

The Logic of the Process of Immanent Desire in Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Literature: A Study of Consequences

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Abstract

The French poststructuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze, who based his philosophy on an ontology of Immanent desire, also wrote separate books and monographs on arts, and especially on literature. These two orientations, which have developed simultaneously throughout his philosophical life, raise the question of the relation between the new understanding of desire and the function and purpose of literature in Deleuze's philosophy. Criticising the Oedipal process of the unconscious in the tradition of Freudian-Lacanian psychoanalysis, Deleuze does not see the construction of desire as merely a process of filling a Lacanian gap. In his view, desire is the creator of something new, positive, and narrative. In Deleuze's opinion, literature presupposes fidelity to Events and Puissance, which create a new relation with the state of affairs. By conceptualising the Line of Flight, Deleuze considers the schizophrenic vocation and function of Literary Machines to be the creation of Pure Affects and Singularities, the visualisation of invisible forces in any situation, and taking life to a state of Impersonal Puissance. This article discusses how Deleuze's new understanding of desire as Desiring-Machines can be central to his philosophy of literature, and what the positive consequences would be; in other words, it argues how Desire, as a condition for the possibility of literature, can open a new Transcendental foundation.

Keywords: Desire, Deleuzian Event, Line of Flight, Literary-Machine, and Schizoanalysis

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The relation between literature and philosophy has always triggered discussion and controversy. Literature has been employed to explain philosophical concepts or philosophical concepts have been employed to analyse and understand works of literature. The French poststructuralist philosopher Gilles Deleuze views the creation of philosophical concepts in light of a synthesis between philosophy and literature. Of note here is that in no case did he mean thinking philosophically about non-philosophical matters; in fact, he aims to marry philosophy and literature in order to expand the philosophical domain and help it to move beyond itself and discuss issues that run into other disciplines. This is a moment which can be regarded as 'the occurrence of literature for Deleuze.'

2. Theoretical Framework

The main concern of this article is to analyse the relationship between desire and literature. As a metaphysician, Deleuze aims to conceptualise new transcendental foundations for understanding and re-defining the world. As a result, he views desire, or even the unconscious, as an ontological issue and regards the interaction between philosophy and literature as transcendental experimentalism for a new foundation.

3. Methodology

The methodology of the present article is in line with the ontological understanding of Deleuzian desire in relation to literature, which can be identified as a Deleuzian philosophy of literature. In other words, this qualitative study aims to analyse the relationship among immanent desire, event, and literary substance in Deleuz's philosophy to claim that his understanding of the development of desire as an immanent matter can pave the way for understanding his philosophy of literature.

4. Discussion and Analysis

Deleuze views desire as an impersonal matter, a twist in the social reality that presents itself as a productive process. The article begins by explaining the immanent process of desire employing Deleuze's example of the Baroque House. The authors claim that by analysing Deleuze's works on literature, one can point out three distinct characteristics of literature: literature as schizophrenic delirium, literature of creating effects and unique individuation, and literature as a medium of creating Lines of Flight. After extensive explanation, the relationship between literature and immanence becomes

clear – a relationship which can be called, in Deleuzian terms, a Literary Machine. It must be added that the Literary Machine is in no case a referencing, interpreting, or reviewing system; to put it differently, it is not a machine of ‘representation.’ Just like any other machine in Deleuzian philosophy, the Literary Machine is a machine of ‘experience’ that must ‘work’ in order to create a ‘synthesis’ that creates an ‘event.’

5. Conclusion

Through analysing different types of transcendence and criticising the ‘representation theory’ in philosophy and literature, Deleuze interlinks immanence of desire with the definition of desire in psychoanalysis. The function of representation is to reduce and contain ‘the new matter’ in the context of familiar preexistent emotions or concepts. By his formula, ‘this is Oedipus,’ Deleuze seems to identify the function of literature as molding the preexistent systematic experiences in terms of the process of individuation. By eliminating common speculations about the function and essence of literature, he tries to show ‘what these Literary Machines can do to us and our lives.’ He believes the function of philosophy to be the creation of new ‘concepts’ and the function of literature to be extracting ‘unique interpretations’ and – eventually – taking the reader/author to the Schizo State, thereby giving an unprecedented ‘ability’ to philosophy. As a result, literature creates a foundation or a level of transcendence and passes it on to philosophy. The consequence of such a condition is following the Lines of Flight, which means nothing but unrelenting loyalty to desire and the unprecedented power that consumes us. The synthesis of Literary Machine and philosophy confuses all static preexistent identities known to us and marks the beginning of the freedom of criticised subjects.

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