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The (Bio)Power of Structure
A. Kiarina Kordela

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The (Bio)Power of Structure

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3 Psychoanalysis and structuralism

> But, as for knowing who is responsible for [fantasy as] the setting [for desire] ... the psychoanalyst [cannot] rely on ... his science, nor on the support of myth. He must also become a philosopher.
>
> (Laplanche and Pontalis 2003: 133)[1]

In this chapter, I turn to Gilles Deleuze for his systematic and extensive attempts to define structuralism, particularly in a series of works in the late 1960s and early 1970s. These works provide support to the thesis that psychoanalysis and structuralism are so intertwined as to be parts of the same movement of thought. To this end, I begin, in a rather provocative manner, with the following double statement: the broadest term that can express the intrinsically psychoanalytic nature of Gilles Deleuze's thought is structuralism. Whether adopting psychoanalysis, appreciatively critiquing it, or even vehemently attacking it, structuralism is what fascinates Deleuze (not unlike Jacques Lacan) in Freud's work. In fact, it is not unlikely that Deleuze would have remained rather immune to Freud's attractions if, by the 1960s, and primarily through Lacan's intervention, psychoanalysis had not developed into an arena for probing structuralist thought. If nothing else, Lacan and Deleuze shared one passion: to explore and develop structuralism's potential for revolutionizing thought.[2]

Few other names, though, deserve credit regarding Deleuze's devotion to structuralist thought. Beyond Deleuze's profusely avowed debt to Jean-Paul Sartre, in the present context four others of his more or less contemporary thinkers warrant prominent reference. First, Louis Althusser, for having bolstered Deleuze's commitment to structuralism (which for him is another word for "theory") as an absolute condition of scientificity (and this, in spite of all his reservations regarding the actual practices of the majority of structuralists).[3] Second and third, Jean Laplanche and J.B. Pontalis, for having, in their 1964 article on the origin of fantasy (and the fantasy of origins), to which Deleuze refers repeatedly in the late 1960s, discerned structuralism as the condition of psychoanalysis' scientificity, and for having read Freud's long itinerary from his "seduction theory" in the early 1890s to his work on the "primal fantasy" and, finally, "auto-erotism" in the late

1910s – which coincides with his attempt to establish and define fantasy as the object of psychoanalysis – as a search for "structure."[4]

The ultimate creditor for Deleuze's structuralist/psychoanalytic proclivities, not counted among the four of his contemporary companions, remains, of course, his "'prince' of philosophers," Baruch Spinoza, whose non-anthropomorphic and monistic account of substance will always already have laid the ground of structuralist thought (Deleuze 1990: 60). Thus, this brief homage to Deleuze's philosophical friends must conclude with, fourth, Alexandre Kojève, the name of the person who identified Spinoza's thought as structural, that is, as "a *total*, or 'systematic,' or 'circular' Knowledge," incapable of explaining how "an *eternal* Knowledge could absorb everything that is in Time," and, for this reason, it, "obviously, is absurd" (Kojève 1980: 122). This quartet could represent the impetus for Deleuze's life-long, almost compulsive, reconstitution of the *object* and reconceptualization of *time* – the two central elements whose emancipation from traditional philosophical premises was required for the formation of structuralism as a systematic and self-conscious mode of thought.

Indeed, both Spinoza's system and structuralism, as well as psychoanalysis, appear utterly absurd from the perspective of experience or, as Deleuze would say, of representation, which is organized on the basis of linear time (the succession past-present-future) and the distinction between reality and non-reality, along with its corollaries: the true and the false, the objective and the subjective. These systems presuppose a different conception of temporality (and hence causality), as well as the collapse of all distinctions predicated in the reality/object – imaginary/subject divide (a collapse visualized in Lacan's formula for the subject – "$ ◊ a" – which includes the object: "a"; Lacan 1998: 303). As Deleuze writes in "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?" (written in 1967 and published in 1973), while "classical philosophy" had "conditioned" thought "to a certain distinction or correlation between the real and the imaginary," the "first criterion of structuralism ... is the discovery and recognition of a third order ... a symbolic order, irreducible to the orders of the real and the imaginary, and deeper than they are," which is also to say, irreducible to "a sensible form" or "a figure of the imagination" or "an intelligible essence" (Deleuze 2004: 171, 173). This is why the long, yet dense, arch from Spinoza to structuralism could not grow to something more than "absurd" without a break with "classical philosophy." However, as in every break, the new is neither sanctioned nor certain of itself.

To gain any credibility whatsoever, such a system has to account for the discrepancy between its own counterintuitive schemes and our intuitive experience of reality – which in the case of structuralism means precisely, to repeat Kojève's words, to explain how "an *eternal* Knowledge could absorb everything that is in Time." This is why Deleuze's universe is permeated through and through with a distinction between two aspects: the actual, which corresponds to our empirical representations, and the virtual, which expresses the transcendental conditions that enable the former – in psychoanalytic parlance, the ego and the unconscious. It is a matter, then, of conceiving the unconscious or the virtual as, following Freud's lead, "fantasy, the fundamental object of psychoanalysis," but in such a way that this object, fantasy, is not posited as the unreal antipode of the objects of reality (LP: 118). The virtual and the actual is of course a recapitulation of the Spinozian couple, attributes and modes; but if Spinoza's telescopic view of the modes made the attributes look "absurd," Deleuze had to take his magnifying lens and zoom it toward their difference until it revealed itself in the form of repetition. It is this focus, and its intertwined compulsion to repeat, that distinguishes Deleuze's work from both Spinoza's and Lacan's, and confers on it its idiosyncratic mark, conceptually, methodologically, and stylistically.

This mark is intrinsically related to Deleuze's structuralist postulate that actual time – the succession of past, present, and future, in which movement and change take place – reveals itself on the virtual level as what he calls the "third synthesis" of time. By using this term Deleuze alludes to Spinoza's "third kind of knowledge," which we shall approach in the last chapter. The "third synthesis" refers to a form of time that is "empty and out of joint, with its rigorous formal and static order," and which "is precisely the death instinct" (Deleuze 1994a: 111). Having been introduced by Freud in his *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* as the compulsion to repeat (*Wiederholungszwang*), the death drive or the "pure and empty form of time" can emerge only through an actual repetition that not only collapses all empirical oppositions, such as reality-imaginary or object-subject, but eliminates "all content," including any "temporal content" (Deleuze 1994a: 86, 110). This radical eradication of concrete contents is the very task of repetition since, as everyone knows from "love's repetition," in repeating, "we realize that our sufferings do not depend on their object" (Deleuze 2000: 72). This is why, although the "phenomena" we repeat "are always unhappy and particular," "the phenomenon of repetition forms a general joy" (ibid., 72) – comparable to the Spinozian "Joy" of "*the third kind of knowledge*," extracted from the "intellectual Love of God," that is, "the idea of God as its [Joy's] cause ... not insofar as we imagine him as [a] present" concrete entity, but "as eternal" (*Ethics* VP32D and P32C). Repetition is Deleuze's method for transcending any concrete content, as the foremost precondition of structure, and, thus, for enabling "the repetition of the future, as [the] eternal return" of the "new, complete novelty" (Deleuze 1994a: 90).

Object and time

In "How Do We Recognize Structuralism?" Deleuze presents seven distinct, yet interrelated and partly overlapping, criteria that thought must fulfill in order to be structuralist, all of which concern the constitution of the *object* and, albeit less directly, the constitution of *time* (Deleuze 2004:

170–92).[5] As mentioned above, the "first criterion of structuralism ... is the discovery" of a "symbolic order" (Deleuze 2004: 171, 173). The symbolic, as a precondition for structure, is "a combinatory formula [*une combinatoire*]" of purely negative elements that "have neither extrinsic designation nor intrinsic signification," so that "the sites prevail over whatever occupies them" (Deleuze 2004: 173–4). By vacuuming the combinatory elements of their content, repetition provides the bridge from actuality to the virtual object and its "empty form of time," and thereby reveals itself as the very process of the constitution of the (virtual) *object* and (empty) *time*.

Furthermore, the "atomic elements" of the structure, obtained through repetition, must "account both for the formation of wholes and for the variation of parts," for the "whole structure" and for the fact that its "symbolic elements ... are organized necessarily in series" (Deleuze 2004: 173, 182, 186). Last, but not least, if repetition is to account fully for the possibility of the emergence of structure, it must also lead to the "Third" "differentiating" and "eminently symbolic object," the "empty square" or "Object = x," which guards against the "reflecting[,] ... doubling, and duplicating" role "of the imaginary" by "preventing the one [series] from imaginarily falling back on the other" (Deleuze 2004: 184–6). It is particularly this criterion that leads Deleuze to the question: "what is the meaning of this idea that virtual objects refer, in the last instance, to an element which is itself symbolic?" This is a question in which, Deleuze continues, "the whole psychoanalytic – or ... amorous – game of repetition is at issue" (Deleuze 1994a: 103).

In pursuing this question, I will trace the parallels between Freud's actual series of repetition (his failures and revised attempts) toward the constitution of fantasy as the object of psychoanalysis and Deleuze's reconstruction of this itinerary in his own series of repetition in *Difference and Repetition*, as the logico-conceptual path required for the simultaneous constitution and fulfillment of the conditions of structure. Preventing each series of repetition – Freud's and Deleuze's – from falling back on the other, Laplanche and Pontalis's 1964 article on fantasy functions as the "Third" – which, as we shall see, corresponds to the moment of the present – insofar as it recapitulates Freud's *historical* itinerary (past) as a *logical* problem. Then, in the third (future) reenactment, Deleuze can take up the logical problem, already divested of all historical residue, and show that *logic* itself requires a double formulation, both in actual and virtual time. Thereby, Deleuze's relation to psychoanalysis is revealed as the thesis: psychoanalysis does not deserve to be called "theory" (which is also to say, structuralism) unless it treats the actual *historical* past as the manifestation in actual time of a *logical* problem that is simultaneously given in virtual time.

Freud's own past theoretical framework, which lasted from 1893 to 1897, bears the name "seduction theory." Its "guiding principle" remained "the search for chronology, going backwards into time towards the first real, verifiable elements," which made Freud a "prisoner of ... theoretical

alternatives," such as "internal-external, imaginary-real" (LP: 119). To leave behind the past requires, according to Deleuze, establishing that the "phenomena of the unconscious cannot be understood in the overly simple form of opposition" (Deleuze 1994a: 106). Far from representing apparent (i.e., actual) conflicts, such phenomena must, according to Laplanche and Pontalis, be "the result of more subtle differential mechanisms" that take place on the level of "a pre-subjective structure, beyond both the strict happening and the internal imagery" (LP: 118). It has to be shown that the "unconscious," as the terrain of fantasy, "is differential and iterative ... serial, problematic and questioning," and not, as a "Hegelian Post-Kantianism" would want it (a view apparently shared by Freud at that point), "oppositional," which is only the principle of "consciousness" (Deleuze 1994a: 108). Nevertheless, Freud's "seduction theory" did offer, "if not the theory, at least an intuition of the structure," since "seduction appear[ed] as an almost universal datum, which ... transcended both the event and ... its protagonists" (LP: 118). A theoretically full-fledged account of this transcendental order, in which the concrete contents – "the condition and the agents" – of the structure "will themselves be annihilated," is what is presupposed for structure and, hence, what both Freud's and Deleuze's futures await (Deleuze 1994a: 111).

In the meantime, "in 1897," Freud "discard[ed] ... the seduction theory" for the sake of the "Oedipus complex"; but he "conceived" the latter as a "biological" or "endogenous reality, sexuality, which is itself supposed to be in conflict with a normative, prohibitive external reality" (LP: 118). In this move, fantasy was once again reduced to "no more than the secondary expression of this reality," while chronology united forces with biology into a renewed unsurpassable stumbling block: "the intrusion of the fantasy ... into the subject[,] cannot but occur to the organism, the little human being, at a point in time, by virtue of certain characteristics of his biological evolution" (LP: 118, 115). So, with the Oedipus complex we seem, at least momentarily, to "have lost the structure" for good (LP: 118).

Yet, if the Oedipus complex constitutes a veritable step forward with which Freud enters his present, it is because, in its futile search for historico-biological data, the theory of the Oedipus complex had in effect stumbled on the structualist concept of sign. For what appears as the "temporal characteristics of human sexuality," as "too early (birth) and too late (puberty)," is the narrativization of the logical relation between "too much and too little excitation" (LP: 114). Past and future turn out to be not instances spread out in diachrony, but rather two intensities – "too much" and "too little" – that form the "totality of time" or, borrowing Hölderlin's term, "the caesura, [of] the before and the after" (Deleuze 1994a: 89). What lies between the before and the after – what we call the "present" – is the "*symbolic image*" – an image that "must be called a *symbol* by virtue of the unequal parts which it subsumes and draws together." For "the sign" always consists of two unequal parts since it "describes both the object and its absence" (Deleuze 1994a: 89, emphasis mine; LP: 131).

The symbol or the present "is the unequal in itself" and, as such, equal to itself and to itself alone, since everything else, being by definition equal to itself, can be either "too much" or "too little" in comparison to the symbol (Deleuze 1994a: 89-90). In its vertiginous twist, the chronological quest of the Oedipus complex eventually thrusts us into a "time ... defined not only by a formal and empty order but also by a totality and a series" (Deleuze 1994a: 89), or, rather, two series, since it is always the case that "'structure' puts into play [at least] two series" (Deleuze 2004: 183).

Discovered in Freud's own self-analysis, the Oedipus complex did to chronology what Kant had done to Descartes: by introducing between "the determination [I think] and the undetermined [I am] ... the form of the determinable, namely time" as an empty form, Kant shuttered the Cartesian *cogito* "as though the *I* were fractured from one end to the other ... by the pure and empty form of time" (Deleuze 1994a: 86). "Totality" and the "seriality of repetition" are the conditions of the empty form of time and its fractured *I*, "the man without name, without family, without qualities, without self or I, the 'plebeian' guardian of a secret, the already-Overman whose scattered members gravitate around the sublime image" of the sign (Deleuze 1994a: 90). If Sophocles can here meet Nietzsche and a sensibility that characterizes modernity since Shakespeare's time, it is because when the "Northern Prince says 'time is out of joint'" he effectively says that he himself, no less than "the Northern Philosopher," "should be Hamletian because he is Oedipal" (Deleuze 1994a: 88).

Yet, the future is not yet accomplished (*vollbracht*) for either of the two partners. The sheer invocation of the sign and, for that matter, the empty form of time and the fractured "I" do not suffice for structure to establish itself, just as the mere presence of two series does not suffice to prevent them from falling imaginarily back on one another. So far "sign" merely indicates the imaginary, the redoubling of the word effected by the fact that the sign conjures in the imagination the presence of the absent object, just as it renders the present object absent. It is true that "as soon as we see two in 'one,' as soon as we make doubles [*déboublons*], the imaginary appears in person," but this does not suffice to make the sign symbolic (i.e., structural) (Deleuze 2004: 172).

Nevertheless, the reconceptualization of the Oedipal chronology as varying degrees of intensity already makes evident that:

> it matters little whether or not the event itself occurs, or whether the act has been performed or not ... past, present, and future are not distributed according to this temporal criterion. Oedipus has already carried out the act, Hamlet has not yet done so, but in either case the first part of the symbol is lived in the past, they are in the past ... as long as they experience the image [sign] of the act as too big for them.
>
> (Deleuze 1994a: 89)

For in "effect, there is always a time at which the imagined act is supposed 'too big for me'," and this supposition "defines *a priori* the past" or the first time (Deleuze 1994a: 89). "The second time ... is ... the present of metamorphosis, a becoming equal to the act" or "a doubling of the self, and a projection of an ideal self in the image of the act" – here the sign becomes the double of the self as its ideal, just as "the hero becomes 'capable' of the act" (Deleuze 1994a: 89). Because "what the self has become equal to" – the sign – "is the unequal in itself," "the third time" emerges "in which the future appears" and "the event and the act ... turn back against the self which has become their equal and smash it to pieces" (Deleuze 1994a: 89–90). This completes the bridge from the actual to the virtual. Inversely, seen from the opposite perspective, from the virtual to the actual, it follows that, "as regards time, the position of structuralism is quite clear: time is always a time of actualization," in which "the elements of virtual coexistence are carried out at diverse rhythms" that make up actual time (Deleuze 2004: 180).

So far, the concerted efforts of the seduction theory and the Oedipus complex have yielded (a) the transcendence of the actual event and agents, and (b) a reconceptualization of time as the simultaneous coexistence of two intensities (past and future) bound together by the present (sign) as the totality of time. If the future is, nevertheless, not yet accomplished for either partner, Freud or Deleuze, it is because something of a realist history, contingent and character-oriented, continued to stick to the formality, preventing time from becoming sufficiently static to allow for an excessive formlessness. Put otherwise, the agent annihilated remains so far a *self* that is an *a priori* given, whereby the emergence of both the subject and the object remains an occulted mystery. What, therefore, still remains to be shown is that the totality of time itself engenders the distinction between subject and object, at the same time that it collapses them. This deficiency required the next round of repetition.

The year 1917 rekindled hopes. Freud seemed to bring the "need for a theoretical foundation" of fantasy close to "a veritable transmutation" by "introduc[ing] a new concept ... the Urphantasien, primal (or original) fantasy." These can be recovered "beneath the diversity of individual fables," and which would lead him to the notion of "phylogenesis" (LP: 121–2). With this move:

> once again a reality is postulated beneath the elaborations of fantasy, but a reality which, as Freud insists, has an autonomous and structural status with regard to the subject who is totally dependent on it ... It is tempting to accept the "reality" which inspires the work of imagination according to its own laws, as a prefiguration of the "symbolic order" defined by Lévi-Strauss and Lacan ... Beneath the pseudo-scientific mask of phylogenesis ... Freud finds it necessary to postulate an organization made of signifiers anteceding the effect of the event and the

> signified as a whole. In this mythical pre-history of the species we see the need to create a pre-structure inaccessible to the subject.
>
> (LP: 122)

Yet, Laplanche and Pontalis caution, we must not overtake ourselves and assume too easily that the protagonists have yet been fully eradicated, and their hesitation anticipates the necessity for yet another round of repetition. In their words:

> However we should not be in a hurry to replace the phylogenic explanation by a structural type of explanation. The original fantasy is first and foremost fantasy: it lies beyond the history of the subject but nevertheless in history: a kind of language and a symbolic sequence, but loaded with elements of imagination; a structure, but activated by contingent elements. As such it is characterized by certain traits which make it difficult to assimilate to a purely transcendental schema.
>
> (LP: 123)

Freud's own intimidation before such a leap is betrayed in his dallying differentiation "between original fantasies and others, those that one might call secondary, whether conscious or unconscious" (LP: 127). Nevertheless, his characteristically discerning intuition leads him in the right direction: his distinguishing criterion concerns directly the protagonists. In secondary fantasies:

> the scenario is basically in the first person, and the subject's place clear and invariable. The organization is ... weighted by the ego ... But the original fantasy ... is characterized by the absence of subjectivization, and the subject is present in the scene: the child, for instance, is one character amongst many in the fantasy "a child is beaten." Freud insisted on this visualization of the subject on the same level as the other protagonists.
>
> (LP: 128)

That is, the issue is not simply a matter of "recogniz[ing] the equivalence" between active and passive, beating and being beaten, or "eating and being eaten in the fantasy of incorporation." For "so long as there is some idea of a subject, even if playing a passive role," the protagonists persist and we cannot "reach the structure of deepest fantasy," as "a purely transcendental schema" (LP: 129, 122–3).

Hence, one more, ultimate, round – the repetition of the future itself – is still required. This is the circle of the ultimate fantasy, narcissism or auto-erotism, for only "the narcissistic ego" can account for the distinction between "virtual and real objects," out of which the division between subject and object will emerge, and through which we eventually can "enter

the third synthesis of time" as a truly "pure and empty form" (Deleuze 1994a: 111). To understand those rather obscure pages in *Difference and Repetition*, in which Deleuze derives the empty form of time from the incubator of narcissism, we must first become familiar with the psychoanalytic understanding of this concept.

Above all, as Laplanche and Pontalis emphatically remark, narcissism does not operate "in the object-directed sense, as a first stage, enclosed within itself, from which the subject has to rejoin the world of objects" (LP: 131). On the contrary, as Freud stresses in the Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality, "the drive becomes auto-erotic, only after the loss of the object" – something which presupposes "the existence of a primary object relationship" (LP: 132). Evidently, this primary relationship and its *ur*-lost object cannot be like any other object relation the subject will experience after the trials of auto-erotism. It is in his attempt to approach this primary object that Freud pens down the following remarkable thought: as long as "sexual satisfaction" is "linked with the taking of nourishment, the sexual instinct has a sexual object outside the infant's own body in the shape of his mother's breast"; "it is only later that the instinct loses that object, just at the time, perhaps, when the child is able to form a total idea of the person to whom the organ that is giving him satisfaction belongs" (Freud 1974: 222). With this passage, which is an "invaluable ... indication that the very constitution of the auto-erotic fantasy implies not only the partial object (breast ... [etc.]), but the mother as a total person, withdrawing as she becomes total," Freud will have grown, to repeat Deleuze's words, "equal to the act" that catapults his work into the future of structuralism (LP: 141–2, n. 38).

The groundbreaking implications of Freud's reference to totality are enhanced in Lacan's 1964 account of the introduction of sexuality in human life. What the human "being loses in sexuality," Lacan says, is not the "breast" but *totality*, in its most comprehensive sense, that is, consisting of the following. On the one hand, totality includes "the libido, *qua* pure life instinct ... immortal ... or irrepressible ... simplified, indestructible life," "whose characteristic is not to exist, but which is nevertheless an organ." This indestructible life Lacan exemplifies in the "lamella," Lacan's zoologically inspired fable for the libido. On the other hand, totality includes "the locus of the Other, insofar as it is there that the first signifier emerges" (Lacan 1981: 197–8). The primary object, lost by default, is this undifferentiated totality – at once indestructible life and signifier, being and thought, object and subject – that "is subtracted from the living being by virtue of the fact that it is subject to the cycle of sexed reproduction." And "it is of this that all the forms of the *objet a*," the "breast ... [and] all the other objects" that "can be enumerated[,] are merely its representatives, its figures" (Lacan 1981: 198).

Sexuality causes this loss because, strictly speaking, in the human being (the very being that is subject to the signifier) sexuality is always auto-erotic.

For being "objectless" – the distinctive characteristic of auto-erotism – indicates that the "origin" of auto-erotism is "the moment when sexuality, disengaged from any natural object, moves into the field of fantasy," where the object is redoubled as totality, "and by that very fact becomes sexuality" (LP: 132). For "the natural method of apprehending an object is split in two." On the one hand, apprehending it in terms of "non-sexual functions," as a need, such as "the taking of food"; and, on the other hand, apprehending it through the "sexual drive." For the latter, the "external object is abandoned" so that the drive's "aim and ... source assume an autonomous existence with regard to feeding" and, consequently, its "prototype is not the act of sucking, but the enjoyment of going through the motions of sucking" – the "ideal ... of auto-erotism is 'lips that kiss themselves,'" in a total self-satisfaction that lacks nothing (LP: 132–3). Paradoxically, it is only with this "apparently self-centered enjoyment" of auto-erotism that "all distinction between subject and object has been lost" (LP: 133). The collapse of this distinction, then, comes at the price of a totality that, originating in the redoubling (or splitting) of an *ur*-lost object, will henceforth be always half of itself.

Now we can understand why Deleuze writes that Lacan's "concept of the phallus" – that is, "the 'phallus,' understood as a symbolic organ," i.e., both as the locus of the Other and organ – "effectively comprises the ... characteristics" of totality. The phallus is the (actually) impossible, yet (virtually) necessary object that "not only does ... lack something in relation to the real object from which it is subtracted, [but] it lacks something in itself, since it is always half of itself, the other half being different as well as absent." It "testif[ies] to its own absence and to itself as past" by "being essentially displaced in relation to itself, being found only as lost, being possessed of an always fragmentary identity" (Deleuze 1994a: 102–3). Thus, the "symbolic phallus," as the archetype of the total object or of the overlap of libido and the Other, is "the always-displaced fragment ...: the object = x" that confers on the structure its symbolic character by preventing the series of the past and the future from falling back on each other (Deleuze 1994a: 103).

By now we may discern in Deleuze's text Sartre's echoes, both conceptually and rhetorically. According to Sartre's phenomenology, in order to express the totality of being one must express both its appearance and its essence. Its essence transcends its appearance insofar as "the existent ... cannot be reduced to a *finite* series of manifestations since each one of them is a relation to a subject constantly changing." Although "an *object* may disclose itself only through a single *Abschattung*" – in a single aspect, profile, or shading – "the sole fact of there being a subject implies the possibility of multiplying the points of view *on* that *Abschattung*," and "[t]his suffices to multiply to infinity the *Abschattung* under consideration" (Sartre 1992: 5). Hence, "the appearance, which is *finite*, indicates itself in its finitude, but at the same time in order to be grasped as an

appearance-of-that-which-appears [essence], it requires that it be surpassed toward infinity" (Sartre 1992: 6). In other words:

> What appears in fact is only an *aspect* of the object, and the object is altogether *in* that aspect and altogether outside of it. It is altogether *within*, in that it manifests itself *in* that aspect; it shows itself as the structure of the appearance, which is at the same time the principle of the series. It is altogether outside, for the series itself will never appear nor can it appear.
>
> (Sartre 1992: 6)

The series itself can never appear, for this would require that the infinity of *Abschattungen* – "the being-which-does-not-appear" (Sartre 1992: 6) – appears, which is impossible. The totality of being or the "for-itself" is, therefore, the appearance or "the in-itself" *and* the series of appearances that can never appear. This:

> totality which runs after itself and refuses itself at the same time, which can find in itself no limit to its surpassing because it is its own surpassing and because it surpasses itself toward itself, can under no circumstances exist within the limits of an instant. There is never an instant at which we can assert that the for-itself *is*, precisely because the for-itself never is.
>
> (Sartre 1992: 211)

This is why the time of the "for-itself," which is the "the time of consciousness[,] is human reality which temporalizes itself as the totality which is to itself its own incompletion; it is nothingness slipping into a totality as a detotalizing ferment" (Sartre 1992: 211). Finally, in the time of consciousness, "the In-itself is what the For-itself was *before*," but "Present, Past, Future" occur "all at the same time," for "the For-itself disperses its being in three dimensions is temporal due to the very fact that it nihilates itself" (Sartre 1992: 198, 202). This is why in the empty form of time, the pure past – the "past as the contemporary of the present" – is both the in-itself and the for-itself, the mythic moment in which the infinity of *Abschattungen*, as it were, still appears. Sexuality is the moment at which human reality temporalizes itself. Thus, the overlap of the lamella or libido and the locus of the Other condensed in the "symbolic phallus signifies no less the erotic mode of the pure past than the immemorial of sexuality" (Deleuze 1994a: 102–3).

Deleuze succinctly encapsulates the point once more – "the symbol is the always-displaced fragment, standing for a past which was never present: the object = x" – to raise then the question we encountered at the beginning of this chapter, concerning as much structuralism as psychoanalysis: "But what is the meaning of this idea that virtual objects refer, in

the last instance, to an element which is itself symbolic?" (Deleuze 1994a: 103). He then embarks in an almost seven-page-long rumination on a non-realist conception (i.e., not in terms of the actual and its linear time or, in short, in terms of consciousness) of repetition and difference punctuated with philosophical and literary references that lead to a renewed occurrence of "the object = x ... as the immanent limit of the series of virtuals." This limit demarcates "the series of the real" and the "series of the virtual" as "the successive presents of ... coexistent series" (Deleuze 1994a: 109). Deleuze lingers here to indicate that if Freud so long persisted on realistic divisions and temporalities, and if for him "Eros" can only be "the opposing element ... [to] Thanatos," this is only because it "is inevitable that the two references become confused, the pure past assuming thereby the status of a former present, albeit mythical, and reconstituting the illusion it was supposed to denounce, resuscitating the illusion of an original and a derived, of an identity in the origin and a resemblance in the derived" (Deleuze 1994a: 109). For realistic consciousness, Eros is the line in which "the series of the virtual" constitutes "a past which differs in kind from any present [actual]," precisely insofar as it is conceived as a "former" or dead present, without recognizing that if this conception is at all possible, it is because of the coexistence of the series of the past and present – "a power of difference" which "Eros borrows from Mnemosyne" (Deleuze 1994a: 109). In realist thought, just as the present is the death of the past, the empty form of time – Thanatos – is the death of Eros.

Thus, having tarried with this inevitable confusion at the root of Freud's realism, in the next paragraph narcissism can eventually enter the stage performing the movement that realism needs to emulate in order to overcome itself: "However, it is by interiorizing the difference between the two lines [Eros and Mnemosyne] ... that the libido returns or flows back into the ego and the passive ego becomes entirely narcissistic" (Deleuze 1994a: 110). To stress the absolute character of the coexistence of the two series, the real or actual and the virtual, in the narcissistic circuit, as opposed to the preceding cycles of repetition, Deleuze performs a final ritornello that brings us back to the "fracture of the I" executed by the Kantian introduction of time as "pure and empty form ... separated from its content." Here again it matters little whether the act was already or not yet committed, so that in the *a priori* category of time the "already" and the "not yet" retain a minimum of "temporal content" (Deleuze 1994a: 110). The unique value of the "narcissistic libido" lies in the fact that it "abstracts from *all* content," being "the phenomenon which corresponds to the empty form of time" as "the *spatial* phenomenon of that form in general," without reference to an "already" and a "not yet," not even as exchangeable notions (Deleuze 1994a: 110, emphasis mine).

This is so because, when the "order of before, during, and after marks the division of the narcissistic ego in time," the "whole of time is gathered in the image of the formidable action" – "the action = x" – "as this is simultaneously presented, forbidden and predicted by the superego" (Deleuze 1994a: 110). For, what is here called "temporal series" or "before, during, and after" in truth "designates the confrontation of the divided narcissistic ego with the whole of time or the image of the action," whose spatial configuration consists of three elements: the problem or lack, which is at once presented (before) and predicted (after) – this is too big for me – the prohibition (during) – it ought not to be too big – and the realization of the prediction, as the death of the above two instances (*Instanzen*) and the genesis of the radical novelty (Deleuze 1994a: 110). In Deleuze's words:

> The narcissistic ego repeats once in the form of the before or lack, in the form of the *Id* (this action is too big for me); a second time in the form of an infinite becoming-equal appropriate to the *ego ideal*; a third time, in the form of the after which realizes the prediction of the *superego* (the id and the ego, the condition and the agent, will themselves be annihilated)!
>
> (Deleuze 1994a: 110–1)

It is only now, after narcissism's complete annihilation of all protagonists, conditions, and their temporal residues, that the empty form of time can reveal itself as a pure "rigorous formal and static order" (Deleuze 1994a: 111).

Thus, with auto-erotism, the "third repetition" or "third time of the series" amounts to "the repetition of the future, as eternal return," in which the future emerges as a "new, complete novelty," by dint of the fact that it "constitutes the autonomy of the product, the independence of the work ... which leaves nothing intact of the default [past] or the becoming-equal [present]" (Deleuze 1994a: 90). It is the triumph of the sign liberated from all attachments to any self, timid or arrogant. By being thus radically selfless, the "extreme formality [of the sign] is there only for an excessive formlessness (Hölderlin's *Unförmliche*)," just as "change" – and "time is the most radical form of change" – is what "does not change" (Deleuze 1994a: 91, 89).

Yet, the further point not to be missed is that if narcissism alone can annihilate all protagonists, conditions, and their temporal residues, it is because, by introducing the signifier, it animates the law (superego). Herein lies one of Deleuze's most decisive theses regarding psychoanalysis, namely, that the function of the law transcends its role of sustaining the *status quo* by being simultaneously the very condition of the emergence of the new. This means that "territorialities" circumscribed by any law are always already destined to be "shot through with lines of flight testifying to the presence within them of movements of deterritorialization and reterritorialization" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 55). Or, as Lacan puts it, "transgression ... only takes place if it is supported by the oppositional principle, by the forms of the Law" (Lacan 1992: 177). Given that "the

law ... is revealed ... as identical with an order of language" (Lacan 1977: 66), it is only expectable that the very moment that "the passive ego becomes narcissistic, the activity must be *thought*" (Deleuze 1994a: 110). The auto-erotic introduction of the sign is the "new, complete novelty" that emerges as the future of the narcissistic repetition, and which, as we already precipitated, will always already have demystified the fact that virtual objects refer to an element which is itself symbolic. It is for this reason that "the importance of the reorganization that takes place at this level, in opposition to the preceding stage ... cannot be overstated" (Deleuze 1994a: 110).

Nevertheless, as I hope to have shown, one also cannot overstate the importance of the preceding cycles of repetition, by which I mean both Deleuze's first and second syntheses of time (performatively recapitulated within the third) and Freud's repetitions through the seduction theory and Oedipus complex up to auto-eroticism. For it is only by going through them that our two initial quests are fulfilled. These include: (a) the requirement of structurality, which postulates the elimination of conditions, protagonists, and temporality – something which cannot be executed unless the structure is determined by its internal limit of totality (object-x) and the series it engenders; and (b) the requirement that the structure (totality and series) nevertheless accounts for the realistic experience of the actual, with its linear time, conditions, and protagonists. Without the repetition of the past and the present, the repetition of the future could not reveal itself as a palindromic translation between the actual and the virtual, presupposing all actual agents in the very move that extinguishes them.

Drive, lack, desire

The above exposition also indicates that what is often perceived in Deleuze's work as a criticism of psychoanalysis is actually his enthusiastic and painstaking philosophical labor toward guarding psychoanalysis against its most insidious peril: the non-structuralist temptation of conceiving the subject as an individual agent of events in chronological time. Surrendering to or resisting this tendency is also decisive in grasping another central psychoanalytic concept: lack. Whether Deleuze's theory, which is often characterized as a philosophy of the "plenitude of life" that "disjoin[s] desire from negativity," constitutes a departure from or an amplifying reaffirmation of psychoanalysis, depends also on a structuralist conception of lack (Butler 1999: 212).[6]

To approach this point, let us return for a last time to narcissism, as the nexus of drive and desire. As the fatal denouement of the narcissistic prediction with "its crushing unity and ... irreversible series" indicates, it "is by means of the death instinct that [the narcissistic ego] is reflected in the ego ideal and has a presentiment of its end in the superego, as though in two fragments of the fractured I" (Deleuze 1994a: 111). The inevitable result of the fact that in narcissism "the commandment" of the law

"appeared" is that "through it I came to desire death" (Lacan 1992: 83). In narcissism, it is not only the subject and the object that merge but also death and the amorous game, so that "Thanatos" is "by no means the complement or antagonist of Eros" (Deleuze 1994a: 111). Rather:

> It is all in the same movement that there is a reflux of Eros on to the ego [whereby it becomes narcissistic], that the ego takes upon itself the disguises and displacements which characterize the objects in order to construct its own fatal affection ... and that the death instinct appears, indistinguishable from that pure form ... of that narcissistic libido.
> (Deleuze 1994a: 113)

The "apparently self-centered enjoyment" of auto-erotism obliterates "all distinctions" "between subject and object," Eros and Thanatos, pleasure principle and death drive, and so on (LP: 133). Here, I would emphatically object that there *are* distinctions, but they are not to be understood as oppositions or dualisms. Just as the death drive is "not ... the exception to the [pleasure] principle but ... its *foundation*," the drive is also the foundation of desire (Deleuze 1994b: 113). This is a clear distinction, without setting up an opposition. Need can serve as the blueprint for exemplifying this relation:

> A phenomenon such as need can be understood in terms of "lack," from the point of view of action and the active synthesis which it determines, but as extreme "satiety" or "fatigue" from the point of view of the passive synthesis by which it is conditioned.
> (Deleuze 1994b: 77)

Considered from the perspective of action, need, as much as desire, appears as a "lack" that produces (linear) time as a project, as in Hegel's conception of desire, which Kojève formulates as follows:

> Man essentially creates and destroys in terms of the idea that he forms of the Future. And the idea of the Future appears in the real present in the form of a Desire ... Action that arises from *this* Desire engenders History. Hence there is *Time* only where there is *History*.
> (Kojève 1980: 139)

This "dialectical understanding applies only to historical reality – that is, to the reality created by Work according to a Project" (Kojève 1980: 146). However, from the perspective of the virtual, as Jean-Paul Sartre has established, desire is lack as the pure past, that is, the lacked totality. In Sartre's words:

> A lack presupposes a trinity: that which is missing or the "lacking," that which misses what is lacking or the "existing," and a totality

> which has been broken by the lacking and which would be restored by the synthesis of the "lacking" and the "existing" – this is the "lacked."
>
> (Sartre 1992: 135)

The "lacked" restored is desire as excessive satiety. From the perspective of the virtual, "lack is appearance on the ground of a totality," which is why it does not matter "whether this totality has been originally given and is now broken ... or whether it has never yet been realized" (Sartre 1992: 138). Given that on the actual level, too, "human desire" is "a Desire directed toward another Desire," and not any actual thing (Kojève 1980: 139) – a point in which Spinoza and Hegel concur – "desire finds the principle of its difference from need in the virtual object" (Deleuze 1994a: 106). Desire is the most direct index of the virtual (lacked totality) in the actual (while need does so only from the perspective of the virtual).

However, it is crucial to understand that when we say, repeating Sartre's words, that it matters not whether this totality has been originally given and is now broken or whether it has never yet been realized, we mean that "lack" in this sense refers to something that lies outside time. Because of this important aspect, and because of Sartre's general Hegelian undertones, it might be more helpful to distinguish the two conceptions of lack – on the level of the actual and linear time, as opposed to lack on the level of the virtual – through a direct juxtaposition between Hegel and Spinoza. From the point of view of the actual and of Hegel, lack is tantamount to negation or limitation; by contrast, from the perspective of the virtual, lack indexes the positive determination of something through its immanent cause.

To explain this point, let us turn to Pierre Macherey's juxtaposition between Hegel and Spinoza regarding specifically the issue of determination and the fact that Hegel misrepresented Spinoza in arguing that "*omnis determinatio est negatio* [all determination is negation]" (Macherey 2011: 113). To understand one crucial difference between Hegel and Spinoza – and the difference between actual and virtual lack – we need to introduce a distinction between negative and positive determination. In Macherey's words, "to determine something negatively is to represent it abstractly according to its limits, in separating it from God that acts within it" – i.e., ignoring substance as its immanent cause – "and attempting to adapt it to formal norms ... forged by the imagination" (Macherey 2011: 141). When we do this to a thing, we "relate it ... to that which it is not," including to "its possible disappearance," which is why "we present it as contingent." By contrast, "to determine something positively ... is to perceive it ... according to the immanent necessity that engenders it within substance, according to the law of causality that is the same one through which substance produces itself" – since it is in the individual things that "substance produces itself." In this case, we "envisage it from the point of view of eternity, insofar as it is eternal, that is, insofar as it cannot be destroyed, other than by an exterior cause (*E* IIIP4)" (Macherey 2011: 141).

For, being the effect of eternal substance, the essence of every singular thing is eternal, and only its actual existence is finite and appears contingent. That is, in contrast to substance, whose essence necessarily entails its existence, singular "things do not exist necessarily," and, therefore, "their existence and their essence are 'determined' in completely different manners." Their existence is determined according to a negative determination or actual lack, whereas their essence is determined according to a positive determination or virtual lack (while the two are expressions of one and the same determination). "This is why the fact that singular things do not exist in eternity" on the actual level "has no effect at all on the eternity of their essence," that is, on their virtual determination (Macherey 2011: 173). In other words, "the same things are determined from different points of view," from that of eternity or the virtual, and from that of linear time and the actual. We could call these two determinations the "internal" and the "external," respectively. In the first case, "a finite thing is determined according to its essence, following which it tends indefinitely to preserve its being; in the other case, it is determined according to its existence in the conditions that limit it" (Macherey 2011: 173).

If in Spinoza, and in psychoanalysis, "determination can be understood simultaneously in a positive and a negative sense, it is because this notion does away with the traditional opposition of positive and negative" (Macherey 2011: 146). This is not unlike the other traditional oppositions that structuralist/psychoanalytic logic has made obsolete.

Therefore, we can accept Sartre's conception of lack only insofar as by "lacked" we mean not a divisible totality – whose parts would be the existing and the lacking – but the specific immutable and eternal essence that a singular thing expresses in its singular existence. Simply put, the lacked of the crescent moon is the full moon neither because the waxing moon craves to become full nor because the waning moon misses the full moon, but because the crescent moon always *is* the full moon.

This conception of lack provides the matrix for understanding "the connection between fantasy and desire" – the two names for the object of the unconscious. By "locating the origin of fantasy in the auto-erotism" and the fact that the "origin of fantasy" coincides with the "first upsurgings of desire" (LP: 131), Freud and Deleuze have also shown that:

> Fantasy ... is not the object of desire, but its setting. In fantasy the subject does not pursue the object or its sign: he appears caught up himself in the sequence of images. He forms no representation of the desired object, but is himself represented as participating in the scene ... As a result, the subject, although always present in the fantasy, may be so in a desubjectivized form, that is to say, in the very syntax of the sequence in question.
>
> (LP: 131–3)

This is why "the unconscious desires, and only desires," but "as a questioning, problematising and searching force which operates in a different domain than that of [action-oriented] desire and satisfaction" (Deleuze 1994a: 106). The action-oriented desire of historical time "goes ... from one actual form to another," whereas unconscious desire "goes from the virtual to the actual, that is, from structure to its actualizations" (Deleuze 2004: 180). Therefore, from "the position of structuralism ... time" is "genesis," "from the virtual to the actual" (Deleuze 2004: 180).[7] The interval between the two is the space of structuralist thought.

Postscript on fantasy

If the "origin of fantasy" coincides with "the very first upsurgings of desire" it is because the unique peculiarity of both lies in their "hallucinatory satisfaction." For desire emerges when, "in the absence of a real object, the infant reproduces the experience of the original satisfaction in a hallucinated form," namely, in the form of the sign, which will make out of the infant a human subject (LP: 131–3). Freud's and Deleuze's searches for the origin of fantasy and/or structure show us that this "origin" is in truth the "fiction" or "myth of origin" of all four: the drive, desire, sign, and ultimately the subject itself (LP: 131). It is:

> an analytic "construction" ... which tries to cover the moment of separation between before and after, whilst still containing both: a mythical moment of disjunction between the pacification of need (Befriedigung) and the fulfillment of desire (Wunscherfüllung), between the two stages represented by real experience and its hallucinatory revival, between the object that satisfies and the sign which describes both the object and its absence.
>
> (LP: 131)

The primal fantasy of auto-eroticism, the very stage of the dissolution of the subject and the object, coincides with the introduction of the sign, the very entrance of the subject in the locus of the Other. In short, *the dissolution of the subject is the very origin of the subject*. And this short-circuit is accompanied by its corollary temporal loop, as retroactivity (Nachträglichkeit) and historical time coincide. In Laplanche and Pontalis's succinct formulation:

> [T]he original fantasies also indicate this postulate of retroactivity: they relate to the origins. Like myths, they claim to provide a representation of, and a solution to, the major enigmas ... Whatever appears to the subject as something needing an explanation or theory, is dramatized as a moment of emergence, the beginning of history.

> Fantasies of origins: the primal scene pictures the origin of the individual; fantasies of seduction, the origin and upsurge of sexuality; fantasies of castration, the origin of the difference between the sexes ...
>
> There is convergence of theme, of structure, and no doubt also of function: ... through the scenarios constructed, the varied quests for origins, we are offered in the field of fantasy[] the origin of the subject himself.
>
> (LP: 124)

Conversely, the postulate of retroactivity – the principle of the virtual and of original fantasies – more often than not requires the narrative form of a myth to make the logic of retroactivity itself known on the actual level. I hope the mythological itinerary dramatized in this chapter, and shared by two co-travelers who could only have met virtually, has offered, not a theory, but some explanation as to why psychoanalysis and structuralism constitute one and the same line of thought. Now it is time to repeat, spelling out the new: "through the scenarios constructed ... we are offered in the field of fantasy[] the origin of the subject himself" – as its own cause (LP: 124). This is the (atheist) Joy in which structuralism/psychoanalysis never ceases to indulge.

Notes

1 References to this text will henceforth be indicated with the abbreviation "LP."
2 As an aside, Deleuze's last interview of his life, with Didier Eribon, succinctly indexes the transference between the two thinkers (Deleuze 1995). For a detailed account of Althusser's critique of Deleuze's account of structuralism, which is mentioned also in the first chapter here, see Stolze 1998.
3 This equation owes to Deleuze's endorsement that "no one has better determined the status of the structure as identical to the 'Theory' itself than Louis Althusser" (Deleuze 2004: 173). In fact, Deleuze continues, "the symbolic must be understood as the production of the original and specific theoretical object" (ibid., 173). Deleuze added this statement as a consequence of the letter he received from Althusser (dated 29 February 1968), to whom Deleuze had sent earlier in the same month the first draft of his essay on structuralism. As Ted Stolze writes in his careful analysis of this correspondence, Althusser stressed the point that "structuralism can first of all be designated in terms of '*what it rejects*' –a break with the 'real' object, whether sensible, historical, or empirical – in order to constitute a distinct 'theoretical' object. This was, [Althusser] says, already true of Marx's break with the real, historicist, and empiricist object of history that was in fact the 'ideological object of the philosophies of history'" (Stolze 1998: 56). Structuralism is the continuation of this Marxian epistemology, for, Althusser continues: "[B]ehind the claim of 'structuralism' [is] this simple fact: a certain number of disciplines of the Human Sciences have discovered, (more or less) blindly" – the "only one to know it is doubtless Lacan" – "that they could only exist as *sciences* provided that they break with historicism, that is, with the *empiricist* ideology of their 'object.' They have 'discovered' the necessity of *theory* as an absolute condition of their scientific

existence" (Stolze 1998: 57). This point is of course further elaborated in Althusser and Balibar 2009, which is further discussed in the sixth chapter here.

4 Undoubtedly, Edward P. Kazarian hit the bull's eye when, in a passing footnote, he spotlights this 1964 article to remark that for the major shift that occurred in Deleuze's thought between 1961 and "some time after this, but before 1967" – notably, his reevaluation of Freud, the concomitant abandonment of "his forceful endorsement of Jung," and the effects of his exposure to the "direction of 'structure' in a sense that Deleuze will [henceforth] adopt" – "it seems that some of the 'credit' for all this should be given to Laplanche and Pontalis" (Kazarian 2010: 106, n. 17). I would add that the impact of Laplanche and Pontalis's article goes even further by setting the tempo for the scansions of repetition out of which the new can emerge. This is not only regarding repetition as one of Deleuze's most central theoretical concepts but also as one of the most defining marks of his entire work, including stylistically.

By this I do not mean that the centrality of repetition in Deleuze's thought is a contingent byproduct of the stylistic idiosyncrasies of his pen but, rather, that it is the performative manifestation of a concept that defines as much his thought as psychoanalysis (*Wiederholungszwang*), precisely insofar as both are structuralist. For, as Deleuze writes, although the "phenomena" we repeat "are always unhappy and particular," nevertheless "the idea extracted from them is general, and joyous" so that "the phenomenon of repetition forms a general joy" – comparable to the Spinozian "Joy" of "*the third kind of knowledge*," extracted from the "intellectual Love of God," that is, "the idea of God as its [Joy's] cause ... not insofar as we imagine him as present ... but ... as eternal" (*Ethics* VP32D and C); and if this is so, it is only because, as everyone knows from "love's repetition," in repeating "we realize that our sufferings do not depend on their object" (Deleuze 2000: 72). Transcending the concrete object of experience is the primary precondition of structure, and the method for obtaining this is repetition.

Regarding Deleuze's trademarked, seemingly indefinitely extendable, series of examples – ranging from literature and cinematography to geology, mineralogy, military science, and so on – Eleanor Kaufman poignantly argues that all this is not offered as the bridge to help us "descend from the abstract to the concrete." Quite the contrary, Kaufman continues, "what we witness" in this "propagation of the chain of examples" is "the model devolving into the manic and interminable chain of concrete instantiations that in the very energy of their metonymic deferral take on a still higher level of abstraction," mesmerized by, again in Deleuze's words, the "law of progression by which we accede to a consciousness which transmutes our sufferings into joy," the "joy of repetition understood, or of the comprehension of its law" (Kaufman 2012: 455; Deleuze 2000: 72). Yet, as we shall see in the last chapter, structure is only the first step toward the joy that repetition can offer us. It is the step accomplished by reason (the second kind of knowledge, in Spinoza), but intuition (the third kind of knowledge) makes a step beyond universal structures into singular essences.

5 These are: "The Symbolic," "Local or Positional," "The Differential and the Singular," "The Differentiator, Differentiation," "Serial," "The Empty Square," "From the Subject to Practice" (Deleuze 2004: 170–92).

6 See also Olkowski 1999.

7 Let us here recall from the first chapter what Deleuze distinguishes as two kinds of eternity, which I differentiate by calling the one (pertaining to reason) synchrony, and the other (pertaining to intuition) eternity. The fact that, for structuralism, time is genesis from the virtual to the actual means that eternity manifests itself on the actual/modal level within time/duration. Eternity can be

grasped through the third kind of knowledge (intuition) as the singular essence of a mode, or through the second kind of knowledge (reason) as a universal structure, that is, in terms of synchrony (we shall return to this in the last chapter).

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4 Dialectics, or valences of structuralism

A work that claims for monist structuralism such an important role in the constitution of modern thought, cannot avoid raising the question: What is the relation between this monist structuralism and the Hegelian dialectic?

Fredric Jameson's *Valences of the Dialectic* (2009) offers one of the most pertinent ways to approach this question, as it argues that all structuralist (including post-structuralist) thought has, albeit without knowing it, always been dialectical. To be sure, by "dialectic," or rather "dialectics" (for, as he argues, there are many), Jameson envisions something quite different from what is traditionally understood under the term – i.e., the teleological plodding or march from thesis to antithesis to synthesis – and for which he reserves the name "pseudo-Hegelianism." At stake, Jameson argues, is a properly *postmodern* dialectical thought, which he sets out to define, explicate, and unfold in the same book.

Jameson's is a powerful and compelling thesis that not only deserves consideration but truly raises one of the most authentically philosophical questions which, launched out of postmodernity, has the potential to undermine retroactively centuries of epistemological and theoretical assumptions: *Is there a difference between dialectical and structuralist thoughts?*

Jameson's answer is: No – an answer with which, although initially appealing to me, when immersed in its extensive justification, I came, perhaps ironically, to disagree. Gradually I realized that what fascinated me was not so much the book's thesis, as the fact that out of each of its elaborate pages emerged, again and again and with inexorable persistence, this very same, irresistible, question: *Is there a difference between dialectics and structuralism?*[1]

Accordingly, what I present here is neither a summary of Jameson's impressive collection of engaging and timely essays, whose composition spans over nearly two decades and whose erudition presupposes many more, nor a dissection of Jameson's notorious style. Nor am I engaging with the viability of Jameson's suggestions and their implications for today's political practices.[2] None of the above is either an unworthy or an