Chapter 8

Baroque Structuralism: Deleuze, Lacan and the Critique of Linguistics

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Nowadays it is still common to see Deleuze and Lacan as two rivals standing on entirely opposite shores. The legitimation of this opposition is sought in Deleuze and Guattari's notorious *Anti-Oedipus* project, whose very name attacks one of the cornerstones of Freudian psychoanalysis, the Oedipal drama of castration and the corresponding notion of negativity. On the other side, Lacan's teaching is said to have pushed structuralism to the extreme, privileging lack and negativity, while also promoting an overall pessimistic vision of politics. However, this perspective could also be inverted. Deleuze and Guattari's project contains a peculiar radicalisation of psychoanalysis, a consequent substitution of the psychological with the schizological: schizo-analysis took a step further in the depsychologisation and deindividualisation of the mental apparatus, or if one prefers, of thinking. *Anti-Oedipus* pursued the anti-humanist orientation of their 'arch-rivals', structuralism and psychoanalysis, whereby it went beyond the boundaries of concepts such as structure and analysis. With Freud, psychoanalysis took the first step by abolishing the metaphysical hypothesis of the soul. The etymology of 'psychoanalysis' already contains this point: *analysis* (decomposition, dissolution, deconstruction) of *psyché*. Freud's discipline is anti-psychology, which still remains *logos* of *psyche*, the science of the soul. With the discovery of the unconscious no soul-hypothesis could be sustained any longer, and in this respect Freud indeed produced a ground-breaking epistemological, philosophical and political rupture. From here on the subject could finally be envisaged beyond its anthropomorphic mask: the subject of the unconscious has no human face; it is a decentralised, constitutively alienated and split entity. Yet, Freud did not go beyond the split that the abolition of the soul revealed in the psychic reality. Consequently, psychoanalysis never made the effort

to become more than a royal road to negativity, while other attempts to step out of Freud's shadow only amounted to worse. Jung's mysticism brought about the obscurantist regression, while the Anglo-Saxon development continues to represent a conformist regression in accordance with the demands of the free market ideology. Then there is Wilhelm Reich, the bastard psychoanalyst, who in an exaggerated and somewhat delusional way demonstrated that there is something beyond the schism of the mental apparatus discovered by Freud.

The predominantly vitalist and vehemently critical orientation of *Anti-Oedipus* suggested that Freud failed to envisage the positive, productive and nomadic function of desire. He may have decentralised the mental apparatus by pushing forward the triad composed of negativity, lack and metonymy, yet this was only the appearance of unconscious desire, which was thereafter re-centralised, normalised, domesticated by means of the Oedipal family triangle: Father, Mother, Child. Positivity, productivity and nomadism got overshadowed and the subject's polymorph character was reintegrated into what Freud called *Familienroman des Neurotikers*, the neurotic's family novel, and what Lévi-Strauss described as Freud's greatest myth. Lacan is said to have pursued this original Freudian sin under the guise of its rationalisation by means of the linguistic notions such as metaphor, metonymy and structure, to which Deleuze and Guattari immediately opposed metamorphosis, nomadism and rhizome. Within these oppositions the main task of schizo-analysis would consist of moving beyond the hypothesis of *Spaltung*, the negative structure that became the privileged departure for the entire structuralist movement. Schizo-analysis would then stand for psychoanalysis without negativity, dissolution of the split. It would think the main Freudian achievement, the decentralisation of thinking, beyond the conceptual triangle composed by the phallus, castration and loss. We can remark here that Lacan remained sceptical toward such dichotomies, which always seem to sound too good to be true. The question, however, remains whether this was what Deleuze and Guattari actually intended and whether the later developments in Lacan's teaching could not offer a slightly different view of the problem.

In the following I would like to examine some of the intersections between structural psychoanalysis and schizo-analysis. These points of encounter will be addressed through their common critique of linguistics, the confrontation with what could be described as the persistence of Aristotelian philosophy of language in modern linguistics. In the second part, the critical perspectives of Lacan and Deleuze will be linked to their efforts to construct a new topology, which both thinkers claimed to have found in the baroque.

The sins and blind spots of linguistics

As already indicated above, Deleuze and Guattari's opposition targeted the affinities of psychoanalysis and structuralism, and more broadly the epistemic foundations of structural linguistics, for which neither of them cultivated much sympathy. In *A Thousand Plateaus* they attack what they call the 'postulates of linguistics', and one can hardly overlook that their critique targets both Saussure and Chomsky, whose generative linguistics by then had won the battle against continental structuralism and reintroduced positivist epistemology into the science of language. The postulates of linguistics propose a negative summary of the modern science of language in the following four theses:

1. 'Language is informational and communicational.'
2. 'There is an abstract machine of language that does not appeal to any "extrinsic" factor.'
3. 'There are constants or universals of language that permit us to define it as a homogenous system.'
4. 'Language can be scientifically studied only under the conditions of a standard or major language.'[1]

Beyond the specific developments provided for each point, the common feature that traverses this critical summary of linguistics' scientific tendencies can hardly be overlooked: normalisation and domestication of language accompanied by the presence of mastery. Saussure, too, persisted in the frames of the master's discourse (the general structure that grounds the relations of domination and subjection; it was none other than Lacan who identified Saussure with this structural framework). Instead of bringing about an 'emancipation of language' – something that Deleuze and Guattari appreciated in literature, this counterpart of linguistics, or at least in certain writers, such as Kafka and Beckett – structural linguistics ended up renewing its servitude, under the banner of the four postulates. Structuralism would thus stand for the scientific taming of language. Still the overall situation is more complex, and structuralism does not entirely match this critique either – not even for Deleuze, who wrote a famous text not simply *on* but moreover *for* structuralism.

By prioritising information and communication, linguistics remained within the old Aristotelian frames: it treated language as *organon* (instrument and organ) serving pragmatic purposes such as transmission of information, adequate representation of reality, constitution and regulation of stable social relations, and so on. Thereby, language remained centred by an ideal and normative communicational model. This is one crucial aspect

of Deleuze and Guattari's notion of abstract machine, the other one being that language is envisaged in its absolute detachment from other registers of reality, be they human or inhuman. Once transformed into a scientific object, in other words, extracted and isolated from its concrete manifestations (recall that for Saussure linguistics is grounded on the differentiation of language from speech), language is turned into an ideality, which, as such, does not exist. The object of linguistics is inexistent but it nevertheless serves well for regulating the practice and the experience of language. In the very same way the psychoanalytic language of Oedipus domesticates the subjective dialects of unconscious desire: Oedipus does not exist, yet it is imposed onto the subject as the regulative frame, which teaches him or her how to desire 'correctly'.

Constructing the constants and the universals that are supposed to be common to all languages enables the isolation of the scientific object. This isolation is inevitably accompanied by the homogenisation of language – in fact, it is the same process. Language is cleansed of surpluses, deviations and movements that accompany concrete speech situations. Deleuze and Guattari's last point, the study of language under the paradigm of a major or standard language, most explicitly questions the presupposed ideological neutrality of linguistic treatment of language. The very expression 'major language' indicates the persistence of a power relation within the science of language and should be evidently correlated to the opposite idea of a minor language,[2] which can, within the abstract linguistic regime, only appear as particular subjective dialect, actualisation of the universal features of any language. For the science of language, and this is again a moment that could be qualified as Aristotelian, living language is subordinated to language as such, the scientific object that linguistics supposedly extracts from the Babylon of natural languages.

Here we can hardly avoid evoking Deleuze's controversial statement in his posthumously released *Abécédaire*, where he remarks that linguistics has caused a lot of harm (*mal*: damage, evil). Linguistics is a negative science, which needs to be contrasted to the lessons of literature, where 'minor language' is practised beyond the abstract linguistic machine and against the idea of universal grammar. Literature – critique of linguistics and clinics of language. No surprise that the *Abécédaire* closes with very brief and hostile remarks on Wittgenstein and the analytic philosophy. Wittgenstein and his followers are accused of 'assassination of philosophy' – they constructed a 'system of terror' and presented poverty as greatness ('pauvreté installée en grandeur', says Deleuze in his video interview). All this could be associated to the various stages of Wittgenstein's philosophy, whose guideline remained the attempt to conceive first logic and then grammar as therapy of philosophy and more broadly therapy of language, which

abolishes the false problems and shifting meanings of concepts and words. These linguistic and philosophical evildoers are then the main enemies of any attempt to overcome the abstract linguistic hegemony with the concrete experience of language in literature, in childhood and finally in the unconscious. From this perspective we can hardly overlook that Deleuze already in the 1960s replaced the notion of 'structure' with a more flexible 'becoming', which he associated with Nietzsche.[3] Language, too, was approached from this perspective, thereby exposing an aspect of symbolic systems that the classical structuralist programme supposedly neglected. Here, a topological lesson is at stake, which will be more directly addressed further below, a lesson that brings Deleuze closer to Lacan.

So, linguistics did a lot of harm. This claim is made in Deleuze's response to the letter S, which stands for style. Linguistics is equally avoided under the letter L, which stands for literature as an *experience* of the *life* of language, its becoming, metamorphosis and autonomy. Opposite to this stands the structuralist obsession with mathematical formalisation, its scientism, which strives to establish linguistics as a positive science, whose object (*la langue*) is obtained through an act of abstraction and subtraction: *la langue* is *le langage* (language) minus *la parole* (speech), as Saussure has already formulated. Language is thus language without speech, numb language. Linguistics treats language as if no living being would speak it, as *no-body*'s language, language without body. Could we not see here another critical axis of Deleuze's concept of the body without organs? Linked to the linguistic problematic such an organless body would stand for a language, which is – against Aristotle and the pragmatic, analytic and positivist philosophy of language – *not* an *organon*, but which remains a body. A materialist science of language, what structuralism strived to become, would need to think language beyond the four postulates of linguistics.

Deleuze's condemnation of linguistics is formulated in the following context:

> In order to understand style, you must know nothing about linguistics. Linguistics has done a lot of harm. Why is this the case? Because there is an opposition between linguistics and literature, which do not go well together. According to linguistics, *langue* is a system in a state of equilibrium, which can thus be an object of science. All the rest, all the variations are set aside as belonging not to *langue* but to *parole*. But a writer knows well that a language is a system that is by nature far from equilibrium, a system in a perpetual state of imbalance, so that there is no difference between a level of *langue* and a level of *parole*. Language is made up of all sorts of heterogeneous currents, in a state of multiple disequilibrium.[4]

For linguistics language is autonomous, homogeneous and constituted on an underlying *relation*. For Deleuze – and this is where the opposition

between him and Lacan begins to weaken – language is essentially *non-relation*, which immediately problematises its presumed isolation and homogeneity. However, the question is whether structuralism can be entirely subsumed to this denouncement and categorised exclusively as a normalising tendency in the science of language. Deleuze had the intuition that structure is not merely a normative system that the scientific apparatus imposes to the free, vital and raw linguistic materiality. On the contrary, structure is indeed the privileged name for the *disequilibrium of language*, and Lacan is *the* structuralist, who thought this discovery in the most rigorous way, without amounting to the dichotomies such as structure and life, mathematics and poetry or linguistics and literature.

Deleuze, too, does not simply choose speech against language, denouncing the systematicity and opting for linguistic spontaneity. Rather, he rejects the very pertinence of the dichotomy language/speech, and consequently that between abstract structure and living experience. As Lecercle writes:

> Deleuze does not deny the possibility of a system, of thinking in terms of *langue*. What he denies is the ontological hierarchy, and separation from *parole*. A system there may be, yet it is a strange one, which a systematic linguist would fail to recognize.[5]

To speak of structure is not false. What is false is that linguistics recurred to ontological hierarchisation, and we know that for Lacan ontology is *the* discipline grounded on the master's discourse; and even here, Lacan does not target just any ontology but the closed ontological system par excellence, that of Aristotle. Deleuze, too, opts for linguistics without the spectre of Aristotle. His condemnation of linguistics should therefore be additionally specified. What did a lot of harm in linguistics is grammar, which tames the dynamic of language, and rejects its immanent becoming, which strives to no external and normative end. Grammar does this in order to present language as a fixed and stable constellation, which is supposed to represent the real of language. This grammatical normalisation and its ontological aspirations are not at all characteristic for structuralism, which explains linguistic stability from the perspective of instabilities such as the unconscious, aphasia or child language (Jakobson being the most evident example of this orientation). The centrality of grammar is what the materialist core of structuralism openly strived to leave behind by pursuing a consequent decentralisation in the field of language.

Incidentally, Lacan denounced the same restriction of linguistics, when he openly thematised the insufficiencies of the structuralist 'opinion movement'.[6] The media image of structuralism, which involved severe imprecisions, neutralised the epistemic dilemmas as well as the dialecti-

cal and materialist core of the structuralist research programme. Lacan addressed this problem in an interview from 1966: 'Structuralism will last for as long as the roses, symbolisms and Parnassus: one literary season. [. . .] The structure, however, will not go away any time soon, because it is inscribed into the real.'[7] Lacan envisaged an intensified understanding of structuralism throughout his teaching. The structural realism, expressed in the formulation 'the inscription of the structure into the real', affirms the rational character of the real, without thereby concluding that the notion of structure should be thought exclusively through the linguistic paradigm (this would equate the real with the symbolic and entirely overlap reality and the real, something that Lacan rigorously distinguished). The point here is rather in affirming that, while reality is linguistic and discursive, there is also something like a *real of language*, which can become the object of a science of structures, which found its first and hitherto most accomplished exemplification in structural linguistics. The end of structuralism as an opinion movement thus *does not imply* the end of structuralism as a movement of episteme.

The quarrel of Deleuze and Guattari with Lacanian psychoanalysis turned around this major point, as Lecercle has already noted:

> The center of Deleuze's hostility to linguistics [. . .] can best be expressed as a rejection of Milner's central tenet in his philosophical reconstruction of the science of language: that there is a Real of *langue*, and that this Real is the object of a calculus.[8]

Still, Lacan and Deleuze share a common denominator: there is a real of language. This linguistic real is irreducible to grammatical structure and – this is where Milner might be corrected – is formalisable without therefore being reducible to the calculus (abstract quantification). The question remains: can the structural instability, dynamic, non-relation be more than experience of literature? Can it become a scientific object? A positive answer to this question conditions the possibility for a materialist science of language. Lacan, who was vehemently opposed to every reduction of linguistics to grammar, proposed several names for the real of language: unconscious, *lalangue*, *jouissance*, which all come down to the conception of structure as a feature of the real. His later seminars, where the real is defined with three negative features, address this problem most directly: absence of the law, foreclosure of sense and fragmentation (non-all). None of these features suggests that the real is not structured – they merely postulate that it does not contain a stable law, which would make the real entirely predictable and invariable; nor does it contain sense, which would support its univocity and consistency; and finally, the pieces of the real do not form a closed totality. However, this non-all is already the privileged

Lacanian name for the structure of the real, for the real as structured – not structured like a language (that axiom applies only to the unconscious, the real of language), but simply structured without being necessary, univocal or totalised. In order to come closer to Deleuze one could say: the structure of the real manifests as becoming, and the features of this becoming-structure, this structure-as-becoming are grasped with *topology* rather than with classical linguistics – and the same holds for the linguistic structure: 'Topology is not "made to guide us in structure". Topology is this structure – as retroaction of the chain order of which language consists.'[9]

One could remark something similar about rhizome, which is Deleuze and Guattari's attempt not simply to reject the concept of structure but to name a dynamic structure, which has nothing in common with the transcendentalism of structure. This, of course, does not mean that rhizome overlaps with the Lacanian non-all, but it does represent an effort to preserve a systematic approach. As Lecercle insists, Deleuze was not blindly opposed to the system, nor was he a non-systematic thinker. He merely strived for a decentralised and dehierarchised system, hence the choice of literature against linguistics, Anti-Oedipus against Oedipus or becoming against structure.

For Lacan, too, linguistics has done a lot of harm, but unlike Deleuze, he strived 'to construct a linguistics, which would take language more "seriously"'.[10] The given linguistics then does not take language seriously enough. It either reduces it to *langue* (Saussure) by separating structure from becoming, excluding temporality from structure and evacuating speech from language; or it renews the organonic conception of language (Chomsky). To this development a Deleuzian-sounding problematic would need to be added: 'But is language branched to something that could be admitted in terms of some life, that is a question, which would not be bad to be awaken in linguists.'[11] We seem to be back at the dichotomy 'abstract structure versus living experience'. But is this truly the case? Could we not think the introduction of language in the sense suggested by Deleuze, namely as the name for the instability and disequilibrium of language – something that Lacan addressed through his concept of the barred Other? His stubborn repeating that the Other does not exist points to a paradox in the structure, namely that it is not as transcendent and detached from the body and the real as the simplified readings of structuralism suggest.

In order to pinpoint the insufficiencies of Saussurean structuralism, Lacan similarly resorts to literature. Joyce, for instance, turns out to be anti-Saussure par excellence, a move beyond the horizon of popularised structuralism, since the main value of his literature consists in the fact

that it involves something like martyrdom of the subject and of language. Joyce's literature exposes the actual meaning of the 'life of language': language as a factory of *jouissance*, a torture-house rather than a 'house of being'.[12] In this way a critical aspect of the bar that Saussure placed between the signifier and the signified can be thematised:

> What happens in Joyce's work? The signifier stuffs the signified. It is because the signifiers fit together, combine, and concertina [. . .] that something is produced as signified that may seem enigmatic, but is clearly what is closest to what we analysts, thanks to analytic discourse, have to read – lapsus.[13]

The stuffing of the signified goes further than Saussure's notion of arbitrariness, which remains a form of *relation*. It fully acknowledges that something between both poles of the linguistic signs does not work, a *non-relation*, which results from the insight that the dynamic between the signifiers involves a *double* production, of which the effect of the signified is merely one side. What makes Joyce unreadable is the other aspect of production, which concerns *jouissance*, something which not only 'serves no purpose',[14] but which is entirely meaningless and non-referential. *Poiesis* is thus internally doubled on the production of reality (in this respect performativity is the main feature of language) and the production of *jouissance* (which is precisely *not* performative but real discursive consequence). Saussure was not entirely unaware of this critical dimension, given his preoccupation with anagrams. But as he was searching for codified messages, enigmatic, hidden or repressed meaning, which needed to be brought back to the surface, he remained within the effects of the signified.

The minimal materialist thesis concerning language would then be the following Lacanian axiom: the signifier is the material cause of *jouissance*. Thereby we enter yet another polemic with Aristotle, whose theory of causality is here openly overthrown. Not only does Lacan subvert the notion of matter by detaching it from its immediate, sensual, qualitative context, but he includes among causes something no consequent Aristotelian would ever agree to: the signifier. For this reason, Lacan could claim that the Saussurean bar is both a bearer of epistemic revolution and an obstacle to be overcome in the passage from language as scientific object to language as experience of structural instability. Here, literature and speech revolve around the same problem: linguistic non-relation, or multiple disequilibrium. Language is thus not simply grounded on the bar between the signifier and the signified. Language itself *is* a bar. Again, this is the critical point of Lacan's barred Other, the disclosed and dynamic system of differences, deprived of a stable mode of existence. This means then that the autonomy of the signifier should not be understood in terms of

the transcendentalism of the symbolic order either. Its autonomy grounds on an immanent short-circuit between linguistic communication and production – and this interruption, this non-relation, should become the object of a materialist science of language.

The Saussurean signifier is clearly not conceptualised as a material cause. This is not the case in psychoanalysis, for which the signifier produces two essential effects, the subject and *jouissance*, which violate the regime of signification and are not included in the regime of the signified. The organonic notion of language and the foreclosure of speech from the science of language both repress the subject. Due to this incapacity of linguistics to think the subject of the unconscious, Lacan introduced the term *linguisterie*, the main task of which is to account for the real of language: 'Structure is real. In general this is determined by the convergence toward impossibility. Precisely through this it is real.'[15] The equation 'structure = real' makes little sense for the structuralist doxa, where structure simply describes the system of differences and the abstract character of the symbolic. The structuralist research programme can only become materialist under the condition that it abolishes this transcendental perspective. We are dealing with 'hyper-structuralism' (Milner), which is already beyond classical structuralism but not beyond its revolutionary kernel, its detachment of language from the communicative model. Structuralism conditioned the first thoroughly non-Aristotelian philosophy of language. Deleuze's philosophy and Lacan's teaching represent two ways of traversing structuralism in order to overcome its restrictions, by placing the accent on becoming (Deleuze) and on the impossible (Lacan).

The topological turn of the structuralist screw

Lacan and Deleuze thus share a common *philosophical* displacement, not *against* structuralism, but *within* structuralism. This shift is, among others, expressed by the effort to think the structural paradoxes by means of topological models: Borromean knots in Lacan, and the fold in Deleuze. These tools enable one to think structure as a peculiar synthesis of negativity and becoming. Deleuze and Lacan meet in the observation that topology directs philosophy toward a materialist theory of the subject and of language. This is where for both contexts the topological lessons of the baroque become crucial.

The baroque reference has been associated with Lacan's impenetrable and equivocal style from very early on. Indeed, this feature seems to bring him furthest from the structuralist formalism. The baroque style plays with

the breakdown of the presupposed linguistic equilibrium. In this respect style raises the same structural problems as speech. In the light of Lacan's remark that his axiom 'the unconscious is structured as a language does not belong to the field of linguistics',[16] style obtains an additional weight, as far as it directs psychoanalysis away from science towards literature. Freud acknowledged this tendency early on, when complaining that his case studies read more as novels rather than rigorous scientific treaties. In the end the psychoanalytic and the linguistic object seem to address two different aspects of the real of language and consequently two different notions of structure. The definition of the signifier requires a topological turn: 'the signifier is first of all that which has an effect of the signified, and it is important not to elide the fact that between them there is something barred that must be crossed over'.[17] Literature and speech introduce a corporeal dimension, which complicates the topology of the symbolic. The space of linguistic production is curved, decentralised, the structure is disclosed – or to paraphrase Koyré, the notion of structure initiated the passage from the closed world of Aristotelian linguistics into the infinite universe of the materialist science of language.

As a point of curiosity we can remark that the critical stance, according to which classical linguistics elaborates an abstract geometry of perfect shapes, was adopted by the least likely person: Joseph Stalin. His late intervention in the Soviet linguistic debates contains the following remark:

> Abstracting itself from anything that is particular and concrete in words and sentences, grammar treats only the general patterns, underlying the word changes and the combination of words into sentences, and builds in such a way grammatical rules and laws. In this respect grammar bears a resemblance to geometry, which, when giving its laws, abstracts itself from concrete objects, treats objects as bodies deprived of concreteness and defines their mutual relations not as concrete relations of certain concrete objects but as relations of bodies in general, namely, relations deprived of any concreteness.[18]

Though Stalin missed one crucial thing: the main problem is not in the opposition abstract–concrete, universal–particular but in the fact that the geometrisation of linguistic space through grammar leaves linguistic production out of the picture and thereby overlooks the real of language. Grammar is equivalent to Euclidean geometry, which deals exclusively with idealisations and homogenous space, leaving the linguistic space abstract and immaterial. Only angels could potentially speak such 'Euclidean' language, where nothing except representation and communication takes place. Aspheric topology, knots and folds, in contrast, take a step further.

Let us at this point continue with Lacan's topological definition of the signifier:

> The effects of the signified seem to have nothing to do with what causes them. This means that the references or things the signifier serves to approach remain approximate – macroscopic, for example. What is important is not that it's imaginary [. . .] At the level of the signifier/signified distinction, what characterizes the relation of the signified and what serves as the indispensable third party, namely the referent, is precisely that the signified misses the referent. The jointer doesn't work.[19]

What is problematised as imaginary are the relationality in language, the stable linkage between words and things, and, again, the Aristotelianism in linguistics. Lacan's conclusion points in a different direction: 'the signifier is stupid',[20] it does not ground any positive knowledge, which would support and guarantee the stability and regularity of language; and further, the Other does not exist, which again means that language is not a frozen grammatical constellation but a disequilibrium in permanent movement. Together, the stupidity of the signifier and the inexistence of the Other form the truth that linguistic Aristotelianism always systematically rejected. An alternative to linguistics that Lacan baptises *linguisterie* is required: 'under the term [. . .] I group whatever claims [. . .] to intervene in men's affairs in the name of linguistics'.[21] This *linguisterie* inevitably proposes a different geometrisation of the linguistic real by rejecting the grammatical geometrisation of language. But what is *linguisterie* other than a materialist science of language, 'the science that concerns itself with *lalangue*, which I write as one word, so as to specify its object, as is done in every other science'?[22] Lacan never simply gave up on linguistics. Instead, he intended to determine its epistemic object more rigorously.

Let us now turn to Deleuze's discussion of structuralism, for there we find the best possible accentuation of its materialist potentials. The first criterion of structuralism is the differentiation between the symbolic, the imaginary and the real, and the isolation of the epistemic object, which is the autonomy of the symbolic. As Deleuze writes, 'the symbolic must be understood as the production of the original and specific theoretical object',[23] meaning that it distinguishes the science of language from other sciences, while also placing it within the same epistemic paradigm as physics, biology, psychoanalysis, and so on. Deleuze also detected well the specificities of this autonomous symbolic order, on the one hand its topological features, and on the other hand its internal multiplicity: 'Space is what is structural, but an unextended, pre-extensive space [. . .] The scientific ambition of structuralism is not quantitative, but topological and relational' and further 'every structure is a multiplicity'.[24] The notion of structure is equated with a 'transcendental topology',[25] which is '*real*

without being actual, ideal without being abstract.[26] This is precisely the materialist quarrel: how to think real effects beyond the dualism of potentiality and actuality, and how to think an idea beyond the metaphysical dualism of abstract and concrete. It is also clear that a rejection of another major feature of Aristotelianism, pragmatism and positivism is at stake here, an aspect that concerns the ontological status of mathematical, geometrical and topological objects. For Aristotle, and this was the main point of his refutation of Plato, these objects are mere idealities, in the pejorative sense of abstractions, which have hardly anything in common with the empirical objects of science. They are, in the best case, potentialities, which nevertheless lack every actualisation. However, for scientific modernity, at least according to Koyré's critical epistemology, mathematics becomes the privileged tool for exploring the real beyond the restrictive frames of human cognition and consciousness. Mathematics and topology are two materialist weapons against the shadow of Aristotle, which remains to exercise its formal influence in the hegemony of analytic epistemology and empiricist materialism.

To the autonomy of the symbolic professed by structuralism a specific subjectivity should be correlated, a subjectivity that becomes visible only after science erases the figure of man. This erasure should be correlated to the abolition of the soul, yet another metaphysical hypothesis, the rejection of which inaugurated scientific modernity and undermined the foundation of Aristotelian epistemology. In his *Order of Things*, Foucault wrote the famous lines that later inspired Deleuze:

> It is no longer possible to think in our day than in the void left by man's disappearance. For this void does not create a deficiency; it does not constitute a lacuna that must be filled. It is nothing more, and nothing less, than the unfolding of a space in which it is once more possible to think.[27]

The abolition of man indicates that an emancipation of science and a decentralisation of knowledge took place. They are no longer correlated to the figure of a neutral human observer or subject of cognition, which both imply a centralised topology of thinking and language. Consequently, the subject that can finally be grasped in the void, unveiled by the foreclosure of man from scientific knowledge, appears as a fold in space. How to approach this fold? It is not a simple rupture but a discontinuous continuity, a disturbance or torsion. It breaks space without making a crack. Curiously enough, Deleuze saw in structuralism a science, which is grounded on a rigorous theory of the subject, a non-psychological, non-individual and non-anthropomorphic subject:

> Structuralism is not at all a form of thought that suppresses the subject, but one that breaks it up and distributes it systematically, that contests the

identity of the subject, that dissipates it and makes it shift from place to place, an always nomad subject, made of individuations, but impersonal ones, or of singularities, but pre-individual ones.[28]

The critical value of the baroque points in the same direction. Lacan, for instance, reverts to the baroque through yet another rejection of Aristotelian ontology: 'the unconscious is not the fact that being thinks [. . .] the unconscious is the fact that being, by speaking, enjoys, and [. . .] wants to know nothing more'.[29] Bernini's sculpture of Saint Teresa, a baroque masterpiece from the church Santa Maria della Vittoria in Rome, exemplifies the lessons Lacan intended to draw for the notion of structure. The question concerns the bodily experience of *jouissance* that the subject does not know anything about. There is no knowledge, which means that there is no science of *jouissance*. The baroque style already contains a significant break with representational art. Artistic production is no longer subjected to the narrow frameworks of the utilitarian function or a representational model (a move that became radicalised in modernist art such as suprematism).[30] The critical value of the baroque is that it points out something that concerns the very essence of Christianity, an unintended scandal that only a true materialist can appreciate and that concerns the resurrection not of the soul, but of the flesh. While for Aristotle, man thinks with his soul, for Christianity, one could argue, man thinks with his body. Baroque art most openly displays the materiality of thought. But it also displays that thinking always comes in a pair with *jouissance*:

> Nowhere, in any cultural milieu, has this exclusion been admitted to more nakedly. I will even go a bit further [. . .] nowhere more blatantly than in Christianity does the work of art as such show itself as what it has always been in all places – obscenity. The dit-mension of obscenity is that by which Christianity revives the religion of men.[31]

Dit-mension, another famous Lacanian neologism, is loaded with epistemological value. It situates the connection between speech and space, saying and extension. So the dimension of obscenity, the causing of enjoyment in the speaking body demands an entire topological, geometrical and artistic apparatus. The baroque provides this in an unusual way, with the function of the fold, which abolishes the topological divide on the inside and the outside: 'The baroque is the regulating of the soul by corporal radioscopy.'[32] Another aspect concerns the breakdown of adequate representation of reality. The excess of *jouissance* and the real of discourse are visualised through exaggeration, but what gets represented is a kind of inadequacy, imbalance or non-relation. That is why it makes sense to claim:

> those representations are themselves martyrs. You know that 'martyr' means witness – of a more or less pure suffering. That was what our painting was

about, until the slate was wiped clean when people began to seriously concern themselves with little squares.[33]

Not the images of torture but tortured images. The same point can be extended to literature. Style does not stand for the language of torture but for the tortured language. The baroque would then indeed lead to an encounter with structuralism, since it no less approaches structure from the viewpoint of instability and breakdown. It is here that structure is most real.

These lessons are to some extent contained in the very terminology. The expression 'baroque' originates from the Italian *barocco*, used by scholastic philosophers for describing an obstacle in propositional logic. The first point would then address a linguistic hindrance or irregularity, a particularly complex and sophisticated syllogism. In later periods the meaning of 'baroque' was extended to designate 'any contorted idea or involuted process of thought' (which remains in line with linguistic deviation). Another potential source is the Portuguese *barroco* 'used to describe an irregular or imperfectly shaped pearl; this usage still exists in the jeweler's term baroque pearl'.[34] In this second meaning another feature is added: the incorrect or deformed shape is the opposite to the ancient ideal of the sphere, which obtained its scientific expression in cosmology and premodern astronomy. Deleuze pointed out precisely this epistemic dimension in relation to the fold in baroque sculpture and architecture:

> What is Baroque is this distinction and division into two levels or floors. The distinction of two worlds is common to Platonic tradition. The world was thought to have an infinite number of floors, with a stairway that descends and ascends, with each step being lost in the upper order of the One and disintegrated in the ocean of the multiple. The universe as a stairwell marks the Neoplatonic tradition. But the Baroque contribution par excellence is a world with only two floors separated by a fold that echoes itself, arching from the two sides according to a different order. It expresses, as we shall see, the transformation of the cosmos into a 'mundus'.[35]

The deformed or irregular shape, the distortion of presumably perfect forms and the possibility of a topology and geometry, which is no longer rooted in the divide between the inside and the outside, between empty space and full space – this is what accompanies the replacement of the old *cosmos* (the closed world) with the modern *mundus* (the infinite universe). The two features of the baroque would thus be irregularity and decentralisation, to which a third should be added, and that is exaggeration. Still according to the etymological analysis, the word 'baroque' subsequently began to describe 'anything irregular, bizarre, or otherwise departing from established rules and proportions',[36] the overblown and over-decorated bodies

and buildings, which seem to leave no place for the void. This is where the unconscious subject enters the picture, a subject that materialises the aforementioned distortions and deformations: 'Intentionality is still generated in a Euclidean space that prevents it from understanding itself, and must be surpassed by another, "topological", space which establishes contact between the Outside and the Inside, the most distant, the most deep.'[37]

To return to the point of departure, which concerned the scope of *analysis* of the soul. The great merit of psychoanalysis remains that it detached the subject both from the metaphysical soul and from the intentional consciousness. Freud's main gesture consisted not so much in the hypostasis of the subjective split, but in the elaboration of decentralised model of thinking. The Freudian unconscious resides entirely in this ungraspable, undetectable, interrupted line, precisely a fold, which both links and delimits the inside and the outside, the subject and the Other. Lacan's return to Freud through structural linguistics strives to show that Freud's initial works contained an anticipation of structuralism, namely an anticipation of its decentralisation of language. This decentralisation, however, did not imply that the science of language should treat language beyond the subject. Therefore, the first move of the return to Freud intensified the materialist potentials of classical structuralism, which already envisaged language beyond its exclusively organonic, pragmatic and communicative context; while the second one revealed the form of subjectivity that corresponds to the 'emancipation of language' from 'its' tool-model.

In the end one could say that both Deleuze and Lacan subscribed to the Heraclitian challenge to philosophy, a dynamic structure of becoming versus a static structure of endless permutations of the same. The choice is then not between structure and becoming, but between structure-as-constellation and structure-as-becoming. The vulgarised version of Heraclitus claims that for him 'everything flows' and consequently that the only permanent thing is movement. Yet Heraclitus did not merely invent the first philosophy of becoming but also the first materialist philosophy of *logos*, the name of negativity (or multiplicity of differences) in being. Deleuze wrote that being clamours – but this clamour, this 'ontological scream', is precisely the birth hour of *logos*, a manifestation of the structural real, which can subsequently become the object of *logos* in the sense of rationalisation through rigorous geometrisation and formalisation.

Notes

1. Deleuze, Gilles and Guattari, Felix, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 75, 85, 92, 100.

2. The subtitle of Deleuze and Guattari's book on *Kafka* indicates something similar in relation to writing, opposing major and minor literature.

3. It is more than ironic that Nietzsche saw in this notion the greatest invention of Deleuze's most hated philosopher of negativity, Hegel: 'Let us take, thirdly, Hegel's astonishing move, with which he struck through all logical habits and indulgences when he dared to teach that species concepts develop out of each other. With this proposition the minds of Europe were preformed for the last great scientific movement, Darwinism – for without Hegel there could be no Darwin. [. . .] We Germans are Hegelians even had there been no Hegel, insofar as we (as opposed to all Latins) instinctively attribute a deeper meaning and greater value to becoming and development than to what "is"; we hardly believe in the justification of the concept "being" – and also insofar as we are not inclined to concede that our human logic is logic as such or the only kind of logic . . .' (Nietzsche, Friedrich, *The Gay Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), p. 218). I thank Nathaniel Boyd for drawing my attention to this fabulous passage.

4. Deleuze, quoted in Lecercle, Jean-Jacques, *Deleuze and Language* (Basingstoke and New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2002), p. 62.

5. Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, p. 67.

6. Milner, Jean-Claude, *Le périple structural: figures et paradigme* (Paris: Verdier, 2008), pp. 263, 277.

7. Lacan, Jacques, *Autres écrits* (Paris: Seuil, 2001), p. 225.

8. Lecercle, *Deleuze and Language*, p. 98.

9. Lacan, *Autres écrits*, p. 483.

10. Ibid. p. 314.

11. Ibid. p. 313.

12. See Žižek, Slavoj, 'Hegel versus Heidegger', available at <http://www.e-flux.com/journal/hegel-versus-heidegger/> (last accessed 1 April 2016). The expression 'house of being' comes from Heidegger.

13. Lacan, Jacques, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book XX: Encore* (London and New York: W. W. Norton, 1999), p. 37; translation modified.

14. Lacan, *Encore*, p. 3.

15. Lacan, Jacques, *Le séminaire de Jacques Lacan, livre XVI: D'un Autre à l'autre* (Paris: Seuil, 2006), p. 30.

16. Lacan, *Encore*, p. 20.

17. Ibid. p. 18; translation modified.

18. Stalin, quoted in Jakobson, Roman, *Poetry of Grammar and Grammar of Poetry* (The Hague: De Gruyter, 1981), p. 95.

19. Lacan, *Encore*, p. 20.

20. Ibid. p. 20.

21. Lacan, Jacques, *Television: A Challenge to the Psychoanalytic Establishment* (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1990), pp. 5–6.

22. Ibid. p. 6.

23. Deleuze, Gilles, *Desert Islands and Other Texts 1953–1974* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2004), p. 173.

24. Ibid. p. 177.

25. Ibid. p. 174.

26. Ibid. p. 179; original emphasis.

27. Foucault, Michel, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994), p. 342.

28. Deleuze, *Desert Islands*, p. 190.

29. Lacan, *Encore*, pp. 104–5; translation modified.

30. Could we not see in the couple baroque–suprematism that Lacan alludes to a peculiar reflection of the conceptual couple *lalangue–mathème*, the intrusion of *jouissance* into the language, on the one hand, and the pure formal language evacuated of all *jouissance*, on the other – literature and mathematics, two realisations of the absolute

autonomy of the signifier and two royal roads into a materialist science of language? So structuralism should also become baroque and thus break once and for all with the representational and communicative conception of language.

31. Ibid. p. 113.
32. Ibid. p. 116.
33. Ibid. p. 116.
34. 'Baroque Art and Architecture', *Encyclopædia Britannica*, available at <http://www.britannica.com/art/Baroque-period> (last accessed 1 April 2016).
35. Deleuze, Gilles, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* (London: The Athlone Press, 1993), p. 29.
36. 'Baroque Art and Architecture'.
37. Deleuze, Gilles, *Foucault* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), p. 110.