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# Book Review

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Corry Shores (2021) *The Logic of Gilles Deleuze: Basic Principles*, London: Bloomsbury

## I. Introduction

Alain Badiou famously opened his book on Deleuze by setting himself against an often-repeated characterisation of Deleuze as a thinker of heterogeneous multiplicity and unrestrained desire. According to him, this ‘image of Deleuze’ (Badiou 1999: 8) – sometimes propagated even by Deleuze himself – is simply an erroneous understanding which fails to see the powers of the One, asceticism and abstraction running beneath Deleuze’s thought. In line with this image and Deleuze’s auto-characterisation, we would not be breaking ‘Deleuzian common sense’ if we were to say that Deleuze’s thought is impervious to logical schematisation, that is, both symbolic and verbal reductions. Indeed, was he not quick to affirm, with Guattari, that ‘[l]ogic is reductionist not accidentally but essentially and necessarily’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1996: 135)? Corry Shores takes it upon himself to challenge the facile view that would have us believe that Deleuze is a thinker of the irrational and the illogical (2).

However, we would be wrong to expect from Shores’ recently published book, *The Logic of Gilles Deleuze: Basic Principles*, a reading akin to that of Badiou with regard to scholarly ‘violence’. On the contrary, his reading ‘is not meant to be a monstrous contortion of Deleuze’s thinking’ (83). Rather, the aim of the book is deceptively simple and faithful to Deleuze’s text (or voice, as we will see): it undertakes an analysis of Deleuze’s work while watching out for indications that would point to the logical principles he employs in his thinking – principles that he mentions only rarely or never due to his prudence, or ignorance – all the while measuring these indications against several modern attempts at formalising a non-classical logic.

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Implicit in this attempt is a prescient identification of metaphysics and logic as mutually constraining (5, 192), which puts problems of movement, becoming, unity, identity and creation to the fore. Shores' examination of such problems shows why Deleuze is often perceived as a thinker who rejects logic: the rigid symbolisation employed by classical formal logic proves incapable of being 'used in the context of Deleuze's philosophy of becoming and differential selfhood' (3). The overarching contention, however, is not only that Deleuze's criticisms of classical logic do not apply to its non-classical variants, but also that non-classical logic offers tools for thinking precisely what is often perceived as the most problematic – and it is to this end that Shores calls upon Graham Priest (i.e. his dialetheist formalisation of *contradiction*) and many-valued alternatives to classical logic.

## II. Summary

The subtle argumentation this book puts forward is bound to get lost in a review of this length, so we will identify the central dialetheist argument and see how Shores manages to tie it to several concerns of Deleuze's metaphysics. As we suggested above, the many-valued logical approach Shores favours is a logic of paradox with truth-value gluts (37) proposed by Graham Priest; other logics – for instance, intuitionist and fuzzy – are considered, but they are ultimately deemed insufficient to account for the largest part of Deleuze's position (215). Priest's logical system is best characterised by its treatment of statements and their truth-values: a dialetheist logic 'allows for propositions to be both true and false' (37); it affirms propositional inconsistencies and contradictions and argues for their ubiquity. As such, dialetheism is pitted against the classical, monotheist conception according to which a statement can be only true or only false, with no possibility of being neither; likewise, it seemingly parts with the Principle of Non-Contradiction. Dialetheism, however, is a more complex standpoint that entails the possibility that a statement is both *at least* true *and at least* false, thereby making it impossible to introduce strict bivalence (41) and invalidating the traditional way of dispensing with contradictions through the Principle of Explosion (87–8). In short, since it breaks with the usual way of categorising statements into true and false 'camps', dialetheist logic is *paraconsistent* – that is, it allows for an intersection between the realms of truth and falsity, and leads to a *problematic* affirmation of statements that subsist in this intersection. The central contention of Shores' work is that Deleuze utilised a similar conception of contradiction – otherwise

referred to as ‘paraconsistent negation’ (90) – which entails a coincidence of contrary or, in Deleuze’s words, distant (113–14) attributes. This concept of contradiction figures throughout Shores’ analysis and is used to account for different aspects of Deleuze’s thought. In the first part of the book, Shores analyses it under the guise of common metaphysical problems and the coincidence of contradictory attributes; in the second, he distinguishes it from more common models of contradiction utilised in philosophy (especially in relation to Hegel); in the third, it is analysed in connection to Deleuze’s conception of falsity and the creation of the New.

The first part of the book, ‘Dis-Composition and Dis-Identification’, seeks to present Deleuze’s underlying logical principles through an analysis of ‘certain paradoxes of becoming, change and movement’ (17, ch. 1), as well as problems of composition, unity and identity (chs 2–3). The discussion gets under way with the question – unanswered by modern mathematics despite the refashioning of the problem of movement through the concept of an infinitely dense *continuum* (28) – of ‘how [an object] goes from one place to another without any finite or infinitesimal transitions in the first place’ (33). In Shores’ account, this hole in the mathematical account is due to its presupposition that an object can be *either* at one point *or* the ‘next’. Yet, such problems of movement and change are ubiquitous in our lives – when we lift up our pen from the paper we are writing on, at what point does the pen ‘leave’ the paper? when we pass through the door, at what point can we say that the centre of our gravitation has left the room? (35) – and being unable to account for them suggests a fundamental shortcoming of classical logic.

It is at this point that non-classical logic can be of use. Returning to the pen example, a dialetheist would claim that the pen could be *both on and off* the paper. This latter view, under Priest’s formulation, leads to conceiving an arbitrarily small interval of time (that is nevertheless not infinitesimal) during which the object which is undergoing change is both in its previous and subsequent state. Shores cites Priest’s succinct formulation: ‘To be in motion at a time, an object must both be and not be at a place at that time’ (43). Formulating the problem of change this way gives Shores a possible interpretation of Deleuze’s oft-repeated point about becoming: when Alice grows larger, she also grows smaller at the same time. Not only are we better equipped to grasp what Deleuze means by saying that Alice *becomes* larger and smaller *at once* – namely, a dialetheist *coincidence of an attribute and its opposite* – we also realise that the emphasis on becoming (rather than being) entails a similar kind of spread that was at work in Priest’s account. When Deleuze writes that

becoming eludes the present, this is to say that 'it is not determinately located within a strict now moment', but is rather 'tending beyond' (46).

The second chapter switches to the problem of heterogeneous composition in the process of becoming. The main question can be posed in the following way: how does a being in the process of becoming manage to consolidate heterogeneous characteristics of which it is comprised? More generally, however, this question entails the problem of unity, that is, accounting for how a unity of divergent parts can be logically explained. For Deleuze and Guattari, it is a question of a process of *consolidation* which makes the heterogeneous elements subsist in one entity without reducing or subordinating one to the other, without homogenising them, and finally, without reducing the *gulf between* the elements. For them, in other words, classical logic proves insufficient insofar as '*consistency is not a matter of homogeneity among physical parts and self-sameness over time*' (54) – and thus Shores is once again forced to look in the realm of non-classical forms of logic in order to find an adequate basis.

In Shores' eyes, the dialetheist explanation (once again given by Priest) of how *unities* are formed proves much more satisfying. Transposing the principle of the spread hypothesis to space,<sup>1</sup> he argues (by way of Priest) that different minerals in one rock are fused by means of a 'binding factor' or a 'gluon' (61) that has dialetheic or contradictory characteristics in the sense that it combines different or opposing attributes (i.e. both minerals that are being fused) while being itself identical to both sides. This 'dialetheic entity', which is neither a relationship nor an object per se, stands in between the two sides that it binds, being equal to both without making them identical (i.e. homogeneous). Priest explains this by claiming that the gluon is non-transitive: the usual property of *identity* which claims that 'if  $a = b$  and  $b = c$ , then  $a = c$ ' (61) – that is, transitivity – does not hold. This *non-transitive identity* manages to account for the gap that would usually arise between coalesced objects without, however, reducing this gap. As Shores writes, the gluonic component introduces 'a dynamic element in the inclusion process which is not expressed adequately by partial, determinate values' (65). Rather than being partial and determinate, the gluon is *fully affirmative and indeterminate* – this is what allows it to make no restrictions in terms of the rules and the final product of coalescence. In short, gluonic contradiction helps us think heterogeneity and the open, fragmentary whole.

The central part of the book, 'Logic of Otherness: Negation, or Disjunction?', presents the connection between Priest's dialetheism

(non-classical accounts of negation, generally) and Deleuze's project; it also considers Deleuze's relation to Hegel and makes the strongest case for Deleuze qua thinker of unresolved contradiction through distance. This part of the book—perhaps controversial due to its apparent approximation of Deleuze to Hegel—argues for a strict distinction between a 'non exclusionary notion of negation and contradiction' (82), that is, a 'sort of negation [that] can indeed be affirmational with respect to what it negates', and a negation that involves limitative and exclusive sorts of disjunction. To accomplish this distinction, Shores analyses both non-classical accounts of negation, where he finds a logical conception in which A and non-A 'neither cancel nor implode one another' (85), and Deleuze's account of Hegel's negation. The latter analysis, aside from repeating Deleuze's criticism of Hegelian dialectic as operating through exclusive disjunction and affirming identity rather than difference (96), leads to an important point: namely, that Hegel is *not* really a *thinker of contradiction* since his account ultimately serves only as a means to a totalising end (95). Shores thus identifies two problems with Hegel's conception of unity—namely, erasing heterogeneity and conserving the closed whole (100)—which leads to the conclusion that *Hegel's contradiction goes against both properties that were made possible by paraconsistent negation*. Rather than follow the Hegelian path of contradiction, Deleuze opted for a path of 'alternance' through inclusive disjunction (101)—but this game of semantics, as Shores argues, should not prevent us from understanding that Deleuze is a thinker that still manages to think contradiction, albeit with consequences that were inadmissible to Hegel. The rest of the chapter discusses *affirmative synthetic disjunction*, which is an extension of the affirmative, non-exclusive principle of contradiction (see especially 112–16). It also gives the strongest case against classical logic by way of Deleuze's rejection of the God-guaranteed completeness of monotheism.

The last set of problems we will consider are those relating to temporality and impossible events and, more specifically, falsification and the creation of the New; Shores discusses these themes in relation to Leibniz and cinema in chapters 5 and 8, respectively. Building on the discussion of affirmative synthetic disjunction, Shores' analysis of Leibniz makes use of the same opposition between an exclusive disjunction that preserves bivalence and completeness, and an inclusive contradictory affirmation that dispenses with the divine guarantee of classical logic. Presented this way, Deleuze's suggestion to 'remove God from the Leibnizian picture' (120) leads to the coincidence of contradictory/impossible attributes and situations, rather than a

clear distinction between the 'real' world God has chosen and all the others that had been disregarded (121). The affirmed world that results from such removal is infinitely richer precisely by way of the dialectic convergence of impossible worlds; in addition, Shores argues, one is better suited to logically account for Deleuze's 'metaphysical indeterminism' (194). The same principle guides Shores' analysis of cinematic falsification: he argues that 'forking falsifications, by mutating the story world and deviating its movement into alternate routes, make the path that the world is now heading down no longer the one that will necessarily prevail' (199). Moreover, the classical distinctions between the real and the imaginary, the true and the false, no longer hold—a blurring that accounts for the open-ended potentiality of the world through the extension of the domain and scope of the *true*.

### III. Conclusion

Corry Shores' monograph is a surprisingly rich and fertile study of Deleuze's logical principles. It simultaneously covers at least three domains in more or less depth: (1) Deleuze's metaphysics, and thinking involved in it; (2) non-classical forms of logic with an emphasis on many-valued propositions; (3) a genuinely interdisciplinary range of examples taken from both Deleuze and his sources, which illustrate the joined concerns of (1) and (2). These examples range across geography, music, neuroscience, literature (and art generally), mathematics and more. In sum, this triad provides a heterogeneous consolidation that gives elements of both convergence and dissociation. Above all, it shows the author's tenacity to push through with divergent considerations in view of properly getting across the specificity of logical problems at hand. Read this way, this book is primarily *an exploratory tool* and not a monolithic transposition of non-classical principles to Deleuze's work: it gives us the conceptual means to further explore and notice/construct new readings.

However, a few comments on the shortcomings of the exposition are in order. Despite the fact that Shores claims that the book is primarily envisioned as a discussion of Deleuze's metaphysical principles, there is a symptomatic lack of reference to *Difference and Repetition* and the historical works which preceded its publication. Shores' references betray his preference in this regard: rather than accounting for the early, more 'classical', period, Shores repeatedly goes back to the lecture courses Deleuze delivered at Vincennes after 1969, thereby creating somewhat of an uneven balance in terms of sources. (This

is not a criticism in itself; Shores should be applauded for venturing into the territories of Deleuze's verbal teaching, especially given the importance Deleuze accorded to pedagogical practice.) The problem here is not merely that of representation, but rather of the fact that Deleuze's early work also presents many instances where principles of non-classical logic could be applied; we will mention just three. (1) The Kantian problem of the relation of sensibility and understanding. This relation and its Deleuzian *problematization* through imagination (see Deleuze 1994: 173–5) could certainly be approximated to Shores' analysis of affirmative synthetic disjunction and the affirmation of distant attributes.<sup>2</sup> (2) The problem of univocity, the One and the Many and univocal mannerism (see Roffe 2012: 14, 73, 118–19). When Shores cites Klossowski in saying that 'thousands of modifications [...] will never drain the Being' (112), are we not encountering the pivotal problem of how the virtual comprises an infinity of beings different in kind without homogenising them in the One? (3) The problem of (non)-being or ?-being (Deleuze 1994: 64). Could we not perhaps utilise the abovementioned attempts at accounting for a negationless contradiction to get closer to Deleuze's positive understanding of non-being (which is, as Shores gets very close to showing [100], inextricably tied to Platonic falsity)? All of these questions are central to Deleuze's metaphysics, and yet they are hardly mentioned in this volume. Perhaps their time will come in the two volumes Shores anticipates as continuations of his project: the second dealing with experience, the third with language. Its silence regarding these and other transcendental concerns notwithstanding, we can still affirm that the greatest merit of Shores' book is that it rendered something in Deleuze visible – something to which Deleuze himself was somewhat blind.

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## Notes

1. The dialethic principle at work in both space and time is, in fact, very similar: just as there is an arbitrarily small interval of time in between two points of movement, there is an arbitrarily small 'gluon' in between two heterogeneous entities whose coalescence the gluonic binder conditions (see 65).
2. Anne Sauvagnargues' analysis of the importance of Simondon's critique of hylomorphism for Deleuze's assessment of Kant's transcendental problem (Sauvagnargues 2009: 241, 43, 92) is insightful and draws on principles similar to those Shores employs in his analyses. As she argues, Simondon's complication of the hylomorphic schema proceeds by way of a 'constitutive disparity' and a

transductive creative differentiation (254–5) between form and matter that, in creating a ‘shared middle’ (*milieu commun*, 250) between the terms, resolves the difficulties of conditioning through concrete genesis. As she writes: the affirmation of conflictual properties ‘is not discovered by reducing contradiction, by eliminating the difference between parallaxes, nor even by a dialectical synthesis of contraries, but through *an entirely different operation that involves inventive construction and adds a new, non-preexisting dimension* [...]’ (254, emphasis added; also see 302–3).

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