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Living the intensive order: Common sense and schizophrenia in Deleuze and Guattari

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Abstract

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari aim to describe schizophrenia in a positive manner. According to them, the schizophrenic lives on the intensive order. To fully comprehend what this means, it is key to address some of Deleuze's insights regarding the notion of intensity in relation to experience and cognition. This is why I will combine ideas from *Anti-Oedipus* with theory from *Difference and Repetition*, in order to explain Deleuze and Guattari's conception of intensity in its relation to common sense and to schizophrenia. According to this conception (a), intensity is the condition of possibility and limit for the sensible; (b) it becomes covered over by the organizing principles of common sense, which make our affects more workable and recognizable; and (c) this process of organization must hang together with the codification of desire through *Oedipus*, the main organizational principle of the *socius*. On the back of these theoretical considerations, I will explain what it means to say that the schizophrenic lives amongst intensities: (a) this involves a lack of codification of desire and thus of common sense, meaning an absence of organizational principles; and (b) this perspective leads to a different understanding of the schizophrenic's experience and expression, with very concrete implications for a clinical approach to schizophrenia.

KEYWORDS

common sense, Deleuze, Guattari, intensity, schizophrenia

1 | INTRODUCTION

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari describe what they call the schizophrenic process. Their aim is actually ethical-philosophical and socio-political; it transcends a merely clinical point of view on schizophrenia.¹ Nevertheless, one can also distinguish here a description of schizophrenia as a mental condition, in a positive manner: according to them, if the schizophrenic individual seems

¹Their aim is to show that the schizophrenic experience is not simply a highly problematic mental condition, but also (a) a historically contextualized process, which is strongly connected to capitalism, and with an important social and ontological significance; and (b) a possibility of thought that has revolutionary potential. Here, I will only be concerned with an understanding of the schizophrenic experience and logic, in the same vein as Roberts (2006, 2007), Davidson & Shahar (2007), Evangelista Da Silva, (2007) who encourage study into Deleuze and Guattari's work in order to contribute to psychiatric practice and theory.

confused and unable to operate within meaningful structures, this must not be explained negatively, as a failure to interiorize such structures. Instead, one must explore the way in which the schizophrenic functions and try to understand his "logic" without preconceptions. My aim here is to show in what sense the interpretation of schizophrenia Deleuze and Guattari put forward could contribute to an understanding of the schizophrenic expressions and of the way in which the schizophrenic individual functions: I will elaborate upon Deleuze and Guattari's understanding of schizophrenia in order to sketch some elements of a schizophrenic logic, which can serve as a theoretical background for a clinical perspective. This will lead to some critical questions and reflections regarding to how to deal with schizophrenia, and in particular with regard to how Deleuze and Guattari situate

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themselves in reference to the important movements of psychiatry and psychotherapy of their time, and which could still be of significance today.

In Deleuze and Guattari's interpretation, if the schizophrenic seems confused to us, it is because he lives in the "intensive order": "[I]f everything commingles in this fashion it does so in intensity, with no confusion of spaces and forms, since these have indeed been undone on behalf of a new order: the intense and intensive order" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 85). In order to understand what this means, first of all an examination of the notion of intensity is required. Since Deleuze and Guattari do not explain this concept—which is nonetheless ubiquitous in *Anti-Oedipus*—I will provide an explanation with the help of *Difference and Repetition*, where this notion is most clearly described by Deleuze, especially with regard to its role in perceptual and cognitive experience. This explanation will be very helpful in understanding what Deleuze and Guattari mean by the intensive order, and it will also point to the schizophrenic's relation to common sense. I will argue that, if the schizophrenic experiences pure intensities, this means he is not affected by common sense. Additionally, I will also show that this new approach opens the way to an understanding of the schizophrenic's "logic," as well as to a new understanding of some of his symptoms, which normally seem utterly incomprehensible to us, exactly because the schizophrenic does not rely on common sense. Finally, I will relate Deleuze and Guattari's view on schizophrenia to some other important approaches and interpretations, in order to situate their position.

1.1 | Intensity

Deleuze's notion of intensity is very complex in that it adopts different aspects ascribed to it by various authors. Moreover, it plays a primordial role in his metaphysical as well as epistemological considerations: intensity, or intensive quantity, is an indicator of pure force or energy; as such, it is related to what Deleuze sees as the transcendental principle of difference and repetition laying at the origin of any change or creation, and which is thus the condition of emergence of anything new (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 240–241). I will focus here on intensity's role in experience and on its relation to common sense.

In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze writes that intensity is "the form of difference," that it is "differential, by itself a difference" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 222). What he means by this can be illustrated through the difference between extensive and intensive properties.² An example of an extensive property is length. Length, although it originally comes from intensity (as we will see), can be divided into homogenous, identical parts: if we divide 2 cm into two times 1 cm, these two centimetres are identical. This is not the case

for intensive properties such as temperature: if we are to divide 2°C into two times 1°C, then the first degree (0–1°C) is different from the second degree (1–2°C), namely colder. A certain temperature can thus only be divided into a heterogeneous series. This means that, if we measure intensive properties, like temperature, with the help of a scale, each point of the scale represents something different to the other points. This is why intensive properties constitute "differential multiplicities": each difference in intensity is a difference in kind, another reality. As we will see, for Deleuze this difference of intensity or "intensive quantity" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 237) is cancelled out when one represents it as a difference in degree of quality, of property, or as an extensive quantity.³

Furthermore, for Deleuze intensity is also the "the reason for the sensible" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 222): "difference or intensity [...] is the sufficient reason of all phenomena, the condition of that which appears" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 222). In order to illustrate this aspect of intensity, I may use the ink spot experiment of Hume (2001, p. 24). If we have a sheet of paper with a spot of ink on it, and we hold it increasingly further away, the blue of the ink spot becomes increasingly less intense before disappearing into the white of the sheet. If we bring the sheet closer again, it is by becoming a more intense blue that the ink spot becomes visible. This means that the perception of the blue ink spot arises when a certain threshold of intensity is breached.

Intensity, in the form of certain intensive quantities, thus gives rise to perception.⁴ In fact, according to Deleuze it even gives rise to the perception of everything we can perceive: to the perception of objects, of what we call substance, of what we call qualities; and even to the perception of extension and its dimensions. This happens, however, in a paradoxical way: intensity brings about these organizational principles and perceptions, but is at the same time cancelled out or covered over by them. This makes intensity not only "the condition for, but also the limit of the sensible": "[i]t is intensity or difference in intensity that constitutes the peculiar limit of sensibility. As such, it has the paradoxical character of that limit: it is the

³Deleuze adopts many aspects of Bergson's notion of intensity, described most clearly in *Determinism and Free Will* [*Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience*]: it is a heterogeneous multiplicity; it changes nature when it is represented and developed in extension by the intellect; and it denotes becoming. One can thus turn to this book, and especially to its first section, for a more detailed description of this notion, especially with regard to its role in conscious experience. It is important to note, however, that Deleuze performs a certain radicalization of Bergson's notion of intensity: if intensity is pure quality for Bergson, this is not the case for Deleuze, who believes that intensity is neither extension nor quality, but that, on the contrary, these latter both cover it up and cancel it out (as we will see). Another difference is that Bergson emphasizes the continuity between intensities in duration, while Deleuze emphasizes the irreducible difference between intensities.

⁴This reminds one of Kant's notion of intensive magnitude, which he elaborates in "Anticipations of perception" (B 207). For Kant too, intensive magnitude is a necessary condition of perception. However, there is an essential difference: according to Kant, intensive magnitude is a degree of sensation; according to Deleuze, seeing intensive quantity as pointing mainly to a degree of a quality or of a sensation misses its essential feature. Indeed, intensity only implies quality or sensation as a secondary feature; it is first and foremost difference. Because of this, and because of the central role difference plays in Deleuze's thought, intensive quantity is not just the anticipation of perception here; even if it is the productive force that lies at the source of perception, Deleuze emphasizes that it is also radically different from what one perceives and irreducible to it (Deleuze 1972, pp. 231–232).

²In thermodynamics, an intensive property is a quality that is not dependent upon the size or quantity of the matter it relates to. Some examples of intensive properties are temperature, viscosity, pressure, the state of the matter (gas, liquid or solid). Examples of extensive properties, which are, on the contrary, considered to be dependent upon the matter in question, are weight, mass, length, etc.

imperceptible, that which cannot be sensed [...] In another sense, it is that which can only be sensed" (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 236–237).

I will illustrate this paradoxical aspect of intensity through Deleuze's elaboration of what perception of extension, and of its dimensions, presupposes (Deleuze, 2001, p. 229).⁵ At the origin of extension lies depth: we always see dimensions in relation to a certain depth from our perspective, and extension can be seen only with the presence of such depth. At the origin of the perception of depth, in its own turn, lies distance as the intensity of sensation: that which gives us a perception of depth is the decreasing intensity of the impressions of what is further or deeper. The intensity of depth is thus presupposed in the dimensions of extension. It is at the same time annulled by the latter since, when we talk about dimensions of extension, these become interchangeable and homogenous (every depth can be seen as a length or width), which makes the differential aspect disappear; and when we talk about depth as distance seen in terms of length, which is dividable into homogeneous parts, the original heterogeneity of intensity is covered over too. This shows how intensity brings about perception, while at the same time becoming masked by that which it gave rise to: it leads to the apprehension of a quality (for instance being distant or close by), which emphasizes continuity and resemblance (of this one quality with different degrees), and thereby cancels out difference. This is why, according to Deleuze, "[i]ntensity is difference, but this difference tends to deny or to cancel itself out in extensity and underneath quality" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 223).

As a result, we only know intensity as already developed (and thus evened out) in extensity, since it is only sensible in this form. This explains our tendency to see intensity as a greater quantity of a certain quality or sensation. Is there no way, then, to get an idea of what it would be like to perceive intensity itself, beyond its disguise in extension and quality? Deleuze suggests that this would require a "distortion of the senses" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 237). Nonetheless, we can get close to such an experience in its pure state through the experience of vertigo (*ibid.*). Vertigo is the experience of the intensity of depth in itself, represented neither as a quality nor as extension: it does imply distance (depth), but it is not identical to it and cannot be reduced to it. Moreover, it is an overwhelming and perplexing experience; given that it is not perceived through one particular sense, as well as the fact that it can impede our reasoning and perception, one could say that it entails a distortion of the senses.

1.2 | Common Sense

It thus seems that there is a natural tendency to organize intensity and to cover it up in favour of new, understandable and workable concepts such as quality, depth and length, in order to make it workable and recognizable—which it is not in its pure form. Indeed, I argue that, for Deleuze, this is exactly what common sense brings about: he claims that "[c]ommon sense is there only in order to limit

the specific contribution of sensibility [difference of intensity] to the conditions of a joint labour" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 140), and that, in experiencing intensity "[e]ach faculty is unhinged, but what are the hinges if not the form of a common sense which causes all the faculties to function and converge?" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 141). Consequently, it looks as if Deleuze's notion of common sense is essentially related to a way of perceiving, which rules out the experience of intensity. More specifically, common sense seems to condition our experience by guaranteeing that our faculties work together in such a way as to prevent "unhinging" in an experience of intensity. We will see why Deleuze believes common sense fulfils this function; and how it leads to a transformation of intensity.

Common sense represents what is "proper" or "natural" thinking and perceiving, as well as what "everyone knows" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 130 ff.). For instance, everyone should know what "me," "being" and "thinking" means—Deleuze points to the fact that this is why Descartes builds his philosophy upon the cogito, a concept which is apparently free of presuppositions, since its components (me, being and thinking) are supposed to be self-evident.⁶ According to Deleuze, these self-evident, common sense representations are only self-evident because they assume a certain model, namely the model of recognition, and correlatively a certain use of the faculties⁷: "common sense always implies a collaboration of the faculties upon a form of the Same or a model of recognition" (Deleuze, 2001, pp. 136–137). The model of recognition is a thinking pattern, which depends on a number of suppositions. This model presupposes that the same object can be apprehended by different faculties: it can be conceived, remembered, imagined or perceived (seen, touched, tasted, etc.); and it stipulates a certain use of the faculties when they are applied to an object of recognition: when an object is recognized, all faculties must be in agreement, meaning they must collaborate under the rule of one dominant, recognizing faculty.

Deleuze illustrates this use of the faculties in an allusion to Kant: "imagination, reason and the understanding collaborate in the case of knowledge and form a 'logical common sense'. Here, understanding is the legislative faculty" (Deleuze, 2001, p. 137). But we can also think of an example from everyday life in order to illustrate this: when we recognize someone on the street, our memory, imagination and visual perception collaborate, all having this someone as their common object, which allows us to recognize the person in question.

⁶Deleuze alludes to Descartes numerous times in the context of his examination of common sense, and what philosophy adopts from it. This represents a reproach: by relying on the concept of cogito Descartes reproduces common sense representations in his philosophy. Suffice it to say here that Deleuze denounces this because the form of common sense only represents one possibility of thought; it necessarily repudiates intensity and difference. Similar criticisms are voiced with regard to Kant, who is said to reproduce the form of common sense in his transcendental analyses concerning the use of the faculties in understanding and in moral reasoning; and to Husserl, whose concept of *Ur-doxa* reproduces common sense on a transcendental level as well.

⁷Seeing as Deleuze mentions the "self-evident," "natural" and "everyone knows" of common sense on the one hand, and a regulated use of the faculties on the other, it seems that he wants to combine two conceptions of common sense: the definition of common sense inspired by that of Aristotle, for whom common sense is a central sense, which coordinates our different sensations by attaching them to an object of perception and which must be presupposed in order to account for the synthesis, in consciousness, of the sensations that arise from the different senses; and common sense seen as common rationality and thought, as the totality of the received opinions.

⁵Deleuze adopts this description from Merleau-Ponty's *Eye and Mind*. This shows Deleuze's interest in Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, which emphasizes the primacy of corporeality and of the mutual implication of consciousness with its surroundings.

In these examples, “[e]ach element thus appeals to one particular faculty, but is also established across different faculties within the context of a given common sense (for example, the resemblance between a perception and a remembrance)” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 138). Indeed, these examples presuppose a given common element or context of application, which allows the collaboration of the different faculties. This common element is, for Deleuze, no one thing in particular—which explains that this model is applicable to any object of recognition—but a certain form, namely the form of identity: the application of the different faculties to one and the same object presupposes the identity of the object in question—whatever object this may be. “An object is recognized [...] when one faculty locates it as identical to that of another, or rather when all the faculties together relate their given and relate themselves to a form of identity in the object” (Deleuze, 2001, p.133). In its turn, “the form of identity in objects relies upon a ground in the unity of a thinking subject” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 133), since, if different faculties are recognized to relate to one and the same object, this also presupposes that they belong to an identical, recognizing subject—it is this same subject who sees, remembers and imagines. Common sense, meaning the collaboration of the faculties in recognition, thus presupposes an identical subject in time and, correlatively, an identical object in time.

This model of recognition is complemented by what Deleuze calls “the world of representation” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 137), which determines what can be recognized. This makes sense since one cannot talk of recognition if that which is recognized is not already the object of a certain representation. According to Deleuze, representation necessarily entails certain constraints. Indeed, Deleuze remarks that “representation [is] defined by certain elements: identity with regard to concepts, opposition with regard to the determination of concepts, analogy with regard to judgement, resemblance with regard to objects” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 137). To put it simply, Deleuze points to the fact that the representative model only allows for certain possibilities: in representing something, one can recognize a conceptual identity, an analogy of judgement, a similarity in perception or an opposition to something imagined; through representation one can thus only think identity, analogy, similarity and opposition.

These constraints lead to a necessary and definitive exclusion of difference from the world of representation, because “difference becomes an object of representation always in relation to a conceived identity, a judged analogy, an imagined opposition or a perceived similitude. Under these four coincident figures, difference acquires a sufficient reason in the form of a principium comparationis” (Deleuze, 2001, p. 138; his italics). As Deleuze observes, if difference can only be represented as identity, analogy, opposition or similitude, then representation reduces it to the difference between two elements, meaning it is reduced to a principle of comparison. In contrast to this, Deleuze defends a notion of pure difference and of pure intensity, showing that these can neither be experienced under the rule of common sense, which regulates the use of our faculties in such a manner that pure intensity is blocked out, nor conceived according to the model of recognition and representation (the correlates of common sense) because these latter

allow us to think of difference only as a comparative term. As a result, if Deleuze remarks that we always perceive intensity as already developed in extension and under quality, this is because common sense organizes it and gives it an extended form in representation.⁸

Indeed, this is what happens when difference of intensity is apprehended as the perception of a difference in the degree of a quality, for instance the perception of a more or less intense shade of blue: we are not perplexed by what we experience because the resemblance with another perception is emphasized, which allows us to classify the experienced difference under a more general term, namely a certain quality, for instance the quality of being blue, and to represent it accordingly. This is also what happens in the perception of distance and the conceptualization of extension: relying on the judgement that the situation is analogous with previous instances, difference of intensity does not confuse us since it leads for example to the judgement that something is close by or far away and thus to a representation in terms of distance. On account of the recognition of the identity between what is present in a particular experience on the one hand, and conceptions that we have on the other, our perception of extension is represented as containing dimensions and distances, which organize it and make it workable.

1.3 | Common Sense and the Social

Common sense, which is considered the “natural” or “normal” way of perceiving and thinking, thus neutralizes pure intensity by organizing it according to certain representations and types of apprehension. Even though Deleuze does not mention this in *Difference and Repetition*, I will argue with *Anti-Oedipus* that this organization of intensity by common sense must be essentially social. Intensive forces, in the form of differential multiplicities, are the fundamental given of *Anti-Oedipus* too: “desiring machines.” Desiring machines are different in every point, each one being of a certain intensity (pressure). Desire is considered impersonal and intensive by Deleuze and Guattari, and thus similar to a force or an impersonal drive traversing reality; it might affect us with a certain pressure or intensity, thereby making something sensible for us; or it might invest materiality, perhaps resulting in material change.

In this context of chaotic, automatic and impersonal energy flows, Deleuze and Guattari believe it has always been the function of social reality, which they call the “socius,” to codify or channel desire: “[t]o code desire — and the fear, the anguish of decoded flows — is the business of the socius” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 139). Indeed, they believe that “[t]he prime function incumbent upon the socius, has always been to codify the flows of desire, to inscribe them, to record them, to see to it that no flow exists that is not properly clammed up, channel[ed], regulated” (Deleuze & Guattari,

⁸“Extended” is used here in the sense it has for Bergson, namely not only in the sense of physically extended, but also in the sense of possessing extended qualities in thought: homogenous, quantifiable, divisible, etc. Deleuze thus follows in the wake of Bergson, who maintains that thought in the form of representation always has these qualities, which is why it cannot accurately grasp intensity.

2000, p. 33). If it is the role of social reality to organize and codify desire, then common sense must be essentially social. In this case, a brief illustration of the manner in which the socius codifies desire for Deleuze and Guattari can enhance the picture of common sense sketched in the previous section.

In breast feeding, when breast and mouth connect to each other, they each have a certain degree of intensity, which is a certain amount of energy or pressure, driving them to connect. What Deleuze and Guattari would call the sucking machine, or the desire for sucking and feeding, exercises pressure on both the breast and the mouth. According to them, this happens primarily on a purely impersonal level that does not signify or lack anything⁹: it is really intensity, an impersonal pressure, which makes the mouth and the breast connect.

However, in this context too, intensive multiplicities become organized and covered up in extension, namely by the socius that prescribes, codifies or “explains” it in extension. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari remark that “starting from this primary intensity, it will be possible to pass to a system in extension” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 156). I will illustrate how the socius performs this transformation with the help of the incest prohibition (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 160), which is an almost universal prohibition adopted, in different variations, by nearly all present and past societies. With regard to the above-mentioned example, a formulation of the incest prohibition brings it about that the breast the child sucks belongs to his mother: what was intensive and impersonal now gets an extended, personal “meaning.” Apart from the mother, other global, discernible persons are created through this prohibition: me, my father, my sister, etc. This genesis of meaning makes desire extended or represented, given that what was first intensive and impersonal, in its origin as well as in its source, has now become personal (“I” desire, and I desire “something” or “someone”). Additionally, this prohibition brings about a codification that regulates desire: I am not allowed to desire my mother or my sister (and, depending on the particular socius, my cousin); I am a boy *or* a girl (so I have to desire boys *or* girls; or at least a global person, again depending on the particular socius). This codification through the socius thus selects and organizes intensities, and it changes the intensive impersonal desire into personal meaningful desire.

Intensity acquires a paradoxical character here too: “[i]ncest refers to a this-side-of [intensive desire] that cannot be represented as such in the complex, since the complex is an element derived from [the repression of] this this-side-of” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 162; translation modified¹⁰). Common sense thus functions in the same way social codification does with regard to intensity: when

⁹Deleuze and Guattari thus distance themselves from Lacan: even though they believe desire consists of multiplicities (the machines), which they compare to Lacan's chains, they remark that it does not signify and that it is not a lack—at least not before desire becomes codified by what they call “the socius” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 38, 53). Further, their use of the terms “machine” and “process” insinuate the logic of desire is dynamic and open or inventive, in contradistinction with the rigidity of a structure.

¹⁰“L'inceste revoie à un en-deçà qui ne peut pas être représenté comme tel dans le complexe, puisque le complexe est un élément dérivé du refoulement de cet en-deçà” (Deleuze & Guattari 1972; my italics): in the English translation, “du refoulement de” has been omitted.

intensity becomes sensible as a representation of, for instance, quality or distance, it produces that which covers it up and organizes it—just like social codification finds its origin in intensity, to then neutralize it. Moreover, common sense must hang together with the incest prohibition seeing as it presupposes an identical subject, as we have seen, and thus the awareness of a unified self or “me,” which is created by the incest prohibition: “persons, with the names that now designate them, do not exist prior to the prohibitions that constitute them as such” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 160).

1.4 | Schizophrenia

The meaning behind the idea that the schizophrenic lives on the intensive order or “at the very limit of the decoded flows of desire [...] at the very limit of the social codes” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 40) should be clearer now. This means that he lives in the midst of affects that are not canalized and regulated by social codifications such as the one resulting from the incest prohibition and common sense, of which the function even seems to be the repression of the intensive order in favour of an organization and a neutralization of pure intensity, and thus of a workable and recognizable, extended and qualified, experience of reality. If this is the case, the schizophrenic would live amidst pure forces and affects, unable to recognize, represent or organize them, and thus experiencing each sensation and each thought as unrecognizable, perplexing and confusing, in a distortion of the senses similar to vertigo. Furthermore, the schizophrenic's perception would be differential and thus fragmented: if intensity is not organized in extension, then there is no homogenous perception of extension (space), of qualities, of objects or even of oneself and others.¹¹ Indeed, as Deleuze and Guattari describe it, “[t]here is a schizophrenic experience of intensive quantities in their pure state, to a point that is almost unbearable [...] an intense feeling of transition, states of pure, naked intensity stripped of all shape and form” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 18); in this experience, “reality has ceased to be a principle. According to such a principle, the reality of the real was posed as a divisible abstract quantity, whereas the real was divided up into qualified unities, into distinct qualitative forms. But now the real is a product that envelops the distances within intensive quantities. The indivisible is enveloped, and signifies that what envelops it does not divide without changing its nature or form” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 87).

As mentioned above, Deleuze and Guattari actually want to understand the schizophrenic experience in a positive way. I will now point to how this perspective leads to an understanding of the schizophrenic's experience and expression. First of all, if there are no qualities and forms for the schizophrenic, but only intensities and affects, this means that there is actually no confusion or incoherence,

¹¹This would explain the observation a colleague and friend made with regard to one of his patients, namely that she was not able to unify the different perceptions of her sister at different moments in time (“there are thousands of her”), nor to synthesize her own movements (she would lose her balance and have to sit down), as if she perceived movement as a multiplicity of states (Luis, 2013, pp. 24–25; this dissertation provides a very clear description of Minkowski's view on schizophrenia, as well as a comparison between this view and that of Deleuze-Guattari).

but rather an apprehension of something different, of another order (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 85). In this order, this differential and fragmented flux of affects, a change in an affect (an increase or decrease in a certain sensation, or the appearance of a new affect) or a change in space (movement), means a change in nature that can be expressed (designated or acted out). The schizophrenic's expressions seem incoherent and confused to us, however, because he does not use the organization and representations of common sense and associates in a different manner.

Indeed, the schizophrenic might express his experience, for instance, to quote Schreber and the schizophrenic dancer and choreographer Nijinsky, "I feel I am growing breasts," "I am becoming God" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 18), or "I am an Egyptian. I am a red Indian. I am a Negro. I am a Chinaman. I am a Japanese. I am a foreigner, a stranger. I am a sea bird. I am a land bird. I am the tree of Tolstoy. I am the roots of Tolstoy.... I am husband and wife in one. I love my wife. I love my husband" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 77). Usually these kinds of utterances are regarded as delusional identifications. As a matter of fact, if a schizophrenic tells us he is a dog and begins to act like one, thereby simulating the content of his utterance, we conclude he is delusional: this man is not a dog. But seeing as the schizophrenic lives on the intensive order, maybe even lacking the experience of a unified self, these "descriptions," and the "simulations" that go along with it (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 87), do not fulfil the same role that representations and identifications do. Therefore, taking into consideration the nature of this order, they cannot be understood as delusional identifications, but rather as indications of experienced affects, which form the material of hallucinations and delusions (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 21, 84, 86) as they are designated with the help of free, indiscriminate associations, which can (and often do) include socio-political, economical or (personal)-historical elements. As Deleuze and Guattari explain with regard to Nietzsche, "[i]t is not a matter of identifying with various historical personages, but rather identifying the names of history with zones of intensity" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 21). In this way, we can have an understanding of the schizophrenic's experience: his "misapprehensions" are explained by the absence of the use of the faculties prescribed by common sense, and his expressions indicate elements of concern from any field or domain.

Whether the designations and simulations mentioned above could function as organizational principles for the schizophrenic, in a similar way common sense does, is not clear. It seems, however, that they do not. They seem to be fluctuating; several arrangements seem to co-exist or to be more or less constantly done and undone (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 40). This, finally, brings us to a different understanding of catatonia (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 147, 329): if the schizophrenic does not codify desire (in a fixed manner), he is (at times) completely prey to intensities and thus only able to choose between either succumbing to the schizophrenic process of fluid associations, letting all the intensities affect him on the one hand, or attempting to block out all the intensities and being a catatonic body on the other. Codification, on the contrary, allows the neutralization of some things in favour of others, thereby avoiding

an overwhelming experience. Catatonia would thus be the state the schizophrenic is in when he wants to, or is forced to, block out something, since he then needs to barricade the whole flux of affects due to his lack of codification. Deleuze and Guattari suggest that this happens when the schizophrenic is forced to take on a structure, meaning it is not a result of the schizophrenic experience itself, but of its interruption (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 5, 363).

Therefore, according to them it does not help to impose a common sense organization upon the schizophrenic: they suggest that, if the schizophrenic lives on the intensive order, it is exactly because he cannot, or does not want to, function within the structure of the *socius*. Imposing the structure of the *socius* on him would lead to catatonic and autistic schizophrenia, that is to schizophrenia in the clinical sense. Indeed, Deleuze and Guattari distinguish between schizophrenia as a creative process, which has great artistic and revolutionary potential (e.g., Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 69, 116, 133) on the one hand, and schizophrenia as a clinical entity, "the hospital schizo, the great autistic one" on the other (e.g., Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 113, 136); and they claim that "the more the process of production is led off course, brutally interrupted, the more the schizo-as-entity arises as a specific product" (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 136).¹² It may be the same interruptions and deviations that prevent the schizophrenic to find alternative organizational principles, which he would tolerate, and which could function in a similar way common sense does, in order to structure experience and make it bearable.

1.4.1 | Conclusive Considerations

The schizophrenic process, which is actually Deleuze and Guattari's main interest in *Anti-Oedipus*, should be distinguished from the schizophrenia as a mental condition. However, as we have seen, the authors' considerations about the schizophrenic process can tell us something about what constitutes schizophrenia as clinical entity according to them. Deleuze and Guattari have often been accused of romanticizing schizophrenia and of describing the schizophrenic as the true revolutionary or artist. I hope I was able to show that they actually do not idealize schizophrenia as a mental state. According to them, the schizophrenic individual is the result of the degeneration of a potentially creative or productive schizophrenic process, whose

¹²This points to the contextualized, historical, aspect of Deleuze and Guattari's interpretation: according to them, schizophrenia is a product of capitalism and its double movement of (a) decoding flows of money and production in a schizophrenic process, which is escaped through the simultaneous (b) social and psychological repression through an investment of the family and its values (leading to the *Oedipus* complex). The schizophrenic would refuse the second movement prescribed by the capitalist *socius*.

Furthermore, this could point to an understanding of schizophrenia as a defence-mechanism, as in *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze mentions that there are movements, changes and thoughts, unbearable for a subject with common sense, but that could be bearable for other types of organization: some nightmares would terrify and traumatize us if we were awake; and the torsions and changes an embryo undergoes would make an adult go mad. This could indicate the idea that, even though the schizophrenic process is unbearable, it could be a defence against a distress that would be even worse: the impossibility to entertain a certain thought, sensation or memory under the rule of common sense and the structure imposed by the *socius*. Roberts (2006, p. 200) mentions that this could be "an unexpected bereavement" or "a perceived injustice," which would disturb the metastability or the fixity of a psyche.

trajectory has foundered and descended into a black hole, absorbing all productivity. This is a danger inherent to the schizophrenic process itself (Deleuze & Parnet, 1987; p. 139 ff.).

If we are to take Deleuze and Guattari seriously, then we should always set aside the prejudices that come along with common sense and its representations in dealing with schizophrenia, seeing as these two registers are incompatible. This means, firstly, that the schizophrenic should not be seen as alienated from reality: desiring machines or differential forces are that by which everything comes about, and thus the schizophrenic is at the pumping heart of reality when he does not codify and cover over intensity (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 3). It is rather on the side of common sense that there is alienation: pure intensity is suppressed in favour of a logic of representation and recognition, and in favour of values such as that of the family and of (hetero-)sexual love relations. Secondly, this entails that a clinical approach to schizophrenia should not be directed towards socializing or curing the schizophrenic individual by imposing a structure onto him. Even in more experimental psychiatric institutions, Deleuze and Guattari warn, if the objective is to cure or socialize the individual, this most often goes together with a force that they call the “adaptation police,” which reproduces the values of the socius (be it intentionally or inadvertently), thus leading to the interruption of the schizophrenic process and the production of the schizophrenic as a clinical entity (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, pp. 94–95).

Accordingly, Deleuze and Guattari promote an approach in line with some important emergent movements in the psychiatry and psychotherapy of their time, notably the Anglo-Saxon antipsychiatry, initiated by Cooper and Laing, and the French institutional psychotherapy, of which Guattari was an actor, and which was put into practice at La Borde, where Guattari worked for numerous years together with its founder Oury, one of the most important representatives of the movement.¹³ Deleuze and Guattari do not agree with everything the actors of these two diversified movements proclaim, however: they occupy their very own, original, position in the debate, which follows from their conceptual framework. I will mention a few, salient points of convergence and divergence with the main actors of the above-mentioned movements.

Deleuze and Guattari seem to concur with the main tenets of antipsychiatry, namely (a) the idea that most current psychiatry represents nothing more than an evaluation, repression and often incarceration of those whose behaviour is deemed socially unfit or undesirable; and (b) the idea of alternative communities that do not aim at socializing or curing individuals, and which do not operate with the usual roles of patient, doctor, warden etc. In a similar vein to Laing, for whom the “madman” is not alienated but rather enlightened through an “ego-loss” that the “normal” person (who is actually alienated) is unable to attain (Laing, 1967, pp. 129 ff.), and to Cooper, for whom (in his later writings at least) madness is a “liberating force” (Cooper, 1980, p. 37, 51, 139), Deleuze and Guattari believe that since the schizophrenic lives at the level of pure, unconstrained

desire (i.e., forces of production), his experience has revolutionary potential, while desire in a “normal” or “socialized” individual is subjugated to the established order (e.g., Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, pp. 3–4, 131–132). Further, Deleuze and Guattari in a sense agree with the idea that it is the psychiatric institution that creates mental illness: psychiatric intervention freezes a potentially healing coping process, thus transforming it into a pathological one and creating a passive, submissive and unresponsive individual.

In short, the authors admire Cooper and Laing for revealing the political significance of psychiatry and madness. However, they think the latter do not push this politicizing far enough. Indeed, the antipsychiatrists still put too much weight on the family in their approach to mental illness, which makes them overlook the inherently political dimension of schizophrenia as a process. Especially Cooper, who puts forward a multi-generational analysis of the family in order to explain schizophrenia, exaggerates the importance of the family (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 34, 95; Cooper, 1971, p. 44). Assuming the family as a mediating instance between social and mental reality—while this is actually a principle imposed by the social order that does not pertain to the more primordial level of desire on which the schizophrenic is situated—makes one miss the logic and political significance of the schizophrenic process, which incessantly undoes any established order, and which can, and often does, directly invest socio-political reality (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 20, 46, 50, 320, 360).

Hence the reproach made to Laing and Cooper for practicing family and community adaptive therapy (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 360), and in fact the rejection of any approach that focuses on the family or on a socialization or reeducation of schizophrenics, in favour of experiments such as Cooper’s at Shenley Hospital and Laing’s at Kinglsey Hall, which were not conceived as places of re-education or adaptation with professionals, but rather as safe homes in which individuals could live out their mental journey safely and be understood (Mornet, 2007, p. 36; Kotowicz, 1997, p. 3, 76 ff.).

It is also wrong according to Deleuze and Guattari to *interpret* the schizophrenic’s expressions and behaviour (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 296, 322): as the schizophrenic does not comply to the logic of common sense, his speech and his behaviour do not *represent* anything unconscious or repressed, which a careful analysis should bring to the fore. Deleuze and Guattari thus distance themselves from psychoanalysis, and more specifically from Lacan, even though they believe he is in the right when he situates the origin of desire at the limits of identity and before personal and intersubjective reality (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 27, 53, 360). The authors think Lacan tends to overstate figures that actually do not belong to desire itself, such as the “Signifier” or the “Phallus,” which taint his conception of the unconscious and structure it, making it into something as a language, from the order of signification (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, pp. 38–39). In this way, Deleuze and Guattari take sides in the debate about the efficacy of psychoanalysis in dealing with schizophrenia and move away from a number of institutional psychotherapists, including Oury, with whom Guattari worked as we have seen, and Tosquelles, the father of the movement, who both

¹³For a comprehensive history of antipsychiatry cf. Kotowicz 1997; and of institutional psychotherapy cf. Mornet 2007.

embrace psychoanalysis as one of the main pillars of institutional psychotherapy (Mornet, 2007, p. 11–12, 30, 44–45).

There is another facet of both antipsychiatry and institutional psychotherapy that Deleuze and Guattari would disagree with: their humanistic tone. The “human,” just like the family, is a value defined and invested by the dominant social order, which does not pertain to the more primordial nature of desire upon which it is projected and which it suppresses. Instead of focusing on the human value of a schizophrenic, the role he can play in society, or on his personality, one should concentrate on his “machines” and consider the individual as an assemblage of tendencies and processes, of which some are beneficial or pleasurable and others harmful or distressing. As Deleuze and Guattari put it: “The first positive task consists of discovering in a subject the nature, the formation, or the functioning of his desiring-machines, independently of any interpretations. What are your desiring-machines, what do you put into these machines, what is the output, how does it work, what are your nonhuman sexes?” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 322).

It is important to note that Deleuze and Guattari do not mean this only in a merely physiological sense. What they consider input can be anything from foods to words, from sensations to abstract ideas. It is exactly a question of experimenting and being inventive with the different types of input. This being said, they do also believe in the use of drugs in dealing with schizophrenia, as indicated in the following passage: “we have seen how the body without organs was [...] traversed by potentials, marked by thresholds. In this sense, we believe in a biochemistry of schizophrenia (in conjunction with the biochemistry of drugs), that will be progressively more capable of determining [...] the distribution of field-gradient-threshold. It is a matter of relationships of intensities through which the subject passes on the body without organs” (Deleuze & Guattari, 2000, p. 100). To be truly effective, drugs would have to affect particular intensive thresholds in order to codify desiring production and make intensive experience bearable without leading to the catatonic state. We are thus not there yet, and this would require much more research, but for Deleuze and Guattari, it is possible in principle to conceive drugs which would improve the condition of schizophrenics in this way.

To conclude, and as already suggested by Roberts (2006, 2007), Davidson and Shahr (2007), Evangelista Da Silva (2007), Deleuze and Guattari may have a lot to offer to both theoretical and clinical research into schizophrenia. By focusing on the notion of intensity in its relation to common sense, I hope to have shown (a) that Deleuze and Guattari provide a conceptual framework that explains the schizophrenic experience and relates it to “normal” or common sense perception and social reality (as opposed to merely listing symptoms), thereby providing an important contribution notably to institutional psychotherapy, which has been criticized for advocating a practice built upon imprecise psychoanalytic concepts and an approximate sociology (Mornet, 2007, p. 23), and which is thus in need of a rigorous conceptual framework, as recognized even by Oury

(2007, p. 115, 121). Additionally, I hope to have indicated (b) that this conceptual framework implies a precise and original, concrete and real-world view on how to deal with schizophrenia, of which I was only able to indicate some salient points, but which opens up to further experimentation.

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