Introduction: Prophetism and the Problem of Betrayal

Nir Kedem Tel Aviv University

Anyone studying Deleuze often faces a double-edged problem: how to read Deleuze, that is, how to make sense of what he was saying, but particularly how to do that under the compelling Deleuzian decree 'don't interpret!'. While this problem is not foreign to anyone studying French thought after World War II or post-structuralism in general, only in Deleuze does interpretation appear as the worst faux pas, being an expression or an execution of the logic of representation. The problem intensifies when one wishes to apply Deleuze's concepts and ideas, whether in the field of philosophy or in any other discipline: how to apply his philosophy without first determining what it is? How to 'do theory' with a theory that resists interpretation, hence systematic methodology? This problem may also be summed up as a question of loyalty: how does one apply Deleuze's thought while remaining loyal to his principles? How can one be Deleuzian without betraying the decree 'don't interpret!'? Addressing this problem early on in his work, Ian Buchanan suggested that given the role of creativity in Deleuze's philosophy, a possible way out of this paradox is to realise that 'to be Deleuzian one must abandon Deleuze' (Buchanan 1997: 382). Creativity is what makes this form of disloyalty or betrayal possible and desirable; it enables the fabrication of new readings, concepts and procedures, indeed, the production of differences.[1]

Approaching a theme like 'Deleuzian Futures' presents us with similar difficulties: how to make sense of what Deleuze said about the future, and make use of it? In other words, can the future be foreseen from a Deleuzian perspective, and can it be brought into existence or changed? It seems that once thought is directed towards the future, even the most secular of scholars finds him- or herself entangled with the theology

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of divination. But in fact, it is with 'divinatory analysis' that betrayal reveals itself to be all the more crucial for Deleuze studies, as will be explained in what follows. These somewhat pious tones may be disconcerting for some of us, but we actually should not shy away from the idea that Deleuze's thought can be seen as prophetism. After all, what is it that a prophet does? 'He anticipates and detects the powers (*puissances*) of the future, rather than applying past and present powers (*pouvoirs*)' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 124), and this is precisely what Deleuze entrusted us with: new ways to think what we can still become, to fabricate new futures by exploring the powers of life, powers that we are yet to encounter. Indeed, the prophetic value of Deleuze's philosophy is in ethics, and it takes its cue from Spinoza.[2]

If we believe therefore that Deleuze's work could be used to analyse present issues in order to better understand and change our future – that is, if it holds a prophetic value for us – then in a sincere act of loyalty our prophet must be betrayed. Betrayal, Deleuze and Guattari say, marks a distinctive regime of signs, a semiotics in which a line of flight is drawn and acquires a positive value, 'as though it were effectively occupied and followed by a people who find in it their reason for being or destiny' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 121). This positive, productive moment of deterritorialisation enables the formation of new relations between always-already predetermined, fixed terms (fixed since they are signs defined by and subjected to one rule: to refer to other signs ad infinitum as their only content). It is with prophets that 'betrayal has become an idée fixe' (124), and 'it is the regime of betrayal . . . in which the true man never ceases to betray God just as God betrays man, with the wrath of God defining the new positivity' (123). Betrayal is the best expression of loyalty for it anticipates God's will: 'even the prophet, unlike the seer-priest, is fundamentally a traitor and thus fulfills God's order better than anyone who remained faithful could' (123). God turned away from the prophet (like Jonah) and from the true man (like Cain or Judah), and they turned away from him; and that is what sets in motion processes of creativity and change, 'this double turning away that draws the positive line of flight' (123).[3]

But how, then, do we betray Deleuze without becoming 'interpretive priests' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 114)? What would be the right way to betray Deleuze, and is it possible to infer it from Deleuze's writings? This special issue opens with Ian Buchanan's essay, which takes on this ethical question and focuses on its crucial role in shaping the future of Deleuze studies by asking: what would be the right thing to do from a Deleuzian perspective? Betrayal here takes the form of a reading both

critical and creative, and is commensurate with Deleuze's readings of other philosophers, his own betrayal in his 'prophets'.[4] But rarely have Deleuzians put both their readings of Deleuze and their applications of his philosophy (or 'Practical Deleuzism' as Buchanan terms it) to the test of ethics. And if they did, says Buchanan, more often than not has it been done by way of false reasoning, that is, by 'mov[ing] from how things are to how things should be'. Buchanan's primary case in point is Foucault's misreading of the concept of desire in Deleuze and Guattari, which leads him to the conclusion that there is 'nothing at all within Deleuze and Guattari's theory of desire that can tell us either how we should live or how we should treat others'. But, according to Buchanan, this is all the more reason to revaluate and re-examine the models with which we have been working so far to read Deleuze, and to create an ethical discourse from which practical, Deleuzian solutions to burning issues could be created.

At this point this issue's rationale can be made clearer: it is nothing but a provisionary map, indeed, a pro-visionary, non-exhaustive map of directions or tendencies that could or should be pursued in the field of Deleuze studies. Buchanan's ethical demand-dilemma constitutes a critical juncture, where essays concerned with readings of Deleuze and essays concerned with applying Deleuze's thought conjoin and form a series defined by a logic of betrayal. It is always that atemporal moment of deciding how Deleuze *should* be read (that is, betrayed), which shapes and conditions all the ways Deleuze *could* be read and *could* be applied (two related but different expressions of that same betrayal: sometimes it is the question of reading which is implied in an actual application as its past, whereas in other cases it is the question of application which is implied in an actual reading as its future). Deleuzian Futures is explored here as the future of Deleuze studies.

Gregg Lambert's essay contextualises the ethical problem of 'what is the right thing to do from a Deleuzian perspective?' in his discussion of the experience of drugs. Deleuze and Guattari's concept of pharmacoanalysis is offered here as a way to resist a pervasive misconception of desire, which is used to generalise the idea of desire *for* drugs, and thus ultimately misses the dangers specific to drugs. Relating this problem to a critical investigation of consciousness as a threefold seat of illusion, Lambert suggests that ethical experimentation, not moral judgement, should be appealed to when attempting to determine what is the right thing to do (next).

Daniel W. Smith gives his own take on the concept of desire, this time as a question of flows, and its correlative terms 'code' and 'stock' as

they are worked out in Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus*. The future of Deleuzians working in the field of socio-political philosophy lies in developing a theory of flows, for this is the fundamental thesis at the basis of the entire *Capitalism and Schizophrenia* project, Smith suggests. Here, the 'right', or adequate, analysis of contemporary socio-political situations is dependent upon determining actual relations between flows, defined as the movement or exchange of economic value; codes, defined as the system which record or inscribe the flows, and as a necessary means of grasping them; and stocks, defined as portions of flow understood in terms of possession or ownership.

The next three essays share an interest in futuristic Deleuzian concepts, and relate to Deleuze's third synthesis of time in different contexts. Henry Somers-Hall discusses Deleuze's concept of the future through Hamlet's famous formula, 'time is out of joint'. As long as time is understood to be based on an underlying rational structure (as is the case with Plato's and Kant's conceptions of time), time is 'in joint', that is, tied to cardinal points which make it the measure of primary, and essentially rational, movement. This metaphysical conception of time, argues Somers-Hall, is implicit in classical drama, but overturned with Hamlet's famous hesitation, which expresses an alternative understanding of time as pure and empty form: a time out of joint, or duration, which is no longer subordinated to movement, hence allowing for the creation of something genuinely new.

Ronald Bogue addresses the third synthesis of the Future as the time of fabulation, the infinite Now which results in the creation of 'a people to come'. Fabulation for Deleuze indicates an act of legending, Bogue explains, 'an irreducibly temporal process of becoming-other that is open-ended, and if it is a process of summoning forth a future people, it is one that cannot move beyond itself without involving the participation of a collectivity in its action'. After meticulously examining the concept of fabulation, Bogue offers an intriguing analysis of the manifestation of fabulation in the science fiction of Octavia Butler.

Is contemporary media culture commensurable with Deleuze's typology of images constructed in his cinema books? Patricia Pisters examines a possible third type of image based on the third synthesis of time, which she names 'the neuro-image'. Precursors of the third image category, expressing a digital logic before digitality, can already be traced back to the cinema books themselves, and Pisters elaborates on Deleuze's analysis of the films of Alain Resnais to advocate this claim. She then turns to discuss the American television series *FlashForward* as a typical example of contemporary neuro-images.

The collection concludes with one of Deleuze's least favourable forms of negotiation: an interview that Constantin V. Boundas conducted with Jean-Clet Martin, philosopher and one of France's most prominent readers of Deleuze (by Deleuze's own admission).

The interview took place on the occasion of Martin's new book on Hegel and *The Phenomenology of Spirit* published in France last year, and offers a preview into the main issues and concerns discussed in the book. But why would a special issue on Deleuzian Futures conclude with a discussion of a new book on Hegel, the most repudiated of all philosophers who inspired Deleuze? 'I cannot stop reading Hegel in a Deleuzian way,' admits Martin, and Boundas explores the ramifications of such a seemingly improbable Deleuzian reading of Hegel. For instance, could it be that Martin's reading implies that Deleuze was wrong to distance himself from Hegel? Could Martin be making the Hegelian Concept work in the same way the Deleuzian Concept does? Is Hegel truly an enemy to Deleuze?

This is where betrayal comes full circle: with the philosopher-friend questioning his loyalty not simply by submitting it to moral judgement ('Deleuze was wrong'), but by forming alliances with his Hegelian enemy, or, more precisely, by re-examining the old Hegel–Deleuze rivalry and by changing its defining relations. A line of flight is drawn, where both the cherished philosopher and his nemesis are subject to new understandings. At the final moment of this series, that is, at the event of negotiation, a different figure to embody the logic of betrayal is revealed: not that of a biblical prophet but that of a sapling-warrior, like the young Neoptolemus.[5] As the etymology of the name suggests, he was the wager of 'new war', the introducer of *polemos*. What he actually did was to create a new war machine, enabling him to become the site of a new, strange alliance between rivals (Philoctetes and Odysseus). Neither parting with his friends nor subscribing to any one side of a polemic, Neoptolemus is the emblem of negotiation in which loyalty takes the form of relating-anew, of creating difference.[6] Our Deleuzian futures may very well depend on that.

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Notes

1. Later, in a book 'built around the twin problem of reading Deleuze and reading with Deleuze' (Buchanan 2000: 7), Buchanan creates his own difference in the field of Deleuze studies, 'an *other* reading of Deleuze that would enable his work to be systematically applied' (Buchanan 2007: 8; emphasis in the original).
2. 'It is Spinoza who has elaborated the profoundest theory of prophetism' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 123).
3. For an illuminating discussion of prophets and betrayal in Deleuze and Guattari, see Bogue 2004.
4. Michael Hardt (1993) makes a similar point when he characterises Deleuze's philosophy as apprenticeship: a method of selection and transformation of philosophical materials.
5. 'The warrior is in the position of betraying everything' (Deleuze and Guattari 1987: 354).
6. It is worth noting that Deleuze and Guattari do not have Neoptolemus's image in mind when discussing the warrior, but only that of the 'old heroes' trapped in between two poles: that of the Old State, represented by Agamemnon, and that of the Modern State, represented by Odysseus (which they call by his Roman name, Ulysses). In Sophocles' *Philoctetes*, it is the young warrior who seemed trapped between two poles or two orders, not the 'old hero' (Philoctetes): on the one hand, he is a descendant of Achilles, a noble hero (which places him on the side of Philoctetes, whom he will truly befriend despite deceiving him), and on the other hand, already a member of Odysseus's party on its way to Troy, and key player in his ruse (but he does not hesitate to reach to his sword when Odysseus attempts to prevent him from returning the bow to Philoctetes). His entrapment 'in between' expresses the revolutionising of *philia* relations, which might offer us a different path to think the war machine operating between the two States, with its politico-ethical implications.

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