, first presented at a symposium in 1966 and later published as *Stone Age Economics* in 1974. Drawing on the work of Richard B. Lee, itself based on prolonged co-habitation with one of the few remaining hunter-gatherer tribes in the Kalahari, Marshall claimed that, far from suffering a state of near-starvation in constant struggle against nature, our primeval ancestors were able to enjoy a lifestyle of leisure and affluence with minimized effort.

Escaping the city into the desert is therefore a trope in urban narratives. The imaginaries of the late 1960s and 70s must have influenced Deleuze and Guattari in how they envisaged the desert and the figure of the nomad in *Mille Plateaux*. Earlier, Deleuze had problematized Rousseau’s conception of the natural state. Presumed as essentially good for humanity, without the violence imposed by social and economic structures, the natural state (Deleuze notes) does not merely entail independence and self-sufficiency, but also isolation: “need [for Rousseau] is not a factor which brings people together: it does not unite, it isolates each of us.”⁹ In their collective thinking, Deleuze and Guattari rethink production as based on desire and reconfigure the relationship between nature and the state, departing from the

individualism inherited from Rousseau *and* from the impasse of orthodox Marxism that erupted in the 1970s. Stressing the co-constitutive and relative function of binary concepts – “they function as a pair, in alternation” – Deleuze and Guattari advanced a way of thinking by which oppositions give rise to “far more difficult complications, alternations, and superpositions.”¹⁰ Not everyone followed them, however. Perhaps the most significant outcome of May ’68 lay latent in the beach beneath the pavement; a configuration of freedom that carried the seed for the intensification of individualism that the following decades would bring.

My escape into the desert is therefore an attempt to escape from myself, from the subjectivity of the employable, adaptable and flexible researcher forged by neoliberal capitalism that brings on “the fatigue of being oneself.”¹¹ As part of an urban imaginary, clearly the desert is already embedded in the city – a city that has grown ubiquitous in global capitalism, working its way into our brains. In order to challenge this powerful force, however, we must retain the *thought* of an exteriority, an outside from where critique becomes possible. For Deleuze and Guattari, it means situating thought in a smooth space, a thought “for which there is no possible method, no conceivable reproduction, but only relays, intermezzos, resurgences.”¹²

2.

The little cottage where I spend the night is a sound machine. Something is moving about on the tin plate roof. The quick scuffling noises are amplified by the room; it acts like a drum, dislocating the source to generate an impression of repeated attacks, coming from all sides. I am here to follow the Sevilla Trail on the property of Haffie Strauss, a middle-aged woman who sits with her family on the porch drinking iced rooibos tea. It’s been a long day’s drive up from Cape Town, following the N9 highroad to Namibia through the vast, dusty landscapes of mono-industrial agriculture, passing the rows of people asking for rides with crumpled bank notes in their hands. But everybody knows that stopping your car in this part of the world is potential death. Haffie and her relatives express surprise to see me travelling alone – in a cheap rental car at that. Again I can’t help but enter into a conversation about my accident the week before, and as ever the reaction proves significant for my cartography of post-apartheid South Africa.¹³ Still overwhelmed by the structural violence that hit me, telling the story of drug-powered children to whites has generated responses ranging from aggression to blame and denial. Most seem to think that violence is the price that has to be paid for democracy. But Hattie’s mother shrugs with the gesture of what-do-you-expect. “Oh, it is Africa,” she says.

This is Boer country. Land estates are vast with next-to-nothing in-between, fences criss-cross the desert, trespassers are warned. The cottage has issues of *Farmer’s Weekly* carrying editorials arguing the right of landowners to armed defence. I set out on track in the hazy morning light, following the white footprints painted on the ground that show the way to the San rock art sites on the Travellers’ Rest estate. Little animals scurry over the ridges. Hundreds of kinds of bushes and plants fill every possible fertile spot, endowed with their own special means for dealing with danger and opportunity: kraalbos, stapeliad, oxalis, vygies, kabong, kuni-bush, kruidjie-roer-my-nie, katbos, wild clove, milk bush, botterboom, sugarbush, amaryllis, and the daisies for which the region is renowned. The average annual rainfall is less than 250 mm – according to the guidebook it’s a “transition area of mixed Fynbos and Strandveld with many Karoo elements.”¹⁴ The San must have had detailed knowledge of these plants, making use of their properties for food, medication, carrying devices, clothing, tools and weapons.

Hunting and gathering depend on an intense environmental connection. Not only spatially – occupying and holding a smooth space, territorializing the land and extending its boundaries¹⁵ – but also in terms of temporality. It’s a constant assessment of resources – nutritional value versus volume, carrying effort and the hands available – with respect to the access of water and the distance to the camp.¹⁶ In his extensive studies of the !Kung San tribe, the Marxist anthropologist Richard B. Lee addresses hunting and gathering as a mode of economic production. The availability of raw materials – wild game and plants, nuts, fruits, fish and shellfish – is as important as the means for securing them and the forms of distribution, according to (what he calls) “a principle of *generalized reciprocity*.”¹⁷ As a mode of production, hunting and gathering relies on dynamic and complex interactions within ecologist, social and informational networks of relations. Suggestive for a way of life in tune with the

Earth, it's become a source of inspiration for not only survivalists and anarcho-primitivists, but also for ecological economists.¹⁸ Crucially associated with attentiveness, immersion and speculation, hunting and gathering resembles the complex manoeuvres of the African urban poor – the “hunter economy” defined by opportunities and kinship that Filip de Boeck observes in Kinshasa¹⁹ – but, to an equal extent, the circulations of intensity and affect that AbdouMalik Simone captures at the heart of the global financial trade.²⁰

From what may be gathered from the archives, the San way of life revolved around incessant negotiations between the spiritual world and everyday existence; between time and space, male and female, culture and nature, human and animal.²¹ There is ample material evidence left of their culture: dispersed across vast stretches of *trekkers* land, and to a large extent unregistered on maps, sub-Saharan Africa is believed to hold some 15,000 sites with tracings, marks and paintings. If the so-called discovery of the painted caves in Europe was a dramatic and contested event, almost immediately fraught with ideology,²² the recognition of San rock art has been a longer process of gradual disengagement from racist and colonial sources. Archaeological excavation of shelters points to a tradition going back some 27,000 years and maintained until the late nineteenth century, as shown by depictions of horses, ox-wagons, and people with guns, indicative of contact with Europeans.²³ Although the bulk of San rock art is believed to be the work of pre-colonial hunter-gatherers, their identity grew increasingly complex due to the “creolisation” of the region.²⁴ Already some two thousand years ago, with the emergence of pastoralist tribes and sedentary farmers, the Western Cape was supporting a range of intermediary and competing economies.

If the nomad is defined by holding a smooth space – “a mode of distribution without division into shares, in a space without borders or enclosure” – the materialist substance of San rock art complicates this smoothness.²⁵ Hidden into cracks and hollows, placed under ridges and cliff hangings, are depictions of human figures carrying weapons or tools, accompanied by animals and anthropomorphic monsters. Approached as territorial markings scattered across the *veld*, they bear witness to Deleuze's and Guattari's claim that “the nomad is one who does not depart, does not want to depart”.²⁶ Understood from the basis of economic production, however, and seen as embedded in its corresponding mythology, San rock art points to a more complex weaving of factors. The notion of becoming-animal, for instance, that resounds in Deleuze's and Guattari's work, may be taken as literal here; animals with human legs and humans with animal heads are a common feature in these paintings. The recurrent motif of the *therianthrope* has contributed to pinning down the meaning of San rock art within a framework of shamanism. Although highly contested, this “single reading key” maintains its grasp as the dominant theory of interpretation.²⁷ Conversely, to simply “appreciate the art” by means of empathic immersion, as Pippa Skotnes suggests,²⁸ is equally problematic in that it fails to acknowledge the complexity of perception – a micro-assemblage “made up of decoded fragments of all kinds” such as signs, actions and passions.²⁹ Any singular encounter with San enunciation is shaped and affected by a multitude of forces and conditions, most of which are below the borders of perception; post-colonial identities, pre-formed ideas, fences criss-crossing the desert.

But already the sun is too hot. I suffer moments of acute fear – a frequent experience during my stay in South Africa – as I lose track of the white painted footprints that only lead outwards and disappear in the other direction. I wander around aimlessly in the bush before I recognize the rift of a dried out river and am able to find my way back to the road. There is a fundamental inconsistency between my ambulant, subjective positioning and the milieu of the San. Surely these paintings, tracings and markings were more than points in a nomadic trajectory, “subordinated to the paths they determine,” points reduced to relays, “reached only in order to be left behind”, as Deleuze and Guattari philosophize.³⁰ In principle, they see the nomad as defined in relation to the Earth: a vector of deterritorialization, making the desert no less than being made by it, turning it into “an extraordinarily fine topology that relies not on points or objects but rather on haecceities.” It is in this way that “the land ceases to be land, tending to be simply ground (*sol*) or support”, Deleuze and Guattari say.³¹ Surely these paintings, traces and markings must be regarded as so many haecceities, that is, “modes of individuation [...] different from that of a thing or a subject”.³² In their diversity and visual complexity, these markings once formed a plane of consistency, the particular *nomos* of the San. For us it constitutes the folded ground in which we now have to find our bearings.

I do not trespass by crawling under a hole in the barbed wire fence, as someone suggests, but manage to enter the legal way to the adjoining estate of Bushmans Kloof.³³ The dusty red track on the other side of the gates leads to an oasis in the desert: peacocks on brilliant green lawns clipped with scissors, black servants dressed in white offering drinks under huge thatched roofs, guests brought in by helicopter from Cape Town. Graciously invited as a “scientist,” I take my place next to a British lawyer on the Safari Four-Wheel Jeep. We stop by the wayside after a little while to have safari style coffee and rusks. From here, it’s only a few minutes’ walk to the rock art site, hidden under a shelter that’s invisible from the road. The guide is very sceptical about the whole shamanistic thing. The quality of his guiding, crafted for the immensely rich, is infinitely superior to that of the unemployed taxi driver who took me on a different tour the day before. During our scrambles he demonstrated the unfathomable click sounds of Khoisan language that is one of the few living legacies of the Cape San. Notwithstanding, by now I feel I know about as much of these paintings as either one of them.

3.

Like me, the San were hunters and gatherers, setting out for an eland but content with a dassie,³⁴ filling the bag with whatever seems useful, if not now then later perhaps. Quick decisions made on the go, negotiating between risks and opportunities; is that worth pursuing, is this worth holding on to? The various carrying devices used by the San were of crucial importance, constituting a technology that is regularly overlooked as hunting takes priority over gathering. For me, the significance of the antelope stomach sack is transposed to the space on my computer, the luggage restrictions of international airlines, and a general assessment of how much material I can ever hope to make sense of in writing. Research is not a linear process. Incessantly skidding across the categories, I’m driven by an intuitive sense of necessity rather than rational thinking. By South African reckoning, I am conducting *surface work* – the work of the amateur, the naturalist, the adventurous explorer – in distinction to the professional archaeologist digging for certainty underground. Surface work involves moving from one site to another, sampling materials scattered on the ground, comparing findings from disparate sources and making connections through a combination of insight and chance. It’s predominantly a horizontal practice, driven by affect and intensity, whereas professional archaeology is vertical and hierarchical, founded on the delimitation of site, the procurement of legal permits, and scientific analysis. Disengaging from centuries of surface work, the institutionalisation of archaeology came late to South Africa and was a violent and tormented process.

Ione Rudner, now over ninety years old, sits in her bungalow surrounded by *Strandloper* pottery, mourning events in the 1970s; “so much scathing towards surface work!”³⁵ She and her husband Jalmar Rudner – a Swedish architect who immigrated to South Africa after the war – used to pack their *bakkie* and go out to the bush whenever time allowed. During a period of over thirty years, they travelled across sub-Saharan Africa exploring and tracing San culture. Ione tells me stories of setting up camp in the middle of the desert, falling asleep under the stars with Jalmar softly playing the mandolin. Life was so different back then in Cape Town; an endless swing of parties with a fun-loving crowd employed by the Swedish industries. After Jalmar’s death in 2003, Ione has continued working on their translations of notes and diaries by eighteenth century Swedish explorers in Africa. I understand that the Rudners were very important in instituting San rock art studies at the South African Museum. Part of their collection of San ethnography has a permanent placement at the Bushmans Kloof, enhancing its unique status as a world class resort – “it’s not a donation, we sold it to them”, Ione sourly asserts. The bungalow is filled with Palaeolithic relics, documentations of their work and copies of their books, and there is a loom and a small printer’s press in what used to be the house servants’ shed. I’m amazed at their proficiency across so many different and parallel professions. Jalmar’s principal occupation was that of an urban planner, though, leaving as his legacy the freeway system in Cape Town: a massive entanglement of eight-lane drives encircling and fragmenting the historical urban fabric. I venture to ask what it was like working as a planner during apartheid. Ione does not like the question. “It was never about politics”, she retorts. Jalmar did not impose on anyone, and District 6 was a slum – “it had to come down anyway”.³⁶ “But once that was done he was free to design the beautifully undulating curve, what they now call the Nelson Mandela Highway.”

Surface work emanates from centuries of white supremacy, colonial exploitation and racist appropriation. Yet it holds more than a passing resemblance to what Deleuze and Guattari advocate as nomad thought, a “minor science” imbued with creative potentiality and criticality.³⁷ Denoting a “prescientific or parascientific or subscientific agency” that disregards rationality, both are in fact “itinerant, ambulant sciences” that follow a flow, observant to events and singularities “like so many ‘accidents’ (problems)”.³⁸ The match between these two modes of research – one empirical, imbued with racist connotations; the other conceptual, a source of radical inspiration – urgently calls for distinctions. How is my own forage into the field, the practice of explorative, curious-driven and interdisciplinary research, different from that of surface work? Essentially involved with claiming and bringing back findings as investments “at home”, what makes such research “nomadic”? The notion of nomadic theory has been used to the point of exhaustion to reconceptualise resistance; to subvert subjectivities; to establish a link between postcolonial theory and the politics of dislocation in late-capitalism. Rosi Braidotti, for one, asserts that “nomadic thought amounts to a politically invested cartography of the present position of mobility in a globalized world”, and that her project on nomadic subjectivity “constitutes an act of resistance against methodological nationalism and a critique of Eurocentrism from within”.³⁹ For a project that centres on “creative alternative space[s] of becoming” by following and identifying lines of flight, the component of violence inherent to the meaning of such terms seems significantly underrated. Elsewhere, in a similar vein, escape has been addressed as a creative and productive mode, endowed with the capacity to alter “the very conditions within which struggles over existence are conducted” through “every day, singular, unpretentious acts of subverting subjectification and betraying representation”.⁴⁰ But lines of flight are not a matter of soft slippages; becoming hurts. It takes violence to break loose, to discontinue, to resist: a violence that is intimately connected with trauma. In Catherine Malabou’s enfolding of philosophy and neurology, when trauma is seen to make people strangers to themselves it is precisely because “no transcendence, flight or escape is left”, because there is no other than “being other to the self”.⁴¹ Nomadic thought, to me, necessitates a rupture that makes thought exterior to itself. It cannot be pursued within the comfortable confinements of academic writing.

Scenes of violence are few and far between in San rock art. Lee describes hunter-gatherers as a radically egalitarian society, employing a variety of “humility techniques” that avoid self-aggrandizement and channel energies into socially beneficial activities.⁴² In a mobile society based on sharing, with little or no sense of private property, disagreement is easily dealt with: some merely leave and set up their own camp, adhering to mechanisms that “inhibit[s] the installation of stable powers, in favour of a fabric of immanent relations”.⁴³ The *nomos* of the San was not a war machine, but it was brought into conflict with others as the social landscape in which they lived grew increasingly complex.⁴⁴ This ambiguity provides a key for understanding one of the most enigmatic San rock art paintings, known as *Veg ’n Vlug* (Fight and Flight). Located in a shelter under an overhanging rock, it’s inaccessible to and held secret from the general public. I’m led here by a combination of random occurrences, tracing an incidental comment to a context, if not a source: a de-colonizing reading group from the university out here on a weekend trip.

We’re now taking turns to squeeze under the shelter to look at the delicate brushstrokes of red, white and black that spread over the rock surface. What we see centres on a group of “defenders” sheltered by a cave-like interior, anticipating an outside group of monster-like “attackers” approaching along parallel lines. Some figures seem to be running away from the action along similar lines, and there are other lines leading to less discernible figures in the margins of the composition. Constituting an anomaly in San rock art, *Veg ’n Vlug* is normally interpreted literally as depicting a scene of conflict. Drawing on the archives, however, the South African archaeologist John Parkington stresses the significance of the parallel lines. They cannot be footprints or paths, he argues, because on closer inspection they are seen to emanate from bows or bowstrings, connecting to the mouths or faces of the figures.⁴⁵ He suggests that the lines represent “strings”, a metaphor used by the San to express the relationship between thoughts and habitat. The system of lines surrounding the cave scene would thus refer to *attachments* – “the intangible connections between people and the land” or, alternatively, the power of rituals to “influence the behaviour or impact the wellbeing of others at a distance”.⁴⁶

The cave is striated. It vibrates with transversality, with how Guattari emphasises the effects of ideas over matter, which resonates with Deleuze’s ideas on the Fold. Centred on a division between interiority and exteriority, connected by strings, *Veg ‘n Vlug* illuminates Deleuze’s writing on “the coils of matter and the folds of the soul”. Situated in a project on baroque complexity, the concept of the Fold in Deleuze’s thinking relates to a condition where each part is separate yet affected by and affecting all the others; where “there is always a cavern in the cavern: each body, however small it may be, contains a world insofar as it is perforated by uneven passageways”.⁴⁷ Fighting and fleeing are two primary affects, captured by the San in a modified, negotiated and even reasoned way, yet deeply mysterious. The intensified state of reciprocity and co-existence in this scene indicates what we today would identify as an urban setting. The conflict and violence conveyed by the central motif – frightful intruders advancing towards the cave – conjures up struggles over land ownership, the threat of eviction, the fragility of a mortgaged home. But what about the figures at the margins of the composition, merely mentioned by Parkington, whose possible significance only becomes apparent *in situ*?



“Veg ‘n Vlug” (Fight and flight) Clanwilliam, Western Cape, SA. Photo by the author (2013).



“Veg ‘n Vlug” tracing. Courtesy of Peter Slingsby.

One of these figures is a nondescript, looming monster-like shape. Many of the lines connect here – the figure appears to be reeling them in. Who or what holds this determination over existence, what singular power over human society does it represent? A de-centred source of absolute power, it’s reeling in lines of flight. Whatever it signifies – God, Capitalism or the State – clearly, here, there is no escape. There is only fight, awaiting “that final force” – the decisive support of a people that is yet to come; “the missing people” that is yet to emerge, and is of such central importance to desert thought.⁴⁸

5.

Returning back to the city the front tyre of my car explodes, damaged from my driving on uneven desert roads. The car starts jerking from one side of the road to the other as I descend from the steep mountain pass. I narrowly escape crashing into oncoming cars and manage to pull over. Everyone knows that stopping your car in this part of the world is potential death. It’s close to 40°C and the battery of my phone is dead. A car runs up behind me, a man gets out and approaches. Without saying much he immediately grasps the situation and goes about changing the tyre, grunting at my stuttering thanks and shaking his head at my money. “Be careful on the road”, he says, and escorts me until we get to the crossroad where he has to take off in his rusty old car packed to the brim with assorted bits and pieces. The folded ground shifts once again, as produced by correspondences and interaction – at once stable and evolving, defined by plasticity: the ability to create and to destroy.

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¹ The current population of San in southern Africa is estimated at 100,000, most of them living in Botswana and Namibia (www.kwatthu.org, accessed 15 May 2015). The few remaining tribes of hunter-gatherers are under severe pressure by governments and private developers alike, acting on behalf of wildlife conservation interests and the tourist trade. See www.survivalinternational.org (accessed 15 May 2015).

² Catherine Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?* trans. S. Rand (New York: Fordham University Press, 2008), 73.

³ Catherine Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident: an Essay on Destructive Plasticity*, trans. C. Shread (Cambridge & Malden: Polity Press, 2012), 24.

⁴ Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, 4.

⁵ Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: an Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 17-18.

⁶ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. B. Massumi (London and New York: Continuum, 2004 [1980]), 420, 399, 528.

⁷ Jan-Olof Rosenqvist, "Theodore of Sykeon and his Biography", *Meddelanden* vol. 6 no. 1, Swedish Research Institute in Istanbul (1981), 5–18.

⁸ Peter Lang and William Menking, *Superstudio: Life without Objects* (Milano: Skira Editore, 2003).

⁹ Gilles Deleuze, "Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Precursor of Kafka, Céline, and Ponge", trans. M. Taormina in D. Lapoujade (ed.), *Desert Island and Other Texts* (Los Angeles and New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 52.

¹⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 388, 531.

¹¹ Malabou, *What Should We Do with Our Brain?*, 50.

¹² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 416.

¹³ Cartography, here, refers to my body defined as "the sum total of the material elements belonging to it under given relations of movement and rest, speed and slowness (longitude); the sum total of intensive affects it is capable of at a given power or potential (latitude)". Deleuze & Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 287.

¹⁴ Peter Slingsby, *Sevilla Rock Art Trail* (Muizenberg: Slingsby Maps, 2013), 10.

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 452.

¹⁶ John Parkington, "Mussels and mongongo nuts: logistical visits to the Cape West Coast, South Africa", *Journal of Archaeological Science* 39, pp. 1521–1530 (2012), 1521.

¹⁷ Richard B. Lee, *The !Kung San: Men, Women and Work in a Foraging Society*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1979), 117.

¹⁸ Cf. John M. Gowdy (ed.), *Limited Wants, Unlimited Means: A Reader on Hunter-Gatherer Economics and the Environment* (Washington D.C.: Island Press, 1998)

¹⁹ Filip de Boeck, *Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City* (Ghent-Amsterdam: Ludion, 2004)

²⁰ AbdouMaliq Simone, "Deals with Imaginaries and Perspectives: Reworking Urban Economies in Kinshasa", *Social Dynamics: A Journal for African Studies*, 37:1, (2011).

²¹ Research on the San is enabled by the extensive documentation of their language, traditions and belief collected by Wilhelm Bleek and Lucy Lloyd in the late nineteenth century. The archive is held by the University of Cape Town library.

²² Mats Rosengren, *Cave Art, Perception and Knowledge* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012)

²³ Janette Deacon, *Some Views on Rock Paintings in the Cederberg* (Cape Town: The National Monuments Council, 1998), 16.

²⁴ Jean-Loïc Le Quellec, "Rock Art Research in Southern Africa", in P. Bahn, N. Franklin & M. Strecker (eds.) *Rock Art Studies: News of the World III* (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 97–111, 2008), 98.

²⁵ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 420.

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Le Quellec, "Rock Art Research in Southern Africa", 99.

²⁸ Pippa Skotnes, *Unconquerable Spirit: George Stow and the Landscapes of the San*, Ohio University Press, 2008), 75.

²⁹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 555.

³⁰ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 419.

³¹ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 421.

³² Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 287f.

³³ For a record of Bushmans Kloof, including video footage of the terrain, see www.bushmanskloof.co.za (accessed 21 March 2015).

³⁴ Lee, *The !Kung San*, 209.

³⁵ See Jalmar Rudner, “Review Article: End of an Era? A Discussion”, *South African Archaeological Bulletin*, 28: 109/110 (1973), 13–26.

³⁶ The case of District 6, Cape Town, was a slum clearance of an inner-city, historic neighbourhood carried out in the late 1960s, an implementation of the Group Area Acts issued by the apartheid government. The forced eviction of the non-white population involved the obliteration of entire streets and houses while people were dumped into unplanned settlements on the city’s outskirts.

³⁷ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 405.

³⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 411.

³⁹ Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 4, 7.

⁴⁰ Dimitris Papadopoulos, Niamh Stephenson and Vassilis Tsianos, *Escape Routes: Control and Subversion in the 21st Century* (London: Pluto Press, 2008), 61.

⁴¹ Malabou, *Ontology of the Accident*, 11.

⁴² Lee, *The !Kung San*, 246 f.

⁴³ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 395.

⁴⁴ In discussing the concept of the nomad in relation to real nomadic practices, Ronald Bogue argues that the concept is *de jure* in kind; it captures a qualitative difference as regards the sedentary, but is *de facto* only present in a mixed-up state. The effort of Deleuze and Guattari is not to fix categories or identify essences in nature, he asserts, “but to make something pass *between* the terms of a binary opposition and thereby to foster a thought that brings into existence something new”. Ronald Bogue, “Apology for Nomadology”, *Interventions: International Journal for Postcolonial Studies*, 6:2 (2004) 173, 178.

⁴⁵ John Parkington, “Rock art research, conservation and social transformation”, in J. Deacon (ed.), *The Future of Africa’s Past: Proceedings of TARA Conference*, Nairobi and San Francisco: Trust for African Rock Art, 62–65 (2005), 63.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 64.

⁴⁷ Gilles Deleuze, “The Fold”, trans. J. Strauss, *Yale French Studies*, No. 80, 227–247 (1991), 229f.

⁴⁸ Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 416. See also AbdouMalik Simone, “Socialbility and Endurance in Jakarta”, in Hélène Frichot, Catharina Gabrielsson & Jonathan Metzger (eds.), *Deleuze and the City*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2016).