

FROM PSYCHOANALYSIS TO SCHIZOANALYSIS:
BORGES AND CALVINO THROUGH LACAN, BARTHES, DELEUZE AND GUATTARI

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In this paper I will attempt to display the levels of compatibility between two apparently opposite theories, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and schizoanalysis as developed by Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, with references to Roland Barthes's theory of the "Text," which occupies a middle position between these two theories. Then I will discuss some short stories by Jorge Luis Borges and Italo Calvino in light of these theories. As its title "From Psychoanalysis to Schizoanalysis" implies, I will not only emphasize the radical shift from one theory to the other but also underline that Lacanian psychoanalysis can be seen as a transition on the way to the revolutionary theory of Deleuze and Guattari.

Jacques Lacan, by challenging the unity of the sign as conceived of by Saussurian linguistics, in other words, by splitting the bond between signifier and signified, disrupts the referentiality of language and breaks the illusion of signification, which is comparable to Deleuze and Guattari's emphasis on "asignification." However, Lacan's idea of "floating signifier" or "sliding signified" stands in contrast with the theory of Deleuze and Guattari who totally reject the notions of signifier and signified. Moreover, the psychoanalyst's attempt to interpret, or to "reproduce" the unconscious of the analysand by establishing certain connections between signifiers so as to arrive at an already existing structure (Oedipal triangle) or a "transcendental signified" (phallus) are in total opposition with the anti-oedipal, anti-structuralist, and anti-hermeneutic philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari. Nevertheless, Deleuze and Guattari use such totalizing or signifying systems in order to deconstruct them. They underline that revolutionary conditions emerge from within the established systems.

Deleuze and Guattari's definition of the rhizome as a nonlinear, heterogeneous system with a multiplicity of interrelated lines, that is "lines of segmentarity according to which it is stratified, territorialized, organized, signified, attributed" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 9) as well as "lines of deterritorialization down which it constantly flees" (9), points to the fact that the rhizome contains elements from traditional logic which, however, are constantly dismantled. In their book titled *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari talk about how Oedipus can be de-oedipalized by using psychoanalysis as a foothold.

For example, one will often be forced to take dead ends, to work with signifying powers and subjective affections, to find a foothold in formations that are Oedipal or paranoid or even worse, rigidified territorialities that open the way for other transformational operations. It is even possible for psychoanalysis to serve as a foothold in spite of itself. In other cases, on the contrary, one will bolster oneself directly on a line of flight enabling one to blow apart strata, cut roots, and make new connections. (14-15)

Deleuze and Guattari's notion of desire differs radically from the psychoanalytic notion of desire which is based upon the acquisition of a lacking object. They criticize this traditional logic of desire that places desire on the side of acquisition rather than production. In their book *Anti-Oedipus* they claim:

Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the subject that is missing in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject unless there is repression. (26)

As Mark Seem remarks in his introduction to *Anti-Oedipus*,

To be anti-oedipal is to be anti-ego as well as anti-homo, willfully attacking all reductive psychoanalytic and political analyses that remain caught within the sphere of totality and unity, in order to free the multiplicity of desire from the deadly neurotic and Oedipal yoke. (xx)

For Deleuze and Guattari, desire is a flow, a process, a constant becoming, an opening to infinite possibilities. They point out that everything intersects in these intense becomings, passages, and migrations, races, families, parental appellations, divine appellations, geographical and historical designations (*Anti-Oedipus* 85). On the other hand, they maintain that it is inevitable that lines of deterritorialization become reterritorialized and certain orders or structures block the free flow of desire.

You may make a rupture, draw a line of flight, yet there is still a danger that you will reencounter organizations that restratify everything, formations that restore power to a signifier, attributions that reconstitute a subject. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 9)

The territorializing systems Deleuze and Guattari talk about bear similarities to the "symbolic order" which constitutes an important aspect of Lacanian psychoanalysis. Lacan stresses that upon one's entry into language, into the "symbolic order," the preexisting linguistic and cultural systems impose their orders and structures on him and determine one's identity within that system based upon binary logic. What differentiates the theory of Deleuze and Guattari from that of Lacan is that the former revolts against all preexistent orders and structures by eliminating hierarchical opposition between binary concepts, or better, by dispensing with them altogether, whereas the latter conforms to them, even serves them.

Lacan underlines that the split between "conscious" and "unconscious" occurs with the child's entry into the "symbolic order" which imposes its orders even on the unconscious as indicated by his idea that unconscious is structured like language. By pointing out that repression takes place not only in the conscious but also in the un-

conscious, he testifies to the "dictatorial" conception of the unconscious against which Deleuze and Guattari react. However, he remains within the boundaries of this order. He practises psychoanalysis, reduces all operations of the unconscious to the Oedipal pattern and attempts to cure them. On the contrary, Deleuze and Guattari promote the schizo person whom they describe as

a free man, irresponsible, solitary, and joyous, finally able to say and do something simple in his own name, without asking permission; a desire lacking nothing, a flux that overcomes barriers and codes, a name that no longer designates any ego whatever. (*Anti-Oedipus* 131).

The schizo person "has simply ceased being afraid of becoming mad. He experiences and lives himself as the sublime sickness that will no longer affect him" (*Anti-Oedipus* 131).

In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari also emphasize the contribution of Oedipus to the existing social and economic system by inserting desire into triangulation and prohibiting it from satisfying itself. Patrick Colm Hogan discusses Lacanian psychoanalysis in relation to the political and economic system of capitalist society, which is comparable to the theory developed by Deleuze and Guattari. He points to the "anti-objectivism" of Lacan, which is based upon Georg Lukacs's conception of "reification" as a part of an objectifying "ideological phenomenon" derivative of the "commodity structure" of capitalism. Lukacs remarks

just as the capitalist system continuously produces and reproduces itself economically on higher and higher levels, the structure of reification progressively sinks more deeply into the consciousness of man. . . . It stamps its imprint upon the whole consciousness of man; his qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality, they are things which he can 'own' or 'dispose of' like various objects of the external world. (Hogan 11)

Lacan expresses his worry about the reduction of man's needs to exchange values as follows:

for the psychoanalytic experience one must understand that it unfolds entirely in this rapport of subject to subject, signifying thereby that it retains a dimension irreducible to any psychology considered as the objectification of certain properties of the individual. (Hogan 10)

Hogan draws attention to the economic base of Lacan's terms and structures such as *manque* which means both lack and shortage, "a *scarcity* of a certain commodity," which gives rise to *demand*. "It is the business of the *sujet* *supposé savoir* to recognize that *demand*, and *supply the scarce commodity*" (Hogan xvii). Hogan's discussion indicates that Lacan is part of the existing economic system. It is also suggestive of Lacan's worry about being objectified himself, his concern about his subjectivity that might

be reduced to an exchange value either because he gets paid for his ideas or his psyche might undergo a split as a result of a "countertransference" process. Paradoxically, these concerns might also explain his preference to stay in the system. His status as analyst, as the knowing authority, strengthens his position as a subject whereas his analysand is a split subject, the speaking subject (the subject of the conscious), and the subject spoken of (the subject of the unconscious). Lacan's concern with a stable and unified self that distinguishes him from others, and also places him above others goes parallel with the analyst's method of interpreting, tracing meanings in the depths of the analysand's unconscious by establishing links between "floating signifiers." Thus, Lacan becomes a representative of the dominant power structure. Deleuze and Guattari call such systems "arborescent systems,"

hierarchical systems with centers of signifiante and subjectification, central automata like organized memories . . . (in which) an element only receives information from a higher unit, and only receives a subjective affection along preestablished paths. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 16)

As opposed to Lacan who regards desire as directed to the primordial unity with the mother, Deleuze and Guattari reject both the idea of initial unity ("Mirror-Stage" or "Imaginary Order" in Lacanian sense) and any idea about future unity.

We live today in the age of partial objects, bricks that have been shattered to bits, and leftovers. We no longer believe in the myth of the existence of fragments that, like pieces of an antique statue, are merely waiting for the last one to be turned up, so that they may all be glued back together to create a unity that is precisely the same as the original unity. We no longer believe in a primordial totality that once existed, or in a final totality that awaits us at some future date. . . . (*Anti-Oedipus* 42)

Deleuze and Guattari's liberation of desire from a subject and a lacking object corresponds to their liberation of the literary text from a subject and an object, in short, from authorial sovereignty as well as from meaning or closure. For Deleuze and Guattari, the literary work is a rhizome containing lines that are interrelated but decentered, lines resisting signification and linearity. Like the rhizome, the literary text is made of plateaus, that is "a continuous, self-vibrating region of intensities whose development avoids any orientation towards a culmination point or external end" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 11). Deleuze and Guattari say,

We will never ask what a book means, as signified or signifier; we will not look for anything to understand in it. We will ask what it functions with, in connection with what other things it does or does not transmit intensities, in which other multiplicities its own are inserted and metamorphosed. (*A Thousand Plateaus* 4)

According to Deleuze and Guattari, there is no difference between what a book talks about and how it is made, which is in line with Barthes's notion of the "Text" as an activity of production. According to Barthes, "the Text cannot stop; its constitutive movement is that of cutting across (in particular, it can cut across the work, several works)" (Barthes 162). The distinction Barthes makes between the Work and the Text corresponds to the distinction Deleuze and Guattari make between the root-tree (root-book) and the rhizome (rhizomorphic book), the former referring to the signifying and subjectifying book with organic unity and binary structure, and the latter to the book which is characterized by asignification, astructure, and multiplicities. Barthes describes the "Text" as follows:

The Text can be approached in reaction to the sign. . . . It practises . . . the infinite deferment of the signified (secret, ultimate, something to be sought out; characteristic of work which falls under the scope of hermeneutics, interpretation) . . . ; its field is that of the signifier and the signifier must not be conceived of as 'the first stage of meaning' . . . but as its deferred action. Similarly, the infinity of the signifier refers not to some idea of the ineffable (the unnamable signified) but to that of playing; the generation of perpetual signifier . . . in the field of the text is realized not according to an organic progress of maturation or a hermeneutic course of deepening investigation, but, rather, according to a serial movement of disconnections, overlappings, variations. The logic regulating the text is not comprehensive (define 'what the work means') but metonymic; the activity of associations, contiguities, carryings-over coincides with a liberation of symbolic energy (lacking it, man would die). (Barthes 158)

Barthes's theory stands mid-way between Lacan's and Deleuze and Guattari's. His signifier is definitely not the "transcendental signifier" of Lacan but he does not deny the existence of signifiers as Deleuze and Guattari do. Deleuze and Guattari's theory of schizoanalysis rejects all kinds of overcoding systems, "any idea of pretraced destiny, whatever name is given to it—divine, anagogic, historical, economic, structural, hereditary, or syntagmatic" (13). They also emphasize the way in which psychoanalysis and linguistics strengthened their position in the universe and in people's minds by dominating people's conscious and unconscious from the very early stages of their lives.

Deleuze and Guattari use their theory of the *map* as a reaction to *tracing* in their attack on psychoanalysis and linguistics. They remark that the *map* is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real, fosters connections between fields and removes blockages whereas tracing, that is the method of psychoanalysis and linguistics, constructs an unconscious and a language closed upon itself. The map is open and connectible in all of its dimensions. It is detachable, reversible, susceptible to constant modification. The *tracing*, however, organizes,

stabilizes, and neutralizes the multiplicities according to the axes of signification and subjectification. It generates and structuralizes the rhizome. According to Deleuze and Guattari, one of the most important characteristics of the rhizome is that it always has multiple entryways as opposed to the tracing, which always comes back "to the same" (*A Thousand Plateaus* 12).

Deleuze and Guattari maintain that a language is never closed upon itself, but decenters into other dimensions and other registers, not only linguistic but also perceptive, mimetic, gestural, and cognitive acts. This ties in with Barthes's notion of the Text as "a social space which leaves no language safe, outside, nor any subject of enunciation in position as judge, master, analyst, confessor, decoder" (Barthes 164).

[The Text is] woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages antecedent or contemporary, which cuts across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the 'sources', the 'influences' of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas. (Barthes 160)

Deleuze and Guattari's conception of "Minor Literature" can also be associated with Barthes's notion of the "Text." First of all, "Minor Literature" as literature's eruption into new lines of flight is comparable to Barthes's description of the "Text" as a passage, an overcrossing, an explosion, a dissemination rather than a co-existence of meanings (Barthes 159).

"Minor Literature" as conceived of by Deleuze and Guattari refers to "the revolutionary conditions for every literature within the heart of what is called great (or established) literature," and it is characterized by the deterritorialization of language (intensive use of language as opposed to all symbolic or signifying language), the connection of the individual to a political immediacy (the individual concern or the family triangle connecting to other triangles—commercial, economic, bureaucratic, judicial, etc.), and the collective assemblage of enunciation. The idea that a "Minor Literature" emerges from within a "Major Literature" is in line with Barthes's conception of the "Text" which does not stop at (good) Literature, which cannot be contained in a hierarchy, and which has subversive force in respect of the old classifications (Barthes 157). What the reader perceives is

multiple, irreducible, coming from a disconnected, heterogeneous variety of substances and perspectives. . . . All these incidents are half-identifiable: they come from codes which are known but their combination is unique, finds the stroll in a difference repeatable only as difference. (Barthes 159)

The stories I discuss here—Borges's "The Garden of the Forking Paths," "The Library of Babel," and "The God's

Script"; and Calvino's "The Distance of the Moon," "Without Colors," and "A Sign in Space"—bear on man's striving to understand, to interpret the universe, his constant search for meaning, unity, and truth. At the same time, these works indicate the impossibility of arriving at a stable meaning in the universe as well as in the text, that is the "Text" in the sense Barthes uses it in his "From Work to Text." Moreover, the stories, especially those by Calvino, display man's attempt to construct a unified, stable self-identity, which, however, remains unfulfilled. As discussed above, the anxiety over a stable and unified identity is characteristic of the subject of Lacan's "Symbolic Order," including the psychoanalyst himself. Although the stories in question indicate that it is impossible to grasp the meaning underlying the universe and to construct a stable identity, they do not end in frustration or failure. On the contrary, they affirm the kind of optimism we find in Deleuze and Guattari's theory of desire, that is desire that never stops, that refuses to be territorialized.

The first two stories by Borges, "The Garden of the Forking Paths" and "The Library of Babel," revolve around physical and textual labyrinths. This indicates the self-reflexive character of the stories which are themselves labyrinthine texts full of intertextual and interlingual allusions. Both stories question the notion of linear time and unified space. In "The Garden of the Forking Paths" the physical maze is identified with Ts'ui Pên's chaotic novel which, like the one the narrator dreams about encompasses the past and the future and "in some way involves the stars" (Borges 23). It breaks with the traditional forms of fiction.

In all fictional works, each time a man is confronted with several alternatives, he chooses one and eliminates the others; in the fiction of Ts'ui Pên, he chooses—simultaneously—all of them. He *creates*, in this way, diverse futures, diverse times which themselves also proliferate and fork. . . . Naturally there are several possible outcomes. . . . In the work of Ts'ui Pên, all possible outcomes occur; each one is the point of departure for other forkings. (Borges 26)

The fabric of Ts'ui Pên's text is like the fabric of the rhizome; it is the conjunction "and . . . and . . . and" as Deleuze and Guattari describe it in their *A Thousand Plateaus*. It is a multiplicity connected to other multiplicities. It resists closure. Diachrony that is characteristic of traditional texts gives way to synchrony so that the linear conception of time is dismantled. Ts'ui Pên emerges as a schizo person because he does not believe in a uniform, absolute time.

He believed in an infinite series of times, in a growing, dizzying net of divergent, convergent and parallel times. This network of times which approached one another, forked, broke off, or were unaware of one another for centuries, embraces all possibilities of time. (Borges 28)

In "The Library of Babel" it is the notion of unified space that is called into question. The library is identified as the universe made up of an indefinite number of hexagonal galleries from which one can see interminably the upper and lower floors. The spiral stairways sink abysmally and soar upwards to remote distances. The library is a sphere whose center can be any of its hexagons and whose circumference is inaccessible. It is rhizomic; in other words, it is decentered, and has no culmination point. The hexagones, like the plateaus, are always in the middle, never at the beginning or at the end. The labyrinthine structure of the library can be compared with the maze of formless and chaotic books in it. Though the number of symbols that are used in these books is limited, the books remain impenetrable, incomprehensible, or inexhaustible. This corresponds to Barthes's notion of the "Text" in which known codes are combined in most unique ways. Furthermore, the books constitute a rhizome with lines of signification as well as lines of flight. It is observed that "for every sensible line of straightforward statement, there are leagues of senseless cacophonies, verbal jumbles and incoherences" (53). The texts contain references which link them infinitely and make it impossible to trace them back to an origin, which is again reminiscent of Barthes's notion of intertextuality. In the story, it is impossible to arrive at the original or the central book just as it is impossible to find the center of the library. The multiplicity of the universe cannot be reduced to a transcendental signifier, or to an original unified meaning.

Borges's story "The God's Script" also revolves around a quest for an original source of signification or language. In this story, it is the original sentence, God's sentence that is being sought but cannot be found. The configuration of the spots of the tiger is identified as an undecipherable text, a text which cannot be reduced to an original signifier:

What type of sentence (I asked myself) will an absolute mind construct? I considered that even in the human languages there is no proposition that does not imply the entire universe. To say *the tiger* is to say the tigers that begot it, the deer and turtles devoured by it, the grass on which the deer fed, the earth that was mother to the grass, the heaven that gave birth to the earth. I considered that in the language of a god every word would enunciate that infinite concatenation of facts, and not in an implicit but explicit manner, and not progressively but instantaneously. (Borges 171)

Not only absolute signification but also the notion of a unified subject is put into question, since every unit extends to larger units in the universe. However, this is not a linear progress but a synchronic proliferation to diverse directions. Language as well as the universe that it tries to define here constitute the rhizome because they are multiplicities opening into other multiplicities. At the same time, they do away with all hierarchical differences. Language is not referential. There are no fixed signifieds.

The nonlinear conception of time and space exhibited in the passage above is also to be found in the image of the Wheel which, the narrator says,

was not before my eyes, nor behind me, nor to the sides, but every place at one time. That wheel was made of water, but also of fire, and it was infinite. Interlinked, all things that are, were and shall be formed it. (Borges 172)

The notion of dreams enclosed within one another to infinity in the story challenges the psychoanalytic claim that dreams can be interpreted according to prescribed patterns. Here the path one must retrace is interminable. This image of the subject who might not awaken from his dream enclosed within infinite series of dreams indicates that the subject cannot be located spatially, nor temporally. In other words, it is impossible to fix or stabilize identity. The subject who cannot even lay claim on his dream cannot interpret the universe in relation to himself.

Also in Calvino's stories, the quest for a stable identity as well as the hope to come to terms with the universe through that identity remains unfulfilled because the universe is chaotic, elusive, and incomprehensible. As Kristi Siegel remarks, Qfwfg, the narrator of Calvino's stories in his *Cosmicomics*, undertakes an "elusive quest for self in hopes of constructing himself as a stable subject" (44) but finds himself lost in the process of language, and the slipping chain of signification. Kathryn Hume emphasizes that "this chaos is abundantly fertile, always throwing up new forms, new creations" (91). This is clearly seen in the story titled "A Sign in Space" where signs proliferate and multiply in such a way that it becomes impossible for the subject to recognize his own sign. The narrator cannot establish a point of reference because any point can be the point of departure, and any sign within the multiplicity can be his.

I realized I had lost by now even that confused notion of my sign, and I succeeded in conceiving only interchangeable fragments of signs, that is smaller signs within the large one, and every change of these signs-within-the sign changed the sign itself into a completely different one. (Calvino 34)

This image corresponds to Deleuze and Guattari's image of the rhizome throwing out multiple stems into multiplicities, and to their idea that every new line in the rhizome changes the whole structure of the rhizome. The image of the universe as an indefinite number of interrelated units, the origin or the center of which cannot be determined is also in line with the notion of the rhizome.

This story as well as the "The Distance of the Moon" and "Without Colors" deconstruct the pre-symbolic and symbolic orders in Lacanian sense by dissolving the boundary between them. However, this is done by working from within these systems, in other words, by using elements from Lacanian psychoanalysis in order to dismantle them. As we have seen, in "A Sign of Space" it is the symbolic order, the order of language and signification,

which becomes an undifferentiated order, an order of non-identity and non-referentiality. The anxiety of the narrator over this loss of identity or signification also stands in contrast with the psychoanalytic notion of desire for the initial state of wholeness or the undifferentiated which is associated with the desire for the mother as the primary object of desire. In this story desire is not directed towards an object but to the establishment of one's subjectivity which, however, also becomes impossible.

In "Without Colors" love is directed towards a female who is a part of the undifferentiated order where there are no object distinctions, no sharp contrasts, no colors but gray. Therefore, she can be seen as the primary object of desire, desire for the pre-symbolic state of unity. Indeed, this sense of loss of the primary object of desire is to be found at the end of the story, where the narrator enters the differentiated world. However, there is the sense of loss within the undifferentiated realm itself. Ayl is the object of desire also within the pre-symbolic order. Moreover, there is the notion of desire that is directed towards both outside and inside, desire for escape from the order of differentiation as well as undifferentiation.

Also in "The Distance of the Moon" desire is associated with escape rather than acquisition. It is not static but dynamic. Ofwfg's initial desire is directed to a female who also displays several motherly characteristics which Lacan would interpret as the striving for the wholeness with the mother which is characteristic of the pre-symbolic stage. Besides, it is the deaf cousin who, among all others, achieves the perfect reunion with the Moon which is again identified as female. Lacan would attribute this to the fact that he has never entered the linguistic order. However, the deaf one is more interested in the operation of desire than its acquisition of a lacking object. In fact, he prefers to distance himself from the Moon in order to keep desire flowing. Kathryn Hume describes his love as passionate but selfless, as sensuous enjoyment of the exploration process, delight in questing. This selflessness and the nomadic wanderings of desire are characteristic of Deleuze and Guattari's schizo person. Desire does not seek acquisition or culmination but free lines of escape, passages, process. The narrator attempts to escape not only from the differentiating order but also the undifferentiating one. His desire does not stop at either one.

I thought only of the Earth. It was the Earth that caused each of us to be that someone he was rather than someone else; up there, wrested from the Earth, it was as if I were no longer that I, nor she that She, for me. I was eager to return to the Earth, and I trembled at the fear of having lost it. The fulfillment of my dream of love had lasted only that instant when we had been united, spinning between Earth and Moon; torn from the earthy soil, my love now knew only the heart-rending nostalgia for what it lacked: a where, a surrounding, a before, an after. (Calvino 14)

The stories by Borges and Calvino that have been discussed here can be considered as examples of "Minor Literature" as developed by Deleuze and Guattari. They chal-

lunge the traditional notions of unity of time and space as well as the unity of the subject. They deconstruct the basic concepts of psychoanalysis, using elements from Lacanian psychoanalysis, such as desire, object of desire, symbolic and pre-symbolic orders. The stories dissolve the boundaries between these orders as well as other binary oppositions. They exhibit a notion of desire directed not towards the acquisition of an object but towards experimentation, a constant becoming, a process. The universe that is portrayed in these stories is rhizomic in the sense Deleuze and Guattari use it. It is made of multiplicities infinitely connected to other multiplicities. Its progress is nonlinear. It has no center, and resists being traced back to an origin. The notion of the universe as a text in these stories is in line with Roland Barthes's notion of the "Text," that is a text that displays indefinite intertextuality, and is therefore untraceable, inexhaustible. Barthes, contrary to Lacanian psychoanalysis, rejects a transcendental signifier as well as a unified meaning in the text. Deleuze and Guattari dispense with all kinds of structuralization and signification, the subject as well as the object. Their theory of schizoanalysis opens infinite possibilities to desire.

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