

"STATIONARY PROCESS AND INFINITE SPEED": PSYCHOANALYSIS WITH PSYCHOSIS

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These are the two great original Figures that one finds throughout Melville, the panoramic shot and the tracking shot, stationary process and infinite speed....It is like the great Figures of the painter Francis Bacon, who admits that he has not yet found a way of bringing together two figures in a single painting. And yet Melville will find a way. If he finally broke his silence in the end to write Billy Budd, it is because this last novel, under the penetrating eye of Captain Vere, brings together two originals, the demonic and the petrified.

-Gilles Deleuze¹

Borrowing these expressions from Gilles Deleuze, I would like to examine the way in which Deleuze's theories of art and philosophy can accompany analysts like myself with patients who, to my ear, threaten the very possibility of imagining a history, the hope of recovering anything on the level of meaning, and the signifiers that mark its constitutive knots. Deleuze thought of art as a way for an *original* to approach the inaudible and the formless, and thought of philosophy as a form of audacity in the terrain of the unthinkable that defines a place of sublimation which can be evoked, in the case of the analyst, by the cure of so-called psychotics. But no more for psychotics than for other patients is analysis primarily a place of sublimation, if we understand the latter to be a transformation of the stakes of the drive that avoids repetition. Analysis works in other ways: beginning with what survives in repetition, it demands that the latter change its status and become the occasion for a transformation. Deleuze's texts (which keep the analyst company in these cures) provide the analyst with a second commentary on the anxiety mobilized in him or her by the atypical character of these original patients. But the work of the analyst starts with his or her own anxiety: the analyst is provoked to confront a desperation of meaning, an explosion of time that is simultaneously immobile and dazzling in the shortcuts that sometimes arise in these detours of the session, which leave it without a voice. The possibility of conducting an analysis with a psychotic patient (which, according to Octave Mannoni's expression, would rather be a *disanalysis*) rests first of all on what happens when the patient takes the risk of uncovering the silence that inhabits him or, more precisely, the relation of silence and speech that are connected in a different fashion for the two protagonists of a cure. Deleuze certainly indicates a few strands of thought that resonate

with the experience of transference with persons more concerned with silence and catastrophe than the majority of our patients. Nothing, however, can replace the transference event of this encounter between two human beings who have different entries into language, time, and space. The usefulness of Deleuze and Guattari (with and in spite of their polemic against psychoanalysis) becomes apparent only if we first describe the function of a time of desperation in these cures. This description does not present itself in the name of a philosophical truth. That is, it does not defend a new image of thought nor a doctrine of time and space other than that which Kant formulated under the name of *transcendental aesthetics*. Rather, it presents itself as the embellished story of an encounter with something impossible that no two persons approach in the same way. The possibility that life transforms itself—a little—plays itself out around the way the patient, taking the risk of delivering some elements of his atopy, provokes the anxiety of the other (the analyst) and in a certain sense leads her to anxiety.

THE TIME OF TRANSFERENTIAL DESPERATION

The analyst's transference desperation is linked to the "being put on the spot" that characterizes, within these coordinates, the exhaustion of speech that loses itself in the middle of the patient's sentences without ever closing again on a semblance of meaning. No doubt, meaning is mere semblance in all analysis. When listening to those we call neurotics, the analyst can justly consider meaning to be a semblance, the always provisory result of something else. Contrarily, when a patient comes regularly to sessions for years (which give a certain consistency to this threshold of speech where she dwells by manifesting that the important thing is this threshold itself and not the hope of crossing it), it is from this failure of all sentences, relentlessly absorbed by silence, that we have to compose a style, the style of a difficult life.

In these analyses there are, of course, temporal markers which have the appearance of constituting a history: the departure of a father when a patient was nine years old; the impossibility of knowing if he committed suicide as he had announced or lived somewhere else (even while alive, he had already made children "somewhere else"); and the fact that this departure repeated other absences. "My parents got married because my father had an accident, he was hit by a streetcar when he tried to protect a child so that she would escape the accident. He was trepanned. My mother says that my father's parents pushed for their marriage after this accident, although they did not love her. The doctors said that he would have difficulties in a few years. It was around the predicted time that he disappeared. When I was born, he was not there; he flipped a streetcar against the cops at a demonstration." But the dates, which have the appearance of being signs, actually crush time with their blinding clarity. With their twists and turns, and their semblance, they flatten out life and even the possibility of a history when life articulates itself through a

narrative. But where does the violence come from in this atemporal story of a catastrophe which has been announced since the beginning of time? The analyst hardly has the time to demand that the cure enter into silence for a long time. Of course, one of the ideas that crosses the analyst's mind is the theory of the foreclosure of the Name of the Father: it is through the discourse of a mother that the inexistence of this father (as a husband for the mother and as a troubling father for the children) is transmitted to my patient and, through her, to me. But this negative determination is purely descriptive (in spite of the differential diagnostic character of psychosis in relation to neurosis) and says nothing about the manner in which the violence of these speeches, which turn a birth into a curse, worked.² Above all, the question that poses itself to the analyst is not so much to recognize what is at stake in this stunning condensation, but to acknowledge the alternating movement between this discourse which closes the possibility of speech and the return to silence, *hic et nunc*. During the silent sessions, this young woman is absent. Sometimes her body, in one second (a second for the analyst facing her) dislocates itself. Her eyes move in a direction while her legs and arms twist themselves, until a rhythm establishes itself through a swinging motion and a circular movement of the hand, always the same, which rolls a thread on the neck of her sweater. At this moment, her look searches that of the analyst for an instant, calms down and loses itself again somewhere else, just as the voice of the analyst (which testifies to the possibility of speech, like a clown in the void) startles the young woman.

How should we situate ourselves in relation to the fact that a sequence of truth without detour abolishes the hope of speech? The decisive transferential fact is the uselessness of the reported elements for interpretation (“trepanned”/ “trépané” and “you are not born” / “t'es pas- née”). But this is not a negative given: session after session, the patient stages the manner in which she is reduced to silence. So the petrified analyst begins to dream: first, of what ties certain men to death *sans phrase* in her history, and then of what connects these bodies to disappearance. But it is not enough for her to recognize in herself that with which she protects herself against the risk of silence and the absurdity which lurks under all symbolic organization. Rather, the stake of this cure, for the patient as well as for the analyst, is to accept the diverse conditions of the access to language. Of course, the analyst sometimes puts history in play by speaking to the patient of her silence: the latter, then, tells pieces of the story of her adolescent silence. After the disappearance of her father, of which nothing definite had been said, she locked herself up in her room for months. “It was neither true nor false, so...” As always, the promise of speech founders on an only too true sentence and, then, on silence. Four years, three times a week, three quarters of an hour each session: I ask myself what purpose I serve. I am torn between the wish to tell my patient that it would perhaps be better to see someone else, and the no doubt excessive hope that the sessions have acquired for her a decisive importance. All of this indicates one detail for me: now, when the moment returns at which, after its beginning a sentence loses itself,

I punctuate this event by a brief remark (“Well!” or even “What is behind this silence that has just fallen?”) and a smile, which she shares. Month after month, we get used to smiling at the dissolution of discourse when it occurs. We also get used to waiting for the always improbable reappearance of a sequence of the sentence which dissolved. On good days, I tell myself that, after all, it is not obligatory to enter language or the world of men in a particular way, and that this minimal manner is also one way of doing so, which should be allowed to happen. After all, the construction of a unified story around the question of origins, centered on Oedipus, is much less important than this minimal account on the verge of an abyss whose coordinates are different for the patient and the analyst.

Sometimes, the patient accepts my invitation to revisit a place where speech would be possible, but for the most part she does not engage herself and does not accept other means of expressing herself. For example, she regarded me as if I had been mad and simply ridicules the day when I proposed to her to express herself by drawing.

When her maternal grandmother died and “gave her body to medical science” (yet another body that disappeared, I told myself), she related a nightmare: she was on the edge of a valley in the city of this grandmother with the parents of her father. She really wanted to signal them without actually joining them. She descended towards the bottom of the valley where animals were being beaten by men. It was disgusting: in this place, a camel which had no skull, only brains, was being beaten.

“A camel?”

“It was an expression my grandmother used, and the sign that I made to the other grandparents also.” The smashed head reminds her of a little girl she saw at a hospital. At the age of ten, she was hospitalized and operated for a malformation that her mother considered to be the proof of a fatality tied to her birth. She saw this little girl in the corridor. She had a hemorrhage, and she thought about this event much later when a schoolmate at high school died of a brain tumor.

Another dream a couple of days later: she was at a friend’s house for lunch, but they had to leave for work. Her mother might be there also. She gets up and when she returns, they have cleared everything and started over again, and laid the table—a round table with a white tablecloth and dishes—for the evening. It was strange. She leaves and, in a fountain in her own quarter, she sees dead tadpoles floating in the water. She awakens. It was disgusting.

Somewhat later, she says: “I believe that I will not come anymore. When I am here, words become solid. I see the words in a pile on the wall, and at the edge of the words someone falls in the void. I only speak of catastrophes.” Nevertheless, she comes for a few more months and one day reports a dream that was not a nightmare: she was in a prison for women where everything was disgusting. There was shit everywhere, so she left and went to the supermarket to

go for a walk. She is looking for a particular brand of chocolate (“Pic-Nic”). At first, she can’t find any, but a little girl shows her where they are on a high shelf. After this outing, she returns to the women’s prison. That was all that was possible. I speak to her of these little girls in her nightmares. Or, more precisely, I do not say anything “about” these little girls, I only point out that they are there. Naturally, I think about the shattering of time for this little girl that she is, and about what is congealed for her in a time that does not only coincide with that of the disappearance of her father. “Anyway,” she said one day, “that was always like that, even before...” Before what? That is never mentioned. She does not ever name what I falsely summarize, in my language, by the events.

After this dream, as she is leaving my office, she hesitates, retraces her steps, leaves again, when the title of Musset’s piece comes to my mind and I shout in an interrogating tone: “A door must be opened or closed!” She leaves, finally, and does not return...without contacting her, I think about her dream of the toilet in the prison for women and chocolate; about the way I “responded” with Musset’s sentence to her claim that “that is all that is possible.” Quite often, when I spoke, the sentences resonated with an almost unbearable violence. I want to say that I had the impression of having exercised a terrible violence, and not only of having completely missed the point, but also having risked throwing her back into absence. I am afraid that (through the alternative that Musset’s title poses) I framed the impossible by an exclusive choice that renders impracticable for her this threshold of discourse that opens to the silence that she held onto. At the same time, since this violence (that I have the feeling that I repeat) marks for her the conditions of all entry into language, I tell myself that, perhaps, she can handle it even if she says the opposite, and I have a relative confidence in what she formulates by her dream.

Years pass...four or five. One day, she calls me on the phone and returns. I am happy to know she is alive. She has changed her life and became a chemical engineer. She received advanced technical training and actually has a job in her field which allows her to deal with the fact that “it is really difficult with the others.” She wants to return because “there are many things I cannot do.” At first, I try to get out of it by telling her that I am not sure if we can resume differently, but upon her silent insistence, I grasp that if she returns, it is not to go somewhere else, and I propose to receive her regularly.

A NEW TRANSCENDENTAL AESTHETICS IN THE CURE?

My goal here is not to recount the outcome of this cure, but to show how—beginning with my own desperation before the immobile time that always led her back to the same catastrophe, figured in her nightmares, and to the same threshold of her entry into language, which staged itself as an impossibility of entering it (according to Melville’s *Bartleby*: “I would prefer not to...”)—this young woman could begin to dream not always of the exact same catastrophe, but in an infinitely

varied fashion of that which goes wrong for her in time and space. Although “that which goes wrong” is a negative expression, during this second period of analysis her dreams rather gave form to unusual apparatuses [*dispositifs*] of space, to short-circuits and unheard of temporal sequences, to unseen colors, and to impressions which characterize the originality of her world without a model. For example, she dreamed of a camping site where two tents faced each other except, in this arrangement, the poles were always dissymmetrical: “This is a space in which ‘facing’ [*en face*] never took place.” Or, once she was bathing in a sea that turned cold and she “could never get warm again.” Still on another occasion, she found herself in a car with her elder brother. She was driving the car and all of a sudden she caught something with a handle and everything changed. She “lost the depth, everything retracted itself, for example, the rearview mirrors.” She was suffocating and her brother was no longer there. But, finally, some air got in.

The important thing was not that she associated, in the present, certain elements of the dream to parts of her history or to daily residues, but her inventiveness to imagine the way the impossible sneaks into time and space.

Another day, she was on the shore of the sea with some colleagues: on the one side, she first saw the calm beach, on the other, the fury of the waves. But there was no limit between the two sides. On the shores of the water, her colleagues played walking on the water and floated: there was a rope holding them behind their backs which allowed them to float. At first, this was impossible for her, and she was going to sink, but finally it all worked out. But, while she was floating on the water, she realized that the face to face of the two seas (the wild and the calm) was a painting, which made her enter another part of the dream in which she lost her cell phone.

While listening to some of these dreams, I was no longer petrified or reduced to silence about the desperate approach of the same irreparable obstacle, but admired her capacity to give form to the singularity of her world and to different aspects of the impossible. This did not mean, however, the abolition of her displacement. By being able to speak of her dreams, she also said: “I do not know what I am producing; I have been bogged down in something since forever.”

“Since forever?”

“Yes, when I was little, my humming always annoyed my sister. I am bogged down in something. I am in something and then there is no longer any continuity. There is no longer any before or after. I see things that do not exist and which are for me more real than all the others, the people who appear and disappear like in a whirlwind.”

When these dreamlike productions drove her crazy, her dreams themselves started to participate and pronounced her desire of “calming the game”: “I dived into the sea. A man helped me and I was confident, but all of a sudden, it all happened so fast, there were noises which hurt me, so I tired to slow down.” I thought of the way she jumped at the smallest noise during the sessions, of

her tolerance of cold (she never had a coat), and at the same time of the extraordinary subtlety of the scale of the sensations mobilized by her dreams.

The possibility of this cure rested, it appears to me, on the fact that that which cannot not be coded in a negative language, that of the impossible or of the irreparable, becomes capable of producing various apparatuses [*dispositifs*] and, hence, something positive [*positifs*]. This demands first that the dissymmetry of the positions in relation to the risk of the absurd (the explosion of time in these scenarios of the end of the world) must be able to be said. It has to be said by the analyst, but not as a truth which idealizes madness or as a defensive refusal of an exploded world, but as the stake of the anxiety which develops during these sessions. It is this change of status of the negative (which becomes, from the derision of a speech which only begins in order to lose itself in its interruption, the variety of unusual forms) that allows the time of a life threatened by desperation to invent itself. This desperation, which is frozen in immobility for not being able to unfurl, is not abolished, but becomes compatible with another thing. “There are things that I cannot do,” said my patient when she returned after a long absence. Time, for her, is not reconciled in an assured manner. She cannot do many things that the others do; for example, being in love is a terrible menace: “When it happens to me, there is no longer day or night.” But she can live in situations and relations in which her strangeness is appreciated as a bizarre and precious quality.

“TIME NOT RECONCILED”

The proximity of the impossible, which pronounces itself in a negative form by an involution of speech, is remarkably formulated by Deleuze in his text, “Bartleby; or, The Formula”:

At each occurrence, there is a stupor surrounding Bartleby, as if one had heard the Unspeakable or the Unstoppable. And there is Bartleby’s silence, as if he had said everything and exhausted language at the same time. With each instance, one has the impression that the madness is growing: not Bartleby’s madness in “particular,” but the madness around him, notably that of the attorney, who launches into strange propositions and even stranger behaviors....The formula is devastating because it eliminates the preferable just as mercilessly as any nonpreferred.³

What is interesting in these pages of Deleuze is that they demonstrate that this way of provoking an entry into discourse (which stages its derision and is called negativism in psychiatry) is the creation of a disturbance in the others to whom the formula is addressed, and that it is thereby another thing than pure abstention. If psychoanalysis has something to say about the invention of the formula by which Bartleby withdraws himself from language, it is the following: in the thread of discourse which has the appearance of linearity and indeterminacy, a paradoxical provocation of those who listen instates itself. Deleuze is also right to indicate that giving the

status of a positive apparatus [*dispositif positif*] of provocation to these formulas (what linguists like Nicola Ruwert named “agrammaticality”) does not have to lead to a reconstitution of all intermediary formulas that can account for the strangeness of the formula: “I would prefer not to,” “He danced his did,” or in French, “J’EN AI UN DE PAS ASSEZ (‘I have one not enough’).”⁴ What is important is the distance produced in relation to those who undergo the effects of these formulas. The positivity of negativism consists of establishing this strange difference of positions between the one who speaks and those who listen. But this is also why we should not idealize the inventions of the speeches of the mad. In psychoanalysis, we do not jump into the virtual space of the thought of the person who comes to provoke the analyst, as if this virtual were truer than the analyst’s “normal” relation to language. Rather, this produced (and not reduced) strangeness between the two protagonists must define the space of the cure. Agrammaticality turns anxiety and desperation, on both sides, into the element of a possible change. It is true that the mad, just like writers, “make language stutter.” But, in analysis, the important thing is to give a status to the dissymmetry of positions. This presupposes that the analyst can recognize that the way in which she or he entered language and a relatively unified time is not the norm of all existence. After all, why not stop speaking for twenty years if one is struggling with something inadmissible. But transference, upon which the possibility of the cure rests, here as well as in neurosis, is the space of a dissymmetry that invents its coordinates on the condition that the analyst risks the anxiety and desperation to which she or he is led.

The same can be said of the temporal structure of this articulated desperation. In a remarkable article, Peter Pelbart, a Brazilian therapist, writes:

When Deleuze writes about time, he always evokes irregularity: time is decentered, aberrant, savage, paradoxical, floating or even collapsed and baseless [*effond(r)é*]. It is not an exaggeration to claim that the madness of time, as he elaborates it, communicates directly with the temporality of the madness we call “clinical.” And we know that a great part of the literature on psychosis finds itself entirely lacking in face of the multiple temporal figures that apparently proliferate in the clinic. Thus, due to the normative temporality that they are forcibly the prisoners of, the “psy” theories are having a hard time embracing these perturbations. It is very rare that one thinks the temporality of psychosis through a perspective that would not be in the privative mode.⁵

It is certain that in order to establish an analytic relation with a patient for whom the impossible is fully exposed, everything is useful that promotes in the analyst the recognition of what is uncertain in the constitution of the unified time of consciousness or in the unified structure of the systems of signification that fade away in the imagination of infantile history, allowing the space of dissymmetry to find its form in transference. For example, since *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze is certainly the one who allows us to read in the *Critique of Pure Reason* all that rumbles

like the disorder of time at the heart of the Kantian theory of transcendental schematism which, nevertheless, “assures” the regularity of succession, permanence, and simultaneity of our internal as well as external experiences. Kant, in effect, wrote in 1781 that there exist three syntheses of time, of which only the last one is unified by a consciousness: the moments (linked by a first apprehension) and the sequences (formed by the rhythms which constitute us) can be, in the final analysis, completely independent of the completion of these links by an act of intellect which poses objects outside us. Kant, therefore, first describes a subject which is the dispersion of time itself, without universe, without objective nature, that is to say other than itself. Reading these pages, we tell ourselves that when we read a novel, we are thereby submerged in a formation of time of which we no longer know if it is ours or that of another, and that it all hangs by a thread whether the third synthesis (that of recognition) can unify time and attribute it to the objects which are not us. We can therefore imagine that if two subjects live in the same time, it is without doubt more by their common participation in a nature constituted by the third synthesis than by a time that would be common to them. Since he separated time from movement, Kant ventured somewhere other than the progressive time of history and the *a priori* constituted regularities of nature. But if these experiences of thought acclimatize us to the idea that our most completely mastered temporal constructions are the non-necessary products of passive contractions by which we are what we love, and of the repetitions that punctuate our lives without centering themselves on univocal scenarios, then the exercise of philosophy cannot be reduced without further ado to the experience of madness. Certainly, there is no philosophy without some approach to what goes wrong in the relation of words and things. But as I tried to show through Kant’s example, a philosopher, when he manages to write, speculates on what a mad person directly encounters. The first can be read as the inventive avoidance of that in which the “mad” is congealed. All of a sudden, the philosophical audacity of thought cannot serve as a regulator to say what happens between a “mad person” and an analyst, since this presupposes to be resolved or useless precisely that which makes the first take the risk to come to see the second.

On the other hand, it can be pleasant and pleasurable at the same time as tormenting for the analyst to read philosophy from this perspective: as the actual avoidance of madness, which guards the memory of what this risk conjured. Since *Difference and Repetition*, Gilles Deleuze is certainly the one who taught me to read Kant differently than by assuming the philosopher of the *a priori* to be sure of his own business. In particular, in the text on the three syntheses of time, which Kant deleted from the second edition of *The Critique of Pure Reason*, it is as correct as it is fascinating to see the way he describes the disorder of time not reconciled by the unity that brings about (under conditions to be clarified later) recognition. Furthermore, it is also fascinating to see how Deleuze altered his appreciation of this thought at the limits of the representable to which the so-called philosopher of representation brought himself. In 1968, he wrote

that the transcendental doctrine of time as the form of internal sense “announces” Rimbaud’s “I am another.”⁶ In 1986, he claims that Kant went further than Rimbaud, since the latter, in his regulated practice of a deregulation of all sense, constructs yet another *universe* of sensations in these original sentences, while Kant knew, at the moment, how to renounce all universe, all principle of unity of time. As Deleuze wrote in 1986, Kant is Hamlet—time is “out of joint”:

In short, the madness of the subject corresponds to the time out of joint. There is, as it were, a double derivation of the I and the Self in time, and it is this derivation that links or stitches them together. Such is the thread of time. In a certain sense, Kant goes further than Rimbaud. For Rimbaud’s great formula takes on its full force only by appealing to recollections from school. Rimbaud gives his formula an Aristotelian interpretation: “So much the worse for the wood that finds itself a violin!...If the copper wakes up a bugle, that is not its fault ...”...In this sense, the compartmentalized distinction between forms as concepts (violin-bugle) and matters as objects (wood-copper) gives way to the continuity of a one-way linear development that requires the establishment of new formal relations (time) and the disposition of new type of matter (phenomenon). It is as if, in Kant, one could already hear Beethoven, and soon Wagner’s continuous variation.⁷

In modern philosophical or musical creation, a new linearity of time is produced. A linearity which does without Aristotle, that is to say, an absolute present that the instant participates in, which guarantees a link between the succession of instants in linear time as well as the eternity of cosmic time, the periodicity of which reconciles immobility and movement. But for the patient I spoke of, the instants did not hang on to each other, time was dislocated, and it is this apparently negative dislocation that had to be made to vibrate differently.

Translated by Roland Végső



1. Gilles Deleuze, "Bartleby; or the Formula," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, trans. Daniel W. Smith and Michael A. Greco (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 83-84.
2. On this point, we should engage the discussion with a precise Lacanian perspective, like that of Geneviève Morel in *Ambiguïtés sexuelles: Sexuation et psychose* (Paris: Anthropos, 2000), especially Chapter 5.
3. Deleuze, "Bartleby; or the Formula," 70-71.
4. *Ibid.*, 68-69.
5. Peter Pal Pelbart, "Le temps non réconcilié," in *Deleuze: Une vie philosophique*, ed. Eric Alliez (Le Plessis-Robinson: Synthelabo, 1998), 95-96.
6. Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 86.
7. Deleuze, "On Four Poetic Formulas That Might Summarize the Kantian Philosophy," in *Essays Critical and Clinical*, 30.

