



**University of Dundee**

## **Structuralist heroes and points of heresy**

Campbell, Iain

*Published in:*  
Continental Philosophy Review

*DOI:*  
[10.1007/s11007-021-09562-9](https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-021-09562-9)

*Publication date:*  
2022

*Document Version*  
Peer reviewed version

[Link to publication in Discovery Research Portal](#)

*Citation for published version (APA):*  
Campbell, I. (2022). Structuralist heroes and points of heresy: recognizing Gilles Deleuze's (anti-)structuralism. *Continental Philosophy Review*, 55, 215–234. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11007-021-09562-9>

### **General rights**

Copyright and moral rights for the publications made accessible in Discovery Research Portal are retained by the authors and/or other copyright owners and it is a condition of accessing publications that users recognise and abide by the legal requirements associated with these rights.

- Users may download and print one copy of any publication from Discovery Research Portal for the purpose of private study or research.
- You may not further distribute the material or use it for any profit-making activity or commercial gain.
- You may freely distribute the URL identifying the publication in the public portal.

### **Take down policy**

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

## Structuralist heroes and points of heresy: Recognizing Gilles Deleuze's (anti-)structuralism

Iain Campbell, *University of Dundee*

[draft only, final version published in *Continental Philosophy Review*, doi: 10.1007/s11007-021-09562-9]

### Abstract

This article is concerned with the status and stakes of Gilles Deleuze's "break" with structuralism. With a particular focus on a transitional text of Deleuze, the 1967/1972 article "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?," it asks how Deleuze understood structuralism and why, after his encounter with Félix Guattari and Guattari's own transitional text, 1969's "Machine and Structure," Deleuze felt the need to break with structuralism. It argues that reading these two texts together allows us to see that Deleuze already perceived tensions within the structuralist project, and argues that Guattari's non-structural account of the machine allowed Deleuze to clarify this perception, and see it as necessitating a departure from structuralism. To close, however, it turns to recent work by philosophers such as Étienne Balibar and Patrice Maniglier that re-examines the structuralist moment and identifies an ongoing legacy that the "poststructuralism" of Deleuze and Guattari may be part of. By considering Deleuze and Guattari's break with structuralism in light of this work, this article considers how the polemical rejection of structuralism by Deleuze and Guattari may not fully account for the ongoing legacy of the structuralist program and the persistence of a structuralist problematic in their thought.

### 1 Introduction

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari's antagonistic position towards structuralism is well-known. 1972's *Anti-Oedipus*, the product of their intense first few years of working together, constitutes a sustained attack on structural accounts of the unconscious, being described by the biographer and historian François Dosse as a "war machine on structuralism."<sup>1</sup> Eight years later, *A Thousand Plateaus* positioned structural inquiry as one of the forms of thought that fails to capture the dynamics of *becoming*, with that text's central concept of the rhizome being

---

<sup>1</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1983); Dosse (2010, p. 230).

again described, in this case by Éric Alliez, as an “anti-structuralist war machine.”<sup>2</sup> Yet Deleuze was not always opposed to structuralism. Before his encounter with Guattari, Deleuze’s position on structuralism was outwardly positive, although marked by complexity and ambivalence. Deleuze seemed to at once embrace the project of theoretical structuralism and find himself struggling against limitations he found in it.

Following work on “the Guattari effect” on Deleuze’s thought, I will argue that examining Deleuze’s and Guattari’s respective positions on structuralism in the period of their meeting shows that the psychiatrist and activist Guattari is not only a practical and political supplement to Deleuze’s philosophy, or only a source of materials for Deleuze to philosophize with.<sup>3</sup> On the contrary, I will show that Guattari’s immanent procedure with regards to Deleuze’s philosophy clarifies Deleuze’s position on structuralism and begins a departure from structuralism that will profoundly impact Deleuze’s thought. Yet, by keeping one foot in Deleuze’s structuralism, we will also see that the polemical anti-structuralism of *Anti-Oedipus*, and the less polemical but still negatively construed conception of structuralism in *A Thousand Plateaus*, may disguise how there are still significant ongoing lines of inquiry concerning the question of Deleuze and structuralism.

In order to capture the dynamics of thought at work in the moment of Deleuze and Guattari’s encounter, I will examine two transitional texts: Deleuze’s “How Do We Recognize Structuralism?” (hereafter HRS), a piece drafted in 1967 but not published until 1972, and Guattari’s 1969 essay “Machine and Structure,” written in part as a response to Deleuze’s *Difference and Repetition* (1968) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969) and marking the starting point of their collaboration.<sup>4</sup> By focusing on these two texts I aim to gain insight not only into the conditions of Deleuze and Guattari’s work together, but also into the historical turning point of which they were part, namely the sudden and widespread rejection of structuralism. Deleuze’s positive account of structuralism in HRS and its important role in his two major books that shortly followed, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, compels us to ask why he felt the need to break with structuralism.

I will suggest that reading HRS and “Machine and Structure” together allows us to see that Deleuze already perceived tensions within the structuralist project, and argue that Guattari’s non-structural account of the machine allowed Deleuze to clarify this perception,

---

<sup>2</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1987); Alliez (2011, p. 38).

<sup>3</sup> Alliez and Goffey (2011).

<sup>4</sup> Deleuze (2004a); Guattari (2015); Deleuze (1994); Deleuze (1990).

and see it as necessitating a departure from structuralism. To close, however, I will turn to recent work by philosophers such as Étienne Balibar and Patrice Maniglier that re-examines the structuralist moment and identifies an ongoing legacy, a legacy that the “poststructuralism” of Deleuze and Guattari may be part of. By considering Deleuze and Guattari’s break with structuralism in light of this work, I hope to show how the polemical rejection of structuralism by Deleuze and Guattari—and by many other thinkers of the era—does not fully account for the ongoing legacy of the structuralist program and the persistence of a structuralist problematic in their thought.

In examining the development of Deleuze’s thought in the period immediately following *The Logic of Sense*, this article is in dialogue with, in particular, two other articles that deal with this moment, namely Daniel W. Smith’s “From the Surface to the Depths: On the Transition between *Logic of Sense* and *Anti-Oedipus*” and Edward Thornton’s “The Rise of the Machines: Deleuze’s Flight from Structuralism.”<sup>5</sup> Smith identifies that with *Anti-Oedipus* Deleuze leaves behind the “surface” of the structural field of linguistic sense to explore the physical, intensive “depths” beneath it, while Thornton highlights the role of Guattari in motivating this move and of Guattari’s notion of the machine in facilitating it. While Thornton focuses on *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* in order to specify Deleuze’s particular response to structuralism, here I look at HRS in order to stress Deleuze’s recognition of the tensions of even a highly-evolved structuralism, before his doubtlessly ingenious solutions in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.<sup>6</sup>

In contrast to the seemingly impregnable version of structuralism in *Difference and Repetition* in particular, HRS brings to light what in Balibar’s terms we could call the “points of heresy” that Deleuze identifies in structuralism, points at which the Deleuze of *Difference and Repetition* deploys figures as diverse as Nietzsche, Lautman, and Proust to disarticulate and rearticulate the problem of structure, but which Deleuze and Guattari reinvest in as a means of fully departing from the structuralist program.<sup>7</sup> Yet there may still be a question of whether Deleuze completely resolves and escapes from structuralism’s points of heresy, with consequent implications for contemporary engagement with Deleuze’s thought. In what is ahead I intend to remain as far as possible at the moment of these points.

---

<sup>5</sup> Smith (2006); Thornton (2017).

<sup>6</sup> Thornton (2017, pp. 456-57n3).

<sup>7</sup> Balibar (2015).

## 2 How do we recognize Deleuze's structuralism?

The question “what is structuralism?” may seem to have a simple, well-established answer. Following the systematization of language proposed by Ferdinand de Saussure, linguists in the field of what became known as “structural linguistics” sought, through the study of structures, to develop a science of language that no longer stood in subordinate relation to other disciplines such as philosophy or philology.<sup>8</sup> Scholars in the social sciences, particularly in France, soon saw the opportunity to do the same in their own fields. Claude Lévi-Strauss, to begin with the most famous example, found in structural linguistic approaches a means to detach anthropology, particularly in its French traditions, from its colonial origins, from its impulse towards a search for man's natural, biological foundations, and from intrinsic ideas of human development and progress.<sup>9</sup> As it spread, structuralism, in the words of Éric Alliez, thus constituted a “transdisciplinary research program ... based on the structural functionalism of linguistics ... [that] mobiliz[ed] the scientific problematization of the ‘human sciences’ against the transcendental legitimacy and theoretical primacy of philosophy.”<sup>10</sup>

Yet by entailing specific stances against entrenched disciplinary procedures, even on this simple definition the question “what is structuralism?” is complicated. As François Dosse notes, any account of structuralism must accommodate “many structuralisms.”<sup>11</sup> Each “structuralism” could be seen to respond to a specific set of problems, and “structuralism” was perhaps not the stiflingly unifying and totalizing research program it was often retrospectively presented as. This suggests why for some the question of what structuralism *is* misses the mark; why Roland Barthes would rather speak of “The Structuralist Activity” and why Deleuze asks a question of recognition rather than identification.<sup>12</sup> If structuralism is in fact different in every domain, the question of taking a critical perspective on it cannot be one of determining a top-down meta-method governing each instance, but rather one of examining individual practices and reconstructing points of contact and communication. This is the approach that Deleuze takes in HRS.

---

<sup>8</sup> For Saussure language was to be understood as “a system of interdependent terms in which the value of each term results solely from the simultaneous presence of others” (1959, p. 114). See Dosse (1997a, p. xxii).

<sup>9</sup> Dosse (1997a, pp. 16-17).

<sup>10</sup> Alliez (2015, p. 141).

<sup>11</sup> Dosse (1997a, p. xxii). The pull between the two possibilities of structuralist approaches, as constituting a “science of man” (*ibid.*, p. xxv) and as encompassing the sciences of man, will turn out to be one of the major tensions at the centre of structuralism.

<sup>12</sup> Barthes (1972, p. 213); Deleuze (2004a, p. 170).

First drafted in 1967, Deleuze's text is part of what turned out to be, yet was not immediately evident as, perhaps the most remarkable feature of the history of structuralism; that a moment that seemed to suggest a new level of scope and sophistication for structuralism in fact marked the beginning of its decline. In HRS Deleuze engages with recent texts that were taken to be contributing to the development of structuralism in the fields of anthropology, psychoanalysis, "politics in theory," and history, with a particular focus on Lévi-Strauss's *Structural Anthropology*, Jacques Lacan's *Écrits*, Louis Althusser and his students' *Reading Capital* (especially the essays by Althusser and Étienne Balibar), and Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things*. Deleuze then adopts a somewhat unusual method: From these texts, each rich in the empirical content of the social sciences, he attempts to extract a set of "criteria" for structuralist inquiry, laying out, in an extremely schematic and technical manner, a set of characteristics that can be found across the diverse "structuralisms" of different domains.

The major significance of this text for Deleuze scholars is that each of the seven criteria of structuralism that Deleuze identifies can be found at work in his two major texts that followed, *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*.<sup>13</sup> In making use of structuralism in this way, Deleuze contributes to what was an ongoing movement somewhat at odds with the original impulses of structuralism: In contrast to the attempt within the social sciences to end their reliance on philosophy, Deleuze sees structuralism as inseparable from what he terms a "new transcendental philosophy," finding in structuralism an opportunity to reinvigorate the discipline.<sup>14</sup>

This raises a provisional question to bear in mind for what follows: How do we recognize Deleuze's conception of structuralism, the structuralism he is attempting to bring to philosophy? In James Williams's reading of HRS, in this text Deleuze is formulating a "radical development" of structuralism that commences a turn to poststructuralism.<sup>15</sup> On Williams's account, the criteria of structuralism that Deleuze identifies are presented in "rather extreme versions," oriented towards articulating a structuralism that can match up to Deleuze's own

---

<sup>13</sup> See Charles Stivale's introduction to HRS for more context (1998, pp. 251-58). Marc Rölli offers a detailed account of the place of structure in Deleuze's transcendental empiricism, stressing its genetic, temporal articulation, densely but acutely summarized as follows: "The philosophical concept of structure developed by Deleuze can be defined by means of a number of criteria: elements, relations, singularities, temporality, seriality, unconsciousness. 'Structure' can be defined as the problematical, differential or virtual idea of multiplicity. Or to put it another way, the idea is characterised by a threefold internal determination, which organises itself serially and has at its disposal a temporal mode of actualisation which is not exhausted in a linear transition from one actual state to another" (2016, pp. 205-06).

<sup>14</sup> Deleuze (2004a, p. 174). Craig Lundy argues that this is also how Foucault, Althusser, and Derrida engaged with structuralism (2013, p. 76).

<sup>15</sup> Williams (2005, p. 55).

thought rather than matching his analysis to structuralism as it is. For Williams, already for Deleuze there must be a transformation of structuralism “away from the concept of representation and away from definitions of difference in terms of identity.”<sup>16</sup>

Deleuze’s reading of structuralism is certainly unorthodox, but there is reason to believe that he is in fact trying to maintain a certain fidelity to the structuralist project. We can consider, for example, the apparent modesty and deference, not to mention self-deprecation, with which he viewed his own text. In a letter accompanying a copy of HRS that Deleuze sent to Althusser in early 1968, Deleuze wrote that he had

the impression of being in great darkness or of screwing up completely (partially in the last paragraph, “final critiques”) ... Writing something bad can always be useful for learning, but publishing something bad isn’t. Maybe the last part has to be cut.<sup>17</sup>

Moreover, Deleuze could not have predicted in 1967 that by the end of the 1960s Althusser, Lacan, and Foucault would each be attempting to distance themselves from structuralism, and that the texts that seemed to mark structuralism’s ascent to a new level of theoretical sophistication in fact pointed each of them beyond structuralism.<sup>18</sup>

How, then, does Deleuze “recognize” structuralism? And what aspects of this “recognition” are pertinent to his ultimate rejection of structuralism? Put briefly and drawing out some key elements, the seven criteria that Deleuze identifies are as follows:

---

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>17</sup> Dosse (2010, pp. 227-28). The version of “How Do We Recognize Structuralism?” that Deleuze sent to Althusser was a transcription of a lecture he delivered in December of 1967, and the published 1972 version is substantially expanded. However, the basic form of the two is the same, with the major additions being the fourth criterion on the differentiator and differentiation, an integration of some of the “final critiques” into an account of structuralism and temporality, and the increased prominence of these “final critiques,” albeit no longer named as critiques but rather as the final criterion, “From Subject to Practice.” While this section is developed significantly, the general theme in each concerns the difficulties that structuralism faces when trying to accommodate practice. Some of these changes have been detailed by Ted Stolze (1998). It is unfortunately difficult to determine when exactly the changes from Deleuze’s 1967 lecture sent to Althusser and the essay’s 1972 published version were made, though the appearance of themes from *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* in a form that seems not yet fully developed suggests that this took place, at least for the most part, before the publication of those texts. As such I believe it is justified to take this text to be “before” *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, albeit with some care required in overstating this, in particular with regards to the final criterion. Care must also be taken with situating the Althusserian aspects of HRS in the broader context of Deleuze’s thought, as the final HRS is informed by the detailed feedback Althusser and, indirectly, Pierre Macherey provided Deleuze. As Warren Montag has highlighted, Althusser’s response to Deleuze is written in the context of the rethinking of the notion of structure, in dialogue with Macherey’s critique of literary structuralism, that Althusser undertook after *Reading Capital* (2013, pp. 96-100). Moreover, that Spinoza is crucial to the alternatives to structuralism presented by each of Deleuze, Althusser, and Macherey, presents a rich topic for further inquiry. See also Peden (2014).

<sup>18</sup> See Althusser (2009, p. 7); Foucault (2002, pp. 16-17); and Lacan (2006, p. 189).

1. “The symbolic,” the assertion of a symbolic realm that is not reducible to the real, the imaginary, or their traditional interactions, and which is “deeper” than the two.<sup>19</sup> This tripartite distinction between real, imaginary, and symbolic immediately points to the significance of Lacan. It is, for Deleuze, a distinction that produces a model of analysis that denies both any immediacy of an uncoverable reality *and* the privileging of the individual human imagination.<sup>20</sup> The “images” of the imaginary are understood to be produced by structures which are not themselves representational and do not have content. As such structure is immediately presented as concerning genesis: As a motor of the emergence of images and realities.

2. “Local or positional,” naming the space that structuralism is concerned with as, like the space of structural linguistics, a distinctly relational space. The things that occupy this space are defined not by any innate essence but only by their position in the space. Already through these first two criteria we can see that Deleuze can conceive of structuralism as not, contra Williams, relying on representation, but as finding in structure the conditions of representation, whether unconscious, economic, or otherwise. Indeed the emphasis on the unconscious in even the most orthodox and descriptive accounts of structuralism, as in the Anglophone popularizations of Edith Kurzweil, highlights how the terms of representation are challenged even at the inauguration of structuralism.<sup>21</sup>

The most striking aspect of this understanding of space is the displacement that the figure of the subject undergoes. For Althusser, for example, human subjects are no longer understood as concrete individuals but as “the places in a topological and structural space defined by relations of production.”<sup>22</sup> This critical challenge to the constitutive and unified character of the subject is widely recognized as a key feature of structuralism: François Dosse speaks generally of structuralism as proffering a “human dissolution”; Lévi-Strauss states that the goal of the human sciences is “not to constitute, but to dissolve man”; and Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, the organizers of the 1966 symposium “The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man” that became a touchstone for structuralism’s international reception, took a description of Foucault’s *Archaeology of Knowledge* in Deleuze’s review of that text to acutely present a shared guiding impulse of the scholars being termed structuralists:

---

<sup>19</sup> Deleuze (2004a, p. 173).

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>21</sup> Kurzweil (1986).

<sup>22</sup> Deleuze (2004a, p. 174).



A cold and concerted destruction of the subject, a lively distaste for notions of origin, of lost origin, of recovered origin, a dismantling of unifying pseudo-syntheses of consciousness, a denunciation of all the mystifications of history performed in the name of progress, of consciousness, and of the future of reason ...<sup>23</sup>

As we will see, this has also been highlighted as a crucial aspect of structuralism's ongoing legacy.<sup>24</sup>

3. "The differential and the singular" and 4. "The differentiator, differentiation" elaborate on the emergence of structure as comprised of an axis of reciprocally determined differential elements and a corresponding axis of the distribution of singular points.<sup>25</sup> At this point we move further into the technical vocabulary that Deleuze develops in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, laid out here in a particularly abstract way. Here we see more of how, as unconscious, structures are the conditions for representations rather than representational themselves: "Structures are necessarily unconscious, by virtue of the elements, relations and points that compose them ... In a certain way, they are not actual. What is actual is that in which the structure is incarnated or rather what the structure constitutes when it is incarnated."<sup>26</sup> Of general note here is that Deleuze conceives of structuralism as the only model through which we can adequately account for questions of genesis.<sup>27</sup>

5. "Serial" briefly suggests that what animates structure is a minimum of two series being brought into relation with each other. That structure is irreducibly multiple, and in multiple respects—as in the earlier claim that "[e]very structure is an infrastructure, a micro-structure"—is crucial to Deleuze's account of structuralism, but the issue of whether structure and structuralism ultimately alight on a singular and unified structure is at the crux of how Deleuze, and others, come to reject structuralism, leaving this as an open point of inquiry regarding (post)structuralism.<sup>28</sup>

6. "The empty square" posits a paradoxical object that imparts a general character to a structure without ever being explicitly expressed within it, an object that is "displaced in relation to itself."<sup>29</sup> Historically powerful objects of this kind include "God" and "man," while

---

<sup>23</sup> Dosse (1997a, p. xxv); Lévi-Strauss (1966, p. 247); Macksey and Donato (1972, p. x); Deleuze (1970, p. 195).

<sup>24</sup> Balibar (2003); Maniglier (2010).

<sup>25</sup> Deleuze (2004a, p. 176).

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180. Here Deleuze steps back from the critical remarks of his 1967 lecture on structuralism's neglect of temporality.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

in Lacan's case it is most famously the symbolic phallus. This difficult notion is made more difficult still by Deleuze drawing it primarily from Lacan, but then seeming to quickly attempt to turn it against the psychoanalyst. Moreover, this empty square, this object =  $x$ , is required to give an account of the extremely complex relation of orders within structure, through inversions of subordination and shifts in relative autonomy both within and between structures.<sup>30</sup> With this gesture Deleuze strikes the problem that defines his final criterion,

7. "From subject to practice." Unlike Lacan and psychoanalysis broadly conceived, Deleuze is not satisfied to leave this object =  $x$  as marking a lack at the heart of structure. The "void" it constitutes is for Deleuze "not the being of the negative, but rather a positive being of the 'problematic,' the objective being of a problem and of a question."<sup>31</sup> And "following" this problem, corresponding to structuralism's association with the human sciences, is the subject. As the second criterion made clear, structuralism concerns a displacement of the subject, but not, as Deleuze now emphasizes, a suppression of it. Structuralism is rather a procedure that "breaks [the subject] up and distributes it systematically, that contests the identity of the subject, that dissipates it and makes it shift from place to place." In terms that will be significant to Deleuze's later work, the subject becomes a "nomad" subject, and, using terminology that will not be clear until *Difference and Repetition*, the activity that is proper to this distributed subject is this "following" of the "problematic."<sup>32</sup> This is required such that the emptiness of the empty square neither becomes, in what he calls "two great accidents" or "sicknesses" of structure, a lack, nor is it "filled," occupied by a substantial term, what Derrida had one year earlier called a "transcendental signified."<sup>33</sup> In the terms of *The Logic of Sense* the choice between structure as having a fully individuated centre or as disguising an "undifferentiated abyss" is ultimately a false one, resolved through the instantiation of the transcendental field and the problematic.<sup>34</sup>

---

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 189-90.

<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 190.

<sup>33</sup> Derrida (2001, p. 354). Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," first delivered at the 1966 symposium "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man," is widely noted as an early turn away from structuralism, although like HRS it is marked by ambivalence. As with HRS, to the extent that Derrida puts forward a critique of structuralism, it is via characteristics of structuralism already latent or even explicit, and the basic structuralist problematics Derrida sets off from are left open. Like HRS, "Structure, Sign and Play" can easily be read as being at work internal to structuralism. It is not clear whether Deleuze was aware of Derrida's piece in 1967, but by 1968 both he and Guattari are making positive reference to Derrida, explicitly (Deleuze 1994, pp. 318-19n28) or, in Guattari's adoption of "supplementarity" (1984, p. 178), implicitly. On Derrida's 1966 presentation, see Smith (2019).

<sup>34</sup> Deleuze (1990, pp. 103-05, 71-73).

The undifferentiated abyss names one pole to be avoided, but Deleuze's deeper concern here is with the risk of structure, which he takes to be the exemplary motor of genesis and temporality, being rendered as a static essence.<sup>35</sup> He follows Foucault in finding it necessary to account for structural "mutations" and to open structures to "new values or variations," and like Foucault he conceives of these mutations as being the result of "events." But at this point Deleuze's attempt to depict how this mutation occurs is abstract, speaking in terms of a

structuralist *hero*: neither God nor man, neither personal nor universal, it is without an identity, made of non-personal individuations and pre-individual singularities. It assures the break-up [*l'éclatement*] of a structure affected by excess or deficiency; it opposes *its own* ideal event to the ideal events we have just described.<sup>36</sup>

Deleuze then identifies this mutation with praxis, or with where praxis takes place. Against both a determinate subject acting on structures from above and a subject merely consisting of various determinations distributed across a fixed structure, Deleuze's "structuralist hero" is posed as a means of bringing to structure transformation from within.

This is, no doubt, rather opaque. However, the notion of structure that Deleuze outlines in his first six criteria of structuralism are distinctly present in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense*, through the respective notions of the problematic Idea and, simply, structure.<sup>37</sup> In these texts the mutational impulse of the final passages of HRS is given a clearer theoretical form through what in *Difference and Repetition* could be named an ontology of the encounter or of problems, and in *The Logic of Sense* through a thorough thematization of chance and an ontology of the event, and more generally with an explication of the "non-personal individuations and pre-individual singularities" that make up the "structuralist hero."<sup>38</sup> But still, in *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze does not seem entirely satisfied.

In HRS, Deleuze names the stories of Lewis Carroll as exemplary explorations of the symbolic.<sup>39</sup> *The Logic of Sense*, meanwhile, began as an article on Carroll, which "became so big and developed in a way that turned it into a book, not exactly on Lewis Carroll but on the

---

<sup>35</sup> Deleuze (2004a, p. 191).

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>37</sup> The account of structure in *The Logic of Sense* (Deleuze 1990, 48) has only a small number of (nevertheless significant) deviations from the account in "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?" (see Bowden 2011), while across *Difference and Repetition* Deleuze speaks of the structural characteristics of the problematic Idea (Deleuze 1994, pp. 183-84).

<sup>38</sup> See Maniglier (2012, p. 22); Maniglier (2021); Bowden (2011).

<sup>39</sup> Deleuze (2004a, p. 175).

logic of sense in general.”<sup>40</sup> For Deleuze, Carroll’s paradoxes of sense and nonsense enact a play across the entire surface of the structural field of sense, revealing the role of nonsense in the production of sense.<sup>41</sup> But there is a startling break at the close of the thirteenth series of *The Logic of Sense* as Deleuze introduces the convulsive “Body without Organs,” drawn from Antonin Artaud, who for Deleuze “is alone in having been an absolute depth in literature.”<sup>42</sup> Against the physicality and suffering of Artaud’s writing, Carroll’s play on the surface of sense appears superficial: “We would not give a page of Artaud for all of Carroll.” In contrast to the “static genesis” that sense involves, a structure that gives form to change without itself changing, Deleuze speaks here of a “dynamic genesis” of language, from its primary order of prelinguistic sounds from the depths of the body, through to the tertiary arrangement as propositions, via the secondary order of the surface of sense.<sup>43</sup> In these terms the field of sense is no longer the fundamental genetic ground, with Deleuze, through Artaud, having discovered an order prior to it.

We can compare the role of Artaud and his “Body without Organs” in *The Logic of Sense* with that of the “structuralist hero” in HRS: They are both sites of activity that do not succumb to the symbolic given. In the terms of *The Logic of Sense* this symbolic given is a “surface” to which Deleuze opposes the “depths” of the body. But in the apparatus of *The Logic of Sense* those of us who do not share Artaud’s clinical madness do not seem to have any real access to these “depths,” to the primary order of language. Across the confrontation Deleuze sets up between Artaud and Carroll there is a reluctance to remain on the surface, but also a fear of the plunge into the depths. Moreover, there is doubt over philosophy’s capacity, in any case, to contend with these depths. Deleuze speaks here of the “ridiculousness of the thinker”:

What is left for the abstract thinker once she has given advice of wisdom and distinction? Well then, are we to speak always about Bousquet’s wound, about Fitzgerald’s and Lowry’s alcoholism, Nietzsche’s and Artaud’s madness while remaining on the shore? Are we to become the professionals who give talks on these topics? Are we to take up collections and create special journal issues? Or should we go a short way further to see for ourselves, to be a little alcoholic, a little mad, a little suicidal, a little of a guerrilla—just enough to extend the

---

<sup>40</sup> Deleuze (2020, p. 33).

<sup>41</sup> Deleuze (1990, p. 35).

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

crack, but not enough to deepen it irremediably? Wherever we turn, everything seems dismal. Indeed, how are we to stay at the surface without staying on the shore?<sup>44</sup>

Deviating from the figure of the structuralist hero, the invocation of Artaud seems to call not so much for a mutation of structure than for resisting structure entirely. But it is not clear what this could mean if not an abyssal madness. David Lapoujade acutely identifies in this tension a distinction between the clinical figures of the pervert and the schizophrenic.<sup>45</sup> On Lapoujade's reading, the "structuralist hero" of this period of Deleuze's thought is not the Artaudian schizophrenic, but the pervert, who, in "his art of surfaces and his mobility," navigates between order and chaos.<sup>46</sup> The tension between the pervert and the schizophrenic is a legitimate one, and in the end the pervert wins out. But already at this time schizophrenia is identified as "the highest power of thought."<sup>47</sup> The undifferentiated abyss must be avoided, but at the same time it is where any thought worth the name takes place. As Antonio Negri contends, even if we find in *Difference and Repetition* and *The Logic of Sense* a fully realized structuralist conceptual apparatus, we are still left asking how this is to make a "new thought" possible.<sup>48</sup> Where does this creation take place? How is practice enacted? Where is the "structuralist hero"? To begin to answer these questions we must turn to Deleuze's encounter with Guattari.

### 3 Intervention: Guattari's machine

"Machine and Structure" finds Guattari at a turning point. His vocabulary is still rife with the Lacanianism that formed much of his theoretical perspective up to this point, but he was, as Deleuze seemed to be, straining against the structuralist implications of this. With institutional psychotherapy and political action as important to his thought as a Lacanian high theoreticism, by the time of "Machine and Structure" Guattari had already for several years been seeking to reintegrate into his theory the, in the name of a slightly earlier essay, "causality, subjectivity, and history" that structuralist accounts had tended to sideline.<sup>49</sup>

Early in "Machine and Structure" Guattari notes his agreement with Deleuze's account of structure, except in one respect: Where for Deleuze the convergence of the elements of structure onto the empty square is still a part of structure, albeit an elusive part, for Guattari

---

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 157-58.

<sup>45</sup> Lapoujade (2017, p. 143).

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>47</sup> Deleuze (1994, pp. 58, 148); Lapoujade (2017, p. 147).

<sup>48</sup> Negri (2011, p. 157).

<sup>49</sup> Guattari (1984).

this function must be understood to be of the order of what he names the machine.<sup>50</sup> Perhaps surprisingly for a concept that provides a productive charge to much of Deleuze and Guattari's work to come, the machine is first discussed by Guattari in a negative context, in terms of the alienating effects machines have on concrete human subjects in modernity.<sup>51</sup> This alienation leads to the kind of deconstructed, distributed subject that Deleuze describes in his second criterion of structuralism, a relational form Guattari equates with the unconscious subject.<sup>52</sup> As this alienated status of the unconscious subject is tied to the concrete history of technical machines, it can then be understood to be "alongside" these machines. This allows Guattari to implement an important move from the history of machinery into the concept of the "machine": With the coupling of machines and the unconscious subject, the machine itself can be said to be, following psychoanalytic terminology, at the "heart of desire," always accompanying and being accompanied by the movement of desire that characterizes the unconscious subject.<sup>53</sup>

This may at first seem like a kind of technological determinism regarding not only history but also subjectivity, but tying the unconscious subject to the concrete fact of machines has two significant consequences that push beyond such a reading. First, at the site of the empty square now comes neither an elusive lack nor a substantial, determining figure, but rather only the machine function of *work*, of *production*.<sup>54</sup> And by tying the unconscious subject to this machine function, Guattari can conceive of the subject too as a form of work, and with this as an agent of structural mutation. This would then serve to resolve the problem Deleuze poses with the phrase "from subject to practice," and to which the structuralist hero presents a first solution. Guattari's proposal comes not as a reassertion of a sovereign subject, but rather as a reintroduction into structure of temporality, beyond structure itself as the producer of time; that is, in Deleuze's terms, as a function of dynamic genesis rather than of static genesis. For Guattari it "seems ... vital to start by establishing a distinction between [machine and structure] in order to make it easier to identify the peculiar positions of subjectivity in relation to events and history."<sup>55</sup> Alongside the synchronic form of structure, "[t]emporalization penetrates the

---

<sup>50</sup> Guattari (2015, pp. 381-82n1).

<sup>51</sup> Guattari (2015, p. 319). See the "desiring machines" of *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, p. 1 and *passim*) and the "machinic assemblages" of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, p. 4 and *passim*).

<sup>52</sup> Guattari (2015, p. 320).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 321. Here there remains a proximity to Lacan, not through what Deleuze and Guattari would call, in *Anti-Oedipus*, the "transcendent Phallus" (1983, p. 59), but rather through the *objet petit 'a'*, the "infernal machine" that "erupts at the heart of structural equilibrium" (*ibid.*, p. 83; Guattari 2015, p. 323). In Guattari's words, "the theory of the object 'a' perhaps sows the destruction of the signifier's totalitarianism" (Deleuze 2004b, p. 222). See Charis Raptis's study of the "two poles" Deleuze and Guattari identify in Lacan's theory of desire (Deleuze and Guattari 1983, p. 27; Raptis 2018).

<sup>54</sup> Guattari (2005, p. 323).

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318.

machine on all sides,” and the history of the unconscious subject is a history that can only be understood alongside the concrete history of machinery.<sup>56</sup>

For Guattari it is therefore not quite right to say, as Deleuze does in HRS, that the distributed subject follows the empty square and that practice must, somehow, be implemented in this context. Rather, by conceiving of the empty square as the machine and thus as work itself, the notion of practice lies already in the machine-subject pairing, and need not be an obscure addition to a particular function of structure. This is present even in the opening sentence of “Machine and Structure,” which suffers from a misleading translation in the standard English version. Where this translation reads that the distinction between machine and structure is “based solely on the way we use the words,” suggesting a trivial linguistic question, the original, “*l’usage que nous en ferons*,” is better rendered as “the use we make of it”: It is a practical distinction.<sup>57</sup>

These small aspects of “Machine and Structure” allow us to revisit some key tensions within HRS. The first is clear enough, and is already problematized, if not solved, by Deleuze in HRS. This is what we could follow the Derrida of “Structure, Sign and Play” in calling the structurality of structure; namely, the question of how structures come to be, how they mutate, how they relate to other structures, a question that HRS resolves, if unsatisfyingly, through the structuralist hero.<sup>58</sup> Deleuze’s solution here is extremely formal and abstract, and, as Guillaume Collett has recently argued, formulations from *Difference and Repetition* such as the “eternal return of difference” or the “pure and empty form of time” may be no better.<sup>59</sup> With Guattari these generalized terms are relocated into specific articulations of machines operating at the underside of structure. In this respect it is right to say that what Guattari provides to Deleuze’s thought is a practical aspect, but this statement by itself may occlude the deep theoretical impact of this practical turn.

A related second point, which does not seem to be fully problematized in HRS, concerns the status of language. The fact of structuralism’s origin in linguistics is not easily eliminable. In HRS Deleuze follows the Lacanian dictum that the unconscious is structured like a language, and moreover that “language is the only thing that can properly be said to have structure.”<sup>60</sup> A basic premise of structuralism is that it involves recognizing “the language

---

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 318; Guattari (1972, p. 240).

<sup>58</sup> Derrida (2001, p. 352).

<sup>59</sup> Collett (2019); Deleuze (1994, pp. 86-91).

<sup>60</sup> Deleuze (2004a, p. 170).

proper to a domain,” and while this supposes a plurality of languages, it is not always clear whether, for Deleuze, structuralism can escape positing an overarching “language system” to which all languages ultimately refer.<sup>61</sup> This is something that Deleuze sees the need to resist, but while it is “no doubt unsatisfactory” to ask if one structure determines all others, without a determining language system we are left with the distinct problem of how to understand how diverse structures can be related.<sup>62</sup> The four intricate demands Deleuze makes of the object =  $x$  as he closes his sixth criterion make clear that there are unresolved difficulties here.

Guattari purports to undercut this question entirely. For Guattari in “Machine and Structure,” as the unconscious subject is coupled with the non-structural element that is the machine, it is no longer necessary to say that the unconscious is “structured like a language.”<sup>63</sup> This allows for a rethinking of the challenge that Artaud poses at the centre of *The Logic of Sense*. If the machine is not itself linguistic and need not be thought in terms of language, then we do not face the problem of how it eludes our linguistic accounts of it. We rather face the (certainly no easier) problem of accounting for the non-linguistic processes of this primary order, and how they then relate to linguistic structures.<sup>64</sup> It is no longer a question of starting from structures, of “bas[ing] oneself on some structural space that existed before the breakthrough of the machine,” which “might then be seen as a meta-language, an absolute reference point that one could always produce in place of any chance event or specific indication.”<sup>65</sup> This allows for the status of language as a “secondary” order to be developed from a different perspective. Guattari suggests such a reading when he describes the voice as a “speech machine,” as the “basis and determinant of the structural order of language, and not the other way around.”<sup>66</sup>

Such an account would not have been alien to Deleuze, as already in *The Logic of Sense* he would argue that “[e]vents make language possible,” and even speaks of structure as “a machine for the production of incorporeal sense.”<sup>67</sup> But only with Guattari, it seems, is this inversion completed, through a refusal of the structural autonomy of language by connecting it to a machine that renders it historical, that reconnects language to the social world through a

---

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 189, 188.

<sup>63</sup> Guattari (2015, p. 327).

<sup>64</sup> See Thornton (2017, p. 468).

<sup>65</sup> Guattari (2015, p. 322).

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>67</sup> Deleuze (1990, pp. 181, 71).



primacy of pragmatics.<sup>68</sup> François Dosse is among those who emphasize this as a key aspect of Guattari's contribution to Deleuze's thought, remarking that Guattari's concern with the speech act itself allows him to "get out of the impasse of structural semiology's panlinguism."<sup>69</sup> However, Deleuze too, through his theory of events, is already credited by Dosse with reversing panlinguism.<sup>70</sup> Following this question of panlinguism and structuralism may then reveal something of what is—and what isn't—at stake in Deleuze's break with structuralism.

#### 4 Deleuze's points of heresy

Breaking with structuralism's panlinguism is indeed an explicit goal for Deleuze and Guattari, as seen in their rejection of the "imperialism of the signifier" and in the sustained critique of linguistics in *A Thousand Plateaus*.<sup>71</sup> But recent scholarship on structuralism has challenged this attribution of panlinguism. In a perspective picked up on by Étienne Balibar and Patrice Maniglier, Jean-Claude Milner has argued that, while the term "structural" is adopted from linguistics, structuralism itself cannot be said, as it has commonly been, to be an extension of structural linguistics.<sup>72</sup> It is not that structural linguistics purported to discover a structural reality to language, but rather that it made the methodological move of defining linguistic reality by a structural dimension, and that this gesture was adopted in other fields regarding their own objects.<sup>73</sup> Linguistics provided a prototypical structural approach, but only insofar as structure was not itself understood as an intrinsically linguistic notion.

In this light, common conceptions of structuralism may need to be revised. Maniglier and Balibar both highlight that, rather than being a clearly defined method with an equally clearly defined historical delimitation, the matter of identifying what structuralism was, what it involved, is still open to question. For Maniglier it was "neither a method nor a doctrine, but a problematic field," and its unity is to be found only between the "singular and in some respects heterogeneous" reasons the figure of structure was taken up in different fields, "each in their own way."<sup>74</sup> Balibar likewise emphasizes such a plurality, arguing that the shared "primacy" of structure "was only possible insofar as the irreducibility of structures to a single

---

<sup>68</sup> Alliez (2015, p. 139). This theme is developed in its most sophisticated form in *A Thousand Plateaus*, with the clearest link to a flight from structuralism to be found in the plateau entitled "587 B.C.-A.D. 70: On Several Regimes of Signs" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, pp. 111-48).

<sup>69</sup> Dosse (2010, p. 224).

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 230.

<sup>71</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 143).

<sup>72</sup> Balibar (2015, p. 67); Milner (2002, p. 144).

<sup>73</sup> Maniglier (2010, pp. 59-61); Balibar (2011, p. 17).

<sup>74</sup> Maniglier (2006, p. 15); Maniglier (2010, p. 56).

epistemological model was immediately and collectively posited.”<sup>75</sup> Rather than adherence to a shared, linguistic model, Balibar identifies “three large questions” on which structuralism turns: “that of the constitution of the subject, that of the theoretical break or cut [*coupure*] of knowledge, and that of the universality of human nature.”<sup>76</sup>

From this perspective, Balibar suggests a closer proximity between structuralism and the poststructuralisms of figures such as Deleuze or Derrida than has been supposed. Where a typical structuralist procedure would be the “simultaneous operation of deconstruction and reconstruction of the subject,” or a reversal from “constituting subject into constituted subjectivity,” the poststructuralist move is one of remaining at the limits of structure, focusing on the necessity of structure’s dissolution.<sup>77</sup> But this is already a moment, or a tendency, in structuralist inquiry, and so in this sense poststructuralism may constitute less a critique of and departure from structuralism than a moment of structuralism, or a moment of the renewal of structuralist inquiry.<sup>78</sup> The structurality of structure is already an immanently structuralist concern.

Between structuralism and poststructuralism we might find what Balibar calls, drawing from Foucault, “points of heresy.”<sup>79</sup> The point of heresy takes two forms. In the first form, within a structure, or a stable field of knowledge, lie certain points where shared premises produce two possibilities, either of which is equally valid.<sup>80</sup> These constitute an area of a limited kind of freedom, where choices can be made but without bringing into question the structure within which this choice takes place. But in a second form the point of heresy may bring into focus “the limits of the field or the understanding of the conditions of possibility themselves.”<sup>81</sup> Certain antitheses may present something of the structural condition that made the choice itself possible. At this moment, says Balibar, there arises the potential for a dynamic of thinking to emerge, of “walking on two roads” at once, where remaining at the points of heresy permits the delineation and, moreover, the unsettling of the structure itself. In exploring these points the human sciences “share a capacity to push ‘finitude’ to the recognition of its own constitutive limits.”<sup>82</sup> At these points we find not only an oscillation between two choices,

---

<sup>75</sup> Balibar (2003, p. 3).

<sup>76</sup> Balibar (2010, p. 17).

<sup>77</sup> Balibar (2003, pp. 10, 11).

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 18.

<sup>79</sup> Balibar (2015).

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 50.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 54.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

but the possibility of a third point that suggests a transgression of existing forms of knowledge.<sup>83</sup>

I want to suggest that in HRS Deleuze identifies two such points of heresy within structuralism, the first on the question of stability and mutation, and the second on language and languages. Balibar, indeed, situates the ongoing problem of the status of the subject in and after structuralism in direct relation to Deleuze's "structuralist hero," described as a "sufficiently eloquent and sufficiently opaque" formulation of the aporias of the subject between subjection and subjectivation, "passivity and activity ... metamorphosis and destruction."<sup>84</sup> In a somewhat different philosophical mode, in his *The Philosophy of Marx*, Balibar will state that "the only true subject is the practical subject or the subject of practice, or, better still, *that the subject is nothing other than practice* which has always already begun and continues indefinitely."<sup>85</sup> The structuralist hero, as a solution to the problem of moving from subject to practice, or rather, following Balibar, of subject *as* practice, would then constitute an ultimately unsatisfying attempt to formulate a "third" point at the point of heresy, with the machine ultimately supplanting it and, in the process, breaking with structuralism.

A question I wish to leave open, as grounds for further inquiry, concerns the success of this break and the resulting consequences for structuralism. *A Thousand Plateaus* seems to step back from the plunge into the depths of a terrifying disarticulation that marks some points of *Anti-Oedipus*. When Deleuze and Claire Parnet write elsewhere that "[t]he minimum real unit is [...] the *assemblage*," a statement that has been taken to apply to Deleuze's thought of this period more generally, it cannot escape our attention that the assemblage that appears throughout *A Thousand Plateaus* is a distinctly structural notion.<sup>86</sup> Where the assemblage differs from structure is in how assemblages are not self-sufficient, in a form where Being would take the form of the co-articulation of structures, but are conditioned by an "abstract machine."<sup>87</sup> But the form that the assemblage takes in *A Thousand Plateaus* nevertheless marks a certain reinvestment in ideas of structure after the violent challenge to structure that marks *Anti-Oedipus*.

While the figure of the assemblage then revises a concern with the structurality of structure, Deleuze and Guattari's challenge to structuralism doubtlessly runs deeper than

---

<sup>83</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>84</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 73, 17.

<sup>85</sup> Balibar (2014, p. 25).

<sup>86</sup> Deleuze and Parnet (2006, p. 38).

<sup>87</sup> Lapoujade (2017, pp. 224-25).

asking this question. Maniglier aptly describes Deleuze as having attempted “a kind of synthesis of Bergson and structuralism,” but by *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze is challenging his own previously held position.<sup>88</sup> Under the heading “Memories of a Naturalist,” Deleuze and Guattari criticize structural thinking for only being able to think in terms of relationships (between A and B) rather than in terms of production (from A to *x*); that is, for being incapable of thinking change.<sup>89</sup> This is already a challenge Deleuze had made in his pre-Guattari work, but in the next section, “Memories of a Bergsonian,” a Deleuzian critique of structuralism opens into a distinctly Deleuze-Guattarian confrontation with Deleuze’s own structuralism. This confrontation takes place through the concept of *becoming*. Deleuze and Guattari reject an evolutionary logic for one of “involution,” rejecting the hereditary telos of evolution. Such a logic of evolution can, in turn, be posited of *Difference and Repetition*; we find in Deleuze’s *Bergsonism* a link between evolution and actualization, the passage from virtual to actual that we find throughout *Difference and Repetition*.<sup>90</sup> Not only in structure, but in evolution and actualization, and perhaps even in production, there remains, for Deleuze and Guattari, an insistence on fixed terms that fails to account for the precise character of the change that takes place *between* these terms. The logic of becoming, on the other hand, is concerned with “irreducible dynamics drawing lines of flight,” priority here being attributed to the “block of becoming” rather than the terms it passes through.<sup>91</sup>

Still, this may be seen to occupy the poststructuralist “moment” of structuralism that Balibar identifies, albeit as an extreme case of it. And it remains that *A Thousand Plateaus* is suffused with structures, in the form of assemblages. While the Deleuze-Guattarian challenge to Deleuzian structuralism may take the form of a rejection of the logic of actualization, it is less easy to see where precisely the break lies with another characteristic of the form that Deleuze’s structuralism takes in *Difference and Repetition*. This characteristic, which Maniglier has recently elaborated on, is that structures are inherently multi-structured and that “every process of structuration is at the same time a process of co-structuration.”<sup>92</sup> This again is why the most interesting works under the banner of structuralism are concerned with not only structural domains in their autonomy but with processes of structuration. Maniglier highlights how in *Difference and Repetition* this, for Deleuze, takes the form of his theory of

---

<sup>88</sup> Maniglier (2005, p. 468).

<sup>89</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 234).

<sup>90</sup> Deleuze (1991, p. 98).

<sup>91</sup> Deleuze and Guattari (1987, p. 237).

<sup>92</sup> Maniglier (2021, pp. 25, 37).

problems or problematic Ideas, and with this theory there is a distinct shift from how structures are conceived in HRS. While structure may already be seen to be multiple in HRS, there the problem of structure nevertheless seems to ultimately alight on large-scale, potentially totalizing structures—the unconscious, the mode of production, “culture.” In *Difference and Repetition*, on the contrary, structures are vastly multiplied, apt to be adapted into the understanding of problems of many kinds in many fields, a shift that is continued and intensified with Guattari.

We see then that some of the issues in HRS concerning stability and mutation, and language and languages, the points of heresy that the machine was taken to be a resolution of, are already on the way to being resolved in *Difference and Repetition* through the multiplication of problems. It might be that much of *A Thousand Plateaus* operates under a multi-structural structuring of structures, and it might also be that this is a condition that, at a limit point, Deleuze and Guattari reject. But what we see is that against the polemical anti-structuralism of *Anti-Oedipus* in particular, and against any too-hasty conflation of structuralism with panlinguism that may still persist in *A Thousand Plateaus*, the status of Deleuze and Guattari’s poststructuralism in relation to structuralism must be carefully determined. The structuralist hero, while abstract, may yet be apt to structuralism’s problem of practice.

Deleuze, like Foucault, Derrida, and Althusser, seemed to see structuralism as an opportunity to renew philosophy, to enact, in Balibar’s words, philosophy’s “regeneration out of its other.”<sup>93</sup> Yet, in accounting for his ultimate break with structuralism, we may ask whether Deleuze, as Giuseppe Bianco has argued, adopts from his teachers a defence of philosophy’s epistemological borders, and we may want to consider that the rejection of structuralism is in part a rejection of the diminishment of philosophy that the “sciences of man” enacted.<sup>94</sup> The recent renewed concern with structuralism has been at the same time a renewed concern with the limits of philosophy and the contours of disciplinary translation, from Eduardo Viveiros de Castro’s “post-structural anthropology” to the fluid transdisciplinarity that Lucie Kim-Chi Mercier has highlighted in Michel Serres’s early Leibnizian structuralism.<sup>95</sup> The place of Deleuze in this conversation, whether as transdisciplinary vanguardist or defender of philosophy’s borders, remains an open concern.

---

<sup>93</sup> Balibar (2010, p. 22).

<sup>94</sup> Bianco (2020). See also Dosse (1997b, pp. 28-29) on Derrida.

<sup>95</sup> Viveiros de Castro (2014); Mercier (2019).

## References

Ansell-Pearson, Keith. 1999. *Germinal Life: The Difference and Repetition of Deleuze*. Routledge: London.

Alliez, Éric. 2011. Rhizome (With no return). *Radical Philosophy* 167: 36-42.

Alliez, Éric. 2015. Structuralism's Afters: Tracing Transdisciplinarity through Guattari and Latour. *Theory, Culture & Society* 32(5-6): 139-158.

Alliez, Éric, and Andrew Goffey, eds. 2011. *The Guattari Effect*. London: Continuum.

Althusser, Louis. 2009. Foreword to the Italian Edition. In Louis Althusser and Étienne Balibar, *Reading Capital*, trans. Ben Brewster, London: Verso.

Balibar, Étienne. 2003. Structuralism: A Destitution of the Subject?, trans. J. Swenson. *differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 14(1): 1-21.

Balibar, Étienne. 2011. Structure: Method or subversion of the social sciences?. *Radical Philosophy* 165: 17-22.

Balibar, Étienne. 2014. *The Philosophy of Marx*. Trans. Chris Turner. London ; New York : Verso.

Balibar, Étienne. 2015. Foucault's Point of Heresy: "Quasi-Transcendentals" and the Transdisciplinary Function of the Episteme. *Theory, Culture & Society* 32(5-6): 45-77.

Barthes, Roland. 1972. The Structuralist Activity. In *Critical Essays*, trans. Richard Howard, 213-220. Evanston: Northwestern University Press.

Bianco, Giuseppe. 2020. Philosophy and History of Philosophy: Deleuze as a Trainee Guard of Philosophy's Epistemological Borders. *Deleuze, Guattari, and the Problem of Transdisciplinarity*, ed. Guillaume Collett, 15-34. London: Bloomsbury.

Bowden, Sean. 2011. *The Priority of Events: Deleuze's Logic of Sense*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Collett, Guillaume. 2019. Nine Notes on the Refrain. *La Deleuziana* 10: 43-57.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1970. Un nouvel archiviste. *Critique* 274: 195-209.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1990. *The Logic of Sense*. Trans. Mark Lester with Charles Stivale, New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1991. *Bergsonism*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam. New York: Zone Books.

Deleuze, Gilles. 1994. *Difference and Repetition*. Trans. Paul Patton, New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles. 2004a. How Do We Recognize Structuralism?, trans. Melissa McMahon and Charles Stivale. In *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-74*, ed. David Lapoujade and trans. Michael Taormina, 170-192. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Deleuze, Gilles. 2004b. Deleuze and Guattari Fight Back... In *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953-74*, ed. David Lapoujade and trans. Michael Taormina, 216-229. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e).

Deleuze, Gilles. 2020. Letter to Jean Piel, April 12, 1968. In *Letters and Other Texts*, ed. David Lapoujade and trans. Ames Hodges, 33-34. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e).

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1983. *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1987. *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Trans. Brian Massumi. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1994. *What Is Philosophy?*. Trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell. New York: Columbia University Press.

Deleuze, Gilles, and Claire Parnet. 2006. *On the Superiority of Anglo-American Literature*. In *Dialogues II*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam, 27-56. London: Continuum.

Derrida, Jacques. 2001. *Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourses of the Human Sciences*. In *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass. London: Routledge.

Dosse, François. 1997a. *History of Structuralism, Volume 1: The Rising Sign, 1945-1966*. Trans. Deborah Glassman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dosse, François. 1997b. *History of Structuralism, Volume 2: The Sign Sets, 1967-Present*. Trans. Deborah Glassman. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Dosse, François. 2010. *Gilles Deleuze & Félix Guattari: Intersecting Lives*, trans. Deborah Glassman. New York: Columbia University Press.

Foucault, Michel. 2002. *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A.M. Sheridan Smith. London: Routledge.

Guattari, Félix. 1972. *Machine et structure*. In *Psychanalyse et transversalité : essais d'analyse institutionnelle*, Paris: Maspero.

Guattari, Félix. 1984. *Causality, Subjectivity and History*. In *Molecular Revolution: Psychiatry and Politics*, trans. Rosemary Sheed, 175-207. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Guattari, Félix. 1996. *Institutional Practice and Politics*, trans. Lang Baker. In *The Guattari Reader*, ed. Gary Genosko. Oxford: Blackwell.

Guattari, Félix. 2015. *Machine and Structure*, trans. Rosemary Sheed. In *Psychoanalysis and Transversality: Texts and Interviews 1955-1971*, trans. Ames Hodges. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e).



- Kurzweil, Edith. 1986. The Fate of Structuralism. *Theory, Culture & Society* 3(3): 113-124.
- Lacan, Jacques. 2006. D'un Autre à l'autre, *Le Séminaire : Livre XVI (1968-1969)*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Lapoujade, David. 2017. *Aberrant Movements: The Philosophy of Gilles Deleuze*. Trans. Joshua David Jordan. South Pasadena: Semiotext(e).
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude. 1966. *The Savage Mind*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.
- Lundy, Craig. 2013. From Structuralism to Poststructuralism. In *The Edinburgh Companion to Poststructuralism*, eds. Benoît Dillet, Iain Mackenzie, and Robert Porter, 69-92. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Macksey, Richard, and Eugenio Donato. 1972. The Space Between—1971. In *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man*, eds. Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, ix-xiv. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins Press.
- Maniglier, Patrice. 2005. *La Vie énigmatique des signes. Saussure et la naissance du structuralisme*. Paris: Éditions Léo Scheer.
- Maniglier, Patrice. 2010. The Structuralist Legacy. In *After Poststructuralism: Transitions and Transformations*, ed. Rosi Braidotti, 55-82. Durham: Acumen.
- Maniglier, Patrice. 2012. What is a problematic?. *Radical Philosophy* 173: 21-23.
- Maniglier, Patrice. 2021. Problem and Structure: Bachelard, Deleuze and Transdisciplinarity. *Theory, Culture & Society* 38(2): 25-45.
- Mercier, Lucie Kim-Chi 2019. Michel Serres's Leibnizian Structuralism. *Angelaki* 24(6): 3-21.
- Milner, Jean-Claude. 2002. *Le Périple structural : Figures et paradigmes*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

Montag, Warren. 2013. *Althusser and His Contemporaries: Philosophy's Perpetual War*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.

Negri, Antonio. 2011, Gilles-félix, trans. Shane Lillis. In *The Guattari Effect*, eds. Éric Alliez and Andrew Goffey, 156-171. London: Continuum.

Peden, Knox. 2014. *Spinoza Contra Phenomenology: French Rationalism from Cavailles to Deleuze*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Raptis, Charis [Harris]. 2018. From the Freudian Oedipus to the Lacanian Phallus and Beyond: The *Objet  $\alpha$*  as a Desiring Machine. In *Schizoanalysis and Ecosophy: Reading Deleuze and Guattari*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas, 163-177. London: Bloomsbury.

Röllli, Marc. 2016. *Gilles Deleuze's Transcendental Empiricism: From Tradition to Difference*. Trans. Peter Hertz-Ohmes. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Saussure, Ferdinand de. 1959. *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. Wade Baskin. New York: The Philosophical Library.

Smith, Daniel W. 2006. From the Surface to the Depths: On the Transition between *Logic of Sense* and *Anti-Oedipus*. *Symposium* 10(1): 135-153.

Smith, Claude. 2019. Around Derrida's Intervention in Baltimore: "Decentering" as a Marker of Poststructural Displacement? *MLN* 134(5): 982-991.

Stivale, Charles J. 1998. *The Two-Fold Thought of Deleuze and Guattari: Intersections and Animations*. London: The Guilford Press.

Stolze, Ted. 1998. Deleuze and Althusser: Flirting with Structuralism. *Rethinking Marxism: A Journal of Economics, Culture & Society* 10(3): 51-63.

Thornton, Edward. 2017. The Rise of the Machines: Deleuze's Flight from Structuralism. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy* 55(4): 454-474.

Viveiros de Castro, Eduardo. 2014. *Cannibal Metaphysics: For a Post-Structural Anthropology*. Trans. and ed. Peter Skafish. Minneapolis: Univocal.

Williams, James. 2005. *Understanding Poststructuralism*. Cheshum: Acumen.