

Deleuze and the South: critical considerations on minoritarian becomings for a psychology to come

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Abstract

This paper provides a Deleuzian critical reading to a certain methodological blindness in the study of the construction of subjectifications that take place within the socio-political context where there is a divide between the North and a 'global' South. It also explores constructive solutions to this blindness.

Gilles Deleuze was a French philosopher, whom Foucault defined as *the philosopher of Difference*. Both in his individual philosophical work and in his joint socio-political work with Felix Guattari, Deleuze critiqued the hegemonic tendencies that forms of knowledge take within State-Capitalist social formations and proposed a positive alternative based on decentered – rhizomic – emerging multiplicities.

Starting with self-reflective considerations as a student and a practitioner of psychology in the South and their effects in a later migration, this paper will explore some critical applications of Deleuze's philosophy into psychology, in particular, psychology's blindness to its own methodological assumptions in terms of a normativity in its 'transcendent' object of study, a blindness that supports and perpetuates powerful inequalities in terms of social organization. This blindness is explored through Deleuze's concept of 'stupidity' (in front of the essential activity of differentiation) and considerations as to more respectful alternatives are explored, alternatives that are liminal to the North/South distinction and introduce instead the notions of minor and Major science.

Keywords: Critical Psychology, Global South, Deleuze, Philosophy of Science, Stupidity.

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Liminal considerations on the North/South divide – Four examples

Back in 2005, I attended a conference in Sydney, Australia on Continental Philosophy on the theme of 'The Politics of Being.' One of the key speakers was Wendy Brown, professor both of Political Science and Women's Studies at the University of California, Berkeley Campus. An interesting and clearly progressive thinker, she found herself somewhat disconcerted during her presentation on identity politics in connection with the dialectical politics of North-South. As she was speaking, it dawned on her that she was speaking within a kind of 'liminal space': that she had been speaking to an audience she considered to be 'equals' about 'the South' and that she was doing so as if she was in the North. That she had been speaking 'as if' the South was 'out there' when in fact, she was in it. Her disquiet was mirrored by the audience which – at least in my reading of the situation – had also identified itself as belonging to the North – a strategic North if you like.

I am not intending to be judgemental of Professor Brown when telling this story. Politics of inclusion and exclusion happen within all of us, despite our best intentions. In many ways, these dynamics are directly related to the constitution of social identities: to the endless question of who we are and where do we belong. Although issues regarding identity and social belonging are central to what I will be discussing, the critical gaze should be better focused on the issue of differences and (in)equalities. It is in this context that Professor Brown's exclamation was of relevance. As I already indicated, she is a thinker strongly committed to progressive political ideas, so her 'realisation', was not in terms of lack of knowledge, but of the subtleties of power dynamics and the complexities inherent to trying to disentangle ourselves of them. As an example, and thinking of its use in this presentation, the example still finds me wondering where the limits of this North-South lie. Looking at the map, both Asia and a significant part of Africa do in fact lie in a geographical North, reminding us that the South in question has more to do with a Eurocentric (and here I include USA as well) North than with what perhaps could be better defined as a 'global South'. Even in its naming, the distinction misrepresents and misinterprets the play of forces at stake.

Be it what it may, and despite its many manifestations, this type of politics – with all its implied reasonings and effects – was not new for me and has had a critical yet often obscured presence within Psychology as a discipline. Such politics were already present during my training as a psychologist in Chile. This education – provided in the South and taught by Chileans to Chileans – followed the lines of psychological training within the Continental European curriculum. Despite being an

earnest student, my experience of such training was that 'something just simply did not make sense', something was missing. On reflection, 'the human' assumed as background to the psychological investigations presented to us, left me with a deep sense of confusion and of alienation. A simple way of describing this, and aware that this in part plays to general stereotypes of 'a passionate' South, was by stating the often-referred idea that such image of the human was connected to a northern ideal of man: of an individual, private, independent and with an exaggerated sense of rationality as governing his free-will choices. This disciplinarian definition of what is 'what we truly are' was different to the one I and my fellow students had of ourselves, thus the sense of confusion and alienation I experienced.

My confusion and alienation got only worse once I emigrated. Migrating to Australia, and not to either USA or Europe (prevalent options in Chile at the time, options that confirmed our colonial status), was a conscious and purposeful decision to 'stay in the South.' But this feeble attempt for self-determination confronted me with a much 'colder' alienation that I had not anticipated and that talks to the example: Australia was a different kind of South to the one of Chile. Australia, being part of the Commonwealth and having English as its official language, had a different relationship with the North to the one Chile had.

In Australia, I painfully experienced the often-hidden biases towards the education in the South and I experienced what I could only describe as uninterrogated professional racist biases, biases that went from a questioning of the quality of the education I received to questioning of my previous professional practice (what I had done as a professional prior to my migration) once my qualifications were 'officially' accepted. As the Chair of the Psychological Board said to me at the time: how can we know that your practice 'there' is equivalent to our practice here? At the time, I could not but see racist elements in what he said – of Chileans being a different kind of people to Australians. A double alienation: not just that the human condition I had systematically studied was not representative of my actual experiences as a human among other humans, but also that my studies of the discipline had not been 'good enough'. The message was clear: despite eight years of serious studies in Psychology, what did I really know?... reminding me of Said when discussing Orientalism (1978/2003):

... Flaubert's encounter with an Egyptian courtesan produced a widely influential model of the Oriental woman; she never spoke of herself, she never represented her emotions, presence, or history. He spoke for her and represented her. He was foreign, comparatively wealthy, male, and these were historical facts of domination that allowed him not only to possess Kuchuk Hanem physically but to speak for her and tell his readers in what way she was "typically Oriental." My argument is that Flaubert's situation of strength in relation to Kuchuk Hanem was not an isolated instance. It fairly stands for the pattern of relative strength between East and West, and the discourse about the Orient that it enabled. (p. 6)

In Orientalism's consideration of who was being represented as 'the Oriental woman', Said elegantly invited us to consider who talks about whom – and who remains silent – in these colonial practices.

It seems fair to mention that there were some 'institutional learnings' through this ordeal too and, some months after these exchanges with the Chair, another person on the executive of the Psychological Board approached me to apologize for the excesses of the Chair. This gesture, which could be seen as a repairing or restorative gesture, did not stand much scrutiny however: this person happened to have known me – I had been providing training within the independent organisation he was leading, and he respected my work in it. Soon in this conversation, it became clear that the apologies were stated from a different register: no longer reflections on a decision-making process fraught with unexamined structural inequalities and profoundly problematic disciplinary distinctions, but a matter of social standing – of who knows whom. Rather than a professional discipline, what then started to be at play was a 'social' interaction of, at the best of times, who was in/out of the credible circles. I am personally weary of these dynamics since, although appealing at one (social) level, more often than not, they obscure a dark nepotism that contributes little to our efforts for a better and more just world to live in.

Critical considerations on disciplinary definitions: a problem of stupidity

It has been an ongoing process to find ways out of this continual discomfort, and I owe most of my insights in this process to readings that took place outside of the official curriculum, bringing yet another level of alienation into play. Such readings often give space to claims questioning the suitability of such knowledge to be defined as relevant to the discipline. As one professor of Psychology in a well-established university here in Melbourne once told me ... perhaps you could try to look for a vacancy in Cultural Studies, but definitely not Psychology, not anywhere in Australia.

At the time, I didn't know how to constructively respond to this statement. On reflection, I would have liked to have responded by saying that, quite the opposite, philosophers and sociologists of science have much to say to Psychology, in particular, in helping us to critically evaluate its 'official curriculum' – the official story – so as to identify that, in itself, this official story is at the heart of a very serious problem in the discipline. Due to it is uncritical – not seriously examined – with a number of core methodological and ontological assumptions, assumptions have been shaped regarding the discipline within a history of thought that is not universal but belongs to the North. Starting with an assumption that what we experience of the world are signs of stable identities – or essences – and that knowledge consists in the careful and thoughtful representation of such 'worldly' objects of study, it then seems not only 'natural' but also 'reasonable' to see Psychology as the systematic study of 'the human' – not the human condition but 'the' human – as something stable and with a definite (and universal) shape.

It is at this point that I can introduce Deleuze into the equation and to argue for the great value his work has to offer to our discipline in its more constructive possibilities. Deleuze's project is at the centre of what has become known as a Philosophy of Difference. Deleuze is a figure that we are still struggling to understand despite his well-recognized standing as a powerful critical voice of central tenets in Western thought. In his aggregation work – *Difference and Repetition* (1968/1994) – he proposes a reversing the order of things central to Occidental philosophy since Plato: instead of having identity as the main concept – with difference as a corollary – to foreground Difference and have identity as the corollary. Difference is no longer an 'accidental variation' (that needed to be minimised in order to appreciate what is central) and identity emerges through repetitions. In other words, what Deleuze is inviting us to consider through his metaphysical proposal is that 'what is, is change' – ongoing transformation – and that, what we experience as stable, is the effect of repetitions. Furthermore, and as an effect of an emphasis on flux and change, that these repetitions construct 'images of thought' that, often in the name of good and common sense, present a pre-established order of things – a commodified version of the world. Images of thought is what 'habits' are made of and they are a very expedient way to manage the complexities of day to day living but, as Deleuze warns us, if we are not careful, they seduce us to believe that they are not 'just' a possible version of how things could be – a version that is of help for us in certain contexts – but the true order of things – the Truth.

For Deleuze, the major problem with this seduction is that it alienates us from the process of thinking. This is an important point. Common and good sense, in particular in spaces where such images of thoughts are functional, ca and useful, can seamlessly shape 'an easy and comfortable' life. Yet, such ease comes at the price of banality. Here, there is an important connection between Deleuze's concerns and Arendt's insights when she writes about the banality of evil,

[Evil comes from the failure to think.] The trouble with Eichmann was precisely that so many were like him, and that the many were neither perverted nor sadistic, that they were, and still are, terribly and terrifyingly normal. (Arendt, 1963, p. 275)

It is in this sense that, for Deleuze, what haunts us as human being is not error but stupidity. As we explained elsewhere,

For Deleuze, more than error, it is 'stupidity [*la bêtise*]' that is of concern. Stupidity 'haunts' thinking in ways more disturbing and more foundational than error, for stupidity is a state of thought 'where we possess the simple possibility of thought, but do not yet think'. In stupidity, people negotiate the actualities - the pre-existing possibilities – 'and the relative truths and falsities that came to be inscribed within them' without any disturbance of the status quo. In stupidity, movement and differentiation is taken out of the equation of life. (Nichterlein & Morss, 2017, p. 96-7)

In light of these considerations, Deleuze was quite negative about Psychology. In particular, he critiqued Psychology's preoccupation with error. When translated into practices of research and knowledge formation, error relies on and takes for granted a number of significant assumptions of the (correct) order of things, reducing psychological knowledge to, as Deleuze states, 'a kind of radio quiz' obsessed with 'artificial or puerile situations' (1968/1994, p. 150) rather than substantive knowledge regarding the human dilemmas that confront us through life. A trivia quiz, he would clarify, since error can only be identified where the answer is already known. In this timidity, what is found through these psychological practices is a confirmation of a certain status quo, the affirmation of an established identity – a certain measure of man, variations of the dominant story – instead of an active engagement in the experimentation of what could be. In short, what Deleuze critiques of Psychology is that, in its fear of error, Psychology has become stupid and unable to separate itself from the status quo. Here, we then see a seamless fit with the concept of the psy-complex (Pulido-Martinez, 2014) and its claim that Psychology, rather than fostering critical and constructive attitudes to the challenges of living a life worth living, has become a tool for supporting docility to pre-established norms that are perceived to be 'good and common sense'. A dangerous seduction since, more often than not, such images of thought have the practical effect of marginalizing and pathologising what is different to this ideal measure.

A constructive position: thinking our way out of the slumbers of stupidity

Once aware of the difficulties we are left with the critical question of 'what to do?' Working on this question, I found myself thinking in a classical children story as a good tool to explain the ways in which Deleuze's project could help us not only disentangle from such mechanisms of control but also, and perhaps of more importance to the purposes of a Southerly network of critical psychology, to address the often-invisible inequalities that are implied in Northerly claims in relation to Psychology's universal measure of our condition. I am referring to the tribulations that *Milo* – the main character in Juster's *The Phantom Tollbooth* (1974) – had when he took 'the wrong turn' in his fantastic journey and, inadvertently, found himself in 'the doldrums'. There, whilst becoming increasingly lost, he found his future companion in the shape of a funny looking dog, a dog with a clock in his tummy: *his watchdog*. The dog provided him with the solution to get out of the doldrums: 'think, just think.'

In the case of Milo's journey, the idea was that any thought would do. We must however be a bit more precise in our divagations since there is significant thought already put in the construction of our discipline. It is a matter of thinking *otherwise* for, as Deleuze and Guattari warn us, the critical problem is that '*we lack resistance to the present*' (1991, p. 108). With the idea of 'thinking otherwise' I am referring to the need to displace 'common and good sense' assumptions, assumptions often held invisible within the body of knowledge in the discipline.

Within a Deleuzian frame, this *thinking-otherwise*, thinking against the grain of what is taken for granted affords the emergence of the variations – the repetitions – that affirm a more complex and ethical body of knowledge for the discipline. Such repetitions, such play with structures assumes some continuing themes (within which variation plays). For the purposes of this early exploration of Deleuze's value for a psychology of the South, I would like to focus on two key considerations: Psychology's unit of analysis and its method.

1. A displacement in the unit of analysis

Firstly, and standing in critical contrast with phenomenological approaches, Deleuze (including his work with Guattari) positions the subject not as the origin of either experience (consciousness) or knowledge, but as an epiphenomenon – in fact, a *by-product* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1972/1983) – of a play of social and geopolitical forces. This displacement of the subject establishes a critical element in Deleuze's project that makes it stand in stark contrast with other contemporary continental philosophies. When working his own conceptual genealogy (Deleuze, 1990/1995, p. 6), Deleuze chose not to follow the trend within his contemporary philosophical context of reading Heidegger and phenomenology but focused instead, as we have explained elsewhere (Nichterlein & Morss, 2017, ch. 1) in a Whiteheadian empiricism¹ and its articulation through the work of Spinoza, Nietzsche and Bergson. A way of explaining the effects of this distinction for psychological knowledge is by noting that, unlike much of Anglo-Saxon Psychology with its reliance in Analytic philosophy, Deleuze's project does not have an epistemological focus. As I have already alerted to, his project is both metaphysical and political in nature. His interest is not in *how do we know what we know*² but in developing a critical appraisal of current forms of governance and on developing an alternative that, using process oriented metaphysics (Whitehead, 1978), focuses on immanence and self-regulation as the key elements for the constitution of ethical societies.

Within this scope, and as indicated, the individual for Deleuze is not the centre of consciousness – the agent of free will – but is decentred and positioned within larger geo-socio-political dynamics. No longer a reference to human faculties that are of a superior order to nature – an *imperium in imperio* as Spinoza would argue (Spinoza, 1677/n.d., Part III preface) – individual consciousness and its ability to grasp a world outside of itself is a misleading image for a more constructive Psychology. Such a Psychology would benefit of conceptualising both consciousness and experience not

1 Whitehead's empiricism is of a very different kind to what is currently defined as 'empiricism' within psychology. In fact, it could be argued that Deleuze's strong disappointment with psychology as it has been practiced in modern times is due to the poor interpretation that psychology – as a science – has done of the possibilities that empiricism brings to its disciplinary knowledge. I will return to this point when discussing the second element: methodology.

2 In order to elucidate this distinction between an epistemological and a metaphysical project in terms of the effects in psychology, we can use this classic epistemological question. The statement 'how do we know what we know' has the pre-requisite of a stable consciousness – and world – to become meaningful. Only a consciousness that is separate and aware of its surroundings (as surroundings) can afford this type of questioning. A metaphysical question would ask: on what grounds are we assuming such stable unity to exist outside of knowledge.

as 'causes' but as 'effects' of the studies at hand. This shift in orientation would allow a twofold movement. On the one level, consciousness becomes relational instead of intrapsychic since it would be open to its contingencies. On another, and due to this openness, it needs to be studied not as 'static' and 'stable' entities but as ongoing process: as a continual attempt of individuation and differentiation. It is these ongoing processes of differentiation that Deleuze sees as acts of resistance, resistance to the forces that are constantly attempting to mould the subject into subjectified and banal positions.

Here the concept of *faciality* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, plateaus 5 and 7) provides us with useful conceptualisations to further articulate the concept of subjectification. A simple way of describing faciality is to say that it refers to aspects of subjectivity that are socially recognised, perhaps even taken for granted: '[a]t any rate, you've been recognised, the abstract machine has you inscribed in its overall grid' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 177). An important consideration regarding faciality is that it does not refer to just one face but the articulation of a semiotic system containing multiple elements. As Deleuze and Guattari write,

The complete system, then, consists of the paranoid face or body of the despot-god in the 'signifying center of the temple; the interpreting priests who continually recharge the signified in the temple, transforming it into signifier; the hysterical crowd of people outside, clumped into tight circles, who jump from one circle to another; the faceless, depressive scapegoat emanating from the centre, chosen, treated, and adorned by the priests, cutting across the circles in its headlong flight into the desert. This excessively hasty overview is applicable not only to the imperial despotic regime but to all subjected, arborescent, hierarchical, centered groups: political parties, literary movements, psychoanalytical [and psychological?] associations, families, conjugal units, etc. (1980/1987, p. 116)

In short, everyone has a pre-established position in the complex grid of signification of a faciality. From this position, dominant conceptualisations of the individual as a universal, stable and self-determining identity of research and knowledge are not only misguided but – given current forms of governmentality – dangerous. Dangerous because such an 'universal' idea has the effect of facilitating the positioning of people within grids of signification and works in tandem with Foucault's notion of 'docile bodies' (1991). That is, in tandem with the manufacture of (human) bodies that do not present resistance to the subjectifications that shape their positions or, as Deleuze would say, bodies that do not think.... *stupid* bodies.

Through this 'systemic' considerations, what Deleuze invites us to do is to (re)think the disciplinary unit of analysis by opening up the subject and by making visible the grid of significations within which such subject emerges. He also invites us to consider the geopolitical forces in which different grids of signification emerge. In this context, it becomes clear that attempts searching for universal measures of man are

empire – not empirical – building attempts rather than sources of knowledge of our human(e) and (un)differentiated condition.³

Deleuze's considerations also helps us to understand the subject as something that is malleable and in process of construction. Here, there is a constructive connection with Foucault. In his book on Foucault, Deleuze showed appreciation with the distinction that Foucault does between (traditional approaches) of processes of liberation from *practices of liberation* (Foucault & Fontana, 1984, p. 452; Foucault, Fornet-Betancourt, Becker, & Gomez-Muller, 1984, p. 433) that, as I have explained elsewhere, 'referred to the disciplined application of oneself in the development of certain capacities and knowledges that will constitute one's own subjectivity' (Nichterlein, 2013, p. 171). As Deleuze commented, this was an issue of inventing ways of being according to 'optional rules [...] that can both resist power and elude knowledge' (Deleuze & Maggiori, 1986, p. 92) and that 'make[s] existence a work of art, rules at once ethical and aesthetic that constitute ways of existing or styles of life (including even suicide)' (Deleuze & Eribon, 1986, p. 98).

These are significant transformations to the concept of 'the human' as a unit of analysis and will return to it in the next two sections once we discussed the second critical consideration.

2. A methodological problem: one or two sciences

A second important distinction that Deleuze provides us in our exploration of more constructive disciplinary definitions relates to our status as and our engagement with science. There is a tendency in critical psychology to distance itself from claims of being scientific.⁴ This distancing relates to a number of factors, starting with the disquiet and the alienation I have spoken about. It also relates to Foucault's comments regarding the late and perhaps 'fragile' arrival within the history of ideas in the West of the sciences of man (2004, p. 421-2), particularly given that this 'appearance' was highly connected with a specific political agenda of the State (Foucault, 2003, 2008, 2009). As Foucault has helped critical psychology to realise, the knowledge aspired by Psychology was not simply objective and transcendental but had a much darker side in terms of its effects given its connection with attempts by the State to manage its population.

Albeit these concerns being quite significant and must not be dismissed, a distancing from science is problematic since it leaves the discipline without a space to address these concerns by positioning critical psychology as dishonest and/or weak in its argument. With this I mean that, by distancing itself from engaging with Psychology as a genuine scientific discipline, our ability to make any statement of such body of knowledge becomes questionable, making it equally questionable our presence in

3 On this point, see Bracken, Giller, & Summerfield, 2016. For a more popular culture discussion of these issues, see Watters, 2010.

4 Take for example, a recently published Encyclopedia of Critical Psychology (Teo, 2014) where the only entry related to science was Methodologism/Methodological Imperative, defined as a tendency that '*overemphasises methods and neglects ontological, epistemological, practical and political considerations.*' (italics are mine, Gao, 2014, p. 1176)

advanced educational settings, both in its teaching capacity as well as in its more critical role in terms of knowledge formation.

A far more *noble*⁵ and powerful position for critical psychology to take would come from engaging fully with the problematisation of science rather than its avoidance. Such problematisation would inevitably lead to an investigation of the current uses of the word 'science' in the discipline, in particular, its modern (Cartesian) take. We have discussed this already elsewhere (Nichterlein & Morss, 2017, ch. 3) and would like to restate that this is not a critique of Descartes attempts of finding a method, but of the effects that such attempt has had in terms of narrowing the scope of the work in the discipline: the stupidity that Deleuze alerts us to. As explained elsewhere, the required '[r]esistance here is not against *real facts*; it is a resistance to the reifications made in the name of science. It is a resistance to the canons and disciplinarian definitions that constitute the normality of everyday life' (Nichterlein, 2019, p. 6). Against the current tendency to avoid matters pertaining to science, critical psychology would do better if it engaged with the elusive relation that science has had with nature and interrogates what Hadot – another strong ally of Foucault – meant when he wrote that the 'idea of a method proper to nature was to play a very important role in the scientific representations of all of Western thought. Kant would call these principles "maxims of the faculty of judgment."' (2006, p. 25).

Indeed, method is central to any body of knowledge, including critical psychology. The question is not a matter of eliminating method but of problematising its assumptions of neutrality and of objectivity so as to allow critical and political questions to emerge in terms of which powers and with what intentions do this method serve. As explained elsewhere (Nichterlein, 2018, p. 88-9):

against the commonly held notion that science provides objective knowledge, [...] Deleuze comments that the result of scientific activity is a certain 'perspectivism' or 'scientific relativism.' This relativism however 'is never relative to a subject: it constitutes not a relativity of truth, on the contrary, a truth of the relative' (Deleuze & Guattari, 1991, p. 130). In line with the value Deleuze sees in repetition as central to the construction of stability, science not only freezes a plane into a certain state of affairs but it also (re)affirms its validity. In itself, this is perhaps necessary and for Deleuze and Guattari there is a need for a certain degree of predictability in life. Even if a necessary reduction, it has its risks. The validation of a specific plane, no matter how persuasive, does not exclude the possibility of existence of other planes of reference. It is here that the scientific perspectivism brings forth not truth but a certain selective blindness, a blindness that could even be blind to itself, opening the possibility for science to be appropriated by fascist or other forms of deeply conservative processes. This tension is further facilitated by the fact that the majority of the funding available for research is regulated by the

5 The use of *noble* here is a direct reference to Deleuze's use of Nietzsche (Deleuze, 1962/1986).

State. This is of particular concern in the case of the social sciences where the increased ability of managing large sets of data is supporting the illusion of an increasingly unified plane of reference, where an apparently benign idea of 'normality' turns into a measuring stick for life.

In line with his commitment to progressive and transformational thought and to a process-oriented (Whitehead's), empiricism Deleuze critiques assumptions of a stable and objective reality to be represented via rigorous scientific method, exploring instead processual approaches to science. Science does not represent a unified, identifiable and reliable reality but engages in the construction of forms of organisation of the geo-socio-political multiplicity of elements at hand. In line with his political project, such construction has the requisite of 'being immanent', of 'being of this world.' As indicated, Deleuze is not searching for transcendent and universal laws of nature but is exploring alternative – more ethical – possibilities of life. A critical element for such construction is that the observers – the researchers – are not separate of the observation but are central to it and to the construction of knowledge that is 'brought forth'⁶ by such activities. In this context, science as an activity of research and knowledge formation becomes almost unrecognisable and counterintuitive to centuries held beliefs within Occidental forms of thinking.

Having this transformation in mind, Deleuze and Guattari articulate a further distinction in terms of method that is of relevance to the discipline, a distinction that is very productive to the purposes of this conference and network. No longer one but two types of sciences: An 'eccentric' 'nomad' or 'minor science'" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 361) is contrasted with 'royal,' 'State' or 'major science.'

As Jensen (2018, p. 38-9) explains:

While major science is built on a "theory of solids treating fluids as a special case" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1980/1987, p. 361), the model for minor science is hydraulic, taking flows and fluxes as its point of departure. Referring to Lucretius' famous depiction of the clinamen, "the smallest angle by which an atom deviates from a straight path," Deleuze and Guattari observe that minor science always operates in the element of becoming and heterogeneity. Moreover, whereas royal science, aiming to extract "constants" and always in "search for laws," has a legalist underpinning, nomad science, which follows the connections between material forces is experimental (p. 369). [...] It is not random that these two kinds of science are also called minor and major, for their relationship to the state is not at all equal. Since the modus operandi of the state is control, it is incumbent upon it "to maintain a legislative and constitutive primacy for royal science" (p. 367). To the eyes of the state, minor or nomad science – averse to law-

6 This is a direct reference to the work of the Chilean Neurophysiologist Humberto Maturana and Francisco Varela (1980).

like regularities and obsessed with flow and becoming – always appears pre- or sub-scientific. It is not that the state aims to quash or eradicate the minor sciences, however, for it also needs their insights. Instead, the minor sciences are kept subservient to the major sciences, which are thereby enabled to continuously appropriate and modify their contents. While minor science takes an interest in rivers due to their chaotic vortices and turbulent flows, major science immediately sets to work on making dikes and embankments to control these forces (p. 363).

Jensen rightly commented also that ‘they were [not] science critics of the kind who denounce the sciences for having institutional blind spots, or for being racist or sexist’ (p. 38). As he explains, ‘Deleuze and Guattari are explicit that it is “not better, just different”’ (p. 39).⁷ Neither is the distinction between these two types of sciences a type of Hegelian dialects of sorts⁸, aiming to reach a sublime superior level of understanding that then could be claimed to represent – yet again – a ‘universal’ status of sorts. More in line with a Taoist appreciation of life, this relationship is a dynamics that is constantly in the process of flux, correcting each other through different mechanisms, fluidly shaping an ecosystemic approach to science and knowledge in a way where thought is used not to represent but to transform what presents to us (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. xxi).

3. Thinking otherwise: in search of a methodological difference for critical psychology

It is in this desire of stay close to the everchanging nature of life and the tensions between these two forms of science that, as Williams (2018) argues, Deleuze and Guattari see value in a pragmatic approach to (scientific) method.⁹ Williams is aware of the dangers we have been alluding in method. As he states, ‘[t]here is no method that isn’t in some way a form of compulsion. The question is then how to minimise this claim to obedience sewn into method and language’ (p. 112, n. 25). Drawing from the latest of Deleuze and Guattari’s collaboration – *What is Philosophy?* (1991) – Williams also notes that for Deleuze and Guattari, ‘the problem of method is central to the question of thought and brain: “We only ask for a little order to protect us from chaos” (1991, p. 201), from total disorganization’ (2018, p. 120). ‘[Method] keeps

7 Jensen makes also a further clarification in terms of movements in Deleuze and Guattari’s thought in relation to science, where they seem to ‘side’ towards with State science and dismissed minor science. Using Stengers (2010), he argues that this movement ‘can be understood as Deleuze and Guattari’s response to the realization that science is now threatened by forces against which it lacks resistance’ (p. 39). As he states, ‘[t]his intra-academic quarrel, however, proved insignificant compared with later attacks by spin-doctors and oil companies, who, among other things, have sought to undermine arguments for climate change and environmental destruction, by systematic identification of all the non-rational elements involved in the making of these facts’ (p.40)

8 I would like to thank Rogelio Arguello for bringing to my attention that much of current psychological theories are based on unacknowledged Hegelian ideas of science and knowledge.

9 For connections between Deleuze and Pragmatism, see also Bowden, Bignall, & Patton, 2015

from us from chaos but at a cost to be minimised'. What Deleuze and Guattari are doing, is calling us to question the methodological grid even as we refer to it. As Williams continues to explain, '[they] want us to respond to [method] creatively as something that must constantly be open to change in response to a differentiated field that always eludes it' (p. 115). In other words, still using Williams, '[t]he problem is at its strongest where method has to be deployed against its own negative tendencies' (p. 116). It is in this sense that, for Williams, Deleuze and Guattari's approach to method is not empirical but in fact pragmatic, a 'special' form of pragmatism 'insofar as it has neither identified goals, nor a method of its own. Instead, Deleuze and Guattari experiment with method and its destruction in individual circumstances and in relation to individual perspectives on complex problems' (p. 119).

For a psychology to come: affirming difference in life and science

Having these three critical distinctions in mind, let's return to Deleuze's concern with Psychology's stupidity. Deleuze's complain is not a gesture of dismissing the value of the discipline.¹⁰ Quite the contrary, as his ongoing collaboration with Guattari attest, his comments are a gesture of intensifying its value by trying to address and honour its complexity. In his critique to Psychology, Deleuze is not dismissing the value of psychology as a discipline but the uncritical reifications that current mainstream Psychology has done in order to affirm its knowledge base.

There is an urgent need to evaluate – assess the value and the limitations – that current practices in Psychology have. As explained in a prior edition of the journal:

It seems fair to say that these displacements force the apprentice psychologist to think through different constellations of problems and thus, to create new concepts for its discipline. Perhaps a simpler way to explain this is by noting that the move from identity to difference requires a move away from the representational forms of knowledge so pervasive in contemporary Psychology into an engagement with a certain – different – kind of *thinking the discipline*. The emphasis here is important. More than the solution, a solution that often takes the shape of a true knowledge of a transcendent nature – of what is true and what is false, a solution that emerges out of the framing of a question within a Cartesian cogito – it is the acute awareness of the thought involved in the positing of a problem that fascinates Deleuze. As he writes in *Difference and Repetition*: 'a solution always has the truth it deserves according to the problem to which it is a response' (Deleuze, 1968/1994, p. 158-9). Wasser explains Deleuze's statement further: "[b]eyond the dualism of questions and answers, truth and falsehood, [...] Deleuze affirms the priority

10 I would like to thank John Farnsworth for bringing this point to my attention.

of a third register, that of problem-formation, a domain in which truth and falsity first acquire meaning and orientation” (Wasser, 2017, p. 49). In yet another way to explain the same point, rather than adding to an increasingly problematic disciplinary edifice, what Deleuze provokes the discipline to do is to reconsider what has been taken for granted in the foundation and the structure of such an edifice. Not just a change of name but a change of game (Nichterlein, 2018, p. 8)

In here, the role of critical psychology is essential, never-ending and highly complex for it requires a disposition that is counterintuitive to what is often been given as granted as ‘common and good sense’ within the discipline. It is in this sense, that many followers of Deleuze introduce the idea of the aberrant and the perverse as ways of explaining Deleuze’s orientation. The critical issue is that these are ‘aberrant’ and ‘perverse’ only if we use ‘common and good sense’ as the moral compass to assess these differences without asking the more complex questions of ‘common and good sense’ in which sense? At the service of which powers to be certain elements are considered to be ‘good and common’? It is often the case that, if these aberrant acts are seen instead within a frame of difference, they often can be appreciated as honourable and thoughtful ways to deal with complex situations.

To think – the alternative of stupidity – is necessarily to *think otherwise*. To think is to accept and affirm the complexity at hand and instead of looking at the world in search of transcendental norms, no matter how sophisticated these norms could be, so as to engage in the affirmation of difference by investigating and articulating the ongoing multiplicity of singularities that constitutes such complexity. Rather than having one definition of what is common to us all within the discipline – so that it could help us ‘achieve such normality’ – a Deleuzian psychology will be *always in formation* and more interested in the marginal and disenfranchised as important clues as to the limits of what we have taken for granted in prior formulations. As a disciplinarian method, this approach to the discipline needs to be conceptualized as invitations to think further for better conceptualizations, for more inclusive and ethical forms of thought. Such a psychology would inevitably be decentred – off its centre – and continually learning to accept the discomfort that comes with the realization that our knowledge is but limited and potentially dangerous, thus inviting us to problematise the stability of any image we have of what it is to be human and affirm what is, and will always be, still missing.

Some final considerations on a bastard science: the right (and need) to have a Southerly voice within the discipline:

Throughout this paper I have, perhaps in an irritating way, referred to Psychology as a science of man. This is a direct reference to a comment by Foucault that has yet to receive the attention it deserves. In his 1983 lecture at Berkeley, California – *The Culture of the Self*, the only presentation he has made in English – he talks of his own awareness of sex biases in societies. As he stated:

In [the history of sexuality and how sexuality was integrated inside the problem of truth] it is a fact that the main role has been run by males and only by males. Sex, the theory of sex, the rules for the techniques of the self, the rules for sexual behaviour and so on *has been imposed by males, by a male society and by a male civilization. So, I think, that this story [...] has to be done from the point of view of males.* But of course you could also – and I think this has to be done – see the effects of that on the sexual experiences or the pleasure experiences of women but that would be something else you see” (transcribed by present author and emphasis added, Foucault, 1983, 46:10-48:40)

In line with his considerations, it seems fair to comment that much has been done by the discipline to serve the frames of reference of a North that is increasingly becoming wealthier and more privileged. In contrast, the South continues with little representation when it comes to psychological conceptualizations.¹¹ There are however dangers if we treat the problem as a simple sort of dialects for it can easily turn into yet another form of (un)critical Psychology. Sonia Soans (2022) already talked during her presentation of the nationalistic – even fascist – dangers of a decolonial discourse that only works as a reactive forces of the powers to be.

The challenge is to work critically within a highly complex and globalized context where reactive and conservative forces exist equally in the North and in the South. In order to do so, we have to keep in mind that progressive forces – forces of resistance – are equally present in both milieus. Perhaps there is value in, as I commented at the beginning of this paper, in maintaining an awareness that ‘the North’ and ‘the South’, more than actual geographic distinctions, are ideas – images of thought – serving specific privileged purposes.¹² Progressive and critical forces within Psychology would benefit from challenging the focus on a representational science to focus instead in identifying the parameters for a genuine engagement with an ethical knowledge of how to deal with the problematics of life that present themselves in the course of living a human(e) life. With this focus in mind, and in a counterintuitive manner to current knowledge formations, there is great value in Deleuze’s considerations around health as literature in inventing a people that is missing.... I return to the opening quote in this paper:

Health as literature, as writing, consists in inventing a people who are missing [...] This is not exactly a people called upon to dominate the world. It is a minor people, eternally minor, taken up in a becoming-revolutionary. [...] a bastard people, inferior, dominated, always in becoming, always incomplete. *Bastard* no longer designates a familial state, but the process or drift of the races. (Deleuze, 1993/1997, p. 4)

11 The French West Indian psychiatrist Frantz Fanon being the most notable exception.

12 I would like to thank Caterina Nirta for alerting me to this ‘a platonic idea of the South.’

More than a North and a South, perhaps there is value in having a conceptual horizon in a *'transversal'* human(e) condition, a condition of equal, dignified and sustainable presence on this earth. Here, Deleuze's words on 'a bastard people' is prophetic and shedding light on important conceptual matters to have in mind. Once this conceptual horizon is clear, the rest is the pragmatic implementation of a method – an infinite number of them – to serve in the experimentation as to what would help (and what would hinder) such an ethics of knowledge formation. Not only this, but as Jensen invited us to consider, such a selection of method(s) needs to also have a strategic element. So, for example, sometimes there will be value in considering using some of the methodological structures of Royal science, i.e. when it comes to assert – at times even forcefully – alternatives that undermine established knowledges. Other times, strategies introducing fluidity – a minor science approach – within entrenched assumptions might serve (at least) equally destabilizing effects within the dominant disciplinar(ian) discourse.

I would like to conceptualize this position as a kind of *'strategic' South*, a South that is not the result of weakness but of resistance, a resistance that – for those who are from this South, is infinite and untimely.

In short, what I have attempted to do through this paper is to invite the consideration that we need to maintain a pragmatic yet ethical engagement with an ongoing 'becoming-revolutionary' of our discipline, so as to continually engage with a psychology to come, a psychology that honours the complexity involved in living a life, of *always becoming, always incomplete*.

In this important project, the South has a pivotal role to play.

Conflict of interest

There was no conflict of interest in the writing of this paper.

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