

The Rise of the Machines: Deleuze's Flight from Structuralism

Abstract:

In this paper, I offer an account of the conceptual shift that occurs between the work completed by Gilles Deleuze prior to 1969 and his later work with Félix Guattari, beginning in 1972 with *Anti-Oedipus*. Against previous interpretations, which have concentrated on the developments initiated by Deleuze, I argue for the primary importance of Guattari's influence, especially his insistence on a theory of 'machinic processes'. The importance of these processes is made manifest in Deleuze and Guattari's move away from theories of structuralism. In order to carry out this task, I offer a close reading of Guattari's essay "Machine and Structure." This essay was first written as a review of Deleuze's acclaimed work in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* and formed the basis for Deleuze and Guattari's first meeting. In the concluding sections of the paper, I show how the integration of the concept of the machine allows Deleuze and Guattari to develop a theory of the unconscious that operates outside of the boundaries traditionally set by structuralist analysis.

In 1969, before the pair had met, Félix Guattari reviewed Gilles Deleuze's two most recent texts, *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, in an essay later published under the title 'Machine and Structure' (Guattari 2015).¹ In this review, Guattari offers a direct criticism of the form of structuralism found in Deleuze's work and then aims to go beyond it by making a distinction – one unexamined in the works under consideration – between the category of 'structure' and that of 'machine'. As such, the explicit aim of Guattari's essay is to demonstrate that "each contingent structure is dominated... by a system of machines" (2015, 318). Taking 'Machine and Structure'

¹ Initially written as a lecture for Lacan's Freudian School in Paris in 1969, the paper was rejected, but later published in French as 'Machine et Structure' (Guattari 1972).

as a pivot, in this paper I will explore the transformation that occurs between the form of structuralism at play in Deleuze's work prior to 1969, and its later uses in *Anti-Oedipus*. I will argue that the emergence of the concept of the *machine*, and Deleuze and Guattari's increasing attentiveness to the existence of *machinic processes*, marks a distinctive shift away from Deleuze's dealings with structuralism in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, towards a historical, clinical, and political break with the concept of 'structure' in *Anti-Oedipus*. In a certain sense, this paper can be read as a reply to Daniel W. Smith's essay 'From the Surface to the Depths: On the Transition from Logic of Sense to Anti-Oedipus', in which Smith suggests that the major difference between *Logic of Sense* and *Anti-Oedipus* is that it is only in the latter that Deleuze "unhesitatingly attempts to write about the 'depths' in a straightforward manner" (Smith 2006, 146). While Smith is correct to make this distinction, his decision to omit any reference to the influence of Guattari's work, and his lack of engagement with the concept of the machine, lead him to mark this difference without giving any account of the real reasons for it. Here I hope to provide these reasons.

Part 1 – Recognizing Deleuze's Structuralism:

Much of Deleuze's work prior to 1969 can be understood as an attempt to grapple with the question of structuralism. In both *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze draws on the Saussurean linguistic structuralism prevalent at the time, and on the social, economic, and psychoanalytic versions of structuralism popular among figures like Louis Althusser and Jacques Lacan. However, at this point in his work, Deleuze is ambivalent to the core tenets of structuralism. Deleuze's major challenge to structuralism consists in the demand that whenever one is presented with an actual entity in representation, whose relations seem to be determined structurally, the

philosophical task at hand consists in giving a genetic account of how this actual entity has come to incarnate such a structure. While an entity can be said to incarnate a structure if its elements are given their determination by reciprocal relations, what remains to be explained is the differentiation of these elements. In order to avoid the possibility of an infinite regress of reciprocal relations between elements, Deleuze argues that these relations of opposition must rely upon prior differential relations among pre-individual elements. According to the terminology that Deleuze develops at this time, the two sides of structuralism – the one composed of differential relations between pre-individual elements, the other composed of differences between a set of individuals – are named as the virtual and the actual.² In brief, the genetic account that Deleuze aims to give of the actualisation of the virtual is intended to explain how structures are incarnated in actual terms. It moves “from the structure to its incarnation” by explaining the movement “from the differential elements and their ideal connections to actual terms and diverse real relations” (2004a, 231).

In the case of linguistics, Deleuze is critical of those Saussurean forms of structuralism that “constantly speak in negative terms and assimilate the differential relations between phonemes to relations of opposition” (2004a, 255). This is inadequate for Deleuze because “opposition teaches us nothing about the nature of that which is thought to be opposed” (256). Turning away from Saussure, Deleuze finds an alternative and genetic theory of language in the writing of Gustave Guillaume, whose work carries out “the substitution of a principle of *differential position* for that

² Both the virtual and the actual are real, but while what is actual can be located at a specific point in space and time, what is virtual is the set of differential relations that are expressed in the actual. The two aspects are never fully distinct and Deleuze describes reality as a dynamic relation between the virtual and the actual (Williams 2003, 7-9).

of distinctive opposition” (256). Following Guillaume, Deleuze will attempt to show how individual phonemes, which constitute the building blocks of the linguistic structure, must first be differentiated in speech. In his essay ‘How Do We Recognise Structuralism?’, where Deleuze makes a careful distinction between the concept of a differential relation (spelled with a ‘t’) that holds between pre-signifying sounds of the voice, and the differences (spelled with a ‘c’) that exist between signifying phonetic elements, the following account of linguistic structuralism is given: “Of the structure as virtuality, we must say that it is still undifferentiated (c), even though it is totally and completely differential (t). Of structures which are embodied in a particular actual form (present or past), we must say that they are differentiated, and that for them to be actualized is precisely to be differentiated (c)” (2004c, 179). Here, Deleuze refers to the necessity for any actual incarnation of a structure to have a set of underlying differential relations which serve to ‘make the difference’ between its elements. In both ‘How Do We Recognise Structuralism?’ and *Difference and Repetition* the existence of such a ‘differenciator’ is named as one of the essential criteria for any structure, as it guarantees the passage from virtuality to actuality.³

³ In what remains of this essay I have decided to focus on Deleuze’s responses to structuralism as they appear in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, rather than in ‘How Do We Recognise Structuralism?’. There are three reasons for this decision: first, while this essay is very useful for gaining an understanding of what Deleuze thought structuralism was, it does not show how Deleuze responded to structuralism in his own work; second, as this essay was sent to Louis Althusser and Pierre Macherey for comments before publication, it is not clear how the form of structuralism presented may be influenced by these thinkers (See, Dosse 2012, 130-134; and Stolze 1998, 51-63); finally, and most importantly, by concentrating on *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* it will be possible to give a clearer analysis of the shift that occurs when Deleuze begins to write with Guattari.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze continues to develop his alternative to linguistic structuralism by showing how it is possible for a genetic account of structuralism to incorporate a theory of ‘events’. If structuralism is traditionally conceived of as the search for regular and fixed patterns of relations that can be discerned within a particular field, then ‘events’, which introduce novelty and contingency, are traditionally understood as antithetical to structuralism.⁴ However, according to Deleuze’s virtual account of structures, events play the role of ideal tipping-points in a structure, so that differential relations between pre-individual elements are able to determine a series of ‘singular points’. According to this analysis “[t]here is no more opposition between event and structure... than there is between structure and genesis” (2004a, 240). This problem is explored more intently in *Logic of Sense*, where it is one of Deleuze’s main aims to give a philosophical account of the status of ‘events’ (Williams 2008, 1-7). In the section of *Logic of Sense* titled the ‘Eighth Series of Structure’, Deleuze begins with a conventional Saussurean distinction between a series of signifiers and a series of signifieds, where each of these two series is made up of a distribution of singular points, and where the two series interact due to “a natural excess of the signifying series and a natural lack of the signified series” (2004b, 59). The asymmetry that exists between the excess of one series and the lack of the other means that “determinations are interchanged without ever reaching equilibrium” (59). The element that produces this asymmetry in the signifying series is referred to as an ‘empty square’ and it is by the

⁴ There have been a number of attempts to articulate the problematic relationship between the concepts of ‘structure’ and ‘event’, especially in the Marxist tradition of political economy where this question is related to the problem of articulating the relation between a continuous historical development of economic forms and a revolutionary break. See, especially, Althusser’s development of ‘aleatory materialism’ in his later work (Althusser 2006). A succinct overview of this issue is provided by Nathan Coombs’s recent book (Coombs 2015).

transmission of this element that variation is introduced into the structure. Naming these moments of variation ‘ideal events’, Deleuze writes that “it is imprecise to oppose structure and event: the structure includes a register of ideal *events*” (60). Incorporating the ‘empty square’ as a special case of the more general concept of the ‘differentiator’, Deleuze is now able to provide three criteria which determine the minimal conditions for a structure in general. These are given as follows: “1) There must be at least two heterogeneous series, one of which shall be determined as ‘signifying’ and the other as ‘signified’... 2) Each of these series is constituted by terms which exist only through the relations they maintain with one another... 3) The two heterogeneous series converge toward a paradoxical element, which is their ‘differentiator’” (60). Given this definition of structuralism, much of *Logic of Sense* is given over to a study of the genesis of structure on the one hand, and the nature of this ‘differentiator’ that ensures the co-dependence of structure and event on the other. While the third of these criteria is the one that marks Deleuze out from the forms of structuralism prevalent at the time, his arguments are not without precedent. Specifically, Deleuze’s articulation of the ‘differentiator’ draws heavily from Roman Jakobson’s concept of the “zero phoneme” (2004b, 83).⁵

According to Deleuze’s arguments in *Logic of Sense*, philosophers of language have previously tended to explore the logic of the three main operations of any fully formed language – namely signification, manifestation, and denotation – without producing a sufficient account of the more

⁵ For more on Deleuze’s uses of Jakobson see ‘How Do We Recognise Structuralism?’ (2004c, 178-186) as well as Sean Bowden’s analysis in *The Priority of Events* (2011, 153-173). This connection is interesting to note, given the fact that Deleuze and Guattari’s use of the linguistics of Louis Hjelmslev in *Anti-Oedipus* is defined in opposition to the apparently “bad linguistics” of Lacan, which Guattari describes as “Saussuro-Jakobsonian” (2006, 76).

basic distinction between sense and nonsense.⁶ With the concept of the ‘differentiator’ in mind, and with an eye on the central importance of the relation between structure and event, in *Logic of Sense* Deleuze explains both the dynamic and the static genesis of the field of sense. According to the dynamic account, the signifying capacities of language are only made possible when “sounds are not confused with the sonorous qualities of things,” and in order to account for sense we must describe the process “which separates sounds from bodies and organizes them into propositions” (2004b, 208). Turning to the psychoanalytic work of Freud, Lacan, and Klein, Deleuze’s dynamic genesis explains the process by which an infant moves from the ‘primary order’ of the body, where sounds are not yet differentiated from material bodies, to the ‘tertiary order’ of propositional language, where specific sounds are taken as words and arranged into propositions. This dynamic genesis of the structure of language follows from Klein’s analysis of the child’s progression from a paranoid-schizoid position, through a depressive position, towards oedipalization. According to Deleuze’s Kleinian analysis of the child’s acquisition of language, while the infant can initially hear the sounds made by the adults around him or her, the child cannot distinguish the phonetic elements that make up speech from the various noises and sensations surrounding it. To do so, the child must go through a process composed of three distinct moments. In the first, individual phonetic elements are extracted from the background noise, in the second they are concatenated into collections of sounds, and in the third they are finally put into relation with other phonetic conjunctions via the differences that exist between them. These three processes, which Deleuze

⁶ Deleuze initially praises both Russell and Frege for recognising the importance of sense, but quickly criticises them for betraying this discovery by framing the domain of sense within the image of the truth/falsehood distinction.

Thus, for Russell, “true and the false are supposed to remain unaffected by the condition which grounds the one only by rendering the other possible” (2004a, 191-192).

names connection, conjunction, and disjunction make up the three syntheses of sense (2004b, 194; 258). These three syntheses bridge the gap between the depths of the ‘primary order’ of bodies and the heights of the ‘tertiary organisation’ of propositional language by creating a secondary organisation, or surface of sense, which separates nonsense from sense and makes language possible.

The complex dynamics of Deleuze’s genetic schema of sense-production have been well documented before (Bowden 2011, 185-260; Collett 2016, 64; Świątkowski 2015, 19-22; Widder 2009, 207-230). However, one point should be stressed here: while the three syntheses that constitute the secondary organisation of language and produce the surface of sense operate *in between* the primary order of bodies and the tertiary order of propositional language, Deleuze is keen to emphasise that there is a more basic distinction to be made *within the primary order* between the actions and passions of the body. This is most apparent in Deleuze’s analyses of the specific kind of words that can act as the ‘differentiator’ of sense and nonsense in the work of Lewis Carroll and Antonin Artaud respectively. In Carroll’s writing, Deleuze discovers three kinds of ‘esoteric words’ that fit with the three syntheses previously discussed: connective portmanteaus that bring two words together to create something new (‘Snark’ = snake + shark); conjunctive words that contract a number of phonemes together (‘y’reince’ = ‘your royal highness’); and disjunctive portmanteau words that mark a differential relation between two similar words (‘frumious’ = fuming + furious). These esoteric words “guarantee the conjunction of two series of heterogeneous propositions” because they act as names for the ‘empty square’ (2004b, 52). Speaking of the relation between these esoteric words and the ‘empty square’, Deleuze writes that “not one of them is the word which circulates; rather, they are names which denote this word”

(53). These words are of particular interest to Deleuze because they are neither sensible nor nonsensical, but exist *between* the two and operate precisely by splitting the domain of sense from that of nonsense. In the work of Artaud, on the other hand, Deleuze picks out the peculiar use of ‘howl-words’ and ‘breath-words’, which also play a dividing role, but do this by splitting expressive noises of the body from the signifying phonetic elements of language. To be clear, while Deleuze uses the work of Klein to explore the dynamic genesis of the field of sense, he uses the esoteric words of Carroll and the howl-words of Artaud to explore the operations performed on the surface of sense and in the depths of bodies respectively. Deleuze ultimately claims that while Carroll’s esoteric words only play on the surface of sense as a “mirror-like effect” (99), in Artaud the surface of sense is shattered and the distress of the primary order of bodies is directly expressed. Consequently, Deleuze will be most interested in Artaud’s “primary order of schizophrenia” where, “the only duality left is that between the actions and the passions of the body” (103). Deleuze’s discussions of Carroll and Artaud in *Logic of Sense* are both attempts to grasp the ‘differentiator’ of sense; however, it is in the latter case of Artaud that Deleuze suggests the most basic foundation of language is given. It is for this reason that Deleuze writes that “[w]e would not give a page of Artaud for all of Carroll” (105). We have seen, then, that across *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze aims to develop a form of structuralism that is dynamic and that can account for its own genesis. We have also seen how such an account relies on the existence of a ‘differentiator’ of sense. Consequently, at this point in his articulation of structuralism, Deleuze is content to write: “Structure is in fact a machine for the production of incorporeal sense” (82). Structuralism remains defensible for Deleuze on the grounds that it incorporates an account of its own genesis within itself.

Part 2 – An Explosion of Machines:

Despite his Lacanian training, by 1969 Guattari had begun the long process of dismantling the formalism and logic of his mentor's system. Finding Lacanian psychoanalysis insufficient for his clinical work with psychosis, Guattari became one of the central voices in the development of Institutional Analysis, a psychotherapeutic practice that aimed to go beyond Lacan by working with the historical and socio-political nature of desire. The two central doctrines of Lacanian theory that Guattari was most intent to overturn were the importance placed on "Oedipal triangulation" and the "reductiveness in his thesis on the signifier," both of which he saw as capturing desire within the historically contingent form of the nuclear family (Dosse 2010, 3). To put it bluntly, Guattari wanted to open psychoanalysis onto history, and especially onto a Marxist account of history, by attacking the tendency within psychoanalysis towards linguistic structuralism. What Guattari found when he read both *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* was a highly original rendering of the concept of structure that he could use for his own purposes.⁷ In 'Machine and Structure', Guattari is keen to tease out a distinction that he finds underdeveloped in Deleuze's work between the productive force that animates historical change and the resulting structure given at any particular moment in history. Guattari names the productive force the "machine" and opposes it to the contingent "structural articulations" to which it gives rise (2015, 318). The purpose of 'Machine and Structure' is therefore to use Deleuze's work in *Difference and Repetition*

⁷ Guattari's reading of Deleuze in 'Machine and Structure' follows Deleuze's own method of reading philosophy; he does not strive to simply remain faithful to the text, but instead aims to work through the implications of his philosophy to produce new results. One could also say that Deleuze and Guattari's attempt in *Anti-Oedipus* to take Lacanian psychoanalysis to its point of auto-critique was initiated when Guattari attempted to take Deleuze's structuralism to its own point of auto-critique.

and *Logic of Sense* to demonstrate that “each contingent structure is dominated... by a system of machines” (318). Guattari formally differentiates these two elements in a footnote to his text where he selects an insight from *Difference and Repetition* and turns it against the definition of structure that Deleuze provides in *Logic of Sense*. The complete footnote reads as follows:

“To adopt the categories suggested by Gilles Deleuze, structure, in the sense in which I am using it here, would relate to the generality characterized by a position of exchange or substitution of particularities, whereas the machine would relate to the order of repetition “as a conduct and as a point of view [concerning] non-exchangeable and non-substitutable singularities.” Of Deleuze’s three minimum conditions determining structure in general, I shall retain only the first two:

- (1) There must be at least two heterogeneous series, one of which is defined as the signifier and the other as the signified.
- (2) Each of these series is made up of terms that exist only through their relationship with one another.

Deleuze’s third condition, “two heterogeneous series [converging] toward a paradoxical element, which is their ‘differentiator,’” relates, on the contrary, exclusively to the order of the machine” (2015, 381-382).⁸

In the first half of this footnote Guattari extracts an important distinction made by Deleuze in the opening pages of *Difference and Repetition* between ‘generality’ and ‘repetition’. For Deleuze,

⁸ Original sources for quotations from Deleuze can be found in *Difference and Repetition* (2004a, 1), and in *Logic of Sense* (2004b, 60).

“generality expresses a point of view according to which one term may be exchanged or substituted for another” whereas, “repetition is a necessary and justified conduct only in relation to that which cannot be replaced” (2004a, 1). What Guattari will try to show in this essay is that the category of repetition cannot be accounted for in purely structural terms. Guattari’s decision to read Deleuze’s concept of repetition as inherently anti-structural can be better understood if we look at chapter 4 of *Difference and Repetition* where Deleuze elaborates his concept of repetition with respect to the form of chance involved in the “throw of a dice” (2004a, 248).⁹ According to this section, repeated throws of a dice are “not subject to the persistence of the same hypothesis, nor the identity of a constant rule” (248) because each throw is independent of the last. Deleuze also states here that Ideas, understood as virtual multiplicities made up of differential relations, “are the problematic combinations which *result* from throws” (248, my italics). Following from this, Deleuze concludes by saying that the throw of the dice “carries out the calculation of problems, the determination of differential elements or the distribution of singular points which constitute a structure” (248). What this means is that the relation between differentiation, which concerns the relations between differential elements, and the process of differentiation, which concerns the actualisation of these differential relations in concrete terms, relies on a kind of repetition. Or, to put this another way again, while the concept of structure defines the relation between a virtual collection of differential relations on the one hand, and an actual set of distributed points on the other, this relationship relies on the activity of something that is not of the order of difference and which is not itself included in the structure, but which remains outside of it and animates the process. As Deleuze puts it, there must be something internal to difference, which splits one kind of difference

⁹ This is a direct reference to Nietzsche, and Deleuze’s intention in this section is to understand the role of affirmation in the eternal return.

(differential relations among pre-individual tendencies) from the other kind of difference (differences between actual terms). Deleuze names this “for-itself of difference” as the “differentiator” (143) and as “repetition in the eternal return” (153).

What Guattari is picking up on in his footnote, is that according to Deleuze’s own text the movement from the virtual to the actual, and from differentiation to differentiation, relies on something which is not articulated structurally. For Guattari, this ‘differentiator’ operates on its own, as a kind of repeating-machine that produces the structure as a secondary effect.¹⁰ While it is a somewhat complex reading of Deleuze’s book, it is easy to find support for Guattari’s analysis in the text. In the later sections of *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze pays close attention to the processes of ‘individuation’ and ‘dramatization’ that determine the activity of ‘spatio-temporal dynamisms’. Here, Deleuze argues that the previously discussed process of differentiation-differentiation relies on the activity of individuation-dramatization and not the other way around. As he puts it: “Individuation always governs actualisation” (2004a, 313). Taking the example of an egg, Deleuze claims that while there are “the differential relations which constitute the pre-individual field to be actualised” (2004a, 313), the actualisation of these differential relations is governed by the individuation and dramatization of spatio-temporal dynamisms. So, while the

¹⁰ It is unclear whether either Deleuze or Guattari make a conscious distinction between the two spellings of the ‘differentiator’ and the ‘differentiator’. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze exclusively uses *différenciant* (1968, 48, 90, 154, 159, 161, 316, 355) but in *Logic of Sense* he exclusively uses *différentiant* (1969, 66). Guattari’s footnote in ‘Machine and Structure’ seems to misquote *Logique du Sens* by using the term *différenciant* (Guattari 2003, 240). However this is ‘corrected’ in the English translations (2015, 322, 382). In this paper I do not make a conceptual distinction between the two spellings and follow the conventions of previous publications in each case.

virtual aspect of the egg may be defined by a set of differential relations, “their actualisation is determined only by the cytoplasm, with its gradients and its fields of individuation” (2004a, 313). It is important to note here that for Deleuze, the process of individuation is carried out in an “intensive field” where pure intensities explicate themselves, and through this process individuate the differential relations of the virtual Idea. As Deleuze writes: “Intensity creates the extensities and the qualities in which it is explicated; these extensities and qualities are differentiated” (317). Ultimately, Deleuze will combine the different processes discussed here into the combination “differentiation-individuation-dramatization-differentiation” which describes the production of actual experience: a process of individuation in an intensive field of depth produces spatio-temporal dynamisms in accordance with the virtual structure of the Idea; these dynamisms are then dramatised to produce an extended field of differentiated elements that stand in relations of opposition and limitation to one another. Picking up on the importance of the central activities of individuation-dramatization, ahead of the structural relations between differentiation-differentiation, Guattari latches onto the constant repetition of the spatio-temporal dynamisms, which move from intensity to extension and drive the whole process of actualisation. This is the kind of repetitive action that Guattari will call ‘machinic’ and it is this aspect of Deleuze’s work that Guattari will name the ‘machine’ and distinguish from the notion of ‘structure’. What Guattari attempts to show here is that Deleuze’s genetic interpretation of structuralism can only account for the relationship between the virtual and the actual by positing a repetitive process of individuation. Guattari’s decision to separate the categories of machine and structure in this essay is simply a call to recognise that these repetitive processes of individuation must be understood in non-structural terms.

Having shown that the ‘differentiator’ of any structure operates by a process of machinic repetition that is not in itself structural, in the second half of his footnote Guattari challenges Deleuze’s three-part definition of structure. Accepting the first two points, namely that any structure must be composed of two heterogeneous series whose elements exist only in their relations with one another, Guattari refuses to accept the third criteria and instead claims that the process by which the two series relate to each other goes by way of a machinic process that operates externally to the structure. Concerning the question of linguistic structuralism, Guattari will go on to argue that while the ‘differentiator’ may be represented within language by an empty place holder, variously named the ‘object = x’, the ‘phallus’, or the ‘empty square’, it is also possible to deal with this differentiator directly at the level of its non-structural and machinic operation. In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze discusses two kinds of linguistic ‘differentiator’, Carroll’s esoteric word, which only manages to name the empty square, and Artaud’s howl-breaths and breath-words, which erupt from the depths of the primary order. Guattari’s claim that the differentiator of the linguistic structure is not itself a structural element is therefore not so much a direct criticism of Deleuze, as the decision to take up the example of Artaud’s schizophrenic language over that of Carroll’s paradoxes. Guattari is able to go beyond the form of structuralism presented in *Logic of Sense* because while Deleuze had taken up the insights of Roman Jakobson and Gustav Guillaume in order to highlight the way in which a differentiator is required to explain the differential relations that exist between phonemes, this model was still beholden to a semiotics based almost exclusively on signification. Drawing on the work of Louis Hjelmslev, Guattari, on the other hand, was developing his own theory of a-signifying semiotics and of a-semiotic encodings (Guattari 1984, 73). To put this simply, Guattari was interested in semiotic systems and chains of code that operate without the need for what Deleuze would call a field of sense. While Deleuze’s innovative uses of

both Jakobson and Guillaume argue for the central importance of sense, and are attentive to what propositions express, Guattari is interested in semiotic processes that function without the need to say anything at all. For example, both genetic code and computer code operate by the use of signs, but do not express any sense that exists outside of themselves (Watson 2009, 47). Deleuze had held up Artaud's schizophrenic howl-breaths for examination because they existed at the boundary of sense and nonsense and served to ground the field of sense, but Guattari is interested in schizophrenic language for another reason, namely that it gives an insight into the a-signifying and machinic processes that exist below the structural realm of sense. According to Guattari's reading, rather than being only a gap in the structure, a-signifying schizophrenic language has its own mode of functioning that has nothing to do with structural determinations. In 'Machine and Structure' Guattari borrows selectively from Lacanian terminology to name this a-signifying and essentially schizophrenic process. Opting to pass over the concept of the 'phallus' altogether, Guattari takes up Lacan's term for the lost object of desire, namely the '*objet petit a*', renaming it the "*objet-machine petit 'a*,'" as well as the "desiring machine" (2015, 324-325).¹¹

¹¹ One of the central implications of Guattari's Deleuzian overturning of Lacan is that any structural theory of psychoanalysis will always cover over the true nature of the unconscious, because "[t]he existence of this *objet-machine petit 'a*," ... means that the representation of oneself by means of the "stencils" of language leads to a dead end" (2015, 324). This move is particularly relevant for Guattari's therapeutic practice because, while Lacan claimed that the foreclosure of the psychotic to the linguistic structure meant that it was not possible to use the techniques of psychoanalysis in the treatment of schizophrenia, Guattari was attempting to do just that at La Borde. The practice of Institutional Psychotherapy, which will have a considerable impact on Deleuze and Guattari's later conception of schizoanalysis, follows from the belief that it is possible to use an analysis of a-signifying processes to work with that aspect of the unconscious that Lacan had deemed impossible.

Guattari's decision to use a theory of a-signifying semiotics to analyse the machinic nature of desire also allows him to incorporate an understanding of historical determination into his practice. Despite the fact that Guattari's understanding of the conscious agent remains relatively unchanged from the structural subject of Lacanian theory, outside of this structure Guattari posits a machinic element, "remote from the agent of action," which "marks a date, a change, different from a structural representation" (2015, 318-319). At certain points, Guattari seems to take the concept of the machine literally, as when he justifies the historical nature of the machinic element by claiming that "[t]he history of technology is dated by the existence at each stage of a particular type of machine" (319). This historicist conception of the machine makes sense in the context of Guattari's Marxist theoretical background, with Guattari's concept of the machine standing in for the Marxist concept of the 'base' of productive economic relations, while his theory of the structure plays the equivalent role of the legal and cultural 'superstructure'. For Marx, while the legal, social and cultural implications of any political economy may form a structural whole, they are determined by the historical and material development of technology.¹² Analogously for Guattari, while the linguistic structure that determines the social relations of consciousness is effectively pre-given, the machinic processes of the unconscious are historically defined. This results in a picture of the human as determined socially on one side and historically on the other. As Guattari will put it: "The human being is caught where the machine and the structure meet" (2015, 322). What this means is that while the subject is defined by its position in the structure of language and experiences the laws of this structure as pre-given, for the unconscious, these laws remain

¹² For Guattari's more direct reflections on the relation between base and superstructure, see his essay, "Causality, Subjectivity, and History" (Guattari 2015, 235-280). For Marx's original distinction, see "A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy" (Marx 1987, 263).

historically contingent. Anne Sauvagnargues sums up the interrelation between Guattari's Marxist reading of history and his anti-structural project when she writes: "It is with this feature of the relations of production in mind – namely the way they induce modes of subjectivation – that Guattari, a Marxist and a therapist, orientates his critique of the structure" (2009, 388, my translation). What is more, this conception of history will become vital for Deleuze and Guattari's claim in *Anti-Oedipus* that the unconscious is neither structured like a language nor caught in the trap of the Oedipus complex.

Having initially asked Guattari to review Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, Lacan did not appreciate the way that Guattari had put Deleuze's concepts to work in an attack against Lacanian orthodoxy. Lacan subsequently refused to publish the paper, and it was sent instead in the journal *Change*, edited by Jean-Pierre Faye. The paper was also sent directly to Deleuze and formed the basis of Deleuze and Guattari's first meeting.¹³ The arguments put forward in 'Machine and Structure' thus form a crucial turning point for Deleuze by marking the point at which his theoretical architecture was first used for the purpose of dismantling, rather than simply reorientating, the basis of structuralism in general, and structural psychoanalysis in particular. Guattari's decision to distinguish 'structure' and 'machine' and his introduction in this text of all kinds of operations of the machinic order, including the "speech machine" of the voice (322), the

¹³ There are at least two slightly different versions of this story given in the literature, the first by Jean-Pierre Faye (2000, 91-99) and the second given by François Dosse (2010, 71). The latter includes the additional information that Guattari initially promised the article to Roland Barthes journal *Communications*, only for Lacan to insist on having the article himself and then later changing his mind and reject it. For further information on these two positions, see Janell Watson's account of the story (2009, 39-40, 189).

infernal “*objet machine petit ‘a’*” (324), the “psychoanalytic machine” (325), “desiring machines” (325), the “unconscious desiring machine” (326), a whole range of “economic and social machineries” (328), “institutional machines” (328), and even the first mention of the “war machine” (321), provide the pair with a whole set of concepts to begin their collaboration. In this sense, it would not be overstating the case to say that the most important theoretical development that takes place between Deleuze’s *Logic of Sense* and his first collaboration with Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, is the emergence of the order of the machine.

Part 3 – Anoedipal Desiring-Machines:

On meeting Guattari in 1969, Deleuze was impressed by the concept of the machine: “Félix had talked to me about what he was already calling ‘desiring machines’; he had a whole theoretical and practical conception of the unconscious as a machine, of the schizophrenic unconscious. So I myself thought he’d gone further than I had” (1990, 13). However, Deleuze was concerned that Guattari was still borrowing too heavily from Lacanian terminology, adding that “it would all work even better if one found the right concepts” (14). The work that the two completed in *Anti-Oedipus* can thus be seen as a continuation of Guattari’s first attempts to dismantle the linguistic structural theory of signification, so central to Lacanian discourse, and the structural theory of the Oedipus complex, by producing a fully developed theory of the unconscious based on the founding concept of the machine. The pair’s early collaborations were immediately productive, and Deleuze’s philosophical direction quickly produced the results that Guattari was looking for: “When I met Deleuze in 1969, I really seized the opportunity. I’d made headway in arguing with Lacan on two different issues: Oedipal triangulation and the reductiveness in his thesis on the signifier. Step by step, the rest dissolved like a rotten tooth, like a saltpetered wall” (quoted in Dosse 2012, 3). In

what remains of this paper, I will explain how Deleuze and Guattari develop the concept of the machine, showing how it both connects *Anti-Oedipus* to, and distinguishes it from, Deleuze's writings in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*.

Rather than basing their theory of the unconscious on the Lacanian model, in which the unconscious is structured like a language and operates by means of a lack, in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari develop a non-structural, machinic conception of the unconscious that is explicitly not structured like a language. Once again, Guattari's theory of a-signifying semiotics is important here. In *Difference and Repetition*, it is the theory of the depths of spatio-temporal dynamisms, which play the role of the "intensive environment" that determine the actualisation of the differential structure of the virtual multiplicity, that come closest to an analysis of the unconscious (313).¹⁴ However, it is only with an understanding of the machinic nature of a-signifying semiotics that Deleuze can explore the workings of this intensive field in earnest. At the point of writing *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze claimed that the unconscious is structured like a language "on condition that the perpetual, invisible and silent displacement of linguistic sense is taken into account" (149-150). However, this all changes in *Anti-Oedipus*, when the silent displacement of sense by the esoteric word is jettisoned in favour of an analysis of the schizophrenic processes that operate via an a-signifying semiotics. Here, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the "fertile domain of a code of the unconscious" using Lacan's discovery of the *objet-petit-a*, but add the crucial qualification that unconscious semiotic chains "are called 'signifying chains' because they are made up of signs, *but these signs are not themselves signifying*" (2012, 340). Deleuze and Guattari

¹⁴ For more on the role of the unconscious, see Deleuze's psychoanalytic account of the three passive syntheses (2004a 120-144).

provide an account of how these unconscious chains function by introducing the concept of ‘desiring-production’ and its organisation by a series of ‘desiring-machines’. In the opening chapter of *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss unconscious psychic energy, stating that: “Everywhere *it* is machines—real ones, not figurative ones: machines driving other machines” (1). The unconscious is taken as nothing other than a multiplicity of interconnected desiring-machines.¹⁵ This new materialist and machinic conception of the unconscious leads to a complete revolution in the role of the analyst,¹⁶ because the machinic unconscious “poses no problem of meaning, solely problems of use,” and the question posed by desire is not “What does it mean?” but rather “*How does it work?*” (119). This shift in perspective is not only a move away from the traditional psychoanalytic method, but also a move past some of the impasses of Deleuze’s earlier work. In *Logic of Sense*, the primary order, experienced in the depths of schizophrenia, could only be understood as nonsensical, and thus beyond any direct analysis or interpretation. However, if the task of interpreting the unconscious is cast off, then another more central task remains, namely to determine how the processes of the primary order function.¹⁷ Much of *Anti-Oedipus* is given over to just this task. Here I will discuss two central aspects of Deleuze and Guattari’s answer to

¹⁵ Deleuze and Guattari are adamant here: “The desiring-machine is not a metaphor” (45).

¹⁶ This shift designates the main difference in the practice of schizoanalysis in relation to that of psychoanalysis and entails many terminological changes. Schizoanalysis “sets out to explore a transcendental unconscious, rather than a metaphysical one; an unconscious that is material rather than ideological; schizophrenic rather than Oedipal; nonfigurative rather than imaginary; real rather than symbolic; machinic rather than structural” (120).

¹⁷ Thus, the most important distinction for Deleuze and Guattari is no longer one that is internal to the linguistic structure, but one that gives rise to it. As they put it: “The true difference in nature is not between the Symbolic and the Imaginary, but between the real machinic (*machinique*) element, which constitutes desiring-production, and the structural whole of the Imaginary and the Symbolic, which merely forms a myth and its variants” (92).

this question that relate to the machinic nature of the unconscious. First, I will give an account of Deleuze and Guattari's conception of the three syntheses of the unconscious, which define the legitimate uses of desiring-machines, and show how they differ from the three syntheses given in *Logic of Sense*. Second, I will show how Deleuze and Guattari collapse the traditional distinction between mechanism and vitalism to develop the concept of desiring-machines. This will also allow me to show that the order of determination given in *Difference and Repetition* by Deleuze's four-part process of differentiation-individuation-dramatization-differenciation is altered in *Anti-Oedipus*, where desiring-machines, unlike spatio-temporal dynamisms, are no longer dominated by the virtual Idea.

In 'Machine and Structure', even while Guattari was first differentiating the two concepts in question, he was also careful to note that "a machine is inseparable from its structural articulations and, conversely, that each contingent structure is dominated... by a system of machines" (2015, 318). The theory of desiring-machines in *Anti-Oedipus* is consistent with this early intuition, and when Deleuze and Guattari describe the three syntheses of the unconscious that determine the operation of desiring-machines, these operations are inextricable from the structural articulations of the body that they serve to organize. In *Anti-Oedipus* there is a continuum between machine and structure, which is filled with the becoming of a body. Depending on the activities of the desiring-machines, bodies can tend towards one of two poles: becoming an organized and structured body that takes the form of an organism, or becoming a Body without Organs (BwO). Specifically, the desiring-machines operate according to three syntheses, called the connective synthesis of production, the disjunctive synthesis of recording, and the conjunctive synthesis of consumption-consummation. The first draws on Freud's notion of libidinal investment to describe the operation

by which desiring-machines connect to one another. It is the process by which desire, understood as the tendency inherent in intensive states, constantly reaches outside of itself. This connective synthesis guarantees that there is never just one machine, but always “machines being driven by other machines, with all the necessary couplings and connections” (1). According to the first synthesis, this series of connections is constant and additive, not just an “and”, but always “and...” “and then...” (5). It is in this first synthesis that the BwO is formed. Borrowing the term from Artaud, Deleuze and Guattari use the concept of the BwO to designate the unformed and unorganised state of matter, which desiring-machines must work against in the first synthesis to form connections (Young 2013, 51-55). The genesis of desiring-machines and the BwO are concurrent because they both rely on the tension produced in “the opposition of the process of production of the desiring-machines and the nonproductive stasis of the body without organs” (Deleuze and Guattari 2012, 10). The second synthesis of the unconscious is the disjunctive synthesis of recording. This synthesis describes the way in which desiring-machines must also detach themselves from one another in order to make new connections, ultimately interacting with the BwO “as so many points of disjunction, between which an entire network of new syntheses is now woven, marking the surface off into co-ordinates, like a grid” (13). However, the grid produced on the BwO, which allows for the recording of the process of desire, is not yet a structure in the normal sense of the word because the disjunctions between points are inclusive rather than exclusive. This means that the process of the second synthesis operates not by the binary of “either or”, but by the constant extension of an “either or...or...or.” (84).¹⁸ The third synthesis of the

¹⁸ Deleuze first describes the difference between inclusive and exclusive disjunctions in the ‘Twenty Fourth Series of the Communication of Events’ (Deleuze, 2004b, 194-201). This distinction is important in *Anti-Oedipus* where it marks the difference between the legitimate and the illegitimate use of the second synthesis. The first ever piece of

unconscious is that of conjunction or consumption-consummation. It produces a subject, who exists alongside the desiring-machines, and who experiences the intensities produced on the BwO. Deleuze and Guattari write that in the third synthesis, “the subject is produced as a mere residuum alongside the desiring-machines” (19). The common and retrospective appropriation of the processes of desiring-machines by the subject, who is produced only as an after-effect of the three syntheses, comes from what Deleuze and Guattari call the illegitimate use of the third synthesis.¹⁹

There are at least two key differences that should be highlighted here between the three syntheses of the unconscious given in *Anti-Oedipus* and the three syntheses of the production of sense given in *Logic of Sense*. First, the order of the three syntheses has been altered. In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze describes the production of the surface of sense, which separated the primary depths of bodies from the tertiary organization of language, via the three syntheses of connection, conjunction, and disjunction. In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze worked on the assumption that it was necessary for a certain

work that Deleuze and Guattari published together was a working extract from *Anti-Oedipus* titled ‘La Syntheses Disjonctive’, (Deleuze and Guattari 1971, 54-62).

¹⁹ Drawing on the transcendental method used by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Deleuze and Guattari aim to distinguish legitimate and illegitimate uses of the unconscious by recognizing the illusions to which the three syntheses of desiring-machines can give rise. Chief among these illusions is the retrospective ascription of a subject to the processes of desire. Specifically, the illegitimate use of the third synthesis follows from an illegitimate use of the second synthesis in the following way: while a legitimate and inclusive use of the disjunctive synthesis produces a schizophrenic subject, who experiences only intensive quantities (as delusions and hallucinations), an illegitimate and exclusive use of the disjunctive synthesis produces a neurotic subject who experiences desire as a relation between extended quantities (Deleuze and Guattari 2012, 79-83).

kind of subject to be produced in the second synthesis before the disjunction of signifiers could be possible, however in *Anti-Oedipus*, armed with a new conception of a-signifying semiotics, Deleuze and Guattari can explain the disjunction of recording on the BwO without reference to a subject of any kind. This is important for Deleuze and Guattari because while the Oedipus complex plays a central role in Deleuze's dynamic account of genesis in *Logic of Sense*, in *Anti-Oedipus* the complex is recognized as nothing other than a misapplication of the syntheses. Subsequently, the synthesis of conjunction is placed after, rather than before, the synthesis of disjunction. Second, while the three syntheses of sense in *Logic of Sense* were placed *between* the primary order of bodies and the tertiary structure of propositional language, in *Anti-Oedipus* the three syntheses operate in the depths of desiring-production. In *Logic of Sense* the primary order of bodies could not be given a semiotic articulation as it was pre-signifying, but in *Anti-Oedipus* it is possible for Deleuze and Guattari to claim that the three syntheses are located directly in the unconscious and material *real*. To put it simply, while the theory of signification available to Deleuze at the point of writing *Logic of Sense* only allowed him to give an account of the three syntheses of sense using Carroll's menagerie of esoteric words, at the point of writing *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari can draw on the functioning of a-signifying semiotics to locate the three syntheses directly within the schizophrenic order of language glimpsed in Artaud's use of the breath-word and the howl-word.

It is important to note here that Deleuze and Guattari's concept of 'machinic processes' is neither mechanistic nor vitalist, but splits the difference between these two traditional categories (Colebrook 2009, 1-33). Deleuze and Guattari define mechanistic theories as those that explain the real as a series of combinations and collisions of inert material elements, such as atoms, whereas

traditional vitalisms are defined by their assumption of a teleological force that runs through matter and orientates it. Thus, while mechanistic theories are capable of explaining how systems maintain themselves over time, they cannot explain how these systems arise, whereas theories of vitalism can explain the genesis of form, but rely on an otherwise consistent and inert matter. Deleuze and Guattari aim to overcome this distinction by recognizing the intensive nature of matter. While theories of mechanism and vitalism each take the extended nature of space and of time for granted, in *Anti-Oedipus* ‘matter’ is not something already distributed in space and made up of distinct units, instead it is nothing other than a field of intensities. Intensities always tend to cancel themselves out in the extensities that explicate them, but in so doing they drive the individuation and dramatization of what in *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze had called spatio-temporal dynamisms, which compose their own space and time as they unfold. Crucially then, desiring-machines do not operate within the structures of time and space, but produce these structural effects. The tendency of intensive matter that is always oriented outside of itself is what Deleuze and Guattari call desire, and it is the drive of this material desire that produces the actual relations of bodies in space and time. Deleuze and Guattari explain that their theory of desiring-machines “shatters the vitalist argument by calling into question the specific or personal unity of the organism, and the mechanist argument... by calling in question the structural unity of the machine” (2012, 313).²⁰ The pair add that once the structural unity of the machine has been undone, “a direct link is perceived between the machine and desire” (314). In ‘Machine and Structure’, Guattari first defined the machine using Deleuze’s category of repetition, in which what is repeated is never the same, but something different. This insistence is carried over into *Anti-Oedipus* via the fact that

²⁰ This line is given within a discussion of the work of Samuel Butler, who Deleuze and Guattari credit with first collapsing the distinction between mechanism and vitalism.

desiring-machines are said to have no structural consistency of their own; they do not function by simply maintaining a structure, but instead by continually breaking down.²¹ To put this another way, the driving force of desire is nothing other than that which continually differs from itself. One important effect of this intensive driving force, which distinguishes the theory of desiring-machines from both mechanism and vitalism, is that it is capable of incorporating a *history*. Vitalism traditionally requires a particular form of life, such as that of man, to orientate its development and is thus, in a certain sense, anti-historicist, while mechanistic theories traditionally assume that temporal moments are nothing other than reversible or exchangeable states of matter. In contrast to this, desiring-machines emerge historically because the bodies that they compose can only be understood via a historical analysis of the intensive relations that gave rise to them.

Conclusion:

With a clear picture of Deleuze and Guattari's machinic and a-signifying conception of the unconscious, it is now possible to see exactly how Deleuze departs from his pre-1969 work when he begins *Anti-Oedipus*. In *Difference and Repetition*, the individuation and dramatization of spatio-temporal dynamisms is dominated by, and given form by, the virtual Idea. The intensive realm does not operate of its own accord, but is understood as a kind of theatre that requires stage-direction from the virtual Ideas: "The world is an egg, but the egg itself is a theatre: a staged theatre in which the roles dominate the actors, the spaces dominate the roles and the Ideas dominate the spaces" (2004a, 269). This understanding of the depths of intensity as a theatre is replaced in *Anti-*

²¹ In separating machinic processes from mechanistic ones, Deleuze and Guattari write: "Desiring-machines, on the contrary, continually break down as they run, and in fact run only when they are not functioning properly" (2012, 33-34).

Oedipus by the model of the factory. The processes of desiring production operate in intensity, but require no stage-direction. The material unconscious is not understood as an intensive flow of matter which requires an external determination, but as a-signifying and coded. In the unconscious, “strictly speaking, there is no transmission of flows, but a communication of a code or an axiomatic, of a combinative apparatus informing the flows” (2012, 304). At the time of writing *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze is working from within a structuralist paradigm and must posit spatio-temporal dynamisms as the differentiator that can account for the relation between the virtual and the actual. However, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari are attentive to the machinic power of intensity, that is not dominated by the virtual Idea, but gives rise to it. For this reason, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari do not completely drop the language of the virtual, but relegate it to a product of desiring-machines. For example, while the Oedipus complex is virtual, it does not pre-exist and dominate the intensive and productive force of desire, but is produced by the way that desire is coded in the nuclear family (2012, 140).

Once we recognise the great influence of Guattari’s attempts in ‘Machine and Structure’ to separate out the productive and machinic capacities of Deleuze’s early work from its structuralist inclinations, it becomes apparent that the key difference between Deleuze’s work in *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* and his first collaboration with Guattari relies on the category of the *machine*. It is true, as Smith has already recognised, that the ‘primary depths’ remain effectively off-limits in Deleuze’s work prior to 1969 and then become unlocked and explored in his work post-1972, but it is the concept of the machine that provides the key for such a change. In *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze wrote that “[s]tructure is in fact a machine for the production of incorporeal sense” (82). In *Anti-Oedipus*, on the other hand, Deleuze and Guattari claim the

opposite for schizoanalysis, as here: “Everything hinges on the way in which the structure is elicited from the machines” (341). To ignore this step is to ignore much of the conceptual novelty of *Anti-Oedipus*, and potentially to restrict the political possibilities that the text makes available.

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