

## 4

### *Many Politics*

#### I

Whether we are individuals or groups, we are made up of lines and these lines are very varied in nature. The first kind of line which forms us is segmentary – of rigid segmentarity (or rather there are already many lines of this sort): family – profession; job – holiday; family – and then school – and then the army – and then the factory – and then retirement. And each time, from one segment to the next, they speak to us, saying: ‘Now you’re not a baby any more’; and at school, ‘You’re not at home now’; and in the army, ‘You’re not at school now’ . . . In short, all kinds of clearly defined segments, in all kinds of directions, which cut us up in all senses, packets of segmentarized lines. At the same time, we have lines of segmentarity which are much more supple, as it were molecular. It’s not that they are more intimate or personal – they run through societies and groups as much as individuals. They trace out little modifications, they make detours, they sketch out rises and falls: but they are no less precise for all this, they even direct irreversible processes. But rather than molar lines with segments, they are molecular fluxes with thresholds or quanta. *A threshold is crossed, which does not necessarily coincide with a segment of more visible lines.* Many things happen on this second kind of line – becomings, micro-becomings, which don’t even have the same rhythm as our ‘history’. This is why family histories, registrations, commemorations, are so unpleasant, whilst our true changes take place elsewhere – another politics, another time, another indi-

viduation. A profession is a rigid segment, but also what happens beneath it, the connections, the attractions and repulsions, which do not coincide with the segments, the forms of madness which are secret but which nevertheless relate to the public authorities: for example, being a teacher, or a judge, a barrister, an accountant, a cleaning lady? At the same time, again, there is a third kind of line, which is even more strange: as if something carried us away, across our segments, but also across our thresholds, towards a destination which is unknown, not foreseeable, not pre-existent. This line is simple, abstract, and yet is the most complex of all, the most tortuous: it is the line of gravity or velocity, the line of flight and of the greatest gradient (‘the line that the centre of gravity must describe is certainly very simple, and, so he believed, straight in the majority of cases . . . but, from another point of view, this line has something exceedingly mysterious, for, according to him, it is nothing other than the progression of the soul of the dancer. . . .’<sup>1</sup>) This line appears to arise [*surgir*] afterwards, to become detached from the two others, if indeed it succeeds in detaching itself. For perhaps there are people who do not have this line, who have only the two others, or who have only one, who live on only one. Nevertheless, in another sense, this line has always been there, although it is the opposite of a destiny: it does not have to detach itself from the others, rather it is the first, the others are derived from it. In any case, the three lines are immanent, caught up in one another. We have as many tangled lines as a hand. We are complicated in a different way from a hand. What we call by different names – schizoanalysis, micro-politics, pragmatics, diagrammatism, rhizomatics, cartography – has no other object than the study of these lines, in groups or as individuals.

Fitzgerald explains, in a wonderful short story, that a life always goes at several rhythms, at several speeds.<sup>2</sup> Though Fitzgerald is a living drama – defining life as a demolition process – his text is sombre, but no less exemplary for that,