The Concept of Sense in Gilles Deleuze's *Logic of Sense*

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Abstract

What is the concept of sense developed by Deleuze in his 1969 *Logic of Sense*? This paper attempts to answer this question analysing the three dimensions of language that Deleuze isolates: the primary order of noises and intensities (depth); the secondary order of sense (surface); and the tertiary organisation of propositions (height). What renders language possible is that which separates sounds from bodies (the primary order) and organises them into propositions (the tertiary organisation), freeing them for the expressive function. Deleuze argues that it is the dimension of sense that brings about this genesis of language, and he analyses in detail the three syntheses (connection, conjunction and disjunction) that bring about the production of this surface of sense. Yet Deleuze also distinguishes between two types of non-sense: the nonsense of Lewis Carroll's portmanteau words, which remain ensconced in the dimension of sense, and the more profound nonsense of Antonin Artaud's psychotic scream-breaths ('Ratara ratara ratara Atara tatara rana Otara otara katara'), which penetrate the almost unbearable world of the primary order of noise and intensities. In the end, the focus of *Logic of Sense* is less the surface domain of sense than the primary depth of corporeal intensities. What Deleuze calls a 'minor' use of language is nothing other than an intensive use of language that constitutes a principle of *metamorphosis*.

Keywords: sense, language, order, relation, body, surface, logic, elements, intensities, meaning

What is the concept of sense developed by Deleuze in his 1969 book *Logic of Sense* (Deleuze 1990)?[1] The second half of *Logic of Sense* traces out what Deleuze calls the *dynamic genesis* of language, drawing in part on texts from developmental psychology. 'What renders language possible', Deleuze writes, 'is that which separates sounds from bodies and organizes them into propositions, freeing them for the expressive function' (Deleuze 1990: 181). If a speaker suddenly collapsed and began uttering incomprehensible noises, one might suspect that they had lapsed into psychosis, and one of the great merits of *Anti-Oedipus* (Deleuze and Guattari 1983) is to have provided an analysis of the discourse of psychotics in its positivity.[2] But the dynamic genesis of language analysed in *Logic of Sense* follows the opposite movement: it 'concerns the procedure that liberates sounds and makes them independent of bodies' (Deleuze 1990: 186). In tracing out this genesis, Deleuze distinguishes between three dimensions of language – or rather, three 'stages' of the dynamic genesis, although each stage coexists reciprocally with the others: the *primary* order of language, which is simply the noises produced by the body; the *secondary* organisation of language, which is the surface of sense (and non-sense) that begins to liberate sounds from the body; and finally, the *tertiary* arrangement of language, which is found in the propositions that, in principle, have been separated from the body and the world, with their various functions of designation, manifestation, signification and expression. In what follows, we will follow Deleuze's deduction of these dimensions of language in order to isolate the role and function of the dimension of sense.

I. Three Dimensions of Language

The Primary Order of Language (Noise, Intensities)

The dynamic genesis begins with the noises – or more precisely, the 'intensities' – of the body, which constitutes what Deleuze calls *the primary order of language*. In a sense, his starting point in *Logic of Sense* is the same as the starting point in *Anti-Oedipus*: the newborn infant. (Deleuze was married with two children, and it is striking that he returns to the experience of newborn infants frequently in his writings.) In particular, Deleuze starts with the clamorous depth of the baby's body: its cries and screams, its coughs and sneezes, its burps and coos, its flatulence and teeth-gnashings, and so on. This dimension of Noise constitutes a first type of non-sense, and a first type of sonorous system. At this level, 'everything is passion and action, everything is

Three Dimensions of Language			
Tertiary Arrangement	Height	Foundation	Propositions: designation, manifestation, signification, expression
Secondary Organisation	Surface	Ground	Sense
Primary Order	Depth	Groundless	Intensities (Noise)

Figure 1. Three dimensions of language.

communication of bodies in depth, attack and defense' (Deleuze 1990: 192). In his book *The Interpersonal World of the Infant*, which Félix Guattari cited frequently, Daniel N. Stern describes the world of the newborn infant as a kind of human 'weatherscape', made up entirely of sequences of rising and falling *intensities* – the jolting of a bright light or a sharp noise, the calming of a voice, or the explosive breakout of a storm of hunger, with its knot of agony, the passing of the storm when the baby is fed, the subsequent sense of pleasure when it defecates (Stern 1985). Freud differentiated between the oral, anal and genital stages of the infant's development, but what constitutes the condition of these three stages is what Deleuze would call the 'body without organs', a situation where the infant experiences no distinction between itself and the world, but only 'intensities-in-motion' (see Stern 1985).[3]

The Tertiary Arrangement of Language (Designation, Manifestation, Signification and Expression)

The second stage of the dynamic genesis then appears: in the midst of this world of intensities, there emerges a particular noise, a Voice from on

high, namely, the voices of parents or other adults. This is a movement from the depths to the heights, from the body to the proposition, and it entails an entire reorientation of the psychic and corporal life of the infant. Even before the infant can understand it, language appears to the infant as something that pre-exists itself, as something already there: the familial voice that conveys tradition, or that affects the child as already being the bearer of a name. As opposed to the primary order of language (pure noise as a dimension of the body), the voice participates in what Deleuze calls the tertiary arrangement of language (*langue*, a fully formed language) that is make up of sentences or propositions.

We will limit ourselves to some very summary remarks about Deleuze's characterisation of this tertiary arrangement, since his primary interest, as we shall see, lies elsewhere.

In the important 'Third Series' of the *Logic of Sense*, Deleuze analyses in some detail the three primary dimensions of propositions in general, which he terms designation, manifestation and signification.

1. **Designation**, or denotation, is the relation of a proposition to an external state of affairs ('snow is white', 'that man is Socrates'). This is the relation of reference, which determines the truth value of the proposition (true or false).

2. **Manifestation** marks the relation of the proposition to the beliefs and desires of the person who is speaking, which some philosophers like to call 'propositional attitudes', the attitude I adopt toward a proposition ('I believe it is raining outside', 'I desire coffee'). Its logical value is not the true and the false, but *veracity* and *illusion*. A belief is the relation of a subject to a statement ('I believe that . . .') and an entire belief–desire psychology has been developed in analytic philosophy on the basis of such propositional attitudes.

3. **Signification**, finally, is the relation of the proposition to other propositions, or to universal or general concepts. This is the domain of logic, with its relations of inference and demonstration between propositions ('implies', 'therefore'). Its logical value is no longer truth but rather the *condition of truth*, the set of conditions under which the proposition *would be* true (Deleuze 1990: 12–22).

Propositions, in other words, can be related to the world, and to objects within the world (designation); to the feelings, desires and beliefs of the speaker or subject (manifestation); or to other propositions (signification). In Kantian language, each of these dimensions of the proposition is founded on a certain principle or 'Idea': the *World*, and its states of affairs, is the principle of reference or denotation; the *Soul* or Subject is the principle of manifestation; and *God*, as the

combinatory of abstract predicates, is the principle of demonstration or the form of possibility (the *Ens summum*). These are precisely the three transcendent Ideas that Kant identified as the terminal points of metaphysics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*: the Self (manifestation), the World (designation) and God (signification).

4. **Expression**. Yet philosophers have often identified a fourth dimension to the proposition – something in the proposition that cannot be identified with the state of affairs it denotes, nor the beliefs and desires it manifests (the so-called propositional attitudes), nor the concepts or inferences it signifies. This fourth dimension of the proposition is *sense* or *meaning*, which Deleuze, following Husserl, will call the dimension of *expression*: sense is what is 'expressed' by a proposition (Deleuze 1990: 104).

But the concept of sense will in fact operate in two registers in *Logic of Sense*, and these two registers correspond to two aspects of the notion of *surface*. In the first register, sense is a *result* of the tertiary arrangement of language, it is the *effect* of an already constituted proposition. Sense is what is expressed by the proposition, its 'meaning', or what philosophers sometimes call its 'semantic content'. We often say, for example, that the sentences 'The tree is green' in English, 'L'arbre est vert' in French and 'Der Baum ist grün' in German all have the same meaning or sense, the same semantic content, even though this meaning is 'expressed' in different sentences in different languages.[4] Some philosophers reserve the term 'proposition' for this ideal meaning that is expressed differently by each of these sentences in English, French and German.[5] One can easily see that that meaning here is an ideal and indeed *transcendent* entity – it is what Frege called a 'thought' – which can only ever be expressed derivatively in actual sentences. Indeed, Frege conceived of logic as 'the study of transcendent objects whose existence and character are independent of us' (Moore 2012: 286).

Much of the early part of *Logic of Sense* is devoted to an analysis of this first aspect of sense, not from the point of view of post-Fregean analytic philosophy, but rather in the context of the Stoic distinction between corporeal states of affairs and incorporeal events. As is often the case in his work, Deleuze rejuvenates a contemporary problem by reconsidering it from the viewpoint of the history of philosophy. Deleuze's aim, in these early analyses of *Logic of Sense*, is to provide an *immanent* understanding of sense or meaning by appealing to the concept of an *event*.

For Deleuze, the paradigmatic example of an incorporeal event is a *battle*, which has moreover been the subject of well-known literary

descriptions in Stendahl, Hugo, Tolstoy and especially Stephen Crane (Deleuze 1990: 100–1). We can attribute 'Battle of Waterloo', for instance, to a particular state of affairs, but what we find in that state of affairs are bodies mixing with one another: spears stabbing flesh, bullets flying through the air, cannons firing, bodies being ripped apart. Strictly speaking, the battle itself exists nowhere except in the expression of my proposition, which attributes 'Battle of Waterloo' to this mixture of bodies. More precisely, we could say that the battle itself merely 'insists' or 'subsists' in the proposition. Hence one of the fundamental theses of *Logic of Sense*: sense is to propositions what attributes like 'Battle of Waterloo' are to states of affairs. They are pure events that subsist or insist in both propositions and states of affairs.

This is also the first meaning that Deleuze gives to the term 'surface': sense is what lies at the surface between states of affairs and propositions. Sense is both that which is expressed by propositions and that which is attributed to things – this is what Deleuze calls the 'static' genesis of sense. *Logic of Sense* provides detailed analyses of the structures (sterility, impassivity, neutrality) and paradoxes (indefinite proliferation, sterility, neutrality, absurdity) that characterise this first aspect of sense. We will not pursue these analyses here, since they have been the object of a number of excellent studies (see Williams 2008 and Bowden 2011).

We might note, however, that what came to be known as the 'philosophy of language' within analytic philosophy tended to focus almost exclusively on this tertiary arrangement of language. It became preoccupied, for instance, with the concept of *truth*, which would usually be defined in terms of a proposition's conformity with reality (reference) and its conformity with logical principles (inference). But a deeper constraint was the focus on propositions themselves – that is, on the propositions of fully formed and already developed languages – without posing the question of their genesis. Bertrand Russell seems to have set the agenda for much subsequent philosophy when he declared in 1900: 'That all sound philosophy should begin with an analysis of propositions, is a truth too evident, perhaps, to demand a proof' (Russell 1997: 8).[6] Such an exclusive focus on propositions inevitably tended to confine the focus of the philosophy of language to the four primary dimensions of propositions that we have just outlined: *designation* (the theory of reference, denotation, rigid designation), *manifestation* (the so-called propositional attitudes of belief and desire), *signification* (the principles of logic, inference and demonstration), and *expression* (theories of meaning, and the meaning of meaning).

To be sure, this is a vast simplification of the extraordinary work that took place in the philosophy of language in the twentieth century, but it allows us to highlight the fact that Deleuze's concerns took him in a different direction. In biology, one does not discover the nature of the organism by simply examining a fully formed individual, since the individual itself is the result or effect of a complex genetic process, starting with the genetic code and passing through a series of developmental processes that are profoundly interlinked with the milieu. The same is true of language: we are led astray if we analyse language in its full-blown adult state, without adopting a *genetic* point of view on it. Indeed, this seems to be the import of Deleuze's phrase 'to have done with judgment': already formed judgements or propositions should be abandoned as models for thought in favour of a genetic viewpoint. (Kant's entire philosophy took judgement as its model.)

The Secondary Organisation of Language (Sense and Nonsense)

This brings us to the third aspect of the dynamic genesis, the third element of language, which lies 'between' the primary order of language (the body, pure noise, intensities) and the tertiary arrangement of language (the proposition). This is what Deleuze calls the secondary organisation of language, which is the domain of sense in its second register. Sense here is no longer a sterile *effect* of propositions (the transcendent meaning or sematic content of a sentence) but lies at the *genesis* of propositions. It is this second register of sense that is Deleuze's primary interest in *Logic of Sense*. 'At the heart of the logic of sense, one always returns to this problem, this immaculate conception, being the passage from *sterility* to *genesis*' (Deleuze 1990: 97).

To a certain degree, Deleuze is here, once again, indebted to the genius of thinkers like Frege and Russell, who discovered that the domain of sense, in this second register, was the *condition* of truth or denotation. The distinction between the true and the false finds its ground in the distinction between sense and nonsense: in order for a proposition to be true it must have a sense.[7] The sentence 'My cat is on the mat' can be true or false, but the sentence 'My zat is on the dat' is neither true nor false, since the phrase has no sense. A proposition without sense is neither true nor false but merely nonsensical. In this second register, sense is the *form of possibility* of the proposition itself in all its dimensions. 'Sense is always presupposed as soon as I begin to speak; I would not be able to begin without this presupposition' (Deleuze 1990: 28). 'We position ourselves immediately within sense whenever we denote' (17).

It is sense, then, that *grounds* the entire structure of the proposition, and it is for this reason that Deleuze makes sense (and not the proposition) the fundamental object of his analyses in *Logic of Sense*.[8]

The limitation of the analyses found in Frege and Russell, however, is that while they recognise that sense is the condition of the true, sense is nonetheless granted an extension larger than truth in order to account for the possibility of error: a false or erroneous proposition remains a proposition endowed with sense. But in this manner, although the sense–nonsense relation is prior to the truth–falsity relation, sense only grounds the truth of a proposition by remaining *indifferent* to what it grounds. As a result, the values of truth and falsity are allowed to continue in the same state as before, 'as if they were independent of the condition assigned to them' (Deleuze 1995: 153). Truth still remains a matter of reference or denotation. This is why the determination of sense as *expression* is inadequate and is only the first aspect of the concept of sense.[9] 'What would be the purpose of rising from the domain of truth to the domain of sense', Deleuze asks, 'if it were only to find between sense and nonsense a relation analogous to that of the true and the false?' (Deleuze 1990: 68). We cannot simply presume, in a Kantian manner, the existence of 'truth' as a fact and then seek its condition in sense. The problem must be reformulated from the standpoint of *genesis*:

> Truth and falsity do not concern a simple designation, rendered possible by a sense which remains indifferent to it. The relation between a proposition and what it designates must be established *within sense itself*: the nature of ideal sense is to point beyond itself towards the object designated. (Deleuze 1995: 154)

In other words, Deleuze attempts to provide a *genetic* account of truth, rather than seeking the conditions of truth as a mere 'fact'. Put simply, truth must be seen to be a matter of *production* within sense (method of genesis) rather than *adequation* to states of affairs (method of conditioning).[10]

This, then, is what Deleuze considers to be 'the most general problem of the logic of sense': how do we move from understanding sense as a neutral and sterile surface effect of propositions (*expression* or *meaning*) to grasping it as a fruitful principle of *production* (Deleuze 1990: 168)? This second aspect of sense concerns sense as the element of the genesis of propositions and no longer simply the effect of propositions. How then does sense function, in this second discovery, as an element of genesis of propositions, rather than simply as the 'expressed' meaning or effect of an already given proposition?

II. The Synthetic Surface Structure of Sense

In order to comprehend the structure of the secondary organisation (the sense–nonsense relation), one can consider again the life of an infant. How does an infant move from the primary order of the body to the tertiary arrangement of language? Deleuze's answer: through a long apprenticeship in the secondary organisation of sense.

From the continuous flow of the Voice which comes from above (from the tertiary order of language), the child will begin to extract intensive elements of different orders, freeing them up in order to give them a function which nonetheless is not yet linguistic. One might see this as an early formulation of Deleuze's theory of flows: the voice is a flow from which non-signifying elements are extracted and combined. The first words of the infant are not *formed* linguistic units but merely *formative* elements: phonemes, morphemes, semantemes. The fundamental thesis of the logic of sense is that '*sense always results from the combination of elements which are not themselves signifying*' (Deleuze 2004: 175).

Deleuze analyses this surface organisation of sense in terms of three moments, which are defined by three types of series or syntheses: connective, conjunctive and disjunctive syntheses – the same three syntheses that one finds in *Difference and Repetition* and *Anti-Oedipus*.

1. **Connection**. In the first moment (*connection*), the child extracts pure phonemes from the current of the Voice on high and connects them together in 'a concatenation of successive entities' such as *ma ma*, *da da* or *bay bee*, which can then enter into more complex relations, or even an alignment of clusters (Deleuze 1990: 231).

2. **Conjunction**. In the second moment (*conjunction*), there is the construction of the first *esoteric words* out of these phonemes, which is brought about not by a simple *addition* of preceding phonemes, but rather through the *integration* of the phonemes into convergent and continuous series. Deleuze's example, taken from Lewis Carroll: *your royal highness* is contracted into *y'reince* (Deleuze 1990: 43). Or, one might think of the child who, when reciting the alphabet, thought there was only one letter between the letters k and p: the letter *elemeno*. Such a contraction aims at the extraction of the global sense of an entire proposition, often in order to name it with a single word – what Carroll calls an 'unpronounceable monosyllable' (Deleuze 1990: 234).

3. **Disjunction**. In the third moment (*disjunction*), the child starts making these esoteric words enter into relation with other divergent and independent series. If *Logic of Sense* presents itself in part as a reading of Lewis Carroll's work, it is because Carroll was one of the

great explorers of this surface dimension of sense. Although his famous *portmanteau words* seem to establish conjunctive syntheses between two heterogeneous series (snark =snake + shark; slithy =slimy + lithe; mimsy =flimsy + miserable), Deleuze argues that their deeper function is to create ramifications in the surface of sense. Carroll himself explains the functioning of the word *frumious* (fuming + furious) in disjunctive terms:

> If your thoughts incline ever so little towards 'fuming,' you will say 'fuming-furious'; if they turn, even by a hair's breadth, toward 'furious,' you will say 'furious-fuming'; but if you have the rarest of gifts, a perfectly balanced mind, you will say 'frumious'. (Deleuze 1990: 46)

Ultimately, the real definition of the portmanteau word, Deleuze argues, must be found in its ramifying function (or disjunctive synthesis) throughout the surface of sense (Deleuze 1990: 47).

These three syntheses constitute the production of the *surface* of sense out of the Voice.[11] It is not yet language – the tertiary arrangement of the proposition. Rather, the infant takes the components of speech (intensities, phonemes) and synthesises them in various ways – connections, conjunctions, disjunctions – in order to construct a surface of phonemes that sometimes makes sense, and sometime does not. The structure of this surface corresponds to the components of the 'Idea' that Deleuze develops in *Difference and Repetition*: a multiplicity in which differential relations between determinable elements (e.g. phonemes, the difference between *b*at and *c*at) constitute singularities (e.g. esoteric words), in the 'neighborhood' of which the sonorities and significations of language will be constituted (Deleuze 1990: 50).

What distinguishes the secondary organisation of sense (surface) from the primary order of noise (depth) is that 'the depth is not organized in series' (Deleuze 1990: 224). Thus, while the *static genesis* concerns the actualisation of sense in a state of affairs (what is 'expressed' in a proposition is 'attributed' to a state of affairs), the *dynamic genesis* concerns the production of sense out of the depths of the body:

> What matters here is the preliminary, founding or poetic organization – that is, this play of surfaces in which only an a-cosmic, impersonal, and pre-individual field is employed, this exercise of nonsense and sense, and this deployment of series which precede the elaborate products of the status genesis. (Deleuze 1990: 246)

The surface of sense points to a domain that is difficult to access. On the one hand, it implies a dimension of speech that adults have long

ago 'forgotten', even though each of us occupies the domain of sense continuously. If you are capable of understanding the propositions of an interlocutor, it is because you inhabit and sustain the structure of sense that underlies them. This is the function of the surface organisation of sense: it separates sounds from the body and begins to turn them into the elements of speech. The creation of sense (out of non-signifying elements) is what allows the sounds coming out of one's mouth to participate fully in a shared linguistic world.

But the converse is also true. If a child comes to a language it cannot yet grasp as a language, but only as a familial hum of voices, perhaps conversely, it can grasp what adults no longer grasp in their own language, namely, *the differential relations between the formative elements of language*. From the flow of the voice, children extract elements of different orders, but they give them a function that is still pre-linguistic. For the child, there is 'an apprenticeship of *formative elements* before there is any understanding of *formed linguistic units*' (Deleuze 1990: 230) that would be able to denote things, manifest persons, or signify concepts. What Deleuze says about language is equally true for living organisms: an embryo passes through experiences – foldings, migrations, and so on – that would tear an adult apart. 'Embryology already displays the truth that there are systematic vital movements, torsions and drifts, that only the embryo can sustain: an adult would be torn apart by them' (Deleuze 1995: 118). The implication, as we have seen, is far-reaching: we are led astray when we focus on fully formed individuals in biology or fully formed propositions in linguistics.

It would be difficult to overestimate the importance of the concept of sense in Deleuze's work, and indeed in our own lives. If you are capable of understanding this text, it is because of the element of sense that underlies it. Sense is this surface, this boundary, this frontier that exists between the noises of one's body (the primary order) and the sentences of language (the tertiary arrangement). Sense is what allows the noises coming out of one's mouth to participate fully in the linguistic world we share. Moreover, as Merleau-Ponty showed, the same is true not only for the noises coming out of one's mouth, but for the whole of one's body, which is 'expressive' through and through, having a sense in every one of its gestures (what Merleau-Ponty called 'bodily intentionality') (Merleau-Ponty [1942] 1963).[12] In other words, the same syntheses of sense are at work in the *body* of the infant. As Deleuze says, 'there is a co-system of sexuality that mimics sense, nonsense, and their surface organization' (Deleuze 1990: 243), which accounts in part for the whole second half of *Logic of Sense* and its discussion of psychoanalysis.

III. The Fragility of Sense: Two Types of No-sense (the Psychotic *Procedure*)

At the same time, we are also aware of the fundamental *fragility* of this surface domain of sense, and the fact that it can break down at any moment and collapse into non-sense. In fact, for Deleuze this domain of non-sense is even more revealing than the domain of sense – the sense–nonsense relation is far more important to philosophy than the truth–falsity relation, which depends on it. Deleuze in fact distinguishes between two types of non-sense, the non-sense of as-yet inarticulate words (surface) and the non-sense of the body (depth). The second is more profound than the first: 'What is essential is the threat that depth begins to be on all the other dimensions' (Deleuze 1990: 244).

The first type of non-sense is the non-sense of Lewis Carroll, who takes the formative elements of language and establishes new syntheses between them. Carroll's famous poem, *Jabberwocky* – itself a portmanteau word, combining 'jabber' (a voluble, animated or chattering discussion) with 'wocer' (offspring or fruit), that coincides with its function – begins with a famous opening line: ''Twas brillig, and the slithey toves / did gyre and gimble in the wabe: / all mimsy were the borogroves, / and the mome raths outgrabe.' To which Alice responds, 'Somehow it seems to fill my head with ideas – only I don't exactly know what they are!' (Carroll 1936: 153–5). The poem *seemed* to make sense to Alice, but she had no idea what it was about. It seems to make 'sense' because Carroll combines the formative elements of language in a way that produces in Alice a feeling of sense, even though the combination of elements lies outside the tertiary structure of language. 'Slithey' is a combination of 'slimy' and 'lithe', and thus seems to have a sense, even though it is a non-sensical combination of elements.

But there is a second kind of non-sense, which is exemplified in the schizophrenic writings of Antonin Artaud. Artaud did not admire Lewis Carroll, and he used a rather technical term to describe Carroll's writing: pigshit (Artaud 1965: 38–40). Artaud speaks of the 'caca of being and of its language' (Deleuze 1990: 193). The reason: Carroll remained at the surface, playing his little combinatorial game, combining 'shark' and 'snake' into 'snark' and making a poem out of it. But that kind of non-sense is nothing – absolutely nothing – compared with the non-sense of the body, with its pure intensities and noises, which Artaud expressed in his 'scream-breaths', his *cris-souffles* – and which was tied, moreover, to a schizophrenic pathology, to an extraordinary lived experience. Artaud followed the reverse path of the infant, though 'regression' is hardly an

adequate concept for this process. The infant starts in the primary order of the body and attains the tertiary arrangement of language by passing through – or rather constructing – the secondary organisation of sense. Yet as Artaud knew, 'nothing is more fragile than the surface' (Deleuze 1990: 82).

Artaud's pathos lay in the opposite direction. The tertiary arrangement of language (the proposition) is 'grounded' in the 'secondary organisation' of sense, which is what Carroll plays with. Yet, following what Deleuze sometimes calls the 'bend' or 'twist' in sufficient reason, the dimension of sense itself threatens to collapse into the un-grounded 'primary order' of noise. In the primary order of schizophrenia:

> there is no longer anything to prevent propositions from falling back onto bodies and from mingling their sonorous elements with the body's olfactory, gustatory, or digestive effects. Not only is there no longer any sense, but there is no longer any grammar or syntax either – nor, at the limit, are there any articulated syllabic, literal, or phonetic elements. (Deleuze 1990: 91)

There are only Artaud's *cris-souffles*, which are 'the asyntactical limit toward which all language tends': 'Ratara ratara ratara Atara tatara rana Otara otara katara' (Deleuze 1997: 5; see also Deleuze 1990: 83).[13] The schizophrenic treats words as if they were things; 'things and proposition no longer have any frontier between them' (Deleuze 1990: 86–7). The schizophrenic body is no longer anything but depth; it no longer has a surface organisation. The surface has collapsed.[14]

Indeed, Deleuze will argue that 'psychosis is inseparable from a variable linguistic procedure (*procédé*). The procedure is the very process of the psychosis' (Deleuze 1997: 9).[15] One of Deleuze's most important writings on this score is the essay entitled 'Louis Wolfson; or, The Procedure' (Deleuze 1997: 7–20). Wolfson was a schizophrenic, but also a student of languages, and he developed a specific procedure to deal with his English-speaking mother: whenever she began to speak, he would immediately 'translate' her speech into a multi-lingual nonsense, using a device that was similar to a Sony Walkman. Deleuze also analyses the psychotic procedure of Jean-Pierre Brisset, whose procedure was to focus on the identity of sounds: prisoners were first drenched *dans l'eau sale* (in dirty water), they were *dans la sale eau pris* (taken away in dirty water), thus becoming *salauds pris* (busy bastards), who were then sold *in la salle aux prix* (the price room). In *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari discuss the case of a young patient of Bruno Bettelheim named Joey, who would not only decompose words ('Connecticut' became

'connect-I-cut'), but who could live, eat, defecate and sleep 'only if he is plugged into machines provided with motors, wires, lights, carburetors, propellers, and steering wheels: an electrical feeding machine, a car-machine that enables him to breathe, an anal machine that lights up' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 37). Raymond Roussel's literary works employ a similar procedure. Deleuze has developed a set of inter-related concepts to analyse such cases: if the enunciable refers to a *procedure* (*procédé*), the visible refers to a *process* (*processus*), and taken together a procedure and a process constitute a *proceeding* (*procedure*). A psychotic proceeding is a combination of a visible process and an enunciative procedure.[16]

IV. The Intensive: Beyond the Literal and the Metaphorical

But this brings us to a last question that I would like to examine. Deleuze frequently speaks of an 'intensive' use of language, but what exactly does this mean?

It is sometimes tied to Deleuze's claim that his own concepts – such as the rhizome or the body without organs – are not metaphors but must be taken *literally*. But this claim is a complicated one that has to be unpacked. The reason is that the distinction between a literal and a metaphorical meaning operates entirely within the realm of sense: it involves the movement from a 'proper' meaning or sense of a word or phrase to a 'figurative' or metaphorical meaning. At this level of analysis, it is easy to see how the phrase 'the unconscious is a factory' can be understood in a metaphorical manner as a transfer of meaning from a literal to a figurative sense. A factory is literally a milieu of production; to say that the unconscious is a factory is to transfer the literal sense of 'production' (in a factory) in a figurative manner to a new milieu (in the unconscious). There is a transfer of meaning that operates there entirely within the first aspect of sense.

But the second aspect concerns sense as an element in the *genesis* of propositions from its formative elements (the three syntheses). From this viewpoint, sense is the 'ground' of language, but this ground itself rests on the 'groundlessness' of the primary order of noise. (This is why Deleuze frequently appeals to geology: plate tectonics teaches us that no ground is ever entirely secure.) If Antonin Artaud ultimately plays a more important role in *Logic of Sense* than does Lewis Carroll, it is because Artaud's intensive 'scream-breaths', uttered from the groundless depth of his pathology (the primary order), are worth far more than Carroll's extensive wordplays, which remain at the surface

(the secondary surface). The genesis of language must be found at the relation between the intensive depth (noise) and the extensive surface (sense).

Thus, just as the sense–nonsense complementarity conditions the true–false dichotomy (a proposition can be true or false only if it has a sense), one must also say that *the intensity–becoming complementarity conditions the literal–metaphorical distinction*. In several texts, Deleuze speaks of literary procedures, like those of Roussel, that go beyond sense and point to a purely intensive use of language. This can take place:

> when sense is actively neutralized ... when there remains only enough of sense to direct the lines of escape ... in order to liberate a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and has no need of being put into a form. (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 21)

Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature, similarly, speaks of a:

> language torn from sense ... [that] no longer finds its value in anything but an accenting of the word, an inflection ... Children are well skilled in the exercise of repeating a word, the sense of which is only vaguely felt, in order to make it vibrate around itself. Kafka tells how, as a child, he repeated one of his father's expressions in order to make it take flight on a line of non-sense: 'end of the month, end of the month' ... [Here,] the thing no longer forms anything but *a sequence of intensive states*, a ladder or circuit for intensities that one can make race around in one direction [*sens*] or another, from high to low, or from low to high ... There is no longer any proper sense or figurative sense, but only *a distribution to states that is part of the range of the word*. (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 22)

Like Artaud's scream-breaths, the word here becomes linked with its own intensive conditions in the primary order. Such an intensive use of language marks what Deleuze calls a 'line of flight' or a 'line of escape': 'a language of sense is traversed by a line of escape in order to liberate a living and expressive material that speaks for itself and *has no need of being put into a form*' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 21). What Deleuze calls a 'minor' use of language seems to be nothing other than an intensive use of language.

Nietzsche perhaps provides another example. What is astonishing about Artaud is that he was able to speak and write out of the depths of the primary order of the body, whereas Nietzsche lapsed into silence. Nonetheless, we are given a glimpse into Nietzsche's delirium in the letters and postcards he wrote in the ten days following his initial collapse in January 1889. There, his language seems to directly express the 'primary order' of Nietzsche's body and its intensive states, each of

which receives a proper name – some designating his 'attractive' allies, or manic rises in intensity (Prado, Lesseps, Chambige, 'honest criminals', Dionysus), others designating his 'repulsive' enemies, or depressive falls in intensity (Caiaphus, William, Bismark, the 'antisemites', the Crucified) – a chaos of pure oscillations that is ultimately invested, as Nietzsche says in his final letter to Jacob Burkhardt, by '*all* the names of history' (Nietzsche 1969: 364).[17]

Yet one could also claim that this was the conflict Nietzsche confronted throughout all his writings. The final fragment of *Beyond Good and Evil* is a lament by Nietzsche on the impossibility of converting his intensities into written characters:

> Alas, what are you after all, my written and painted thoughts? Alas, always only what is on the verge of withering and losing its fragrance! Alas, always only storms that are passing, exhausted, and feelings that are autumnal and yellow! Alas, always only birds that grew weary of flying and flew astray and now can be caught by the hand – by *our* hand. We immortalize what cannot live and fly much longer – only weary and mellow things! (Nietzsche 1989: 236–7)[18]

One could see this lament as an expression of the difficulty Nietzsche encountered in converting the primary order of language (noise or intensities) into the tertiary arrangement of propositions – or conversely as an expression of the manner in which Nietzsche's propositions were themselves carried off along a line of flight by the very intensities they were trying to express. This is precisely what we mean by the word 'style' – it is style that expresses the intensive aspect of writing.

When Deleuze and Guattari published *What is Philosophy?* in 1991, they similarly defined the components of philosophical concepts as 'intensive ordinates' (Deleuze and Guattari 1994: 20). The components of a concept are not spatiotemporal coordinates (extensions), but intensive ordinates that lie outside any coordinates (pure events). Intensive ordinates are 'pure and simple' singularities that are brought together in the concept through the establishment of 'zones of indiscernibility' between them (20, 25). The Cartesian concept of the *cogito*, for instance, has as its intensive ordinates the concepts of doubting, thinking and being. To create a concept is 'to make the sequences vibrate, to open the word onto unexpected internal intensities' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 22). So when Deleuze says that 'the unconscious is a factory', this must not be seen as a transfer of sense from one term to another. Rather, once we reach the intensive level, the relationship between the two words becomes, precisely, a relationship

of *becoming*. A zone of indiscernibility is established between the two words 'unconscious' and 'factory', such that we can say that the unconscious literally *is* a factory, or more precisely, *becomes* a factory. This what happens in *Wuthering Heights*, when Emily Brontë has Catherine say, 'I am Heathcliff', or in *Moby Dick*, when Herman Melville says that Captain Ahab 'becomes' Moby Dick. Catherine does not 'really' become Heathcliff any more than Ahab 'really' becomes a whale. In a becoming, one term does not simply resemble the other; rather, each term encounters the other, and the becoming is something that passes between the two, outside the two. One could say that, in philosophy, it is precisely these in-betweens, or these becomings, that produce *concepts*. For Deleuze, this is the very movement of thought itself, the creation of the new within thought.

We have tried to analyse the three dimensions of language that Deleuze presents in *Logic of Sense*. Our ordinary use of language is extensive and reterritorialising: language is a deterritorialisation of noise that becomes reterritorialised in sense; and it is sense that allows the noises of the body to become linguistic elements. But there is a reverse 'minor' movement, a deterritorialising or intensive movement, which is a process that involves taking *any* linguistic variable – phonological, semantic, syntactical or grammatical – and placing it in variation, pushing language to the point where it 'stops being representative in order to move toward its extremities or its limits' (Deleuze and Guattari 1986: 23), in order to create new possibilities within thought itself. Style and philosophy in this way come together. 'This is what style is, asyntactic, agrammatical: the moment when language is no longer defined by what it says ... but by what causes it to move, to flow, to explode' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 133, 370–1).[19] Such is the reality of the *intensive*: a philosophical concept is not a metaphor but a *metamorphosis*.

There is a famous passage of intense pathos in *Logic of Sense* where Deleuze muses about people like himself writing on Artaud's schizophrenia, Nietzsche's collapse, Hölderlin's madness, Woolf's suicide, Fitzgerald's breakdown, and so on – all the while standing on the shore, dipping his toes in the water but unable to dive in himself and plunge beneath the surface (Deleuze 1990: 157–8). One could ask if Nietzsche's or Artaud's experience is any different from our own. In a sense, yes, absolutely yes, since both shared a profound pathology to which most of us will never be subject. But in another sense, no, the experience is not so different, since even a simple stammer or a stumbling over a word (a 'Freudian slip') is itself an intrusion of the

dimension of noise, and is enough to indicate the fundamental fragility of the surface of sense, which covers the groundlessness that constantly threatens to bubble up and subsume all of us, making us fall into 'the undifferentiated abyss of a groundlessness which', as Deleuze says, 'only permits the pulsation of a monstrous body' (Deleuze 1990: 120).

Notes

1. We should note that Deleuze himself expressed reservations about certain aspects of *Logic of Sense*: 'I attach little importance to the text on structuralism ["How Do We Recognize Structuralism?"], and very little importance to the whole part of *Logic of Sense* that was still under the influence of psychoanalysis (the empty case, and a far too structuralist conception of series).' See Gilles Deleuze, Letter to Arnaud Villani, December 1981 (Jdey 2012: 286). Deleuze's essay 'How Do We Recognize Structuralism?' can be found in Deleuze 2004: 170–92.
2. *Anti-Oedipus* analyses schizophrenic language as a positive phenomenon of its own and not simply as a negative breakdown of ordinary language, or a 'lack' in the symbolic structure (to use Lacanian language). See Deleuze and Guattari 1983, especially chapters 1 and 2.
3. Stern summarised the results of his research in *Diary of a Baby* (Stern 1990), which provides compelling descriptions of an infant's 'weatherscape': 'a sudden increase in interest; a rising, then a falling wave of hunger pain; an ebbing of pleasure' (14).
4. While some philosophers reserve the term 'proposition' for the meanings (semantic content) of sentences, Deleuze utilises the term in a more general manner as the equivalent to a sentence.
5. In Frege's well-known example, 'Venus is the morning star' and 'Venus is the evening star' are both true propositions since both refer to the same referent (the planet Venus), but they each express a different sense, a different *Sinn* (morning star, evening star). See Gottlob Frege, 'On Sense and Reference', in Frege 1980: 56–78.
6. Curiously, in the very next sentence, Russell admits that this self-evident claim was perhaps not self-evident to Leibniz: 'That Leibniz's philosophy began with such an analysis is less evident . . .' (Russell 1997: 8).
7. See Russell 1962: 201: 'The question of truth and falsehood has to do with what words and sentences *indicate* [designate, denote], not with what they *express*' (as cited in Deleuze 1995: 153).
8. Deleuze's theory of sense seems to have been inspired, in part, by Bergson's analysis of memory. See Deleuze 1988: 57: 'Bergson analyzes language in the same way as memory. The way in which we understand what is said to us is identical to the way in which we find a recollection. Far from recomposing sense on the basis of sounds that are heard and associated images, we place ourselves at once in the element of sense, then in a region of this element.' Deleuze is referring to a passage in Bergson 1988: 116: 'The hearer places himself at once in the midst of the corresponding ideas . . .'. Summarising these links, Deleuze writes elsewhere: 'What the past is to time, sense is to language and idea is to thought' (Deleuze 1989: 99). In other words, sense is 'the interiority of language' (Deleuze 1990: 185), just as intensity is the interiority of sensibility.
9. See Deleuze 1995: 153: 'Two dimensions may be distinguished in the proposition: *expression*, in which a proposition says or expresses some idea;

and *designation*, in which it indicates or designates the objects to which what is said or expressed applies. One of these would then be the dimension of sense, the other the dimension of truth and falsity. However, in this manner sense would only found the truth of a proposition while remaining indifferent to what it founds. Truth and falsity would be matters of designation.'

10. See Deleuze 1995: 154: 'The relation between a proposition and what it designates must be established within sense itself: the nature of ideal sense is to point beyond itself towards the object designated. Designation, insofar as it is achieved in the case of a true proposition, would never be grounded unless it were understood as the limit of the genetic series or the ideal connections which constitute sense. If sense points beyond itself toward the object, the latter can no longer be posited in reality exterior to sense, but only at the limit of its process ... Sense is the genesis or production of the true, and truth is only the empirical result of sense.'

11. We might note that Noam Chomsky uses the phrase 'surface structure' in an analogous way to Deleuze, although Chomsky's 'deep structure' refers to what Deleuze calls the 'tertiary arrangement of language'. See Chomsky 2009: 79: 'Using some recent terminology, we can distinguish the "deep structure" of a sentence from its "surface structure." The former is the underlying abstract structure that determines its semantic interpretation; the latter, the superficial organization of units which determines the phonetic interpretation and which relates to the physical form of the actual utterance, to its perceived or intended form. In these terms, we can formulate a second fundamental conclusion of Cartesian linguistics, namely, that deep and surface structures need not be identical. The underlying organization of a sentence relevant to semantic interpretation is not necessarily revealed by the actual arrangement and phrasing of its given components.'

12. Deleuze, however, does not refer to Merleau-Ponty in *Logic of Sense*, and indeed, in *Anti-Oedipus*, he and Guattari criticise Merleau-Ponty's concept of the *body image* as 'the final avatar of the soul, a vague conjoining of the requirements of spiritualism and positivism' (Deleuze and Guattari 1983: 23).

13. A recording of Artaud's scream-breaths is available on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WibO6TfEcvo (accessed 25 October 2021).

14. See Deleuze 1990: 88–9: 'Triumph may now be reached only through the creation of breath-words (*mots-souffles*) and howl-words (*mots-cris*), in which all literal, syllabic, and phonetic values have been replaced by values which are explosively tonic and not written. To these values a glorious body corresponds being a new dimension of the schizophrenic body, an organism without parts which operates entirely by insufflation, respiration, evaporation, and fluid transmission (the superior body without organs of Antonin Artaud) ... What defines this second language and this method of action, practically, is its consonantal, guttural, and aspirated overloads, its apostrophes and internal accents, its breaths and its scansions, and its modulation which replaces all syllabic or even literal values ... The word becomes an action of the body without organs.'

15. From Deleuze's essay 'Louis Wolfson; or, The Procedure'. Michel Foucault analyses Brisset's procedure 'Sept propos sur le septième ange' ('Seven Remarks on the Seventh Angel') (Foucault 1994, vol. 2: 13–24).

16. For the *procédé–processus–procedure* distinction, see the conclusion of Deleuze's seminar on Foucault on 22 October 1985 (Deleuze 1985).

17. For a penetrating study of Nietzsche's collapse, frequently cited by Deleuze, see Pierre Klossowski, 'The Euphoria at Turin', in Klossowski 1998: 208–53.

18. The last fragment of the book (§296), at the end of the section 'What is Noble?'

19. For this use of the term 'experimentation', see Cage 1961: 13: 'The word *experimental* is apt, providing it is understood not as descriptive of an act to be later judged in terms of success and failure, but simply as of an act the outcome of which is unknown.'

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