

SCHIZOANALYSIS AS A METHOD IN THE  
PROCESS OF DEINSTITUTIONALISATION OF  
PSYCHOTHERAPY

Julija Bonai, Ph.D.

# General outline of the presentation

---

- Explanation of the purpose of deinstitutionalisation through expounding the main problems of institution
- Analysis of the psychological causes for the libidinal investments in institutions, through understanding sadism and masochism
- Definition of the concept of schizoanalysis and explanation of its purpose serving as an effective method in the process of deinstitutionalisation
- Pointing out the difference between schizophrenia as clinical entity and schizophrenic process
- Demonstration of the application of the method of schizoanalysis by Guattari's reform of institutional psychotherapy

# The main problem of institutions

---

- The essential function of institutions is to protect the structure of differentiation and the potential scope of change in society
- The specific social differentiation that is protected by institutions implies power distribution, segregation among classes, castes, roles and binary divisions between normal/abnormal, sane/insane, domestic/foreign, included/excluded
- Following these aims it uses the means of controlling the mind, body and above all the relations between them
- Throughout the history, the body/mind control was made mainly with the means of prohibitions or prescriptions, in the present time it is performed by subjectivation – by producing particular kind of subjectivity
- Deviations from prevailing structure of differentiation and particular kind of change are allowed merely to the extent, that the difference or the change doesn't transform the very means of controlling the change – i.e. the institution itself
- Institution, as rigid structure of differentiation, repeats the same particular form of change in society throughout the history
- The main problem lies in its rigidity - it is not able to find the best possible solution - i.e. order - to the ever changing problems of society
- As everything changes its rigid structure of differentiation and change implies the violence in itself

# Masochism and institutionalized form of law

---

- In his book *Masochism: coldness and cruelty* French philosopher Gilles Deleuze explains how libidinal investments, which enable authoritarian aggression and institutionalised form of law, could be explained as sadistic and masochistic perversions
- In the case of sadism, authoritarian superego acts sadistically towards the ego. The superego or conscience embodies the moral and cultural norms (normalisation). He is cruel towards the ego and through its cruelty he finds enjoyment
- The ego of the masochist disables or destroys the repressive power of superego and in its place establishes the contract or the law
- The law presupposes the guilt – it is assumed that somebody wants, at least potentially, to transgress the law
- The masochist feels immanent (unavoidable) guilt and wants to be punished. As the punishment releases the guilt, it is accompanied with the pleasure gained from the aggression of punishment turned towards the self. The masochist wants to repeat the punishment all over again, as the pain gets its meaning merely through the repetition

• • •

- 
- “Instead of repetition being governed by the idea of experiencing or re-experiencing pleasure, repetition runs wild and becomes independent of all previous pleasure. It has itself become an idea or ideal”. (Deleuze, *Masochism*, p. 120)
  - The pleasure ceases to be motivation for the will. It is renounced in order to be recovered as a reward in a form of a law. The law thus becomes autonomous, with its own sway over the pleasure the masochist partakes in. “Once he has undergone the punishment, he feels that he is allowed or indeed commanded to experience the pleasure that the law was supposed to forbid.” (Deleuze, *Masochism*, p. 88)
  - As an independent form, that repeats itself regardless of circumstances, the law as a contract becomes the institutionalised form of law
  - The unchangeable, rigid form of law, that exists independently in itself could not be in the service of the people, it is not subjugated to the society, as it should be, but the society is subjugated to the form of law
  - With this theory it is possible to explain why some users are so fond of the institutional treatment even though it caused them to experience physical or psychological pain. They masochistically want to be punished, because they feel guilty being stigmatised as abnormal, mad or deviant

# Schizoanalysis

---

- We unconsciously participate in sadistic and masochistic perversions on everyday basis, subjected to cruel authority of moral and cultural norms and to the independent form of institutionalised law
- It is important to find the method that could efficiently analyse the unconscious we partake in, in order to change the unconscious potentialities for cognition and action, with the aim to assure better life for the whole society
- Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari proposed the method called schizoanalysis. It is the analysis of unconscious – analysis of the partial objects (singularities, events or virtual potentialities) and their flows that are connected to other partial objects. The connections among partial objects are never pre-established. They create transverse paths, so that one flow interrupts the other flow or is interrupted by it. “Schize is a system of breaks that are not only interruption of a process, but its crossroads. The schize is the bearer of new potentiality capital.” (Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus papers*, p. 421)
- Object of schizoanalysis is neither individual nor society, but the fragment of individual connected to a fragment of society and vice versa
- The concept was established as the critical response to psychoanalysis, they find problematic, as it presupposes:

• • •

- 
- the hermetically closed space of the interaction among the analyst and analysand
  - no relation the outside world
  - the analyst being the only reference point of supposed sanity
  - personified unconscious
  - Oedipalised unconscious
  - structuralised unconscious
- 
- Besides the individual, schizoanalysis analyses the unconscious of a therapist, a couple, a group, an institution, and a whole of society
  - It presupposes that the unconscious is an orphan (without mother and father), without personality or structure
  - The unstructured unconscious connections form the material basis of the desire – the unconscious condition that defines the potential scope of our cognition and volition
  - Desire as defined by Deleuze and Guattari is a productive process, producing the real and within the real
  - It traverses the whole social field and is contained in all social assemblages, in different arrangements and various orders
  - Social production is thus a desiring production under certain determinate conditions
  - Schizoanalysis follows the lines of unconscious processes of desiring/social production, understood as potential capabilities for any creation and its change

# Schizophrenia as impasse or schizophrenic process

---

- According to international standards schizophrenia is comprehended as a psychosis which is diagnosed according to criteria of cognitive or emotional discordance in the fields of perception, attention, inference, expression, communication, conduct, volition and intention
- Freud defined psychosis as a disturbance in relations between ego and the external reality
- The official definition of psychosis thus presupposes excluded difference between the psychic and the social reality
- Deleuze and Guattari assume that there is no excluding difference between the desiring subject and social reality, because desire produces the real and within the real. The social reality is treated as a definite assemblage of the desiring process or as certain connective mode of desire
- They define schizophrenia as a process of desiring production: “schizophrenia is the universe of productive and reproductive desiring machines, universal primary production as the essential reality of man and nature.” (Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 5) It is a process defined as movement on the path that does not pre-exist
- If creative, productive schizophrenic process becomes blocked or hindered, it becomes schizophrenia defined as psychotic mental illness. In that case the creative schizophrenic process transforms itself into the final goal, the schizophrenic becomes neuroticized and as he fights against this neuroticization he could catatonically silence all his desires

# Guattari and his work at La Borde clinic

---

- Through his work at *La Borde clinic* Guattari developed an idea of institutional analysis contrary to the prevailing practice of institutional psychotherapy
- In his preface to Guattari's book *Psychoanalysis and transversality* Deleuze defined institutional analysis as a political analysis of desire
- Guattari applied the method of schizoanalysis in his work as he was assuming that the individual or family problems reflect the problems of society »The social relationship is not something apart from individual and family problems; on the contrary: we are forced to recognize it in every case of psycho-pathology, and in my view it is even more important when one is dealing with those psychotic syndromes that present the most de-socialized appearance.« (Guattari, *Molecular revolution*, p. 11)
- Instead of individual analysis he proposed the group analysis: its main aim was not to understand (or invent) the static truth underlying symptomatology, but rather to create the conditions favourable to a particular mode of interpretation

• • •

---

- Interpretation could be given by anybody, even by the nurses or psychotic patients themselves. To be effective, they have to meet appropriate conditions that delegate the power to the one who is interpreting or giving the meaning. He defined this process as de-territorialized transference, applied to replace psychoanalytic territorialized transference. »A fixed transference, rigid mechanism, like the relationship of nurses and patients with the doctor, an obligatory, predetermined, territorialized, transference onto a particular role or stereotype, is worse than a resistance to analysis: it is a way of interiorizing bourgeois repression by the repetitive, archaic and artificial re-emergence of the phenomena of caste, with all the spellbinding and reactionary group phantasies they bring in their train.” (Guattari, *Molecular revolution*, p. 17)
- He suggested to replace the idea of institutional transference with the concept of transversality in the group

• • •

- 
- The concept of transversality overcomes both the problems of the verticality of pyramidal or hierarchical structure, as well as specific problems of horizontality. „Transversality is the unconscious source of action in the group, going beyond the objective laws on which it is based, carrying the group's desire.“(Guattari, *Molecular revolution*, p. 22)
  - It could be established in subject (independent) group and not possible in the subjected (dependent) group
  - It enables a new kind of dialogue within the therapeutic group, redefines its roles and reorganizes its structures

• • •

- 
- Through the schizoanalytical understanding of the unconscious processes and with the means of group analysis, he suggested a method that enables the better life for each person and whole of society, overcoming the problematic methods currently established in institutions
  - Deinstitutionalised institution that softens its rigidity, overcomes mere preservation of particular established methods and opens itself to the new methods of approaching the problems, could better serve the society

# “We have the unconscious we deserve” ...

---

... once said Guattari

- That doesn't mean that the individual person, for instance the innocent child, is responsible for his unconscious.
- It means that *we* - each person as connected to the whole - *are* responsible for *our* unconscious. We are responsible for the unconscious we partake in – for unconscious of a couple, of a family, of a group, of an institution and for the unconscious of the whole society. We could say, that we are responsible both for 'pathologies' and for 'mental health' of our society
- Deleuze and Guattari offer us a great tool, a method of schizoanalysis. It helps us to recognize and understand the hidden, unconscious processes, that cause the institutions to repeat the same patterns all over again through the history, in order to overcome and change them
- Moreover it helps us to understand where the real problem lies, and that is the entering door towards the better future

• • •

---

*„There is no problematic, difficult child. That, what is problematic, is being a child in the world where people are tired, preoccupied, without patience and always in a hurry.“*

Graffiti on the wooden door

# Bibliography

---

DELEUZE, Gilles (1991): *Masochism: coldness and cruelty*. New York: Zone Books

DELEUZE, Gilles and GUATTARI, Félix: *Anti-Oedipus*. London: Continuum

GUATTARI, Félix (2006): *The Anti-Oedipus papers*. Los Angeles: Semiotext(e)

GUATTARI, Félix (1984): *Molecular revolution*. Harmondsworth, New York: Penguin