

Virtuality and Reality - An Exploration through Schizo-Analysis Prism

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Abstract: The essay posits an interpretative elucidation of the Felix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze's concepts and their radical departure from the conventional and psychopathologic understanding of schizophrenia; and the producing behavior of mankind institutionalized in capitalism. The essay focuses on the writers' critique of established lines of thinking on capitalism and production, concept of man's existence and its inherent contradictions when analyzed from the 'desiring machine' perspective, and finally the societal view of psychopathology. An attempt to find the origins of such atypical line of inquiry is also made and an analysis of its applications has also been attempted. The thought that schizophrenia is not represented by and Schizo-analysis is not based on the typical institutionalized patient labelled as schizophrenic, has also been elucidated. As a matter of course, the view provides original insights on the objectivity of the dichotomy that exists between the real and the virtual.

The essay is a preliminary exposition of the central and ingrained concepts of Deleuze's and Guattari's line of inquiry and it also tries to understand its scope in human endeavors and in reformulating a worldview. Contemplating the Schizoid or Schizo-analysis reflected by the text showcases the thought of 'not a celebration of schizophrenia' but rather use of it to explore contemporary society.

Index Terms: Schizophrenia and capitalism, Schizo-analysis, desiring machines, rhizomatic networks, non-hierarchical systems

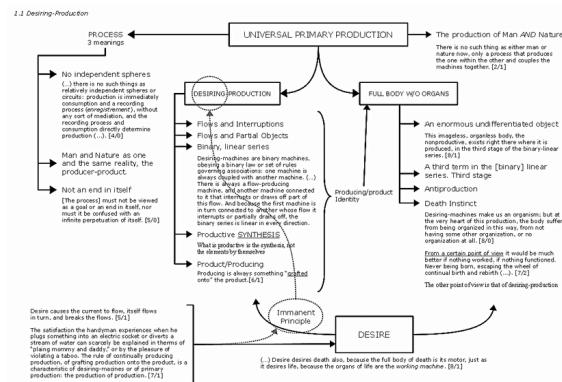
INTRODUCTION

Virtual and real are dichotomous mediated by imagination. In conventional wisdom, virtual is, at best, taken as the representative of the real--deformed and mutated. Virtual either helps in engaging better with the real or, in psychopathological scenarios, deconstructs reality and precipitate alienation.

Neurosis is a struggle with the appeal of the virtual and shuns it at the expense of peace of mind whereas psychosis submits to the virtual at the expense of functioning in the real.

Schizophrenia, the most intricate and intractable psychosis, merges the virtual and real, of course, the merger is subjective and perceptually exclusive, is what Deleuze and Guattari chose this psychological enigma to present Schizo-analysis framework, and in the process violated, the authority of psychological and philosophical concepts like capitalism, desire, fascism and freedom with wide-ranging implications on family, society, arts, and endeavors that define them.

Anti-Oedipus is the first in the series on capitalism and schizophrenia present eponymous critique of Oedipus complex for regimenting the psychosexual development, filial interactions and for being arbitrary. The intent of the authors, behind taking an issue with Oedipus complex becomes clear when we follow their line of reasoning and view it in the light of their conceptualization of man as a desiring machine, and the being which particularly desires production.



Mind Map: Explaining the connections of Universal Primary Production, Desiring Production and Body Without Organs.
[Source: David. R. Cole]

Historical materialism of Marx and the affinity of psychoanalysis to oppressive systems, even fascism, and their philosophical devices like a body without organs and an analog form biology --The Rhizome, the alternating of the schizophrenic mind between the virtual and the real and the typical delusions associated with it including that of thought broadcast, depersonalization and hallucinations, seem to strengthen their assumptions.

Deleuze and Guattari go so far as to suggest that schizophrenics, upon pharmacological intervention hit a wall--the crossover between reality and the virtual, blocking their transcendence or perceptual expansion, and possibility of the integrity of the real and the virtual. The fluctuations of schizophrenic mind may cease and a reconciliation could be reached, if only the condition is allowed to take its course.

The concept of human reality is challenged in other ways to Deleuze and Guattari for example the idea that we innately desire production. Desire is conventionally taken to be a product of deficiency and creating an impetus for fulfillment

and ends with acquisition. Deleuze and Guattari say that we constantly desire production and are desiring-machines, and thus production is an end in itself. Capitalism, which institutionalize production therefore can be understood as a control system that defines innate instinct as an aptitude and is exclusionary, in the process, postulate materialist psychiatry. According to them, desiring machine concept is universal and absolute. The anomalies are of wealth, production and conflict with the environment can, in part, be associated with the rupture between the virtual and the real. The desire for production is innate and universal if it is interpreted as the exclusive domain of a few, then it creates irreconcilable conflicts and desiring-machines that desire production find a way to manifest and well-planned systems crash. Embargo on imagination and criticism gives rise to deformation of reality and denial of virtuality. All systems, organisms and desiring-machines which are plugged into other similar machines for fulfillment, the plugging is so eternal and complete that the individuality is subsumed into the system. This makes nature and man indistinguishable.

*'There is no such thing as either man or nature now, only a process that produces the one within the other and couples the machines together. Producing-machines, desiring-machines everywhere, schizophrenic machines, all of species life: the self and the non-self, outside and inside, no longer have any meaning whatsoever'*¹

This gives us new reality which is more virtual and a virtuality the is increasingly real. The concept of virtuality which is one of Deleuze's early philosophical concepts postulates that virtual is not inherently opposed to the real, it's the ideal version of the real but not abstract. The virtual becomes pertinent after it is actualized as a fact. It just needs recognition to make a difference. Schizophrenia actualizes aspects of the virtual which remain hidden from the generalities of perception fundamentally, the virtual and the real are homogeneous and the heterogeneity is only superficial and comes with strict regimentation of imagination and analysis and the ways of regimentation are language, customs, mores, and socially directed convolution of instincts.

Deleuze and Guattari break ground by saying that Schizo is not withdrawn, or at least not trying to, but is intensely engaged with the reality by recognizing virtuality of existence and it is we who confuse engagement with escape.

In other words, the virtual is not the mutation of the real but an extension of it. It qualifies the real.

What we draw from our interpretation and contemplation on Anti-Oedipus is that reality is not complete without imagination and imagination reaches its pinnacle when it includes in its scope the virtual.

By implication, the lost arts find unconscious and unplanned projection in the reality or contemporary arts and architecture. We believe, the understanding of the evolution of design, endeavors would expose us to the virtual world,

which experts itself on the artistic expression, the artist may be unaware of it. We can even predict the course our trades may take if we understand the desiring-production theory. We wondered why we take pride in designs and creation, now we understand that it because we desire production, and every design we produce is a validation of that desire and that is its appeal, accolades and appreciation are incidental. Its productive value and practicality are also gratifying because they are conducive to further production, sterile designs gratify no one.

The entropy of cityscapes and suburbs makes more sense when analyzed in this light. It can be argued that after all omissions and commissions planning is an imposition, and thus, has limits. Plans, by their very nature, compete with more visceral desire of production and proliferation. So, why compete with instinctual production and why not make it inclusive and participatory? Why should the production be exclusionary and language of sciences so esoteric? The point is to expand perception by integrating virtual and the real and differentiating between them positively and getting rid of the phobia of imagination and fetish for planning, which is seldom conducive to creativity.

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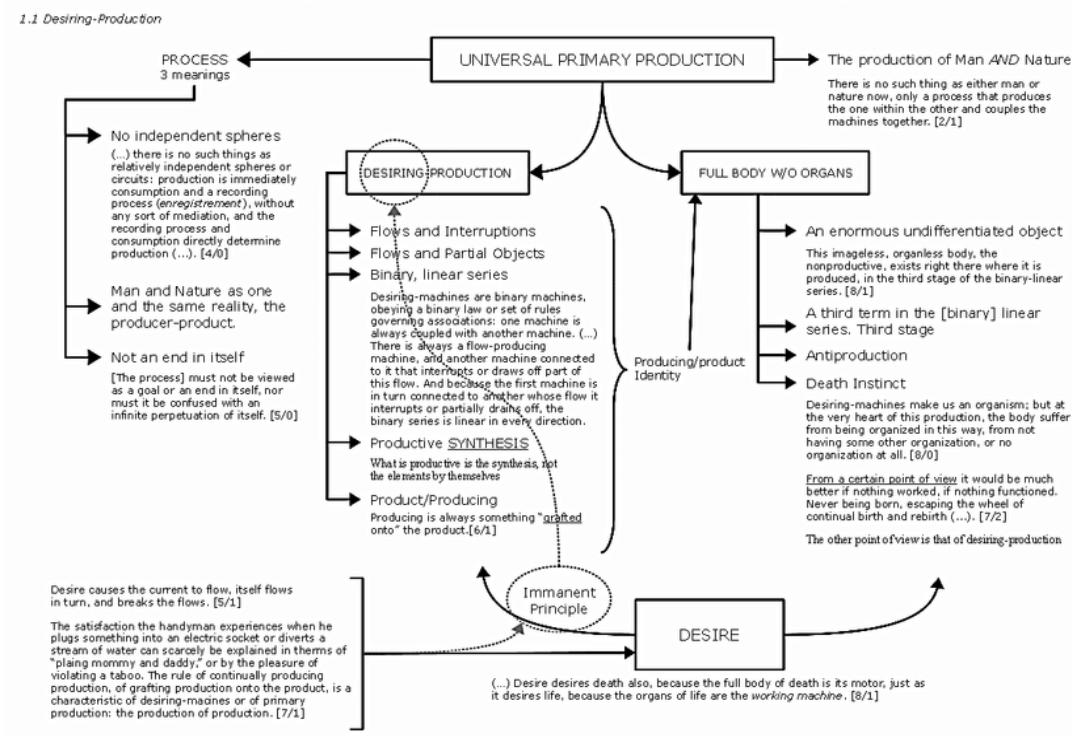
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YOUTUBE VIDEO LINKS

Bell, Shanon. "Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari, The Desiring Machines". *YouTube* video, 1:28:18. Jan 7,2020. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iMIGdkv_m8U&t=1089s&ab_channel=ShannonBell



(Enlarged Image for Readable and Reference Purpose)

Mind Map: Explaining the connections of Universal Primary Production, Desiring Production and Body Without Organs. [Source: David. R. Cole]