

Gilles Deleuze

Seminar on *On Anti-Oedipus* I, 1971-1972

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...[either that or] community psychiatry, i.e., a sort of adaptation police force, as Mrs. [Maud] Mannoni says, where you get split up into districts or sectors—that is, you get oedipalized (Hochman's work).¹ The point is to triangulate people as much as possible, extending the triangular relationship beyond the family. For those not doing community psychiatry, there are three fundamental problems—institutional analysis, for example, uses group psychotherapy.²

What's risky about group psychotherapy—I'm not trying to criticize psychiatry as though individual psychiatrists had to find everything on their own; there needs to be a mass movement behind it. An individual psychiatrist can't be expected to figure it out on their own—they're well aware that lots of things can go wrong with their groups. Sometimes the group ends up being just perverts—a pervert slips in, pretty dangerous, everyone is dangerous except for me—neurotics pose the greatest risk. They won't let you go until they pass their stuff onto you: they're contagious *par excellence*. Better to have ten times as many schizos [*sic*] than a single neurotic, since a schizo will leave you alone. A neurotic person is the spitting image of what Nietzsche calls a "toxic patient." They'll do whatever they can to get their vampire fangs in you—they can't bear the fact that you *aren't* depressed or depressive.

One of the potential risks with institutional analysis is that its group therapy sessions might be infiltrated by perverts, perverting the whole group, or—which isn't any better—the group might be oedipalized, neuroticized, with a group superego, a group father, or at worst,³ [group therapy risks] reconstituting so-called catatonic schizophrenia, and the most open groups an asylum structure will form around catatonic schizophrenics. How do you prevent any of these three sorts of groups from forming? When a pervert starts working a group over from the inside, or starts oedipalizing at top speed—the risks are clear.

The pervert falls under the third [?] category; they're proud, and want to [be] treated as an equal, on an even playing field. It isn't about drive, or whatever; it's about desire's place in relation to territorialities. There's an insane fear of madness and catatonia. They've over-adapted; it made them cold inside. No matter the perversion, what all perverts have in common, I think, [is] this two-fold aspect of over-comfort, over-adaptation—I don't think there are many perverts—that manifests as a sort of joviality, but not at all as some psychotic euphoria. You have to be wary and can't trust your little girl, and at the same time, you get the feeling that they've been hollowed out—a little shard of ice behind the massive armor of their over-adaptation. What do they do with it? The perverse body is certainly no longer catatonic; it's what Sade calls apathy, the sadistic apathy Klossowski famously focused on so much. Either that or the explicit theory of

coldness we find in the anti-Sade, in Masoch. [The pervert] doesn't want a territoriality like Oedipus. "It's beneath me." They're proud. They don't want a sub-aggregate.⁴ They build themselves magnificent territorialities—[Raymond Roussel's] *Impressions of Africa* is a perverted text.⁵ The definitive text on the body without organs and catatonic-psychotic territorialization is Schreber, it's Artaud. Most writing is run-of-the-mill neurosis.

Impressions of Africa [by Raymond Roussel] is about constructing an exotic, artificial territoriality, which, from the depths of its coldness and over-comfort, will claim to be on equal footing with any other power. The pervert has invented their territoriality, their group, their secret society—it has nothing to do with a drive; everything is neurosis, everything is psychosis. You could say that everything is a schizophrenic process, only not in the same way, fortunately. Everything is schizophrenic process insofar as every other aspect is defined in relation to [schizophrenia].

We perpetually find ourselves situated tangentially to the schizophrenic process. We could say that everything is psychosis because, ultimately, even when it comes to other territorialities, what's at stake is the body without organs. And in any analysis, you haven't done anything until you get to the repulsing mechanisms of the body without organs. And then, we could say that everything is neurosis insofar as it is the only sickness, and all sicknesses are defined in relation to the neurosis of Oedipus and castration, because Oedipus is the primary frame of reference, the primary means for recoding [*recodage*].⁶ And the psychotic is someone who refuses Oedipus, who says, "Better the desert of my body without organs than Oedipal territoriality. I'd rather say nothing than say 'daddy-mommy.'" And the pervert is someone whose way of relating themselves to Oedipus is to say, "I would be so ashamed." In that sense, everything is neurosis.

And everything is also perversion, since perversion is the archetypical model of reterritorialization: with how perversion operates, we see the creation of artificial territorialities, of so-called perverse groups, recognizing that the schizophrenic process isn't the same thing as clinical schizophrenia [*Responding to Eric*].

How is clinical schizophrenia produced?

Student: What would authentic reterritorialization be?

Deleuze: You're skipping ahead. We're not going to ever make the mistake of saying, "Ah, the good old days, when the earth [*terre*] was real earth." Capitalism—I forget who said it—was about neo-archaisms, i.e., restoring what appear to be archaisms but with modern functions, returning to the land [*terre*], for example. It's only apparently archaic; it's a neo-archaism because it actually has a perfectly current function for the societies bringing it back.

The third [?] point would be to ask the question: Is the process of deterritorialization itself—not insofar as it gets reterritorialized in a factitious or artificial way in capitalism—is it capable of creating new land [*terre*], or something equivalent to new land? Is it possible to create new land? That remains to be seen; it comes back to the problem of revolution... [*Continuing his response to Laurent*]

Deleuze: You say the real as sexed. For me, even with your stipulated conditions, I would agree. For me it gets tricky when we ask, what sexuality are we talking about? You mentioned human sexuality, but that isn't just Oedipus. It's also a bisexuality, that is, there are men and there are women. There's also the assertion that castration is valid for both sexes. All that together: Oedipus, sexual difference, castration, as the source of difference, the main distributor of Oedipus. Together they define, not sexuality, but the anthropomorphic representation of sex.

What I'm getting at is that there is no human sexuality; the only thing human is a representation of sexuality. It's the anthropomorphic representation of sex that culminates in the phallus: the phallus is the fundamental principle of the anthropomorphic representation of sex. The question isn't whether it exists but how it exists, how it works. I'm asking whether this anthropomorphic representation of sex is a determination of the unconscious, or an element of the preconscious, or even an illusion consciousness has of the unconscious. Is the castration machine, the phallic machine and its oedipal offspring, part of an illusion consciousness is led to form about the unconscious? Schizo-analysis has to reach non-human sex... *[text missing]*

... It seems to me that any introduction, even indirectly, of chains of foreclosure, of lack, of the name of the father, would fall back onto an anthropomorphic representation of sex. So, I'm not all that receptive to the question of "sexual undifferentiation." It's not a real problem; it's the existence of *n* sexes, that statistically there are good men and good women, as molar aggregates. At the molecular level of schizo-analysis or the delirious unconscious, it's impossible to distinguish a man from a woman—certainly not owing to some bisexuality, which does nothing to distance us from anthropomorphic representation—but at a completely different level, the level of *n*, little '*n*' sexes. There, distinguishing man or woman is absolutely impossible. In anthropomorphic representation, there are men and women; when it comes to non-human sex, there's neither man nor woman.⁷

Now, to my delight, one author who's taken to be the most oedipal, but who understood and knew how to smash Oedipus once and for all, was Proust. There's a level of sexuality, the relationships between *n* sexes have this sort of character. Homosexuality, heterosexuality, man, woman—it's lost all meaning. Words that can be used in one context and not in another. At the level of non-human sex, there's no name of the father, no foreclosure, no castration, no... and so on. In these contexts, those things don't exist. It doesn't describe the unconscious; it's part of the image that consciousness forms of the unconscious. In fact, under the name of the father, you find Joan of Arc, President Schreber, Mao—names from history.

Richard Pinhas: Would you agree that... and I'm on board with what you said about difference and how we think about castration. In the system you're describing as the anthropomorphic representation of sex, [there are] like oppositions, simple oppositions in a positivity, and on the other side, you have difference—that is, we can no longer think of difference as sexual difference, but difference still exists—a difference other than opposition. I'd opt to think of it in terms of life and death, through a Freudian lens: the constancy principle and the nirvana principle, average tension and absolute zero; that's ultimately what life and death is. What if we took that as real otherness, as difference in the face of castration, which we could consider an opposition only within the same unity?

Deleuze: No, I wouldn't agree—any time we're dealing with difference, what matters to me is the number of terms involved. If there are two terms at play, it seems to me it would inherently depend on anthropomorphic representation—unless we're working with n terms, where “man” and “woman” have lost all meaning, strictly speaking.

Pinhas: That doesn't work with life and death.

Deleuze: Well, in that case, sure, but life and death... then death is going to bring us back to...

Pinhas: Real death!

Deleuze: Should I ask what you mean by real?

Pinhas: When it stops flowing...

Deleuze: We haven't even touched on the role death plays in this. For me, the question would come down to the relationship between death and desiring machines. But here, again, I don't think I'm all that Freudian, i.e., the death drive still strikes me as horrible, like some nasty trick played on the unconscious.

Student: On the power of affect being measured in n gradients...

Deleuze: Yes, exactly—they're “names in history,” big gradient operators. If the body without organs is a plenitude, it's because it spreads itself out. It's effectively the intensity = 0 on the basis of which all the intensities of the unconscious are produced—non-figurative intensities, intensities that don't represent anything, but which are designated by names in history.

This level of zero intensity is where death comes in. In other words, contrary to what Freud says, there is no death drive, but there is a model. Freud says the opposite: there is a drive but no model.

Pinhas: We might find a model of death, a representation or rather a glimpse into what death might be—in *jouissance*, in orgasm.

Deleuze: That's not [what we find in] Freud's *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*. There is a death drive, and there is no death model.

Richard Zrehen: If you have a body without organs that's full, indeed, a death drive is out of the question. Only when your body without organs is full, but [there's some] middle ground afterwards where you can indeed have a death drive, [but] you can't maintain both, so you logically exclude...

Deleuze: So, there isn't any...

Zrehen: ... that's where there's a major disagreement: it isn't exactly a life force. What he meant was that when we think about these terms in terms of life and death, it isn't a symmetrical

difference. There's precisely a divide that goes so far it can't be pinned down to anything, and it's because of that that no model is possible, that whenever we try to talk about it, we can't help but be reductive. We say, "stuff gets out of the system," or we'll say, "there's something that gets out of the system," and we talk about it, and we end up back with Lacan. That's the real threshold in store for us, the way you portrayed capitalism, how whenever capitalism reaches its limit it pushes it further away. Here, it's the other way around: every time we get our hands on the ungraspable, whenever we get it up close, it becomes grasped—and we have to look even further. We might largely disagree about fullness without lack. Perhaps it's no longer a lack; it's something else. Something more radical, something unattributable to a subject. A death drive is not attributable to a subject, they aren't tied together. It runs its course without any regard whatsoever. It isn't assigned, it doesn't provide—it just runs.

Deleuze: There's an awful idea I'm trying to avoid. If it's true that psychoanalysis and Freud completely missed desiring machines, the production of desire, i.e., everything that makes up unconscious life, that makes me feel pretty romantic, pretty vitalist. The truth of the matter is really on the side of [D.H.] Lawrence and [Henry] Miller; they're the only ones who've understood anything about the unconscious.⁸

After psychoanalysis screwed that up, it could only approach the essence of desire as something turned against life, and they did their thing with the death drive [*Deleuze sighs*]. It's awful. This chapter of psychoanalysis is stained by a sort of death cult. [Wilhelm] Reich described it so well; it was all downhill from there. Reich's *The Function of the Orgasm* is great: once they introduced the death drive, it just so happened that everyone stopped talking about libido and starting talking about Eros. It was all downhill from there—people were talking about Eros, and nobody talked about sexuality anymore. That's not to say that the sort of anti-sexuality found in Jung and Adler primarily took place in high church Freudian psychoanalysis, and that the death drive was a way of conforming to conventional standards, which is what the death drive was used for.⁹

Zrehen: Sexuality isn't what's important. We're on the same page. When Freud does the death drive or Eros (see *An Outline of Psychoanalysis* [1938])... we land right back in the neo-Heyelianism [*sic*] of 1935, and when Reich is done, there's Marcuse, and then it's perfect; we'll find reconciliation. Not only will we return to the earth, but we'll be screwing in our cars (thank goodness!).

Pinhas: Freud says that the libido is on both sides, since the libido is the energy powering both Eros and the death drive, and the libido belongs to the reservoir of energy that is the self.

Deleuze: That isn't so self-evident. That's [Jean] Laplanche's interpretation, and we need to look at Freud's own writing. Personally, I can make out two key works: *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety*—the parts where he attacks [Otto] Rank—and a great text of his, *The Ego and The Id*, where he explicitly says, "there isn't any immediate conversion of energy; I maintain a dualism between drives." And monism would be romanticizing the unconscious—he insists on dualism. His dualism precludes any direct conversion from one type of energy to another. Any direct transformations happen within libidinal energy; at no point is there a direct energetic conversion between the libidinal drives then labeled as Eros—bizarrely, you could very well object that it

doesn't matter, but it matters quite a bit—and death drives. No direct conversion. Any conversion takes place via what Freud calls desexualization, whereby he claims to reestablish his annoying concept of sublimation. What I'm saying is that, if it's true that the death drive doesn't have its own energy—as Laplanche claims, or as you seem to claim—then I can no longer make heads or tails of these passages. Because if the death drive doesn't have its own energy, I fail to see why this stage of desexualization is necessarily, or why Freud thinks direct transformations are impossible.¹⁰

Pinhas: That's easy enough to explain [*Laughter*]. We can't forget that for Freud, first in *Inhibitions, Symptoms, and Anxiety* and then in *An Outline*—he picks these ideas back up in *An Outline*—he says: now, I said this, then afterward I said that, but in the end, I'm convinced that it's this. You know Freud's style of exposition. Now, why there is desexualization: the energy that gets desexualized is what will transform—"transform" is a bad way of putting it, a poor metaphor—into Eros because it gets sublimated, Freud says. But what that means is that it turns into something socially and culturally invested. We go from an individual and family register to one that's fully cultural. That doesn't mean there isn't always this libidinal reservoir belonging to the ego, which, following a very rough outline, distributes energy to the death drives and to Eros, energy which converts to Eros. I don't know, then, whether there's a part that remains as it is and another part that gets desexualized. But there definitely is a big part that is desexualized, in order to constitute higher, ever more complex units. Right, but that's not the case with the death drive. The death drive stays that way; it has energy, and it uses it.

Deleuze: Desexualization, he tells us—explicitly, as I see it—is accomplished by transferring an amount of libidinal energy it has worked on, desexualized, into the death drive; the death drive is thereby transformed, right, but desexualization, the operation whereby some portion of the libido is desexualized and moves over to the death drive. Thus, what's missing is the middle term which ensuring that its conversion is indirect; we need desexualization as this middle term. For me, that says it all. Everything you just said amounts to saying: yes, for Freud, the libido—the sexual libido—falls under the domain of the ego, daddy-mommy, Oedipus, and beyond that, the libido must go through desexualization to carry out other investments. Which is what I've been saying from the start. That's what I think is confining the libido, its broad mystification. You might think he's right, then, but we're in total agreement on how to interpret these texts.

Pinhas: We'll see next week. I believe that through mediation [*Laughter*] as a means of exposure, of making things mobile, we'll be able to account for the death drive. [*End of lecture. However, as Deleuze didn't speak last as he does usually, it is likely the recording stopped abruptly*]

Notes

¹ In Chapter 2 of *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari cite Mannoni's *Le Psychiatre, son fou et la psychanalyse* (Paris: Seuil, 1970), and Jacques Hochman, *Pour une psychanalyse Communautaire* (Paris: Seuil, 1971); see pp. 90 and 93, respectively. On the "adaptation police force," see p. 95.

² See the note on institutional analysis, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 30.

³ The text reads "*au père*," which may be a typo for "*au pire*."

⁴ This translation follows Hurley, Seem, and Lane in putting *ensemble* as "aggregate." For example, see *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 181.

⁵ Raymond Roussel, *Les Impressions d'Afrique* (Paris: Alphonse Lemerre, 1910).

⁶ The punctuation in the text is as follows: "... recording and the psychotic. It's..." This translation moves the period such the second sentence describes "the psychotic."

⁷ On sexuality and *n* sexes, see *Anti-Oedipus*, pp. 294-296.

⁸ Although the transcript from WebDeleuze reads "Lorenz", Deleuze and Guattari make no references in *Anti-Oedipus* at all to Konrad Lorenz whereas Lawrence and Miller are a pairing that one finds throughout the book.

⁹ For more on Reich, see the note that begins on *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 291.

¹⁰ On the impossibility of energetic conversion, in the context of these same writings, see the note on *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 333. Deleuze cites Jean Laplanche, *Vie et mort en psychanalyse* (Paris: Flammarion, 1970), p. 211.