



Piotrek Świątkowski

Deleuze AND Desire

**ANALYSIS OF
*THE LOGIC OF SENSE***

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DELEUZE AND DESIRE

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For Carla, Noah, Sarah en Ella

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Piotrek Świątkowski
Rotterdam, March 2015

ABBREVIATIONS

Works by Deleuze, Gilles

- PSM (1967), *Presentation de Sacher Masoch* (French version)
DR (1968), *Différence et Répétition* (French version)
LdS (1969), *Logique du Sens* (French version)
DF (1977), *Dialogues* (French version)
CC (1989), *Coldness and Cruelty* (English version)
LoS (1990), *The Logic of Sense* (English version)
CeC (1993), *Critique et Clinique* (French version)
DRE (1994), *Difference and Repetition* (English version)
ECC (1997), *Essays Critical and Clinical* (English version)
LID (2002), *L'île Déserte* (French version)
DRF (2003), *Deux régimes de fous* (French version)
DI (2004), *Desert Islands* (English version)
TRM (2006), *Two regimes of Madness* (English version)

Works by Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix

- LAO (1972), *L'Anti-Édipe* (French version)
MP (1980), *Mille Plateaux* (French version)
AO (1983), *Anti-Oedipus* (English version)
ATP (1987), *A Thousand Plateaus* (English version)

Introduction

1. Debate

Readers of the books *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) will be familiar with the vehemence of Deleuze and Guattari's critique of psychoanalysis. The practice and theory of Freud, Lacan and Klein are presented there as a contemporary technique of power that represses the creative and critical potential of desire. The said 'psychoanalysis' produces narcissistic and docile subjects, who participate in a conformist manner in a society dominated by the capitalist mode of production; desire, engaged with social and political problems, is restrained. This fierce attack on psychoanalysis had unwanted consequences for the reception of the work of Deleuze and Guattari. The interpreters have frequently underestimated the importance of psychoanalysis for these authors regarding desire and have also neglected Deleuze and Guattari's will to reform this practice. This is surprising, certainly given the fact that Felix Guattari, one of the most acknowledged participants of the seminars of Jacques Lacan, has been active as a practicing psychoanalyst in an experimental psychiatric clinic *La Borde* throughout his life.¹ It is equally surprising, given the fact that Deleuze himself has made extensive use of psychoanalytic vocabulary in books such as *Coldness and Cruelty* and *The Logic of Sense*.

Drawing a general conclusion about the whole work of Deleuze and that of Deleuze and Guattari about desire and their relationship with psychoanalysis is nevertheless a difficult, if not an impossible, task. The diversity of the texts, or their degree of complexity, is too extensive to provide a reader with both a clear and nuanced analysis. In point of fact, instead of an all-embracing analysis, I provide the reader with a careful commentary on a single text.² This book is devoted to the analysis of desire developed in *The Logic of Sense*, one of the most beautiful and complicated books of Deleuze, and, particularly,

¹ The nature of the relationship between Lacan and Guattari and of the work of Guattari in *La Borde* is discussed in François Dosse (2007), *Gilles Deleuze et Félix Guattari, Biographie Croisée*, Paris: La Découverte, pp. 50, (Dosse 2010: 40).

² The choice for an 'ad litteram' commentary of the text will be explained more extensively below.

of what he calls 'the dynamic genesis of sense'.³ This precise commentary not only reveals the core of Deleuze's thought about desire, but at the same time also establishes his strong ties with psychoanalysis. This text appears to be particularly interesting due to its extensive engagement with the work of Melanie Klein, one of the key figures of British psychoanalysis. Her work allows Deleuze to criticise Jacques Lacan's structuralist psychoanalysis, the dominating framework for exploring the theory of desire in the France of the nineteen sixties. Deleuze objects to the idea that human desire could be analysed by means of a universal structure. The patterns of our behaviour are constructions, emerging out of the interactions of a body with its surroundings.

The analysis of desire in *The Logic of Sense* stands on its own, but may also be considered as a missing link in the reception of Deleuze and Guattari's work. This analysis sets the groundwork for the cooperation with Guattari⁴ and as such, is able to shed a new light on this cooperation. Numerous books have been written about the cooperation of both writers, but very little has been said about the dynamic genesis of sense and particularly about the influence of Melanie Klein.⁵ This relative lack of interest is caused both by the relative popularity of *Anti-Oedipus* (1972) and *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980) and by the relative lack of knowledge of the work of Melanie Klein among philosophers.

³ This analysis may be found in the following chapters of *Logique du Sens*: '27e série, de l'oralité', '28e série, de la sexualité', '29e série, les bonnes intentions sont forcément punies', '30e série, du phantasme'. Chapters '31e série, de la pensée', '32e série, sur les différentes espèces de séries', '34e série, de l'ordre primaire et de l'organisation secondaire' complement this analysis.

⁴ On 5th April 1969 Guattari writes the following message to Deleuze: '*Une lecture lente, à la loupe, de Logique du sens me mène à penser qu'il y a une sorte d'homologie profonde de 'point de vue' entre nous. D'avoir à vous rencontrer quand cela vous sera possible constitue pour moi un événement déjà présent rétroactivement à partir de plusieurs origines*' (see Dosse 2007: 15, 2010: 5).

⁵ Until the present time, almost no literature about the relationship between the work of Melanie Klein and Gilles Deleuze has existed. The work of Nathan Widder (2009), 'From Negation to Disjunction in a World of Simulacra: Deleuze and Melanie Klein', in *Deleuze Studies* 3(2), pp. 207-231 and of J. Bednarek (2012), 'Logika sensu – najbardziej lacanowska z książek Deleuze'a?', *Praktyka Teoretyczna*, nr 5/2012, are the exceptions to this. James Williams' (2008), *Gilles Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, analyses the dynamic genesis equally brief as does Žižek's (2004: 80) *Organs without Bodies*, London: Routledge. Both neglect the influence of Klein. Sean Bowden (2011), pays some attention to the work of Klein in the chapter about the dynamic genesis in his book, *The Priority of Events, Deleuze's Logic of Sense*, Edinburgh: EUP. He nevertheless, pays more attention to the influence of Lacan and structuralism on *The Logic of Sense*. This relative lack of attention to the analysis of dynamic genesis is striking, certainly given the fact that Michel Foucault considers it to be of vital importance for understanding of the whole of Deleuze's philosophical project and is, for example, very impressed by his analysis of the phantasm. Cf. Michel Foucault (1970), 'Teatrum Philosophicum', *Critique* 282, pp. 885-908. A careful analysis of the notion of the phantasm is developed in Chapter six.

In *The Logic of Sense* the analysis of desire is not a fierce critique but rather a fundamental contribution to further development of psychoanalysis. Such analysis could therefore be of great importance to both psychoanalysts and philosophers interested in desire.⁶

The engagement with Melanie Klein's work as a means to criticise structuralist psychoanalysis originates from Deleuze's broader philosophical ideas. To the majority of philosophers, Deleuze is known for his frequently extravagant contributions to the analysis of philosophical systems of key figures of Western philosophy. I lack space to pay sufficient attention to these aspects of his work. For our understanding of the dynamic genesis, a brief mentioning of few influences and concepts must suffice. It is Spinoza, Bergson, Nietzsche and, to a lesser extent, Leibniz who have significantly influenced the work of Deleuze.⁷ Spinoza is even described by Deleuze as the messiah (*christ*) of the philosophers, the only thinker capable of accepting immanence as the starting point of a philosophical system.⁸ Spinoza allows him to reject any ontology that would take a privileged, transcendent point as departure for philosophical analysis. No higher instance constitutes immanence. God, Ideas, or subject do not form the fundamental basis that is able to explain the functioning of reality. Immanence is always the starting point.

⁶ The popularity of *Anti-Oedipus* has unfortunately, led many psychoanalysts to neglect the contribution of *Logique du Sens* to their field. For a critique of Deleuze and Guattari by various psychoanalysts refer to the contributions to the seminar *Anti-Oedipus*, Edouard Privat (ed.), (1974), *Les chemins de l'anti-œdipe*, Toulouse: Bibliothèque de Psychologie Clinique. For us, the text of Jean Bégoin 'L'Anti-Cédipe ou la destruction envieuse du sein' (pp. 139-159), where Klein's initial influence on his work is greatly admired, is of major importance.

⁷ Deleuze wrote a number of books about the work of other philosophers: on Hume (*Empirisme et Subjectivité*, 1953), on Nietzsche (*Nietzsche et la philosophie*, 1962), on Kant (*La philosophie critique de Kant*, 1963), on Bergson (*Le Bergsonisme*, 1966) and Spinoza (*Spinoza et le problème de l'expression*, 1968 and *Spinoza – Philosophie pratique*, 1970). Later in his career, he wrote about his deceased friends Foucault (*Foucault*, 1986) and Châtelet (*Périclès et Verdi: La philosophie de François Châtelet*, 1988) as well as about Leibniz (*Le pli*, 1988). All those books analyse the work of philosophical friends, with the exception of Kant, whom Deleuze considered to be one of his philosophical enemies. (cf. *Dialogues*, 1977). For an analysis of the true influence of Kant on Deleuze, refer, for example, to Kerslake (2009), *Immanence and the Vertigo of Philosophy: From Kant to Deleuze*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

⁸ Cf. Deleuze & Guattari (1991: 59), *Qu'est-ce que la philosophie?*, Paris: Les Éditions de Minuit. For an interesting analysis of the concept of immanence and on the influence of Spinoza's, Bergson's and Nietzsche's work on Deleuze, refer to a short essay by, Quentin Meillassoux (2007), 'Subtraction and Contraction, Deleuze's remarks on *Matter and Memory*', in *Collapse III*, pp. 63-108.

Concepts from Bergson's work assisted Deleuze to develop the philosophy of immanence further. Bergson is an inspiration for the concept of the virtual and the actual.⁹ Each object consists of a virtual and an actual part. The actual part of an object may be observed and known. The virtual part, despite being fully real, remains hidden. It precedes the actualisation of an object. Deleuze understands the separation between these two realms by characterising the virtual as the realm of problems, while the actual, he described as one of solutions. The actual is hence a solution provided for the problems characterising the virtual. An actual object is an expression of a problematic field.¹⁰ A similar distinction plays a role in *The Logic of Sense*. Sense belongs to the realm of the virtual. It is real but at the same time never fully actualised. It does not consist of pre-determined relations between various structural elements but may be understood as a dynamic realm of problems. Individual patterns of behaviour are not an expression of universal and determined structures. Rather, they are an actualisation of the possibilities emerging in the realm of the virtual. The influence of Nietzsche's thought of the eternal return is also directly visible in these brief characterisations. Reality, if not chaotic, is contingent on nature. Sense is continually changing. It is an expression of events (*événements*) which continually undermine the actualised patterns or structures. Influence of Nietzsche allows Deleuze to emphasise the importance of the individual relation towards chance. Its affirmation in the production of sense is possible, but only within precisely defined conditions.¹¹

These philosophical influences allow Deleuze to develop an alternative to the structuralist psychoanalysis which is known from Jacques Lacan's work.¹² For Lacan, the unconscious is structured in a manner that resembles

⁹ For a brief introduction of the concepts actual and virtual see: Constantin Boundas (2005), 'Virtual/Virtuality', in Adrian Parr, (ed.), *The Deleuze Dictionary*, Edinburgh: EUP, pp. 296-299 and Meillassoux (2007).

¹⁰ Refer, for example, to: *Différence et Répétition* (1968: 269), (DRE: 209).

¹¹ The influence of the philosophers mentioned will be largely neglected in the further analysis of the dynamic genesis in order for me to concentrate on Deleuze's understanding of desire and less on the influence of other thinkers on his work. I will clarify the reason for this, below.

¹² Deleuze analyses the characteristics of structuralism in the article: 'À quoi reconnaît-on le structuralisme', in François Châtelet (dir.), *Histoire de la philosophie VIII. Le XXe siècle*, Paris: Hachette, 1973 [Édition de poche: coll. 'Pluriel', 2000]. For an analysis of the relation between Lacan's work of the nineteen fifties and structuralism see: Markos Zafiroopoulos (2003), *Lacan et Lévi-Straus, ou le retour à Freud 1951-1957*, Paris: PUF. For an introduction to the work of Lacan, refer to the analysis of his famous text: *Subversion du sujet et dialectique du désir dans l'inconscient freudien*, by Van Haute (2001), *Against Adaptation*, New York: Other Press. We must nevertheless remember here that the critique is oriented mainly towards Lacan's earlier work. The later texts of Lacan emphasise the importance of the Real, and partially answer Deleuze's critique.