

A Deleuzian Social Psychology

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Introduction

Gilles Deleuze (1925-1995) was one of the major figures in French philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century. His work builds on the post-phenomenological approach to fundamental questions of thought, being and knowledge that is usually referred to as 'continental philosophy' (to distinguish it from the so-called 'analytical' approach that has dominated the discipline of Philosophy in the English-speaking world since the mid twentieth century). Deleuze's early works are philosophically inventive re-readings of singular intellectual figures such as Nietzsche, Spinoza, and Bergson, whose metaphysics Deleuze re-imagined for a modern audience. His major works *Difference and Repetition* and *Logic of Sense* appeared in the late 1960s, during a time of major political and social unrest across Europe (notably 'the events' in Paris of May 1968). Although Deleuze was not as publicly engaged with politics as his friend and colleague Michel Foucault, his collaborative work with the psychoanalyst Félix Guattari - in particular *Anti-Oedipus* and *A Thousand Plateaus* - developed a complex and heterogeneous account of history and subjectivity (amongst many other topics) that has proved profoundly influential to critical social science. Deleuze also extensively engaged with questions of aesthetics, affect and perception, most notably in the two *Cinema* books which reflected his lifelong interest in the medium.

Why should social psychologists take an interest in Deleuze's work? Unlike Foucault, Deleuze had no direct involvement in Psychology as either a formal body of knowledge or an institutional practice. Although Deleuze was inspired by the work of Gilbert Simondon (who taught Social Psychology throughout his career), his engagement with social research is distinctly 'philosophical', albeit in a very broad and creative sense. The final book authored by Deleuze & Guattari - *What is Philosophy?* - excludes social science, at least explicitly, from the fundamental canon of knowledge production that runs across art-science-philosophy. Concepts such as 'affect', 'becoming' and 'assemblage' derived from Deleuze (& Guattari) are notoriously difficult to operationalise and lose much of their analytic power when they are transplanted into social research. Scholars who have tried to mobilise Deleuze's thought directly into an empirical approach (such as Brian Massumi and Erin Manning) have tended toward a kind of 'post-positivist' anti-methodology that resembles performance art. There is also a tendency to use Deleuze as a way of glossing philosophical positions - for example, invoking his re-presentation of Spinoza's question of 'what a body can do' as a definition of affect - that understates Deleuze's unique and at times wilfully perverse way of reading the philosophical canon.

Part of the problem here is the idea that Deleuze has 'a philosophy' that can be used as an overarching conceptual foundation. Across a career spanning half a century Deleuze published 25 books. For the most part, these books were not variations on the same theme, but substantial texts each involving extensive research with unique results. While it is true that some themes and concepts can be tracked across his oeuvre, it is no less true that what Deleuze thinks and says is always with respect to the particular problematic of that text, and changes from time to time, place to place. One must therefore always be cautious when making or reading pronouncements on what Deleuze or a Deleuzian philosophy thinks/says,

for there is no one Deleuze or Deleuzian philosophy, and producing systematic consistency across his texts was never his goal.

Deleuze's work at times focuses on issues with explicit relevance to psychology. For instance, *Coldness and Cruelty*, *The Logic of Sense* and *Anti-Oedipus* all deal extensively with psychoanalysis. But when Deleuze & Guattari published *A Thousand Plateaus* many followers were surprised and even disturbed to discover that much of the psychoanalytic context had been abandoned, as if their project was never really, or at least predominantly, about the critique of psychoanalysis. Their philosophy went deeper and extended farther; its value did not depend on intellectual fashions for its origins or applications. In this vein, we would suggest that rather than focusing on Deleuze's philosophy *on* psychology and psychoanalysis, a more fruitful approach for this chapter is to outline some key contributions that Deleuze makes along two threads of inquiry: one concerning the nature of thinking and sense-making processes; and another concerning the nature of existence or 'being'/'becoming'. In Deleuze's philosophy these two threads are, unsurprisingly, woven together. In what follows we will explore how these two threads intertwine throughout some selected topics of relevance to critical social psychology.

Multiplicity

'Multiplicity' is perhaps the most significant and enduring concept of Deleuze's philosophy, especially when it comes to his influential texts co-authored with Guattari. As Deleuze reveals in an interview, the aim of their monumental *A Thousand Plateaus* was to provide "a theory of multiplicities for themselves, wherever the multiple reaches the state of a substantive" (Deleuze, 2007, pp. 309-310). By the time of their final book *What Is Philosophy?*, the philosophical concept is *itself* defined as a multiplicity (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994, p. 15), with the practice of philosophy described "as a logic of multiplicities" (Deleuze, 1995, p. 147) rather than an inquiry into singular elements.

The Western philosophical canon, as it is usually received, is the history of attempts to divide the 'stuff' of the world into different categories - self and other, nature and culture, mind and body, and so on. These then ground epistemological differences between forms of enquiry, such that the 'objectivity' of science is opposed to the 'subjectivity'/'belief' of religion and non-science. The logic of these ontological and epistemological differences depend upon the capacity to distinguish clear categorical identities. That which belongs to the 'natural' cannot be simultaneously 'cultural', or more simply X does not equal Y. In everyday life the world we encounter often appears to blur these distinctions, but it is the job of the philosopher to provide the tools to get beyond this mere appearance of mixture and clarify the 'essential nature' of things.

Deleuze inverts this logic. He proposes that there is no fundamental order of things which is not in itself already multiple and variable. The very idea of 'singularity' is something imposed on the world. Everything varies in and for itself, all the way down, we might say. Multiplicities are thus both 'substantive' ontological entities (the stuff of being, as it were) and conceptual entities (the content and form of thought). The challenge here is in developing concepts that both identify and 'hold' the particular kinds of variability and multiplicity that we are concerned with at any point. There cannot be any conceptual language which establishes a final or definitive account of the world, since any part of the world we may wish to consider is itself fluid and endlessly varying. Hence the task of philosophy is a continuous, ongoing 'invention of concepts'.

There are, however, two different types of multiplicities that can be schematically distinguished: discrete and continuous. This theory of the two multiplicities goes back to Deleuze's reading of Henri Bergson, and in particular his exploration of the psychological experience of time. Bergson famously distinguished between the social experience of time or

'clock time' and real time, or 'duration'. Time is socially organised through chronological co-ordination which breaks the passage of the day into individual units of hours and minutes. Such is the taken-for-granted nature of this social practice, that it is difficult to think of time in any other way (the philosopher Alfred North Whitehead once remarked that the administration of time was the most profound achievement of modernity). Clock time encourages the belief that time passes as a succession of instants, such that the present permanently displaces the past in the face of a new instant to come. Bergson argues that this is a philosophically muddled understanding which uses concepts of space (individual instants) to define time. He refers to this as a 'cinematographical illusion', akin to a film composed of a vast number of individual frames shown at speed. Our psychological experience of time cannot be divided into instants in this way. We remain in the passing moment and anticipate the future without being able to properly isolate the 'now' in any clear way.

Deleuze builds upon Bergson to argue that a properly empirical analysis of experience can serve as a route to metaphysical insight, which he terms *transcendental empiricism*. However, empiricism of this sort is notoriously difficult to accomplish because the psychological experience of reality always involves a composite or mixture of space and time. Bergson sought to de-compose this mixture by distinguishing between two types of multiplicities. Discrete multiplicities are those that are composed of homogeneous elements, and as such can be divided without changing in kind, only degree. In contrast, when the elements of a multiplicity are heterogeneous to one another, they form a continuity that cannot be divided without changing the multiplicity in kind. Duration is the prime example of this latter multiplicity, and space for the former. In Deleuze's words:

One is represented by space [...]: It is a multiplicity of exteriority, of simultaneity, of juxtaposition, of order, of quantitative differentiation, of *difference in degree*; it is a numerical multiplicity, *discontinuous and actual*. The other type of multiplicity appears in pure duration: It is an internal multiplicity of succession, of fusion, of organization, of heterogeneity, of qualitative discrimination, or of *difference in kind*; it is a *virtual and continuous* multiplicity that cannot be reduced to numbers. (Deleuze, 1988, p. 38)

Consider, for example, the experience of viewing a map of a city in contrast to that of walking through it. The map shows spatial distinctions, more or less accurately, that allow for comparison and calculations (i.e. that district lies to the South of the centre, whereas this one is in the East; it will take me 33 minutes to walk from here to there etc). But walking through the city is a subtly different matter, organized through the temporal patterning or *duration* of the walk itself, which can slow and speed variably, depending on how involved we are in events as they emerge, and the way that the aspects of the city shade from one to another (i.e. I wonder why people are gathering around that square; oh, this feels like I'm now in a very different kind of neighbourhood).

From the perspective of psychological experience, it is *memory* that plays the key role in bringing together the heterogeneous elements of duration, fusing the past with the present:

Inner duration is the continuous life of a memory which prolongs the past into the present, whether the present distinctly contains the ever-growing image of the past, or whether, by its continual changing of quality, it attests rather the increasingly heavy burden dragged along behind one the older one grows. Without that survival of the past in the present there would be no duration but only instantaneity. (Bergson, 2007, pp. 150-151)

Deleuze takes this quote, especially the first part, very seriously. Duration *is* memory. Memory *is* duration. There is no clear distinction to be had between the external 'reality' of our temporal engagement with the world and a psychological record in the form of 'memory'. Personal memory is 'inner duration'. One of the more radical upshots of this is that when it comes to the

perennial question of 'where' memories are stored, Bergson's answer is not the obvious one of 'in the brain', for the brain is matter and memory is duration. Memories, therefore, reside *in duration*.

To illustrate this, consider the pronunciation of a long word. Where is the first syllable when you are pronouncing subsequent syllables? It would be strange to imagine that it has been "immediately deposited in a drawer, cerebral or otherwise, so that consciousness may come for it a moment later" (Bergson, 2007, p. 58). The same applies to words in a sentence, sentences in a paragraph, and so on: "our whole life, from the time of our first awakening to consciousness, is something like this indefinitely prolonged discourse. Its duration is substantial, indivisible insofar as it is pure duration" (Bergson, 2007, p. 58). Note here the words 'substantial' and 'indivisible': this duration is the continuous or heterogeneous multiplicity. Like the notes of an unfolding melodic progression, which are interconnected through relations of 'mutual penetration', each new note does not so much replace the previous note as form a continuity with it. Moreover, previous notes in the melody might be 'prior' or 'past' in one respect, but in another they never really left, for they remain part of the durational/memorial expanse that coextends across the whole of the melody, and they influence the meaning or sense of that which newly emerges. The past thus remains 'there', in duration, removing the need for a materialist storage locker or database (depending on your preferred trope of the brain) in which we are constantly depositing, retrieving and deleting physical memories. But the nature of its existence is nonetheless different from that of the present, and this must be the case if the two are to avoid becoming synonymous. How, then, are we to understand this difference and the nature of memory vis-a-vis perception? It is in aid of addressing this question that Deleuze develops his theory of the virtual/actual.

The Virtual/Actual

Thinking about time is a real conundrum: the past and the present must be distinct from one another yet related, they must be separate yet interconnected in a continuum. Many philosophers of time consider the past and the present to be things of the same kind - i.e. time - that differ in degree. That is, the difference between past and present is a calculable, predictable difference between two instants of time. But for Bergson, the past and the present must be understood as differing in kind. The past is not merely a 'passed present', nor is it all those instants which precede the now as it passes towards the future-to-come. Those who construe the difference between the past and the present as one of degree treat time as a homogeneous or discrete multiplicity - time is all the same 'stuff', just at different chronological points. For Bergson, to the contrary, time is the quintessential heterogeneous or continuous multiplicity. Time differs in itself, it is never identical to what 'is' or what 'was' at any point.

What, then, is the difference between the past and present? While it might be tempting to say that the present is that which exists and the past is that which used to exist, Deleuze says that this portrayal involves a conflation of Being (that which 'is') with being-present (what is here 'now'). In fact, to the extent that the present is the cutting-edge of time, once it comes into being it immediately joins the past. It is therefore more accurate to say that the present is becoming, and the past is being, that which is: "of the present, we must say at every instant that it 'was', and of the past, that it 'is', that it is eternally, for all time. This is the difference in kind between the past and the present" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 55). The present is always an invention. Think of listening to a live musical performance. Every note, every sound, whether anticipated or not, is brought anew into the world in a unique way (in fact, if we had the technical ability to do so, we could describe the radically specific way that the acoustic field of the performance venue varies with each unfolding piece of the performance). It only becomes part of the 'same' musical performance retrospectively as the piece unfolds.

Another way to put this is to say that the present is that which is active upon consciousness, it is actual and psychological, whilst the past is impassive and unconscious (not present to

consciousness), it is virtual and ontological, “being as it is in itself” (Deleuze, 1988, p. 56). The terms ‘psychological’ and ‘ontological’ need a bit more qualification here. By psychological, Deleuze means active engagement in the live invention of the world. For example, I stare a little too long at the crowd in the square, my eyes meet another and a murmur starts to spread amongst the people. By ontological, Deleuze refers to what is and the endless and ceaseless modifications that it has undergone. For example, the crowd is a little smaller than it was last week, their expressions were very different before the events happened, there was a time when it was less tense here. For Deleuze, memory is virtual, and when one engages in recollection, “Little by little it [a memory image] comes into view like a condensing cloud; from the virtual state it passes into the actual” (Bergson, 2004, pp. 133-134). In this process, a memory, which is ontological, gradually takes on a psychological existence (Deleuze, 1988, p. 57).

It is worth pausing here to note that the rigorous way in which Deleuze separates psychology and ontology is one of the obstacles for social psychologists wishing to engage with his work. Based on this division, only action and interaction are proper matters for psychological analysis. This does not mean, however, that psychology is thrown back to the kind of ‘empty organism’ and ‘stimulus-response’ schema traditionally associated with Behaviourism. On the contrary, understanding how our ongoing engagement with the world is constituted as a complex, dynamic nexus which draws not only upon our own lived experience, but potentially with all of the living forces which become interwoven together as we ‘become’ with others (since, as Deleuze & Guattari note, there is no individual becoming, but rather ‘joint becomings’), massively expands the domain of what we think of as ‘psychological’. Psychological analysis poses questions of the order ‘what are the diverse means and media through which remembering is accomplished?’, ‘how is affect experienced as part of our participation within this setting?’, and ‘when do moral categories become invoked and to what ends within these practices?’. What Deleuze also does is to remind us that when we ask questions like ‘what is memory?’ or ‘what constitutes ‘a feeling’?’ or ‘what makes us good people?’, we are entering into a philosophical rather than a psychological discourse and will need to orient to different modes of developing concepts therein.

Deleuze's development of the virtual/actual pair is enormously important for his subsequent work. According to some, the virtual is Deleuze & Guattari's most pivotal concept (Masumi, 1992, p. 34; see also Smith, 1997, p. 172). This is somewhat of an exaggeration (the notion/theory of multiplicity, we would suggest, is far more influential and ubiquitous), but there is no denying that the virtual/actual have a central role in Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. In the theory of Ideas expounded in that text, Ideas are said to be virtual multiplicities that become actualised in various ways. When this happens, it is not as if an Idea in a Platonic heaven is somehow brought into existence or has existence added to it, for virtual Ideas already exist, as virtual, and the process of actualisation consists if anything in a subtraction rather than addition. A virtual Idea is like white light, a whole from which colours such as red and green can be extracted or actualised. The various actualisations are nuances or degrees of difference (but not differences of degree), particulars of a *concrete universal*. Crucially, through this approach “the concept is identical to the thing itself, it is the difference between the objects related to it, not their resemblance” (Deleuze, 1999, p. 54). It is important to note, though, that this example of white light and colours is not merely a metaphor to help us understand the nature of concepts. On the contrary, Deleuze's use of the virtual/actual in his extrapolation on Ideas in *Difference and Repetition* will be one of several applications and developments of a dualism that is employed, along with multiplicity, to understand the nature of existence and reality more broadly - once again illustrating the intertwining of epistemology and metaphysics in Deleuze's work.

The concept of the virtual helps to ease some of the interminable knots that social psychologists have sometimes found themselves in when they confront epistemological and political questions around realism and relativism. A commitment to social change is often

associated with identifying the 'real' material generative mechanisms that underpin social structure, whereas relativism is often positioned as reducing phenomena to the differing sociocultural knowledge practices which may inform them in an 'idealist' manner. Once again, Deleuze inverts this commonsensical understanding. He draws upon Proust to argue that the virtual is 'real without being actual, ideal without being abstract' (Deleuze, 1994, p. 208). What we experience in the course of (inter)action is the concrete expression of a way in which bodies and their potentials act upon one another. But these potentials do not pre-exist in some given, abstract manner. Nor does action add 'reality' to 'ideality'. The virtual is no less real than the actual, but it is different in kind. It is the field of potentiality from which every action is expressed, but not abstract, in the sense like that of the growing sense of unease we begin to apprehend as the murmurs in a crowd grow louder and we feel increasingly looked at. As Brown & Stenner put it:

[W]hat we call perception is not stretched between the objective (what is there) and the subjective (what I believe to be there) but rather between the actual (the concrete possibilities for how two bodies/images might relate) and the virtual (the indeterminate field of potential in which this relation emerges, the full range of vaguely sensed relational engagements which might come to be). (Brown & Stenner, 2009, p. 144)

The psychological then occupies a pivotal position between virtual and action. In turn, clarifying what might be meant by terms like 'mind' and 'subjectivity' becomes critical.

Subjectivity

Deleuze's first published book in 1953 was an essay on the philosopher David Hume translated as *Empiricism and Subjectivity*. This was a profoundly unfashionable topic to consider at a time when the phenomenology of Merleau-Ponty, Sartre's existentialism and Althusserian Marxism were the dominant concerns in French philosophy. As an early indication of what was to come in his later studies of other thinkers, Deleuze reads Hume 'against the grain'. Hume's eighteenth century work is typically considered to have provided a proto-analysis of the psychological mechanisms defining human existence (thereby opening up the space for Psychology to emerge from the Philosophy of Nature a century later). But Deleuze reads Hume as decentering the human subject by rejecting the idea of an interior mind that 'represents' an external reality within itself - "Hume constantly affirms the identity between the mind, the imagination, and ideas. [...] The place is not different from what takes place in it; the representation does not take place in a subject. Then again the question may be: *how does the mind become a subject?* How does the imagination become a faculty?" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 23). We do not enter the world as 'subjects' who gradually process and 'internalise' the world. Rather, we become subjects through the ways in which mind and imagination become shaped through the ideas formed of and in the world - "the mind therefore does not have the characteristics of a preexisting subject" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 29). The subject is something that is constructed or assembled out of our engagements with the world, rather than that which pre-exists those engagements: "The subject is defined by the movement through which it is developed. Subject is that which develops itself ... In short, believing and inventing is what makes the subject a subject" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 85).

The central idea that Deleuze takes from Hume is the 'exteriority of relations'. Relations are considered to be 'interior' to their terms when a predicate (something that can be said of someone or something) is internal to the definition of the subject. For example, 'Charlotte is wise' renders wisdom as one of the internal characteristics of Charlotte as a subject. But in a phrase such as 'Charlotte felt herself becoming bored by the endless and pointless discussion', boredom is a relationship that is external to Charlotte herself and in some sense a propensity of the discussion itself. It is the relations formed within the world that are primary. We then come to inhabit these relations through familiarity, a process Hume described as the formation of habits:

"[Hume] created the first great logic of *relations*, showing in it that all relations (not only 'matters of fact' but also relations among ideas) are external to their terms. As a result, he constituted a multifarious world of experience based upon the principle of the exteriority of relations. We start with atomic parts, but these atomic parts have transitions, passages, 'tendencies', which circulate from one to another. These tendencies give rise to *habits*. Isn't this the answer to the question 'what are we?' We are habits, nothing but habits - the habit of saying 'I'. Perhaps, there is no more striking answer to the problem of the Self." (Deleuze, 1991, p. x)

A habit is a way of being that is established out of tendencies (natural, social, moral, political and so on...). For Hume, all ideas, no matter how complex they might be, come from this same route. When one says 'I think' or 'I feel' this is simply a way of inhabiting worldly relations that has become so well established that we form the illusion that there is something substantive that underpins the 'I' (such as a 'self') that goes beyond the complex sum of thoughts and capacities to engage in relations. This position runs quite contrary to how we usually think about personhood as involving a stable 'kernel' of individual being. And yet, for Deleuze, what Hume principally achieves is to elevate empiricism to a position where it is superior to metaphysics (hence 'transcendental empiricism'). Deleuze re-encounters this in his reading of Bergson, who argues that trying to understand 'change' by positing an underlying 'thing that changes' provides only a limited and partial account. Objectivity, for Bergson, is a discrete multiplicity which differs in degree: "In short, 'object' and 'objective' denote not only what is divided, but what, in dividing, does not change in kind" (Deleuze, 1988, p. 41). But the sort of thing that we call 'subjectivity' is a continuous or heterogeneous multiplicity that cannot be divided without changing in kind. When Charlotte becomes bored this is not a change in degree of some underlying continuous state of being, but rather a change in kind, a passage to a different mode of being.

The repositioning of the subjective that Deleuze seeks across his work is then not meant to undermine Psychology or indeed the dignity of personhood, but rather to restore it to all of its worldly complexity and efficacy by freeing subjectivity of the inadequate idea of being bound in the cage of 'the subject'. In Nietzsche, Deleuze finds a similar attempt to "constantly expose 'the subject' as a fiction or a grammatical function. All subjects — the Epicureans' atom, Descartes' substance or Kant's thing-in-itself— are the projection of 'little imaginery [*sic*] incubuses'" (see Deleuze, 1983, p. 123). Nietzsche challenges the idea of interiority because he sees it as means of rendering moral worth as some intrinsic property rather than as the outcome of our actions: "As soon as forces are projected into a fictitious subject this subject proves to be blameworthy or deserving" (Deleuze, 1983, p. 124). This line of thought leads Deleuze towards the centrality of affect and what Spinoza calls 'conatus' or the 'endeavour to persist in being' as the basis for thinking ethical questions around personhood. We must think of our conduct from the perspective of how we act in relations with others and with the world itself rather than from that of 'interior motives' or 'inner forces'. But this does nevertheless raise the question of how to attribute credit or to recognise the person as constituting a unique pattern of relationality. In the opening of their second co-authored book, Deleuze & Guattari tackle this issue head-on:

The two of us wrote *Anti-Oedipus* together. Since each of us was several, there was already quite a crowd. Here we have made use of everything that came within range, what was closest as well as farthest away. We have assigned clever pseudonyms to prevent recognition. Why have we kept our own names? Out of habit, purely out of habit. To make ourselves unrecognizable in turn. To render imperceptible, not ourselves, but what makes us act, feel, and think. Also because it's nice to talk like everybody else, to say the sun rises, when everybody knows it's only a manner of speaking. To reach, not the point where one no longer says I, but the point where it is no longer of any importance whether one says I. We are no longer ourselves. Each

will know his own. We have been aided, inspired, multiplied. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 1)

There is a kind of freedom that comes with giving up the 'I', where one recognises that what one 'is' is continuously differing in kind and smeared across the relations that one inhabits. A proper name is a sort of a placeholder that marks certain kinds of tendencies, rather in the way that one associates the proper names of artists with styles of painting or drawing, or designers with preferences for materials and forms of making. Towards the end of his life, the idea of style as the singularisation of 'a life' became increasingly important to Deleuze. Rather than see style as a matter of taste or character, Deleuze saw it as a mode of experimentation: 'Everyone can talk about his memories [sic], invent stories, state opinions in his language ... But when it is a matter of digging under the stories, cracking open the opinions, and reaching regions without memories, when the self must be destroyed ... Style becomes nonstyle' (Deleuze, 1998, p. 113). We may then replace the notion of 'self' with an account of the particular kinds of styles of living which a person has tended towards and what specific sorts of (co)becoming this has afforded.

Affect

As we have now seen, for Deleuze the subject is not a pre-given and insular entity, it is formed out of engagements with the world, and furthermore, the subject *is* these engagements - a collection of relations. Thus if one is interested in the psychology of the mind, the object of their study should be the mind's affections, the various interactions and relations that constitute the mind and "unveil the idea of subjectivity" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 30):

The constitution of a psychology of the mind is not at all possible, since this psychology cannot find in its object the required constancy or universality; only a psychology of affections will be capable of constituting the true science of humanity. (Deleuze, 1991, p. 21)

By insisting on the primacy of affections and the various relations that constitute the mind and the subject, psychology for Deleuze is first and foremost a *passional* and *social* psychology: "one must be a moralist, sociologist, or historian *before* being a psychologist, *in order to* be a psychologist" (Deleuze, 1991, p. 22). The passional and social arrangements that constitute each subject and mind will be unique, which is what makes each multiplicity singular: "they are not affected by the same things, or not affected by the same things in the same way" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 217). One's nature, which Deleuze sometimes calls a *haecceity* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 261), is thus defined by what it can do, or to borrow the terminology from Deleuze's reading of Spinoza: "What a body can do corresponds to the nature and limits of its capacity to be affected" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 218). Affections determine our *conatus* or essence, which is a variable, transforming 'striving for life' rather than a fixed set of qualities. We are drawn towards experiences which feed this variation and expand our capacities for living - "conatus is at each moment a seeking of what is useful in terms of the affections that determine it" (Deleuze, 1990, p. 258). In other words, subjects are not merely passive recipients of affections imposed on them, and one's capacity or power to act [*puissance*] is not an unchangeable given.

In Deleuze's collaborative work with Guattari, especially the second volume of their *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project titled *A Thousand Plateaus*, this psychology of affections is most explicitly pushed beyond the conventional boundaries of subjectivity. Affect is no longer a personal feeling or characteristic of the Self (*Moi*): "it is the effectuation of a *power of the pack* that throws the self into upheaval and makes it reel" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 240, emphasis added). The 'pack' here is a reference to multiplicity, as in wolf pack. Gone is the traditional unitary subject, "the historical, social, or individual person, and the corresponding feelings [with its] acts to explain, dreams or phantasies to interpret, childhood memories to

recall, words to make signify" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 162). In its place are flows of intensity, continuums and conjunctions of affects, assemblages with heterogeneous terms of all kinds - not only the relations between other wolves in the pack, but also with the moon, the howl and the scent of the hunt. Combining this sense of multiplicity with the Spinozist question 'what can a body do?', Deleuze & Guattari suggest that an entity's existence is defined by what it can *affectively do* within an assemblage and the *relations* it can form. Quoting one of their well-known examples:

[T]he Tick, attracted by the light, hoists itself up to the tip of a branch; it is sensitive to the smell of mammals, and lets itself fall when one passes beneath the branch; it digs into its skin, at the least hairy place it can find. Just three affects; the rest of the time the tick sleeps, sometimes for years on end, indifferent to all that goes on in the immense forest. (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 257)

The term that Deleuze & Guattari give for this affective approach to understand the nature of life is *ethology*. According to this approach, "A racehorse is more different from a workhorse than a workhorse is from an ox", for what defines the animal is what it does, what it can do, "what its affects are, how they can or cannot enter into composition with other affects, with the affects of another body either to destroy that body or to be destroyed by it, either to exchange actions and passions with it or to join with it in composing a more powerful body" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 257). For the Deleuzian ethologist, people are still subjects, but their subjectivity is akin to a "cloud of locusts carried in by the wind at five in the evening" (Deleuze & Guattari, p. 262). Put differently, "This should be read without a pause: the animal-stalks-at-five-o'clock" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 262). Applying this approach to one of Freud's famous cases, the horse that Little Han's speaks of is now defined by the assemblage it is a part of - the draft horse-omnibus-street assemblage - and its list of affects: "having eyes blocked by blinders, having a bit and a bridle, being proud, having a big peepee-maker, pulling heavy loads, being whipped, falling, making a din with its legs, biting, etc." (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 257). As this example illustrates, for Deleuze & Guattari the two threads of inquiry outlined earlier in this chapter - one focused on the nature of thinking and sense-making processes, and the other focused on the nature of existence or being/becoming - are now thoroughly intertwined into a transversal that concerns itself with different, and arguably more important, questions: what does it do?, how does it work?, and how do we recognise it? - where 'it' is a heterogeneous assemblage [*agencement*] composed of various kinds, material and immaterial, corporeal and incorporeal, virtual and actual.

Conclusion

By way of guidance on how to make use of their astonishing collaborative work *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari offer the following cryptic proposal "Connect, conjugate, continue" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. 161). It is not easy to read Deleuze's work (although there is now a significant body of secondary literature which can assist in tackling any one of his major books). He is, after all, a philosopher who is concerned with problems that are of a different order to those faced by critical social psychologists. But many of the key ideas that Deleuze developed over the course of his life do have direct relevance to questions around selfhood, interaction, experience and feeling. Thinking-with Deleuze - that is to say, following his arguments, the way he works with concepts and problematics, as a heuristic for developing one's own - can be of enormous value. For instance, exploring the way that Deleuze will build an account of mind out of the diverse 'ecological' relations in a particular setting, or looking at how he connects affect to power, or studying the series steps through which he argues that memories are in time rather than space, can be inspiration for both developing theories and reframing the scope of empirical studies.

Curious readers might be tempted next by one of several more extensive discussions elsewhere. For instance, Maria Nichterlein and John Morss' *Deleuze and Psychology* looks

closely at how Deleuzian thought 'provokes' the way we think about psychological practices. The 2018 Annual Review of Critical Psychology on 'Putting the Deleuzian Machine to Work in Psychology', edited by Nichterlein might also be of use. Ian Tucker's (2012; 2018) focuses on how Deleuze reshapes ideas of individuality, whilst Brown & Stenner (2009) look at how psychology might be reformulated around the question of 'life' and Brown & Lunt (2002) juxtapose Deleuze with the social identity theory of Henri Tajfel. However, it would be antithetical to the spirit of Deleuze's thought to suggest that there is 'a' particular way in which you should approach the work. Read, think, experiment, create, repeat.

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