

Theoretical update study on the conceptual renewal of Gilles Deleuze and Sigmund Freud: An exploration of their conceptions on psychoanalysis and repetition

Estudio de actualización teórica sobre la renovación conceptual de Gilles Deleuze y Sigmund Freud: una exploración a sus concepciones sobre el psicoanálisis y la repetición

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the conceptions of psychoanalysis and repetition in Gilles Deleuze and Sigmund Freud. The objective is to understand how desire functions as a force that generates social realities rather than mere fantasies. The methodology consists of a theoretical and subjective discourse analysis of primary texts by both authors. Among the results, it is noted that Deleuze appropriates Freudian categories, challenging the autonomy of his concepts. The research concludes that such conceptual tension demonstrates the impossibility of absolute theoretical purity, contributing to ongoing debates in the social sciences and humanities regarding the limits of thought

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and knowledge construction. The paper also presents an interpretative framework outlining the convergence and divergence between both thinkers.

KEYWORDS

Psychoanalysis, desire, unconscious, construction of reality, theory of knowledge

RESUMEN

Este estudio explora la concepción del psicoanálisis y la repetición en Gilles Deleuze y Sigmund Freud. El objetivo es comprender cómo el deseo actúa como fuerza generadora de realidades sociales y no solo de fantasías. La metodología se basa en el análisis del discurso de textos escritos por ambos autores, desde una revisión teórica crítica y subjetiva. Entre los resultados, se observa que Deleuze se apropia de categorías freudianas y cuestiona la autonomía de sus conceptos. La investigación concluye que esta tensión conceptual evidencia la imposibilidad de una pureza teórica absoluta, lo que abre un debate vigente en las ciencias sociales y humanidades sobre los límites del pensamiento y la construcción del conocimiento. El trabajo también propone un marco interpretativo sobre los puntos de convergencia y divergencia entre ambos pensadores.

PALABRAS CLAVE

Psicoanálisis, deseo, inconsciente, construcción de la realidad, teoría del conocimiento

Introduction

The empirical dimension of this study is centered on the discourse analysis of documents written and published by Gilles Deleuze and Sigmund Freud. As for the design of this article, it corresponds to a theoretical review or update of primary studies on a rigorous but purely subjective research topic. The purpose is to explore Deleuze's conception of psychoanalysis and the notion of repetition found in both Deleuze and Freud. Within the central arguments it is proposed that desire does not generate fantasies, but rather gives rise to the construction of realities. From the above, the philosophical and theoretical dimensions allow us to respond to the objective of understanding the driving forces of the unconscious in the creation of desires that produce particular realities and

societies (Barria-Asenjo et al., 2023a, 2024b) The research examines the ideas presented by both authors, pointing out among the open debates that Deleuze appropriates Freudian concepts, which complicates any attempt to delimit their conceptions, returning from here to the debate of the Social Sciences and Humanities regarding the impossibility of the purity of ideas. The third part of the paper contains an explanatory and interpretative framework focused on the relationship between both authors, highlighting their divergences and debates.

So, to begin with, we must specify that Deleuze and Guattari argue that psychoanalysis fulfills an oppressive social function, directly challenging Freud's conception of desire. *Anti-Oedipus* vehemently rejects the reduction of desire to mere representation within psychoanalysis. Deleuze asserts that desire is not tied to representation because the unconscious, in his view, cannot represent anything. Instead, its sole function is to generate and produce desire. For Deleuze, the object or the Other—regardless of its ontological composition—functions as an «entry and exit» point for the subject's desire, serving as a passage through which the subject navigates historical events or what Deleuze calls «becomings» (Day and Lau, 2010) These becomings are grounded in the sociocultural fields of semiotic and physical materials, which provide the possibilities and potentialities for such investments and self-transformations:

The great Discovery of psychoanalysis was desire, and unconscious. Nevertheless, once Oedipus entered the picture, this discovery was soon buried beneath a new brand of idealism: a classical theater was substituted for the unconscious as a factory; representation was substituted for the units of production of the unconscious; and an unconscious that was capable of nothing but expressing itself—in myth, tragedy, dreams—was substituted for the productive unconscious (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, p. 34).

In this context, desire becomes estranged or detached from the constructions of «law» and «guilt.» Psychoanalysis posits that desire compels us to seek objects in an attempt to alleviate an inherent fault that can never be fully satisfied. According to Freud, repression (*Verdrängung*) is a key defense mechanism of the unconscious mind. It involves the unconscious blocking or suppressing of unacceptable desires, thoughts, or memories into the unconscious mind to avoid the anxiety or guilt they would cause in the conscious mind (Somers-Hall, 2017).

To further investigate the intersection of Deleuze's and Freud's theories of desire and repression, this study employed—as previously noted—a qualitative research design, using an interpretive approach to explore the nuances of both philosophers' contributions to psychoanalysis. The

research will be guided by a theoretical framework derived from Deleuze's critique of Freudian psychoanalysis, in particular his reinterpretation of repression and desire, thus involving for purposes of debates and contrasts, a comparative analysis of secondary literature that addressed the relationship between their theories (Flick, 2018).

In order to capture the multifaceted nature of desire and its effects on the formation of reality, the study will use a combination of content analysis and thematic coding. Key concepts such as «becomings», «productive unconscious,» and «social coding» will be examined in relation to the role of repression in shaping both individual and collective realities. This will involve identifying patterns of desire that reflect the ways in which social structures and historical events influence personal and collective formations of reality (Yin, 2017, Barria-Asenjo, 2021, 2024).

In this context, Gilles Deleuze critiqued and reinterpreted the Freudian notion of repression from a different philosophical perspective. For Deleuze, repression is not primarily an individual, intra-psychic process, but rather a social process of organizing and coding flows of desire according to dominant social frameworks. Deleuze counters this notion, deeming it a source of profound sadness, and proposes an alternative perspective. For instance, when we express a «desire to love,» according to Deleuze, we aren't indicating a lack of opportunity to love; rather, we affirm the existence of a positive and productive force propelling us towards love. In this framework, desire does not imply deficiency; it lacks abruptness but embodies an affirmative strength (Troha, 2017).

Contrary to misconceptions, Deleuze's ideas on the flows of desire do not lead to a hedonistic philosophy; instead, they contribute to the conceptualization of desire as a process aimed at deferring pleasure in pursuit of a fulfillment derived from a continual intensification. For example, the medieval tradition of courtly love rejected the immediate pleasure of sex, yet this did not signify a denial of desire (Bisso, 2013). The ascetic practices functioned as conditions for desire rather than prohibitions, shaping desire as a dynamic process seeking a fullness achieved through the perpetual amplification of intensity (Leon, 2020).

The *Anti-Oedipus* contends that desire is not a generator of fantasies but a creator of actualities. The crucial question lies in identifying the mechanism by which the unconscious, functioning as a factory, generates desires that bring forth one reality instead of another. This is a crucial question because it gets to the heart of how our very realities are shaped and produced according to Deleuze and Guattari's radical rethinking of desire. Their view challenges the traditional psychoanalytic notion that

desire merely produces fantasies or representations. Instead, they argue desire is a productive force that actively constructs the very worlds we inhabit (Troha, 2017).

This occurrence is intricately tied to the organization of desire production, unique to each society. Different social and political arrangements have distinctive «desiring-machines» that channel desires in specific directions, actualizing particular realities over others. It can be argued that Deleuze, much like Foucault (Colombo, 2020) stands as a prominent figure in the discourse critiquing psychoanalysis and offering a more affirmative, liberatory understanding of desire's productive capabilities (De la Peña, 2008; Sartor, 2018).

In their influential work, Deleuze and Guattari declared, «Oedipus informs us: if you don't follow the lines of differentiation daddy-mommy-me, and the exclusive alternatives that delineate them, you will fall into the black night of the undifferentiated» (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, p. 78). The imperative «Configured or die» stands as the only valid and endorsed slogan within Freudian psychoanalysis, which, according to the authors, serves as an accomplice to capitalism, particularly in the context of imbuing incest with a particular color and displacing the revolutionary, non-Oedipal desire—the so-called «true» desire (Leopoldo, 2017).

Deleuze and Guattari posit that the family, within this framework, assumes the role of an agent delegated by repressive social production. Its task is to displace desiring production, presenting it as merely the mother's desire, effectively rendering it as 'nothing' in the societal context (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972). This perspective challenges traditional psychoanalytic views by situating the family not as the primary source of psychological development, but as a conduit for broader societal forces. The family, in their view, becomes a mechanism for channeling and controlling desire, transforming the potentially revolutionary force of desiring-production into a domesticated, Oedipal form. As they argue, «Oedipus is a means of integration into the group» (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, p. 103). This integration, however, comes at the cost of suppressing the true nature of desire. By reducing all desire to familial dynamics, psychoanalysis, according to Deleuze and Guattari, inadvertently serves the interests of capitalist society by containing and limiting the transformative potential of desire. They contend that «the familial determinations become the application of the social axiomatic» (Deleuze and Guattari, 1972, p. 264), suggesting that the family structure is not a natural given, but a construct that serves to reinforce existing social and economic arrangements (Leopoldo, 2017).

Certainly, *The Anti-Oedipus* represents an endeavor to articulate a political philosophy wherein psychoanalysis holds a privileged position in its trajectory. It is noteworthy that, before his collaboration with Guattari, Deleuze was inclined toward a non-structuralist, baroque interpretation of Lacan, demonstrating a deep respect for the progenitor of conceptual innovation (Bisso, 2013). Deleuze's statement, «it was not me who made Guattari leave psychoanalysis, it was he who pushed me away,» underscores the dynamic nature of their relationship (Deleuze, 1995). Early in his work, akin to Foucault, Deleuze not only draws inspiration from psychoanalysis but also integrates it strategically into his philosophical framework. This alignment persists until 1972 when the definitive critique begins to solidify, marking a turning point in his engagement with psychoanalytic ideas (Deleuze, 1995).

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze's most scholarly work, Freud plays a crucial role, particularly in shaping the concept of repetition¹, as will be elaborated point by point later.

Deleuze's interpretation of Freud, notably focusing on *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* (1920), elucidates a significant perspective: «It does not repeat because there is repression, and there is repression because it repeats» (Deleuze, 1994, p. 105). From this vantage point, repetition² is not conceptualized as emanating from a fixed, original, or immutable object subsequently lost, challenging the notion of any primordial objects. Therefore, repetition, in Deleuzian terms, does not hark back to an origin rooted in a foundational substructure but rather affirms the non-existence of the origin itself.

In this context, repetition is neither absent nor negative, as it doesn't involve the mere reproduction of a relationship that is fundamentally lost. Yet, paradoxically, both absence and excess converge and diverge within the established series. There is no repetition of a primordial term because the initial term has already been influenced by repetition, even our childhood affection towards the mother replicates other adult affections

1 There are two types of repetitions related to trauma: The first is the overwhelming repetition of traumatic elements that the patient cannot understand or process, trapping them in a cycle of reliving the trauma. The second is the therapeutic repetition of the repressed narrative, which allows the patient to work through and integrate the traumatic experience in a healthy manner.

2 Deleuze and Guattari criticize Freud's concept of repression, which they see as part of a broader critique of psychoanalysis. While Freud views repression as an unconscious defense mechanism that excludes unacceptable desires from awareness, Deleuze and Guattari see it as a social and political process that restricts the free flow of desire. They argue that desire is a productive force, not a lack, and repression occurs through social institutions and power dynamics, not just within the individual psyche.

toward different individuals. Every seemingly immediate experience is, in essence, a form of repetition (Sartor, 2018). The absence of an original to repeat is underscored by the fact that repetition itself establishes a disguise—a concept Freud might acknowledge as a distinctive interpretation of his research. Up to this point, Lacan and Deleuze can share an appreciation for Freud and his explorations (de Sutter, 2017). However, Lacan³ parts ways with Deleuze concerning the death drive, intricately tied to the concept of repetition. In Deleuze's perspective, this notion gradually dissipates, and repetition assumes the form of a «vital impetus,» resembling an energetic concept assimilated to an unevenness of forces that enable the various moments of life (Troha, 2017). This perspective ignores the fact that up to the constitutive moment of the mirror stage, the psyche does not operate at all on lack and absence. On the contrary. Do note that even Deleuze and Guattari, throughout *Anti-Oedipus*, make the distinctions between Lacan and his followers. They credit Lacan with the understanding that desire is not based on lack, nor is repetition compulsion, as articulated in the «Beyond.» In *The Logic of Sense*—Deleuze continues his psychoanalytic exploration, evident from the title itself, a deliberate nod to Lacan's seminar, *The Logic of Phantasy, 1966-1967*. In a similar vein, Deleuze delves into what he terms «logical paradoxes,» one of them even acknowledged as «Lacan's paradox,» along with improbable intellectual unions reminiscent of Lacan's provocative pairings such as Kant with Sade. Deleuze extends this irreverence, forging unlikely connections of his own, notably pairing Melanie Klein with Lewis Carroll, Freud with the Stoics, and Klein with Artaud. This approach aligns with Lacan's own method, which involves forging unconventional links between disparate thinkers and concepts to illuminate new perspectives within psychoanalysis (Bisso, 2013).

The audacious nature of these unconventional associations, following the Lacanian style, aligns with Deleuze's significant objective: to mount a counterattack against the prevailing academic authorities of his time. These authorities included prominent figures in philosophy, psychoanalysis, and literary theory, such as Jean-Paul Sartre, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, and Claude Lévi-Strauss in philosophy; Jacques Lacan, Melanie Klein, and Sigmund Freud in psychoanalysis; and Roland Barthes and Julia Kristeva in literary theory. Deleuze sought to challenge and subvert the

3 Lacan considers repetition a crucial concept in psychoanalysis that extends beyond the simple repetition of actions or events. It involves an unconscious urge to repeat specific patterns, experiences, or relationships, even if they are negative or traumatic. Lacan views repetition as a means for the unconscious to express itself, as individuals unknowingly try to relive or recreate certain scenarios in a bid to understand and control them.

dominant paradigms and methodologies of these thinkers by offering alternative approaches and perspectives. He sought to initiate what he described as the challenge to one of the last generations «murdered by the history of philosophy» (Deleuze, 1995, p. 5). It is crucial to bear in mind that the author of *The Anti-Oedipus*, in orchestrating this offensive against the revered pantheon of great authors, what he termed his «philosophical Oedipus,» strategically employed the aid of philosophers situated at the periphery of tradition and, notably, psychoanalysis. These unconventional alliances and invitations, including that extended to Melanie Klein, despite her contentious relationship with Lacan, form integral components of Deleuze's arsenal in his pursuit to subvert the entrenched Platonism (Bisso, 2013).

Deleuze displays a captivating interest in the dramatic narrative of terror articulated by Melanie Klein⁴ when she introduces her theory of the «paranoid-schizoid position» as the foundational stage in the constitution of subjectivity. Klein envisages an inception marked by fire, an abyss, followed by the fortuitous reconciliation inherent in the manic-depressive position. Deleuze's acumen lies in discerning the profound implications of the paranoid-schizoid position, characterized by an aggressive courtship with objects that are aggressively emptied, torn asunder, and fragments of sustenance transmuted into poison. Deleuze integrated Melanie Klein's ideas, especially the concept of partial objects, into his schizoanalytic project, which he elaborated with Félix Guattari in works like *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus*. For Deleuze, Klein's notion of partial objects was crucial as it disrupted the notion of unified and stable identities, instead highlighting the potential for productive flows of becoming and multiplicity against rigid subjectivities. In contrast to Lacanian psychoanalysis, which often emphasizes lack and absence, Deleuze viewed Klein's focus on partial objects as emphasizing positivity, production, and desiring-machines (Leopoldo, 2017). This integration of Klein's ideas into his work reflects Deleuze's broader intention to challenge and reconceptualize established psychoanalytic frameworks. This stance depicts an interior perpetually threatened by external forces and vice versa, delving into an unfathomable depth that ultimately leads him to contemplate multiplicity without unity—a theme later crucial for French philosophers such as Alain Badiou.

4 According to Klein, the paranoid-schizoid position constitutes the infant's first attempt to dominate his death drive and precedes the depressive position. Failure to attempt to leave the paranoid-schizoid position (that is, to reach the depressive position) is responsible for many disorders, including obsessive ones.

In Deleuzian analysis, the schizoid position (with the term «paranoid» gradually fading) reveals the concept of the «body without organs»—an organism devoid of distinct parts that has renounced any impulse toward unification. The schizoid positions, as Deleuze perceives them, are characterized by unbridled passion and action, void of identifiable individuals but featuring fragmented bodies without organs. The responsibility now rests on philosophy to explore these uncharted territories. It is evident that Deleuze's engagement with Melanie Klein, coupled with Artaud in their encounter with philosophy, becomes a seminal reference that later blossoms into one of the central themes in *The Anti-Oedipus*. This theme revolves around the celebration of schizophrenia and the «flows of sound,» described as primal, non-signifying forces that defy linguistic structure and representation. These emanate from the body without organs, setting the stage for the transference of these flows into the realm of language.

Deleuze's conception of desire, stemming from the schizoid position, leads to a spatiality free from constraints, emphasizing interconnectedness in an impersonal manner. This transcends Lacanian distinctions between the phantasm and the drive, subject, and self. In contrast to Lacan's framework, Deleuze envisions desire as not constrained by any positively defined impossibility, instead participating in a novel linguistic hypothesis. *The Anti-Oedipus* calls for a paradigm shift towards a linguistics of flows, marked by the absence of potentiality. This emergent linguistic orientation is exemplified by the text itself, with its distinctive and proliferating style. The crucial difference between Deleuze and Lacan lies in their respective approaches to desire: while Deleuze sees it as a force of connectivity and creation, Lacan emphasizes its entanglement with the symbolic order and the constraints of language.

Hence, we arrive at the political philosophy expounded in *The Anti-Oedipus*. In the initial phase, the need to overturn Platonis⁵ accorded psychoanalysis a significant role; however, post-May 68, psychoanalysis metamorphosed into the adversary requiring deposition. It's noteworthy to emphasize that in texts of this nature, exemplified by *The Anti-Oedipus*

5 The problem Deleuze saw with Platonism was its emphasis on the transcendental nature of Forms, which led to a denigration of the physical world and a devaluation of individual experiences and differences. This hierarchical view, according to Deleuze, stifled creativity and innovation by prescribing fixed forms and essences to things.

In relation to repetition, Deleuze saw Platonism as advocating a return to the same, where the aim is to replicate the perfect Forms in the physical world. Deleuze, on the other hand, argued for a concept of repetition that is not based on the return to an original model but rather on difference and becoming. He believed that true repetition is not the replication of a fixed form but the creation of new possibilities and variations.

and certain works of Foucault, psychoanalysis appears to wield an immense influence, seemingly capable of infiltrating every conceivable space. This pervasive presence, though, may eventually be recognized as a localized quirk of French culture—a somewhat ironic effect. Deleuze and Foucault envisioned an absolute ascendancy of psychoanalysis precisely at a juncture when it was facing marginalization by emerging chemical-therapeutic interventions and novel strategies within the academic realm.

Why did Deleuze express his irritation at the use of the term «pleasure» in Foucault's discourse, while simultaneously acknowledging Foucault's aversion to the term «desire» in his own work? This mutual distaste likely stems from both terms carrying an ineliminable residue of the transformative operation they endeavored to undertake in relation to psychoanalysis.

However, it is crucial to underscore the significance of certain perspectives found in *The Anti-Oedipus*. Firstly, the exploration of the relationship between madness and theory arises, particularly regarding the emergence of theoretical moments and the invention of concepts. Secondly, it is essential to recognize that conceptualizing the unconscious from the schizoid perspective doesn't signify a rejection of the unconscious but rather a critical examination of its neurotic tradition. This aligns with the later Lacanian approach, wherein the paradigm of subjectivity is intimately linked to madness. In its broader context, *The Anti-Oedipus* connects with a philosophical tradition that compels us to confront the inevitable question: What are we sick of? This inquiry, extending from Nietzsche to Jünger, Heidegger, and Foucault, has yielded varied answers, marking a lineage of thought engaged in probing the nature of our ailments. Critiquing modern society's emphasis on reason and rationality, Deleuze and Guattari reject the idea that madness is a deviation from reason, seeing it as a productive force. They challenge us to reconsider our understanding of madness and its potential for creativity and change.

The significance of schizoanalysis in the therapeutic process is not solely based on its dominant role, but rather on the requirement for a «Collective Assemblage of Enunciation.» Deleuze's reevaluation of the death drive may have been a step towards constructing a subject for collective enunciation that was left unfinished by the events of May 68. Deleuze and Guattari introduce concepts such as «revolutionary libidinal cathexis» and «collective assemblage of enunciation,» with schizoanalysis finding its ideal application in group settings. It is important to note that these concepts are not solely theoretical but have practical applications in the therapeutic process. As Deleuze and Guattari argue, «the group is the therapeutic agent, and the analyst is merely a facilitator of the group process».

Therefore, the presence of a collective assemblage of enunciation is crucial for the success of schizoanalysis in group therapy.

This subject of enunciation becomes instrumental in organizing a social field of desire wherein the singular schizophrenic, resistant to reduction under a collective enunciation, represents an individual who has attempted something and failed. The clinical schizophrenic, in avoiding the revolutionary process, highlights the necessity for this collective enunciative subject. In essence, *The Anti-Oedipus* outlines a program for schizophrenic psychoanalysis, or even a rescue mission for Lacan from the inadequacies of his followers, as an endeavor to construct a new subject of enunciation—a collective agent of enunciation.

The antinomies and tensions that we previously alluded to, existing between the revelation of the unconscious and the aspirations for emancipation, are now obliterated. The collective agent of enunciation possesses a clear understanding of what must be undertaken, giving rise to the imperative exhortation: «Make rhizomes, not roots, never plant! Do not sow, grow offshoots, don't be one or multiple, be multiplicities! Run lines, never plot a point» (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p, 24).

Echoing this sentiment, Foucault initiates all his statements in the introduction to non-fascist life (prologue to *The Anti-Oedipus*) with the formula: «Make...», «Abandon...», «Do not believe...», and so forth. It's intriguing that those who rigorously emphasized the despotic nature of the signifier would readily surrender to imperatives, rendering their effects inconceivable.

Nevertheless, this concise commentary on *The Anti-Oedipus*, which merits more thorough exploration, cannot be concluded without delving into the final work of Deleuze and Guattari: *What is Philosophy?* These two thinkers, who fervently hoped that the notion of «desiring machines» would not be misconstrued as a mere metaphor, now advocate for a philosophy that maintains a privileged relationship with neurobiology. Acknowledging their newfound inspiration from brain microbiology, they question whether this is merely a metaphor. The rhizomatic concept, initially aimed at dismantling the assumed «familiarity» of psychoanalysis, eventually finds its reference in the intricacies of the brain. They assert that novel modes of thought are emerging through the creation of new neural pathways.

Beyond the potential metaphorical and poetic attributes that lend the brain a philosophical dignity, it may not be entirely surprising, after expelling impossibility from *The Anti-Oedipus*, that they ultimately seek an image of thought that crystallizes within the brain. Even if this were

considered a metaphor, it certainly does not align with the approach taken to render psychoanalysis obsolete.

The concept of repetition in Deleuze

In one of his seminal works, *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze endeavors to conclude what he terms representative thought, characterized by two pivotal perspectives: remission or representation and the predominance of the notion of energy. Representation, according to Deleuze, involves both the character of submission to presence (re-present) and the generation of a duplicate world that emerges as a surrogate for the preceding one. Within Deleuze's exploration, an age-old question is scrutinized: Why is there difference, and not merely repetition or mimetic copying? In essence, this inquiry prompts us to contemplate the existence of freedom of creation in the world rather than mere subjugation to representation.

Deleuze's project extends beyond the mere generation of knowledge; it aims to affirm difference by emancipating it from the confines imposed by representation, thereby transforming thought into a liberating activity (Leon, 2019). From the standpoint of representation, repetition can only be elucidated in a negative manner; it serves as a relative limitation to our representation of the concept, hindering access to the multiplicity of things it can represent. Repetition, as Deleuze contends, is «the difference without concept» (Deleuze, 1995, p. 71), rendering it unrepresentable within the constraints of traditional representational thought.

In *The Sophist*, Plato draws a conclusion that distinguishes the philosopher from the sophist. The philosopher, as delineated by Plato, is one who engages in discourse about the original, the paradigm, to which the copy must adhere faithfully embodying the idea of representation. In contrast, the sophist delves into the realm of simulacra, exploring copies of ideas that are deemed imperfect reflections. Simulacra introduce a disruption to the traditional notions of copy and model because, in a series of progressively diverse copies, the distinction between what constitutes the copy and what serves as the model becomes increasingly nonsensical. Deleuze encapsulates this notion by stating, «That simulacra provide the means of challenging both the notion of the copy and that of the model? The model collapses into difference» (Deleuze, 1994, p. 128).

According to Plato, essence is defined by the form of real Identity (the same understood as *auto Kath' Haut*). This culminates in the overarching principle that, fundamentally, there exists an affinity or filiation—perhaps more aptly described as affiliation—of thought with the true. In essence,

this represents a good nature and a good desire, ultimately grounded in the form of analogy in the Good (Deleuze, 1997, p, 142).

The Platonic tradition champions a philosophy of representation, postulating the existence of a transcendent realm where models and ideas reside. It asserts that within this realm, there exist copies that faithfully reflect the essence of the model, as well as simulacra—entities attempting to reflect the essence of the model but differing from it. To borrow Deleuze's words, what is repeated is inherently different. Every event, often perceived as a repetition of a prior occurrence due to our ingrained habits, brings forth the unprecedented. Repetition does not entail the identical; rather, it involves the difference. Each instance of repetition embodies a singularity, much like the uniqueness and irreplaceability of each twin compared to their sibling (Leon, 2020).

There exists a notable similarity between the concept of repetition and the concept of phantasy, as elucidated in «Logic of the Sense.» Phantasy, in this context, is conceived as a specter formed by real events that refer to a virtual event, belonging to the pure past. This spectral presence is intricately linked to the repetition of events, serving as the connecting thread between them. Both difference and repetition, according to Deleuze, find identification with the simulacrum, the theater, and the mask. In his words,

We have in mind the theatrical space, the emptiness of that space, and the manner in which it is filled and determined by the signs and masks through which the actor plays a role which plays other roles; we think of how repetition is woven from one distinctive point to another, including the differences within itself (Deleuze, 1997, p. 10).

This quote underscores a fundamental aspect for comprehending the nature of repetition—the temporal dimension inherent in it. Furthermore, Deleuze emphasizes, «Time is constituted only in the original synthesis which operates on the repetition of instants» (Deleuze, 1997, p. 70). This synthesis is subjective but occurs within a passive subject, predating memory, and reflection. Within this passive synthesis of time, repetition manifests itself, forming the basis for its possible representation. As discussed earlier, the intrinsic nature of repetition renders its in-itself unthinkable and unrepresentable, as it unravels in the very act of being done.

The three classical dimensions of time—past, present, and future—provide a framework for analyzing repetition through distinct lenses: the present through habit or custom, the past through memory, and the future through the concept of eternal return. Time, according to Deleuze, is constituted by synthesis. The first of these syntheses is the passive

synthesis of the imagination, wherein the contraction of instants occurs, giving rise to the formation of habits. This synthesis shapes the passing present and materializes in the realm of imagination (León, 2020). As previously discussed, it is a passive synthesis that begets larval subjects or partial selves, acting as venues for passive synthesis. The repetition of the present manifests as a material repetition, akin to a succession of current elements where differences fail to surface.

Deleuze further delves into the temporal dimensions, noting,

The past is then no longer the immediate past of retention but the reflexive past of representation, of reflected and reproduced particularity. Correlatively, the future also ceases to be the immediate future of anticipation in order to become the reflexive future of prediction, the reflected generality of the understanding (Deleuze, 1997, p. 71).

This insight encapsulates the transformation of past and future within the framework of representation, highlighting the reflexive nature of their roles in shaping our understanding of time.

The passive synthesis of memory constitutes the pure past, transmuting both the ancient present and the present into elements of the past. Deleuze draws upon Bergson's concept, positing that each present encapsulates the complete past with the utmost concentration. The pure past, however, doesn't align with the ancient present; instead, it is composed of virtual objects that preexist their own present. As Deleuze articulates, «The transcendental passive synthesis bears upon this pure past from the triple point of view of contemporaneity, coexistence, and pre-existence» (Deleuze, 1994, p. 82). The pure past, being sub-representative and nominal, can only be accessed through reminiscence. If the repetition corresponding to the first passive synthesis was material, the repetition associated with the second pertains to the coexisting layers of the pure past. Here, repetition involves virtual objects or simulacra, not real objects, as the coexistence of different levels in the pure past is equally virtual (León, 2020).

In the ultimate synthesis of time, the active self imposes itself upon the real. Kant, in his exploration, revealed time as a pure form that imposes itself on the determination of a subject. If the first synthesis influences the foundation of time, and the second affects its foundation, the third synthesis transcends them both, ensuring order and the ultimate purpose of time. In this third synthesis, repetition must liberate itself from both habit and memory, as in both, the difference remains subservient to the similar. It becomes imperative for repetition to embody «the difference itself.» As Deleuze puts it,

The synthesis of time here constitutes a future which affirms at once both the unconditioned character of the product in relation to the conditions of its production, and the independence of the work in relation to its author or actor. In all three syntheses, present, past, and future are revealed as Repetition, but in very different modes (Deleuze, 1994, p. 94).

Within this third synthesis, the eternal return emerges as the essence of repetition. What returns is the new, purified and selectively chosen. It embodies the unconditioned, the pure difference. Deleuze describes the eternal return as entailing the dissolution of the self, the death of God. This circularity of the eternal return lacks a center; it is essentially eccentric and off-center. What propels its return and circulation is the very essence of difference (León, 2020).

The concept of repetition in Freud's psychoanalysis

Freud extensively explores the concept of repetition in his seminal work, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. In this text, Freud outlines how psychoanalysis evolves from a discipline focused on interpretation to a therapeutic method that requires patients to reconstruct their pasts for better therapeutic outcomes. Despite this evolution, the effort to bring the unconscious into consciousness often meets resistance. Patients frequently «repress» crucial moments from their past that hold significant symbolic meaning. Instead of remembering these moments as fragments of the past, patients are compelled to «repeat as a current experience what is repressed,» rather than recollecting it as a historical fragment (Freud, 1961, p. 13).

Freud posits death as the primary object of repetition, asserting its dominion over the past and embodying entropic decay. He argues that every desire seeks equilibrium with death's inexorable energy (Bartlett et al., 2014). Conversely, life perpetually struggles to maintain stability against external disruptions. According to Freud, the binding of the subject involves intense suffering, where individuals project a simulated sense of death onto objects in the absence of their own demise. Each binding ultimately seeks release, encapsulating Freud's concept of the death drive.

Freud emphasizes that «The repressed instinct never ceases to strive for complete satisfaction, which would consist in the repetition of a primary experience of satisfaction» (Freud, 1961, p. 36). It becomes evident that while memory involves a conscious return to the past, whether it was initially conscious or unconscious, repetition manifests as a compulsive action primarily explained by repression and the transference that occurs

during treatment. Despite its compulsive nature, this phenomenon, for the patient, constitutes a distinctive form of memory.

Repetition unveils the notion that the ailment should not be approached merely as a historical fact but as a contemporary phenomenon. Both repression and transference play pivotal roles in comprehending the intricacies of repetition. The patient engages in repeating experiences to give rise

to a new and remarkable fact, namely that the compulsion to repeat also recalls from the past experiences which include no possibility of pleasure, and which can never, even long ago, have brought satisfaction even to instinctual impulses which have since been repressed (Freud, 1961, p. 14).

In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud grapples with the perplexing question of why patients exhibit an obsession with repetition, even though it compels them to relive unpleasant situations, contrary to the pleasure principle (Bartlett et al., 2014). This contemplation leads him to transcendental considerations, exploring what lies beyond this principle and the conditions that make it possible. Freud discovers that the obsession with repetition in the realm of the psyche indeed extends beyond the pleasure principle. Despite repetition serving as a disguise for repression and, in this sense, involving a concession to the pleasure principle, the obsession with repetition appears to be «more primitive, more elementary, and more instinctual» (Freud, 1961, p. 17). Freud delves into the relationship between the obsession with repetition and the instinctive, pondering the two conceptions of instincts as factors driving modification and evolution.

In the ultimate analysis, Freud associates the obsession with repetition with the death instinct. The question then arises: How can one differentiate between death and the «Line of Flight⁶» discussed in *A Thousand Plateaus*? Is it not plausible to perceive the body without organs as an analogue of death, given that *Anti-Oedipus* introduced it as the anti-production instance? The response, if not more compelling and robust, lies in the sixth plateau. Its title can be interpreted as follows: *How to become a body without organs without becoming a zombie and without falling into fascism*. Among the several ways of crafting the BWO (body without

6 Freud's death drive, or Thanatos, represents a primal urge towards self-destruction and the return to an inorganic state. It is associated with repetitive and destructive behaviors. In contrast, Deleuze and Guattari's notion of the line of flight refers to a movement of deterritorialization, a creative escape from the constraints of a particular form or structure. It is a process of becoming, of exploring new possibilities and potentials.

organs), such as those of the junkie, the schizoid, the masochist, some are more perilous, leading inevitably to catatonia. The crux is not merely becoming a BOW but allowing something, such as the nomadic singularities, to traverse it. However, this experimentation is no longer feasible with the explosive charges of Anti-Oedipus. Extreme caution is imperative, for if the BWO is constructed too hastily, one risks plunging into the undifferentiated night, into an empty space where the two faces of death become indistinguishable.

Relations between Deleuze and Freud

On the one hand, the relationship between Deleuze and Freud is evident as Deleuze incorporates Freudian concepts into his work. Deleuze explores passive syntheses, encompassing both habit and memory, which he views as sub-representative (Bartlett et al., 2014). This recalls Freud's notion of the unconscious. Regarding memory, Deleuze posits the existence of the pure past, distinct from the ancient present. Freud, discussing memory traces, notes, «Such memory-traces, then, have nothing to do with the fact of becoming conscious; indeed, they are often most powerful and most enduring when the process which left them behind was one which never entered consciousness» (Freud, 1961, p. 19).

In Deleuze's philosophy, the concept of the sub-representative is foundational. As previously discussed, it gives rise to the formation of larval selves, as seen in the first passive synthesis of habit or a self that engages in «finding new formulae at once both dissymmetrical and complementary with the activity» (Deleuze, 1994, p. 99). The obsession of repetition, as identified by Freud, emerges from repressed past contents returning in the form of repetitive behavior within the transference framework. The transference process, akin to the masks through which repetition manifests in Deleuze, involves the patient projecting repressed images onto the analyst, leading to their renewed consciousness (Bartlett et al., 2014).

However, a fundamental distinction arises between these two perspectives, as mentioned earlier. For Freud, repression is the driving force behind the obsession with repetition, while Deleuze introduces the concept of virtual objects. In this, Freud discusses trauma here—the compulsion to repeat is not based on repression at all. It is based on the fact that the trauma one has suffered has not been processed and therefore continues to erupt into the patient's psyche. The pure past, distinct from the ancient present, is comprised of fractional virtual objects in perpetual motion. These virtual objects stand in contrast to real objects as objects of desire and exist noumenally; they are only approached in a problematic manner, known solely as the object of pursuit.

Freud attributes the phenomenon of repetition to repression, where the return of the repressed manifests as compulsive behaviors. However, Deleuze offers a contrasting viewpoint. According to him,

For Freud, it is not only the theory of repression but the dualism in the theory of drives which encourages the primacy of a conflictual model. However, the conflicts are the result of more subtle differential mechanisms (displacements and disguises), the negative expresses only within consciousness the shadow of fundamentally unconscious questions and problems (Deleuze, 1994, p. 106).

Deleuze posits repetition as a deeper phenomenon than mere repression, suggesting that «We do not repeat because we repress, we repress because we repeat» (Deleuze, 1994, p. 105).

Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* acknowledges repetition compulsion as extending beyond repression, yet Deleuze critiques this understanding from a distinct philosophical stance. While Freud sees repetition as a result of unresolved conflicts and repressed desires surfacing, Deleuze proposes that repetition itself precedes repression, indicating a more intricate interplay between conscious and unconscious processes in human behavior (Bartlett et al., 2014).

Differences

If we scrutinize the writings of Deleuze alongside Freud's «Beyond the Pleasure Principle,» a notable divergence emerges, potentially explaining two distinct praxes. Deleuze critiques Freud, stating, «The Freudian conception [...] fails to discover the death instinct, along with the corresponding experience and prototype» (Deleuze, 1995, p. 113). According to Deleuze, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* represents a genuinely «philosophical» reflection, delving into the exploration of a transcendental that, without contradicting or opposing the pleasure principle, stands as heterogeneous and irreducible before it, without being its exception.

While Deleuze and Guattari acknowledge that in «Beyond the Pleasure Principle,» Freud articulates an understanding of repetition that transcends interpretations, understanding, and repressions—a repetition compulsion distinct from repetition in service of repression—Deleuze's critique of Freud seems to overlook this crucial insight (Torkild and Wallenberg, 2010). This apparent contradiction in Deleuze's approach to Freud's work highlights the complexity of their intellectual relationship and the nuanced differences in their conceptualizations of repetition. Despite recognizing Freud's more expansive view of repetition in this specific text, Deleuze's broader critique focuses on what he perceives as Freud's overall commitment to representational thought, potentially overshadowing

the more nuanced aspects of Freud's later work (Torkild and Wallenberg, 2010).

Nonetheless, the fundamental distinction between Deleuze and Freud lies in their profound commitment to representative thought. Deleuze contends that in Freud, the conception of repetition is subordinated to the demands of representation, «from the standpoint of its realism, materialism, and subjectivism. Repetition is subjected to a principle of identity in the former present and a rule of resemblance in the present one» (Deleuze, 1995, p. 104). This perspective is realistic, as it unfolds within the confines of the present; materialist, anchored in a model of coarse repetition seeking the death drive primarily; and subjectivist, viewing the old and new present merely as representations of the subject, whether conscious or unconscious. It consistently revolves around a «psychic» reality considered as original. For Freud, the unconscious holds a distinctly subjective reality, as it introduces an early separation between repetition and memory. While repetition manifests as something obsessive and almost pathological, memory serves to arrange things in their proper places (Somers-Hall, 2017).

It will make a return to the original situation, as it was indeed, although, for it, the unconscious had to be conscious at that moment. This is not a return to the pure past, but rather a reencounter with the ancient present. In Deleuze's passive syntheses, there are only larval subjects and the virtual objects that give rise to repetition (León, 2019). The sole means of accessing the pure past is through erotic reminiscence, which significantly differs from mere memory.

Before the mirror stage, Lacan posits that the psyche operates without the concepts of lack and absence. This is crucial to understand, as it contradicts the common misconception that Lacan always emphasized lack and absence in analysis. In fact, up to the constitutive moment of the mirror stage, the psyche does not operate on lack and absence at all, but rather the opposite. In «Anti-Oedipus,» Deleuze and Guattari distinguish Lacan from his followers by crediting him with the insight that desire is not rooted in lack. They also critique traditional Freudian perspectives on repetition compulsion, particularly as articulated in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. This nuanced understanding of Lacan's theories enriches the philosophical dialogue between Deleuze, Freud, and Lacan regarding the complexities of repetition and desire

Freud failed to recognize that difference was intimately linked to repetition. He comprehends that repetition serves the reality principle, facilitated by repression. However, he struggles to justify how repetition can elicit

satisfaction on its own as a return to the past. In Freud's view, pleasure can only emanate from the natural inclination to revert to the inanimate. Conversely, for Deleuze, the contemplation of virtual objects generates narcissistic satisfaction in the second passive synthesis (Somers-Hall, 2017).

Conclusion

Deleuze characterizes Freud and Marx as the dawn of our culture, yet Nietzsche, in his view, signifies the twilight of counter-culture and revolution, embodying positive distraction and an inaugural repetition. The significance of «death» in Deleuze's philosophy undergoes a transformation as the Freudian dust settles from the early years. Although Deleuze subtitles one of his most significant texts as a psychoanalytic novel, he emphasizes the need for precise delineation to avoid contradictions. In works like *Difference and Repetition*, he expresses a favorable view of the death instinct (not in the Freudian sense), while in *Anti-Oedipus*, only one «experience of death» is salvaged. However, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, life takes precedence, with characters reminiscent of the Death drive from *Difference and Repetition*, albeit with the deliberate omission of the terms «death» and «instinct.» The roots of Deleuze's unconscious are traced not merely to Freud but rather to the Leibnizian-Nietzschean lineage. He delves into notions of uneasiness from Locke and contributions by Fechner, elucidating these aspects in his lectures on Leibniz.

We refrain from describing an unconscious characterized by opposition and conflict with consciousness (Bartlett et al., 2014). Instead, we emphasize a differential unconscious—a state of being orphaned, innocent, and productive. The impulses within it are not defined by a nirvanic desire but rather by resistance to the cessation of the game, introducing a unique notion of desire that dismisses nonexistence. As Deleuze and Guattari assert, «Desire is a machine, a synthesis of machines, a mechanic arrangement—desiring machines,» thereby positioning the order of desire as synonymous with the order of production (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 196). In contrast to Freud's perspective, the contemporary drive doesn't seek its cessation or confinement but rather strives for return and resistance. These drives resist not only parental figurations but also the impulse towards the inanimate.

Deleuze introduces us to a pure past in which virtual objects are in motion, accessible through reminiscence, yielding pleasure. The notion of the pure past, borrowed from Bergson, is captivating as it doesn't confine the past to what has already been lived; it enriches it with subsequent experiences. The entire past is encapsulated in an instant, facilitating the connection between different series of virtual objects. The assimilation of

what has already been experienced with the present gives rise to pleasure. The question arises: where is the past heading? Perhaps this question is misdirected. The past is not distant but, as Bergson contends, «Practically, we perceive only the past, the pure present being the invisible progress of the past gnawing into the future» (Bergson, 1929, p. 194).

In a world without God, confronting the question of the future gain's significance, and Deleuze turns to Nietzsche's conception of the eternal return. According to Deleuze, the eternal return originates from the unconditioned, representing the implantation of forgetfulness, akin to death. Deleuze does not view it negatively; instead, he asserts that it is inherent in all living things, constituting the ultimate form of the problematic. In contrast, Freud sees death as the ultimate return to the inanimate, the inorganic. It could be akin to one of Nietzsche's «higher men» visiting Zarathustra, for whom the space previously occupied by God is now filled with nothingness.

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