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Applied Schizoanalysis: Towards a Deleuzian Poetics

Jason Skeet

Independent researcher E-mail: skeetjag@gmail.com

Abstract

This article argues for the importance of Gilles Deleuze's work for contemporary literary studies, and specifically for poetics, an application of Deleuze's philosophy that has yet to be adequately explored. Deleuze's own method of reading is examined for its engagement with the problem of reading, an engagement that made possible what Deleuze terms, in his collaborative work with Félix Guattari, schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis is synonymous, this essay argues, with what can be thought of as Deleuzian poetics. Schizoanalysis is examined in detail and three central schizoanalytic questions are identified: these questions provide a stimulus and guide to staging encounters between Deleuze's work and contemporary poetry. Finally, comments on Deleuze and Guattari's brief reading of Allen Ginsberg's poem 'Kaddish' are offered as a demonstration of a schizoanalytic reading, that is, of a Deleuzian poetics.

Keywords: Deleuze, Guattari, schizoanalysis, poetics, contemporary poetry, Ginsberg

One of the distinctive features of the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze is an abiding interest in literature: Deleuze completed book-length studies on literary figures (Proust, Sacher-Masoch and Kafka), while in other works it is a particular writer that both inspires and propels the conceptual undertaking and, as a presence permeating throughout the work, raises the question as to the relation between philosophy and literature — one thinks here of the use made of Lewis Carroll in *Logic of Sense* and of Artaud and Beckett in *Anti-Oedipus*. In *A Thousand Plateaus* there are references to over seventy-five different writers, ¹ and in that book Deleuze and Guattari state that writing can construct a reality, that it 'constructs a real that is yet to come, a new type of reality'. ² Referring to T'ang era Chinese poetry, they explain how poets 'do not pursue resemblance' but 'make a world, or worlds':

The fish is like the Chinese poet: not imitative or structural, but cosmic. François Cheng shows that poets do not pursue resemblance, any more than they calculate 'geometric proportions'. They retain, extract only the essential lines and movements of nature; they proceed only by continued or superposed 'traits', or strokes. (*TP*, 280)

François Cheng's *Chinese Poetic Writing* is a study of how poetry (as well as painting and calligraphy) captures 'the essential lines, forms, and movements of nature'. These lines and movements are relations of forces that, as Cheng puts it,

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¹ Calculated by Ronald Bogue in his *Deleuze on Literature* (New York and London: Routledge, 2003), 1.

² Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. and Foreword by Brian Massumi (London: Athlone, 1988), 142; hereafter cited as *TP* followed by page number.

³ François Cheng, *Chinese Poetic Writing*, trans. Donald A. Riggs and Jerome P. Seaton (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), 13.

introduce 'the void into the language. The result is a language purified but free, denatured but sovereign, which the poet may manipulate to his own purposes.'4 The 'passive procedures' Cheng describes, mentioned by Deleuze and Guattari as a footnote in A Thousand Plateaus, do not use language as a denotative means of communication but rather as a tool for exploring connections that 'provokes the acts of signifying'. ⁵ The function of the poem is cosmic not mimetic, an activity of world-becoming, with the poet undertaking a practice that involves mapping 'even realms that are yet to come' (TP, 5). According to Cheng, this is a process of co-creation between writer and the world. A poem is a production carried out in collaboration with nature, a process of discovery in which the thresholds and limits, foldings and unfoldings of a production of subjectivity or 'subjectivation' are made possible. Reading is a participation in this production; it becomes the extension to the poem. To think of writing as co-production with nature can be linked to a key formulation of Deleuze's: the world 'does not exist outside of its expressions'. 8 For Deleuze, the world emits signs and is at the same time produced by these signs, so expression and causation happen in parallel in a relation of immanence with each other. Moreover, the real for Deleuze comprises actual and virtual realms; actual things and the virtual conditions that make their actualization possible. The virtual has this capacity since it is the set of singularities and their relations that makes the actual possible without ever coinciding with it. The actual and the virtual form a relation of reciprocal presupposition, so the movement between the virtual and the actual is an interactive process always underway and under construction. 9 It is precisely this concern with immanence and its relation to life (and by extension to literature, since Deleuze sees writing as co-extensive with life) that is the subject of one of the final texts Deleuze wrote: 'immanence and a life thus suppose one another. For immanence is pure only when it is not immanent to a prior subject or object, mind or matter, only when, neither innate nor acquired, it is always yet "in the making"; and "a

⁴ Cheng, *Chinese Poetic Writing*, 15. Cheng discusses the linkage between the Chinese system of writing and the ancient divinatory system called *pa-kua* in which 'the ideograms appear not as arbitrarily imposed marks, but as so many beings, endowed with will and with internal unity' (6). This echoes Deleuze and Guattari's description of art's affects and percepts as 'beings'. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy?*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchill (London and New York: Verso, 1994), 164; hereafter cited as *WP* followed by page number.

⁵ Cheng, *Chinese Poetic Writing*, 7.

⁶ In the context of Chinese poetry, this requires the notion of *wen* in order to be fully appreciated. Cheng explains that this term originally referred to 'the footprints of animals or the veins of wood and stone, the set of harmonious or rhythmic "strokes" by which nature signifies. It is in the image of these natural signs that the linguistic signs were created, and these are similarly called *wen*' (213).

⁷ Gilles Deleuze, *Foucault*, ed. and trans. Seán Hand (London: Athlone, 1999), 78; hereafter cited as *F* followed by page number. The term 'subjectivation' is adopted by Deleuze from Foucault's work.

⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (London: Athlone, 1993), 132.

⁹ Deleuze's conception of the relation between the actual and the virtual ensures a process that is never pre-determined. The actual does not resemble a 'perfect' virtual as in Plato. Further, the virtual must not be confused with the possible, as this would amount to seeing the real only from the perspective of the actual and as only the continuation of the actual. It is the virtual that is actualized since, as Deleuze points out in *Difference and Repetition*, 'what difference can there be between the existent and the non-existent if the non-existent is already possible?' See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (London: Continuum, 2004), 263; hereafter cited as *DR* followed by page number. See also Deleuze's short text 'The Actual and the Virtual', in Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (London: Continuum, 2006), 112-15; hereafter cited as *D* followed by page number.

life" is a potential or virtuality subsisting in just such a purely immanent plane'. ¹⁰ Significantly, it is a writer Deleuze turns to, in this case a scene from Dickens's *Our Mutual Friend*, for an example of how this power of immanence is grasped through art.

These connected ideas — of writing the real (rather than *re*-presenting it) and how literature accesses a power of immanence — are central to Deleuze's understanding of writing. However, while there has been, since the early to mid-1990s, a steadily increasing interest in Deleuze's ideas about literature, relatively little of this work has focused on poetry. ¹¹ Moreover, Deleuze's work has not exerted anything like the influence that Derrida, his contemporary, has had within the domain of literary criticism. The applications of Deleuze's work have tended towards either an analysis of Deleuze's own uses of literature in relation to the writers he favoured, or, if testing out Deleuze's ideas on writers he did not choose to consider, concentrate on narrative (novels and short stories). Yet the few comments that Deleuze does offer about poetry suggest that there is much that could be explored by bringing his philosophy into contact with poetry.

In what follows, I want to argue for the importance of Gilles Deleuze's work to contemporary poetics by offering an indication of the possibilities of Deleuzian readings of poetry, an application of Deleuze's philosophy that has yet to be adequately explored. I start out by examining Deleuze's own method of reading in terms of its engagement with the problem of reading, an engagement that made possible what Deleuze terms, in his collaborative work with Félix Guattari, schizoanalysis. Schizoanalysis is synonymous, I argue, with what can be thought of as Deleuzian poetics, and I discuss what schizoanalysis is and the key questions it can ask about poetry. Finally, I offer some comments on Deleuze and Guattari's brief reading of Allen Ginsberg's poem 'Kaddish' as a demonstration of a schizoanalytic reading, that is, of a Deleuzian poetics.

The Problem of Reading

Deleuze's work challenges us to think about the purposes, uses and effects of reading. As Julian Wolfreys argues, a shared concern across the so-called 'post-structuralist turn' in critical theory has been an 'insistent and noticeable return to the question of what it means to read, as part of the process of reading itself.' This is the context in which the problem of reading factors in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. Whilst this work seeks to propel further the political and social shifts of May '68, it is significant that this venture is accompanied by the idea of extracting the 'revolutionary force' from a literary text. If it was then possible to refer to a 'revolution' in literary theory as a

¹⁰ Gilles Deleuze, *Pure Immanence: Essays on a Life*, trans. Anne Boyman (New York: Zone Books, 2001), 13, emphasis in original.

¹¹ For an analysis of Deleuze's uses of literature, see Aidan Tynan, *Deleuze's Literary Clinic: Criticism and the Politics of Symptoms* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012).

¹² Julian Wolfreys, *Readings: Acts of Close Reading in Literary Theory* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000), xi.

¹³ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane, Preface by Michel Foucault (London: Continuum, 2004), 116; hereafter cited as *AO* followed by page number. Deleuze and Guattari support this perception of *Anti-Oedipus* as in part inspired by the event of May '68. Guattari, referring to *Anti-Oedipus*, stated: 'May 68 came as a shock to Gilles and me, as to so many others: we didn't know each other, but this book, now, is nevertheless a result of May' (Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 15; hereafter cited as *N* followed by page number.

result of which 'the words *reader* and *audience*, once relegated to the status of the unproblematic and obvious, have acceded to a starring role', as one critic was to put it by the end of the 1970s, ¹⁴ Deleuze and Guattari in fact offered an alternative (which has yet to be more widely taken up) to the reader-response criticism that emerged in this period. Reader-oriented approaches fail to account for the ways in which a text activates a reader in unforeseen ways. Readers do not read solely based on their membership of a particular interpretative community or the mechanisms of their psyches that predetermine interpretation. Deleuze and Guattari show us that reading can be both perpetually provisional and never overly determined: this, then, is an aspect of the 'productive use of the literary machine' that Deleuze and Guattari call for (*AO*, 116).

Yet Deleuze's work does not offer a hermeneutical system as such, although he is systematic in the way he reads. For example, at the outset of their book on Kafka, Deleuze and Guattari demarcate two opposing ways of approaching Kafka's work, a conflict that is in effect also a problem of reading. On one side, as Deleuze and Guattari term it, there is 'experimentation' with the text, whilst on the other side Deleuze and Guattari name their enemy as 'the Signifier and those attempts to interpret a work'. 15 Thus, to enter Kafka's writing is to cross the threshold of a 'burrow' whose 'principle of multiple entrances' (K, 3) makes possible a test of the text: entering, leaving, exploring Kafka's literary machine, uses which are all 'components of the machine itself: these are states of desire, free of all interpretation' (K, 7). The explorations of the Kafka 'burrow' do not reveal archetypes or interpretations transposable to another writer's work. Since 'only expression gives us the *method*' (K, 16, emphasis in original), so the components of Kafka's literary machine described by Deleuze and Guattari are unique to that machine, the text eliciting an 'articulation of a distinctive viewpoint on and through itself'. 17 Deleuze and Guattari's method therefore works at finding 'only where a rupturing and heterogeneous line appears' (K, 7), or in others words it does not conform to any imposed interpretative framework or confirm any form of fixed interpretation. A mapping of these heterogeneous lines in relation to other parts of the machine is a test or 'productive use' of the Kafka-machine, the text being conceived as a machine. According to Deleuze, there are

two ways of reading a book: you either see it as a box with something inside and start looking for what it signifies, and then if you're even more perverse or depraved you set off after signifiers. And you treat the next book like a book contained in the first or containing it. And you annotate it and interpret and question, and write a book about the book, and so on and on. Or there's the other way: you see the book as a little non-signifying machine, and the only question is "Does it work, and how does it work?" (*N*, 7-8)

¹⁴ Susan R. Suleiman, 'Introduction: Varieties of Audience-Oriented Criticism', in *The Reader in the Text: Essays on Audience and Interpretation*, ed. Susan Rubin Suleiman and Inge Crosman (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1980), 3; emphasis in original.

¹⁵ Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan, Foreword by Réda Bensmaïa (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986), 3; hereafter cited as *K* followed by page number.

¹⁶ For an analysis of *Kafka* and how it engages with both the problem of reading and the problem of writing, see my 'On the Flyleaves of Modernism: Deleuze and Guattari's *Kafka*', in *Understanding Deleuze*, *Understanding Modernism*, ed. Paul Ardoin, S. E. Gontarski, and Laci Mattison (New York and London: Bloomsbury, 2014), 61-74.

¹⁷ John Hughes, *Lines of Flight: Reading Deleuze With Hardy, Gissing, Conrad, Woolf* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 1997), 50.

Deleuze's delineation here marks a crucial distinction. Hermeneutics, the drive to interpret, is contrasted with a second way to read which is 'intensive', plugging into the singular functioning of the text. It is also significant that the single question that Deleuze purports to conclude with ('the only question') is in fact doubled. He asks us to ask of the text 'Does it work, *and* how does it work?' (my emphasis). Both the 'and' and the 'how' enable something to happen in terms of reading: the 'and' for Deleuze is expressive of the effort of thought — 'AND, AND, AND — stammering' (D, 26) — so that the doubling of the question suggests the possibility of even more questions, an ongoing construction in response to the problem of writing. To use 'how' then indicates the need for reading to be conceived as an event, and as the repetition (or doubling) of the problem that has given rise to the writing.

Deleuze describes his method of reading as the extraction of a problem from a work, the construction of series, the necessary dramatization of thought and the location of a relation with the outside: 'staging means that the written text is going to be illuminated by other values, non-textual values'. 18 In this theatre of philosophy a form of collage is adopted, encompassing the use of series with small variations, so that it even becomes possible to discover revolutionary ideas within the most conservative of philosophers: 'precisely, by virtue of those criteria of staging or collage we just discussed, it seems admissible to extract from a philosophy considered conservative as a whole those singularities which are not really singularities' (DI, 144), to produce a commentary of 'maximal modification appropriate to a double' (DR, xx). This 'monstrous' reading, seizing upon those 'shifting, slipping, dislocations, and hidden emissions' (N, 6), is an unearthing of the problems that motivated that philosopher. Deleuze's working over of Plato in Difference and Repetition is exemplary in this regard: Plato becomes transformed into a Janus-like figure. Two Platos confront us, one looking forward to a philosophy of 'multiplicities that must be traversed by questions such as how? how much? in which case?', and the other facing an opposite direction that 'favors a simplicity of essence or an ipseity of the Idea' (DI, 116, emphasis in the original). The Platonic system of transcendent Ideas of Forms is destroyed by 'denying the primacy of original over copy, of model over image; glorifying the reign of simulacra and reflections' (DR, 66), a formulation that is extracted by Deleuze from within Plato's thought itself. The commentary on Plato that Deleuze constructs therefore has the effect of 'slow motion, a congelation or immobilization of the text' (DR, xx) not only of the text it comments on but also of the text it is a part of: a dynamic comparable to that of a Möbius strip so that the past and the present texts flow into and out of one another. If, then, we are to apply Deleuze's method to reading his work, we must be prepared to work against him in order to construct our own double of his thought.

A Deleuzian poetics is staged as an encounter between Deleuze's philosophy and poetry, so that divergence is as important as convergence. Likewise, Deleuze refers to a 'pick-up' method, which he contrasts with Burroughs's cut-up technique. Rather than a cutting or folding into something else, the 'pick-up' works through multiplication and 'the double theft, the a-parallel evolution' (*D*, 14). Constantin Boundas describes how we then need to read Deleuze

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¹⁸ Gilles Deleuze, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-1974*, ed. David Lapoujade, trans. Michael Taormina (New York: Semiotext(e), 2004), 144; hereafter cited as *DI* followed by page number.

the way he reads others: we must read him according to the series he creates, observing their ways of converging and of becoming compossible, or — and this amounts to the same thing for our strategy of reading — according to the series on their way to diverging and beginning to resonate. ¹⁹

Deleuze's discussion of Foucault's work points to what he argues is a shared serial method: 'to construct a series around a single point and to seek out other series which might prolong this point in different directions on the level of other points' (F, 19). Significantly, for Deleuze this serial method can be compared with poetry, so that Foucault's The Archaeology of Knowledge exemplifies this method and has to be appreciated as an 'archaeology-poem' (F, 18) and as 'the point where philosophy is necessarily poetry' (F, 17). When reading Deleuze through the series he produces, as Boundas puts it, it is then necessary to demonstrate how these series 'would have run along their own lines of flight, without permitting the construction of any planes of consistency among them' 20 were it not for the concepts that Deleuze puts in play to establish convergences and divergences across the series. A serial method implies a logic of incompletion, of series still under construction. The connecting of Deleuze and poetry can thus function as an encounter between series along the lines described by Deleuze as 'simply the outline of a becoming' (D, 2) or 'crossings of lines, points of encounter in the middle' (D, 21). What this connection between Deleuze and poetry does *not* offer is a distinctive theory of literary analysis, although his work renews many of the concerns found in contemporary literary theory, doing so by drawing on a range of 'ontological, epistemological, aesthetic, political and ethical resources'. 21 We can also be certain that any notion of a school of criticism based on his work would have been abhorrent to Deleuze: 'schools are of the arborescent type. And a school is already terrible: there is always a pope, manifestos, representatives, declarations of avantgardism, tribunals, excommunications, impudent political volte-faces, etc' (D, 20). As Deleuze and Guattari insist and repeatedly demonstrate in A Thousand Plateaus, criticism can no longer be carried out on the basis of the application of a particular methodology but must become something else. In the realm of critical theory ('especially in the realm of theory' (TP, 24)) this confronts us with a further challenge: how to avoid imitating Deleuze and carry out a critical project that constructs its own 'precarious and pragmatic framework' (TP, 24). Yet this framework must keep in mind what Garin Dowd in his study of Beckett's writing in relation to Deleuze and Guattari's philosophy reminds us, that 'it is also literature which, in a paradoxical fashion, at once attracts and repels such operations.'22 In other words, how does a discourse attempting to explore a text simultaneously work with and against the text? The solution that Deleuze and Guattari offer to this problem is their concept of schizoanalysis.

Deleuzian Poetics = Schizoanalysis

According to Deleuze, schizoanalysis is 'militant libidino-economic, libidino-political analysis' (N, 19). Emerging in Deleuze's work as part of the critique of psychoanalysis

¹⁹ Constantin V. Boundas, 'Translator's Introduction' in Gilles Deleuze, *Empiricism and Subjectivity*, trans. Constantin V. Boundas (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 13.

²⁰ Boundas, 14.

²¹ Hughes, *Lines of Flight*, 85.

²² Garin Dowd, *Abstract Machines: Samuel Beckett and Philosophy After Deleuze and Guattari* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007), 47-8.

that was a focus of his first collaborative work with Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, schizoanalysis affirms the political exigencies posed by the unconscious as well as the need for identifying multiple connections between theory and practice. This attention to connection making that schizoanalysis calls for includes as well the construction of relays between reading and writing. Reading, according to Deleuze and Guattari in *Anti-Oedipus*, is 'never a scholarly exercise in search of what is signified, still less a highly textual exercise in search of a signifier' (116). To understand this statement and what it can mean for Deleuzian poetics, we need to first examine the concept of desire central to *Anti-Oedipus*.

Anti-Oedipus describes desire as a process of production that envelops everything. Desire is a construction of the real that operates through the on-going relations between 'partial objects' or 'desiring-machines' rather than as the terminus point of a subject's attained (or not) satisfaction. This conception of desire as production has implications for how we then configure the relationship between writer and reader, as Constantin Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski put it, 'replacing the traditional (allegedly neutral) writer/reader coupling in philosophy with writers and readers in an "intensive mode", and who act as "transformer" and "processors" of intellectual energies and extratextual experiences'. 23 This suggests a movement in the direction of poetics as the exploration of what a text (such as a poem) does and, moreover, what can be done with it through and beyond its reading. In Anti-Oedipus's opening pages, a well-known example is given of the 'fragmentary and fragmented' nature of desire: two desiring-machines, the mother's breast and the infant's mouth, form a coupling so that a flow-producing machine connects with another machine that breaks the flow in order to draw this flow off (AO, 5-6). Desire thus conceived as an assembling practice locates the subject within a set of relations, not as the locus of desire or as a subject who desires its object of desire, thereby offering a conception of desire very different from Lacan's formulation of desire as lack.²⁴ As Deleuze then states in *Negotiations*, the conception of desire as a process of production has a political significance since we need to recognize the function and effects of the unconscious: 'there can't be any revolution that serves the interests of oppressed classes until desire itself takes on a revolutionary orientation that actually brings into play unconscious formations' (19) — examining how poetry can be involved in bringing 'into play unconscious formations', and in what ways these can then be said to have a 'revolutionary orientation', is a task for Deleuzian poetics.

Deleuze and Guattari identify three syntheses of the unconscious constituting desire as process, incorporating the production, distribution and consumption of desire within the same cyclical process, each stage imbricated in the next with each stage then falling 'back on' the previous stage (AO, 17). A first stage is the connective synthesis, working along the lines of a binary machine forming a coupling between two desiring-machines so as to produce the flow, passage or circuiting of desire between them, breaking the flow so as to produce other flows and giving rise to the possibility for other connections. (These flows can be liquid such as the example of milk in the breast-mouth

²³ Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski, 'Introduction', in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas and Dorothea Olkowski (New York and London: Routledge, 1994), 11.

²⁴ In a footnote in *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze and Guattari state that Lacan's 'admirable theory of desire' has in fact two aspects: a conception of desire as lack but also within it a conception of desire as production (28). This indicates the complex relation between *Anti-Oedipus* and Lacan's work in the sense that Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge Lacan as a key influence but also seek to critique certain aspects of his work.

coupling; they can also include flows of solids and gas, flows of energy, information and money, and, at a macroscopic level, human flows of commuters, immigration and labour.) The connective synthesis is given the linguistic marker 'and then' (AO, 5). Moreover, the law of production is that 'every machine is a machine of a machine' (AO, 39). Deleuze and Guattari insist that this process of production or the production of production ensures that there can be no separation between the producer and the product, that they are in fact one and the same 'producer-product' (AO, 5).

This 'producing/product identity' (AO, 8) gives rise to a third term within the production of desire, a point when this process stops entirely, so that production becomes coupled with anti-production. Anti-production is associated with the full body without organs (BwO) and with the death instinct. However, death for Deleuze and Guattari is conceived as a threshold: 'the experience of death is the most common of occurrences in the unconscious, precisely because it occurs in life and for life, in every passage or becoming, in every intensity as passage or becoming' (AO, 363). The BwO is thus defined in terms of 'the unproductive, the sterile, the unengendered, the unconsumable' (AO, 9). 25 This attachment between production and anti-production or the full BwO is a characteristic of the connective synthesis. The BwO functions as a 'recording' surface on which is inscribed or coded the 'system of possible permutations between differences that always amount to the same as they shift and slide about' (AO, 13). The desiring-machines are attached to this surface 'as so many points of disjunction', the co-ordinates on a grid that are distributed according to a relation of disjunctive synthesis between them. Delirium is characteristic of this process of inscription or recording.

Distribution produces a dynamic of attraction versus repulsion: the BwO may repulse the desiring-machines (resulting in what Deleuze and Guattari refer to as primary repression) or a force of attraction arises whereby the BwO attracts to it the desiring-machines, making the machines appear to be 'miraculated' or caused by the BwO (AO, 11). That is, the BwO has the tendency to 'fall back on' itself, to give itself the appearance of being a ground or origin for the production of desire. The relations between the co-ordinates inscribed or coded on the smooth surface of the BwO may be inclusive, given the linguistic marker 'either...or...or' and associated with a schizo pole. Or they may become relations of exclusive disjunction, an 'either/or' relation as a decisive, fixed choice and which is then associated with a paranoiac pole (AO, 13).

This process also operates at a wider social level, so that Deleuze and Guattari draw a distinction between the molecular level of desiring production and the molar level of what they term 'social production', comprising 'technical, social machines', on the basis that social production is desiring production 'under determinate conditions' (AO, 31). In fact, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that the distinction they draw is 'merely phenomenological' (AO, 11), a difference of 'regime' since in fact 'there is only desire and the social, and nothing else' (AO, 31). From the perspective of social production, then, the full BwO is the *socius* (in our contemporary context this is capitalism), which gives itself the appearance of standing outside production, of being the ground for all production, extracting surplus value by falling back on production in order to

²⁵ Steven Shaviro points out that the BwO is a solution to a philosophical problem. It enables Deleuze and Guattari to 'avoid both the idealized notion of a plenum with total continuity, in which nothing could happen because nothing would be missing, and the Hegelian logic of negativity and lack, in which absence and contradiction would be the motors of change'. See Steven Shaviro, *Without Criteria: Kant, Whitehead, Deleuze, and Aesthetics* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2009), 125.

appropriate it (the BwO is thus the 'pivot' between the molecular and the molar dimensions (AO, 309)). ²⁶ In A Thousand Plateaus, Deleuze and Guattari describe two kinds of assemblage, which they refer to as the molar and the molecular, indicating a difference of type rather than scale. There are molar, tree-structured assemblages of social class, gender and nations, 'multiplicities that are extensive, divisible' (TP, 33). There are molecular, rhizomatic assemblages 'composed of particles that do not divide without changing in nature, and distances that do not vary without entering another multiplicity and that constantly construct and dismantle themselves in the course of their communications' (TP, 33).

The principle of attraction and repulsion between the BwO and desiring-machines then gives rise to a third synthesis that seeks to reconcile the two forces, the conjunctive synthesis or production of consumption, identified as 'so it's...' and through which the subject is produced (AO, 18). This synthesis is described by Deleuze and Guattari as a 'celibate machine': this machine is the affect produced in the difference between opposing forces, between a force of attraction and a force of repulsion, affects giving rise to a series of intensive states so that the subject 'consumes and consummates each of the states through which it passes' (AO, 44). The BwO is the zero point in relation to which each intensive state can be measured according to its intensive quantity. Thus, desire as the construction of the real, with reality as the end product of a process involving the three passive syntheses of the unconscious, is a production always operating through on-going relations between the partial objects and flows that constitute desire's production. ²⁷ Desire is never the terminus point of a subject's attained (or not) satisfaction; rather the subject is produced in the 'I feel' of the particular intensive state of a celibate machine, celibate since it produces only itself or a certain intensive quantity. Deleuze and Guattari insist that the subject is produced alongside the desiring-machines as the result of the third synthesis, which mobilizes a 'residual energy' as if the subject is something 'left over' from the process of desire's production (AO, 45). Moreover, different subjects are produced on the basis of the two opposing poles: paranoia in which exclusive disjunctions dominate on the surface of the BwO so that a fixed subject is produced, whereas inclusive disjunction is associated with a schizo pole producing a fluid subject.

Based on the conception of desire that they describe, Deleuze and Guattari put forward four theses of schizoanalysis. First thesis: 'every investment is social, and in any case bears upon a sociohistorical field' (AO, 375), so that psychic investment is always constituted and determined in relation to a social and historical context. Deleuze and Guattari note that it is only under capitalism that desiring production emerges to function independently and without over-determination or 'overcoding' by the socius. Capitalism is unique in that it decodes all flows which it then seeks to order or control

²⁶ As Simon O'Sullivan explains, 'recording' on the surface of the BwO replaces a concept of ideology. See *On the Production of Subjectivity: Five Diagrams of the Finite-Infinite Relation* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 170. The challenge, then, as Ian Buchanan puts it, is to avoid the illusion of origin or ultimate cause and see the BwO in its function 'as pure presupposition, that is, the thought or idea which thought cannot grasp' or, in other words, a plane of immanence — Ian Buchanan, 'Deleuze and the Internet', *Australian Humanities Review* 43 (2007): 5.

²⁷ These three syntheses form a triad modifying Marx's concepts of production, exchange, distribution and consumption (collapsing exchange and distribution into the second synthesis of recording). The triad of desiring-machine, BwO and subject replaces the Freudian model of id, ego and superego. This combined usage of Marx and Freud is then reflected in Deleuze's definition of schizoanalysis as 'libidino-economic, libidino-political analysis' (*N*, 19).

by producing axioms that function to engineer the real, manufacturing the subjects that capitalism requires in order to sustain itself. 28 Second thesis: 'within the social investments we will distinguish the unconscious libidinal investment of group or desire, and the preconscious investment of class or interest' (AO, 377). The preconscious dimension is related to the second synthesis of the unconscious and Deleuze and Guattari point out that this disjunctive synthesis can be made either inclusive or exclusive. In the case of an investment in social class, the synthesis is entirely exclusive, an investment in a subject position producing itself by what it excludes. The unconscious investment, by contrast, directs us to the first connective synthesis of desire, the emphasis on 'group' indicating that desire is primarily a process of connecting multiple part objects: an individual as a group, groups of people as part objects, an entire social field composed of multiple and machinic parts. Third thesis: the 'primacy of the libidinal investments of the social field over the familial investment' (AO, 390). In opposition to the insular family triangulation (mummy, daddy, me) that psychoanalysis erects, schizoanalysis insists on explaining the social and historical factors producing psychic structures. This also then requires recognizing how psychodynamic factors need to be incorporated into an account of social organization and cultural change. Fourth thesis: 'the distinction between two poles of social libidinal investment: the paranoiac, reactionary, and fascisizing pole, and the schizoid revolutionary pole' (AO, 401). The social field — an individual's investments and involvements in that field — constantly produces and is in turn produced by these two forms of investment.

What, then, are the implications of Deleuze and Guattari's schizoanalytic project for poetics? There are, in my view, three key questions for Deleuzian poetics, or in other words, for schizoanalysis of poetry. First, the conception of desire as a construction process gives art a crucial role. Deleuze and Guattari refer to art's 'authentic modernity' as a process of experimentation that 'fulfils itself' (AO, 405); this suggests an affinity between Deleuzian poetics and a current of radical modernism in poetry that builds on formal experimentation (a current that continues into the present). This emphasis on experimentation and process must then be used to ask how (and to what extent) poetry undertakes experimentation. This assessment must be made in relation to a social and historical context in the sense that any experiment always has its own spatial and temporal specificity.

A second question would concern the metonymic relation between text and context. As Eugene Holland puts it, 'history is [...] always related metonymically to a text in two *different* ways: both as context (producing effects) and as its referent (produced in response)'. ²⁹ The text is an 'apparatus of register' capable of recording the

²⁸ Deleuze and Guattari discuss three types of historical forms of social organization, with each form associated with a synthesis of the unconscious: the primitive or savage, in which the earth takes the role of the BwO, is the form of social organization associated with the productive synthesis; the barbarian or imperial, in which the despot functions as the BwO, is the form of social organization associated with the second connective synthesis of inscription; capitalism, in which capital plays the role of the 'recording' surface on which social production is organized, is the form of social organization associated with the conjunctive synthesis of consumption.

²⁹ Eugene W. Holland, *Baudelaire and Schizoanalysis* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 262; emphasis in original. In Holland's study the metonymic relation between text and context is constructed on the basis that Baudelaire's work can be read through 'the absent cause' (invoking a concept from Althusser) so that historical developments not represented in the text account for relations of difference within the text. From this perspective Holland's approach is not dissimilar to Edward Said's

effects of social processes. Yet, as Charles Bernstein writes, poets are also 'seismographs of the psychic realities that are not seen or heard in less sensitive media; poems chart realities that otherwise go unregistered'. Whilst Bernstein's conception encompasses the notion of registration deployed by Holland, it also moves beyond since for Bernstein the registration process can be a concern with how poetry makes audible 'dimensions of the real that cannot be heard'. Schizoanalysis likewise asks how poems imagine new realities and how poetry is a disruption of conventions that govern dominant contexts. The poem is not merely a registration of historical events happening outside the text; rather, the poem is part of these events and an intervention into these events. It is this awareness of the metonymic relationship between text and context that can then underpin a self-reflexivity that must be a feature of Deleuzian poetics.

A third question for a schizoanalysis of poetry and for Deleuzian poetics concerns the relation between poetry and capitalism. With the formation of the BwO in the second synthesis of desire's production, the forces and effects of memory become involved. Signs of connection are inscribed on the surface of the BwO by desiringmachines in a 'system of possible permutations between differences that always amount to the same' (AO, 13). Deleuze and Guattari describe these signs as a code or 'jargon'; they form multiple non-linear chains of 'polyvocal' signs that do not signify, that connect on the basis of inclusive disjunctions in order to engineer and produce connective syntheses between desiring-machines (AO, 41).³² In pre-capitalist societies, overcoding quantifies and qualifies the flows of desire (by, for example, ascribing an order of importance, ranking the elements of a code), so that, at the level of social production, the socius appropriates code. However, according to Deleuze and Guattari, capitalism tasks itself with decoding the flows of desire: this decoding constitutes capitalism's 'form and its function' (AO, 36). Capitalism falls back on the flows, unlike previous forms of social organization it extracts a surplus value of flux since it is incapable of overcoding the social field with a code of its own, so it can only decode by substituting for codes that overcode desire 'an axiomatic of abstract quantities in the form of money' (AO, 153). Indeed, capitalist decoding is made possible by the inability of one set of codes to maintain rule over social relations. Anything is permissible under capitalism so long as it makes money (this is not to say that the power of capital to dissolve social relations is only what matters to capital, since retaining certain divisions — for example, the overcodings of class, gender, and race — can still be highly useful to maintaining its dynamics). This process of capitalist decoding requires the establishment of an axiomatics that engineer the real: as Deleuze and Guattari put it, capitalism 'axiomatizes with one hand what it decodes with the other' (AO, 267). These axioms are self-propagating and self-causing; they have a power to repeat in different

well-known reading of Mansfield Park, which shows how what remains unsaid in the text shapes the narrative.

³⁰ Charles Bernstein, *A Poetics* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1992), 213-4. This metonymic relationship between text and context is drawn attention to in Bernstein's work and this is an aspect of what makes his poetry schizoanalytical. Bernstein has often been described as a Language poet, a label applied to a generation of North American poets who came to prominence in the 1970s. The appellation was derived from the magazine L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E that Bernstein edited together with Bruce Andrews between 1978 and 1981.

³¹ Bernstein, A Poetics, 184.

³² According to Holland, Deleuze and Guattari take Lacan's idea of deferred action to its logical conclusion: 'actual engagement with social life shapes the psyche by determining which early memory-traces are endowed "after the fact" with psychic effectivity and "meaning" for the adult' (8).

times and places, and they can be added to indefinitely so that anything can become subjected to an axiom. Under capitalist axiomatics, the free market (and profit) is presented as the ultimate ground for all social relations: moreover, since there are no fixed values or meanings for capitalist axiomatics, resources (including people) are treated as essentially fungible.

For Deleuze and Guattari, capitalist social production is always caught between two poles. On one side, it moves in a schizophrenic direction by decoding all flows; on the other side, a paranoiac counter tendency attempts to control the processes put into play. Thus, whilst capitalism approaches the schizo limit, it must also pull back, so Deleuze and Guattari formulate the revolutionary task as 'to go still further, that is, in the movement of the market, of decoding and deterritorialization' (*AO*, 260). ³³ Schizophrenia is the process of desire's production at a molecular level, while Deleuze adds that the schizo is in a state of continuous study or re-writing of the world, the schizo 'evolves in things and in words', ³⁴ so on this basis schizoanalysis seeks to explore how poetry can enact certain deterritorializations, how it involves itself in the schizo state of evolution, pushing towards this schizo limit, revealing as well dangers or pitfalls.

Each of these questions can be related in turn to the negative and positive tasks given to schizoanalysis in *Anti-Oedipus*. The negative or critical aspect of schizoanalysis is defined as the destruction of any overcoding structure, whether that is psychoanalysis or literary theory. Furthermore, this critical undertaking targets paranoia wherever it operates. The primary positive aspect of schizoanalysis is how to take the schizo tendency and push it to its limit. The negative and positive combine into a therapeutic or clinical goal: to release molecular desire from the restrictions of molar representations, to make molar organization sustain and support molecular desiring production. This takes us then into the problem of politics as defined by Deleuze: how to organize without reproducing the State form or, in other words, how to subordinate the molar to the molecular. It is a productive and immanent process that is at the core of the schizoanalytic project and Deleuzian poetics: poetry as a particular site for implementing and exploring the negative and positive tasks of schizoanalysis.

Deleuzian poetics is schizoanalysis; it is speculative in nature, emphasizing the importance of problematization. This emphasis on problematics requires that we take seriously Deleuze's insistence that theory is a 'tool box' and that, moreover, a theory has to be used, and in doing so, it is a form of practice (*DI*, 208). Certain concepts will be more relevant than others for certain tasks. Yet these uses of Deleuzian concepts will never amount to a definitive framework for a literary criticism conducted in Deleuze's name. 'We have no system, only lines and movements', Deleuze and Guattari insist (*TP*, 350), so any critical apparatus constructed from lines and movements has to remain precarious and necessarily contingent. Reading poetry using Deleuze must be thought of as the staging of an encounter; the reading has the status of a case study and is never a proposal for a new school of literary theory.

³³ This demand issued by Deleuze and Guattari has influenced a so-called 'accelerationist' conception in contemporary critical theory.

³⁴ Gilles Deleuze, *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 17.

Poetry as Schizoanalysis

In Anti-Oedipus, Deleuze and Guattari discuss poetry's capacity to register and map the unconscious as it oscillates between the two kinds of psychic investment, formations that are profoundly different yet always implicated in one another so that they can be thought of as divergent poles: the paranoiac and fascist pole, devoted to the maintenance of a central authority, the attendant belief that such authority is a requirement of all human societies, and a consequent identification with a dominant race or class, relatable as well to the formation of molar bureaucratic machines; the 'schizorevolutionary' pole that functions in inverse manner to the first, identifying with the marginal and inferior, with destabilizing forces and strategies that are able to forge 'lines of escape' (AO, 305). In contrast to molar social aggregates, this pole engenders molecular associations, tiny schizo machines that operate on the basis of their own affirmation. Thus, the two poles of psychic investment are not a distinction between the masses on the one hand and the individual on the other, since Deleuze and Guattari insist that 'every investment is collective, every fantasy is a group fantasy and in this sense a position of reality' (AO, 308). What is at stake are two different forms of social organization: the molar that functions in terms of 'aggregates and persons' in contrast to the molecular that operates by way of 'partial objects and flows' (AO, 309).

Poetry can be a form of schizoanalysis that shows these 'oscillations of the unconscious' (AO, 306), the movements between these two investments and their differing expressions. Deleuze and Guattari provide a selection of lines from Ginsberg's 'Kaddish' as an example of how poetry operates between a 'paranoiac castration' on one side and the 'matrical fissure of schizophrenia' (AO, 306) on the other, the schizorevolutionary as capable of puncturing the social matrix. Ginsberg's poem is a narrative of his mother's struggle with mental illness and paranoid delusions, and her eventual death inside a psychiatric hospital. The poem's title refers to a Jewish prayer for mourning, and this is Ginsberg's endeavour to mourn his mother:

farewell with your sagging belly with your fear of Hitler with your mouth of bad short stories with your fingers of rotten mandolins with your arms of fat Paterson porches with your belly of strikes and smokestacks with your chin of Trotsky and the Spanish War with your voice singing for the decaying overbroken workers with your nose of bad lay with your nose of the smell of the pickles of Newark with your eyes with your eyes of Russia with your eyes of no money with your eyes of false China with your eyes of Aunt Elanor with your eyes of starving India with your eyes pissing in the park

with your eyes of America taking a fall³⁵

These lines move between the particularities of the personal or familial and a broader social, historical context. The poem shows how the 'dividing line' between molar and molecular investments crosses over and moves between these two poles, and how these crossings are then expressed in Ginsberg's mother's mental states, a veritable 'recreating history in delirium' (AO, 307). 'Why these words, paranoia and schizophrenia, which are like talking birds and girls' first names?', Deleuze and Guattari ask (AO, 307). In the final section of the poem (which is not quoted by Deleuze and Guattari), Ginsberg's presence at the cemetery where his mother Naomi is buried disturbs some birds:

Caw caw caw crows shriek in the white sun over grave stones in Long Island
Lord Lord Naomi underneath this grass my halflife and my own as hers³⁶

Schizoanalysis is concerned with how the poem is a machine that both registers the effects of a social field and at the same time intervenes in this field as a transformative force. According to Deleuze and Guattari, any assemblage is liable to be altered by the impact of unformed materials of expression passing through it: the function of language as pure sound is therefore significant. In Ginsberg's poem, prayerlike phonological effects created by the various syntactical repetitions, particularly anaphora, culminate in a repetitive 'Caw caw caw' of crows in a closing section. This bird talk is repeated across the section, in alternating lines each followed by an address to a 'Lord' as in the call and response of a litany. Ginsberg refers to this as the 'most dissociated' section of the poem.³⁷ This final act of distancing from the subject of the poem (the mother) is generated by bird-sound that is outside human language, with huge jumps in time across Ginsberg's concluding memories that are then placed between this sounding, together with pleas to a deity that is given the same status as the crows, transforming a personal tragedy of a woman's mental breakdown amid the events of the twentieth-century into a meditation on death as ultimate limit-point: Ginsberg writing to his mother now 'dark before your Father, before us all—before the world—'.³⁸

Deleuze and Guattari state that psychoanalysis presents itself with a false problem of infinite regression: everything is traced back to childhood, the child is made primary, yet at the same time the child is sick in relation to its parents, who must therefore also be sick in relation to their parents, and so on. In fact, it is the social field that is primary and into which the individual is immersed, the psyche formed in relation to the social, which Deleuze and Guattari vehemently oppose to the reductive enforcements of psychoanalysis that seeks to ascertain causes of psychic formation always from within the family, to construct a linear narrative as a 'form of continuity' so that 'its deployment in discourse is a way of legitimating established forms of social order, as

³⁵ Allen Ginsberg, *Kaddish and Other Poems 1958-1960*, 50th Anniversary Edition (San Francisco: City Light Books, 2010), 34-5.

³⁶ Ginsberg, *Kaddish*, 36.

³⁷ Ginsberg, 129, emphasis in original.

³⁸ Ginsberg, 9.

well as the very idea of such established forms'. The family is in fact cut across and pulled in different directions by the two forms of psychic investment, and according to Deleuze and Guattari literature can become a method of breaking away from the reductionisms and centralizations of paranoiac investments, because certain writers know 'how to leave, to scramble the codes, to cause flows to circulate, to traverse the desert of the body without organs. They overcome a limit, they shatter a wall, the capitalist barrier' (AO, 144).

Deleuzian poetics is also, then, a poetics of immanence. According to Deleuze and Guattari, the plane of immanence 'is the formless, unlimited absolute, neither surface nor volume but always fractal' (WP, 36). This plane is 'the image of thought, the image thought gives itself of what it means to think, to make use of thought, to find one's bearings in thought' (WP, 37). The plane of immanence is populated with the concepts philosophy creates, but it is distinguished from the plane of composition that art constructs (although the two planes have a comparable function). According to Deleuze and Guattari, art thinks by way of affects and percepts: 'percepts are no longer perceptions; they are independent of a state of those who experience them. Affects are no longer feelings or affections; they go beyond the strength of those who undergo them' (WP, 164). Yet art and philosophy can 'pass into each other in a becoming that sweeps them both up in an intensity which co-determines them [...] It is as if, between them, not only alliances but also branchings and substitutions take place [...] This means that the concept as such can be concept of the affect, just as the affect can be the affect of the concept' (WP, 66). The two planes can fuse so that each becomes a part of the other, and a poet can construct a plane of immanence for thought but which they fill with poetic 'entities' rather than the conceptual personae of philosophy (WP, 66-7). It is precisely this becoming in-between philosophy and poetry that Deleuzian poetics investigates, the site of a productive encounter, so that poetry and poetics can use concepts inspired by Deleuze's philosophy, attending to and extending these concepts. Moreover, the directive to extract from a text its revolutionary force could become the spur to construct a suitable critical response to what Jerome McGann terms the 'emergency signal' of contemporary poetry; as I have attempted to show with the schizoanalytic reading of Ginsberg's poem, Deleuze's work can inspire an alternative to the enduring mainstay of literary criticism, those hermeneutical approaches that impose pre-determined frameworks of interpretation, as if the text were a machine whose interior mechanisms are a puzzle needing a solution rather than a machinery to be plugged into and extended. 40 To focus on poetry and poetics with Deleuze's work as resource is to enter into a veritable *dramatization* of thought, so that the staging for each drama can be raised by asking the questions I have suggested schizoanalysis can pose, in the form of 'who? how much? how? where? when?' (DI, 94), such is the undertaking of a Deleuzian poetics, which functions as extension to the poem.

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³⁹ Jerome McGann, 'Contemporary Poetry, Alternate Routes', Critical Inquiry 13.3 (1987): 630.

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Schizoanaliză aplicată. Spre o poetică deleuziană

Rezumat

Acest articol argumentează importanța operei lui Gilles Deleuze pentru studiile literare contemporane și, în mod particular, pentru poetică, o aplicare a filosofiei deleuziene care trebuie încă explorată. Metoda de lectură a filosofiei lui Deleuze este examinată prin angajamentul acestuia în problema lecturii, un angajament care a făcut posibil ceea ce Deleuze denumește, în opera lui scrisă în colaborare cu Félix Guattari, "schizoanaliză". Schizoanaliza este sinonimă, după cum articolul demonstrează, cu ceea ce poate fi numit poetică deleuziană. Articolul examinează în detaliu schizoanaliza și identifică trei întrebări schizoanalitice centrale. Aceste întrebări oferă un stimul și un ghid de a pune în practică întâlnirea dintre opera lui Deleuze și poezia contemporană. În final, se prezintă câteva comentarii la scurta lectură a lui Deleuze și Guattari asupra poemului lui Allen Ginsberg 'Kaddish' ca o demonstrație a lecturii schizoanalitice, adică a poeticii deleuziene.