

Serial Logic

Tim Gough
tim.gough@kingston.ac.uk
 +44(0)7966 377 609

Abstract

For Deleuze, the exemplary novelist (Joyce, Proust, Robbe-Grillet...) disposes within original difference two heterogeneous series of *signifier* and *signified* (Sixth Series on Serialization¹). These two series resonate through a single homogenous series of names where each term can be seen to relate to the preceding one and the next one, thus: $n_1 \rightarrow n_2 \rightarrow n_3 \rightarrow n_4 \rightarrow \dots$. The first name, or signifier, relates to the second name/signifier, relates to the third etc in the familiar continuous chain of signifiers. It is the novelist's task to consider this homogenous chain from the point of view of "that which alternates in this succession"² – ie the alternation of signified and signifier through the terms - and to allow these to resonate.

In what way is the architect a novelist, and in what way is exemplary architecture disposed according to this strategy of primary difference, homogenous chain of signifiers and the creative diagnosis of two resonating, heterogeneous series?

1

Deleuze's *Logic of Sense* is a serial work, presenting "a series of paradoxes which form the theory of sense"³. The book is a series of series. Each supposedly individual "chapter" is named a "series" – thus, for instance, the sixth division of the book is entitled "Sixth Series on Serialization" – and these series are themselves presented as a series of 34 divisions⁴.

2

The exposition of these paradoxes presents a "convoluted story". *Logic of Sense* "is an attempt to develop a logical and psychological novel."⁵ The term "novel", referring as it does in this case to Deleuze's own philosophical work, is here widely drawn.⁶

We posit, in this context, that the exemplary architect is a novelist; and exemplary architecture, a novel.

¹ Gilles Deleuze, *Logic of Sense*, pp36-41. As noted below, *Logic of Sense* is organised in a series of "chapters" entitled "First Series of...", "Second Series of...." and so on up to the 34th series

² *Logic of Sense*, 36

³ *Logic of Sense*, xiii

⁴ Deleuze in the structure of the book and in the naming of the structure of the book is calling into question the status of the individual identifiable element in the name of a primary difference. Identity is derived from an originary differentiation (without originating terms), from an originary *différance*, to use Derrida's term. As Derrida says in his encomium for Deleuze: "From the beginning, all of his books... have been for me not only, of course, strong provocations to think but each time the flustering, really flustering, experience of a closeness or of a nearly total affinity... [he speaks of] an irreducible difference in opposition to dialectical opposition, a difference "more profound" than a contradiction.. a difference in the joyously repeated affirmation.... ". "I'm going to have to wander all alone" in Jacques Derrida *The Work of Mourning* pp192-3. The series, here, is hyper-serial: it is a series composed necessarily of elements which only occur through and by virtue of the movement of the series, and which are themselves therefore serial in nature.

⁵ *Logic of Sense*, xiv

⁶ Deleuze speaks later of the art of the clinician who renews a "symptomatological table" of disorders, producing a work of art in doing so. The artist, in turn, is a "clinician of civilization". And both are novelists: "It seems, moreover, that an evaluation of symptoms might be achieved only through a novel." *Logic of Sense*, 237

3

The ontology of architecture⁷ must be precisely understood. To state briefly what such an ontology is *not*⁸:

- we dismiss any interpretation of Deleuze's work which implies that architecture can be or should be a representation of elements of his philosophy, such as "the fold" - a tactic which displays ignorance of the import of this term, and more generally disregards Deleuze's disdain of the static logic of *representation*
- any ontology of architecture which claims that the task of the architect is to create forms in matter, must be rejected. In this context, we could point for instance to many of the essays in *Deleuze and Space*⁹ which, making reference to Bernard Cache¹⁰ and Greg Lynn's work, speak of the "built form" which the architect creates
- in turn, the transposition of a Deleuzian logic onto the creative processes of the architect, such processes resulting in the above-mentioned built form, is irrelevant to the question of architectural ontology. Architecture is not the creative act of the architect; it is the event of its occurrence as architecture

4

The logic of sense is explicated by means of the concepts of, on the one hand, "states of affairs" - which are bodies, objects, things which, as Deleuze states, exist in the present and can form mixtures with each other; and on the other, the concept of "events", which are "incorporeal" entities which do not exist but rather "subsist or inhere". States of affairs relate to each other by means of causes, but not effects. *States of affairs* effect, instead, *events*¹¹.

We posit: architecture is *not* a question of states of affairs, but of events. But what is an event?

⁷ Or rather, from the point-of-view of most ontologies of architecture heretofore, the non-ontology of architecture

⁸ Using the strategy of something like negative theology (God cannot be defined, but *is not* anything which can be defined or spoken.). We justify this appeal to negative theology by reference to Deleuze's position that the identity of the individual, that is, identity in general, that is, all ontologies commonly so-named which begin from identity and essence rather than originary difference, depend on the concept of God. Ontology = ontotheology. See the essay "Klossowski or Bodies-Language" pp280ff in *Logic of Sense*. Also see *Derrida and Negative Theology*

⁹ Ian Buchanan and Gregg Lambert, eds, *Deleuze and Space* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2005). Not all of this collection is bad: Claire Colebrook for instance brings a properly philosophical understanding to bear on the question of Deleuzian space; the Deleuzian political questions she raises are entirely relevant to architecture but space does not permit this series to be resonated here

¹⁰ In relation to Cache, see *Earth Moves, the Furnishing of Territories* (MIT UP, 1995) for instance page 29ff where he states: "We are then back to thinking of form as form, which means that we take things as images, with no relation to depth, to anteriority, or to use, and even less to representation.... We will now consider architecture to be nothing but the interlocking of frames. We will also henceforth attribute to any given object the states of simple image...." Cache's analysis here is subtle and warrants analysis in turn. See also *Objectile Patrick Beaucé + Bernard Cache Fast-Wood: A Brouillon Project* (Springer, 2007) where he states: "How do we prevent the non-standard from collapsing into original formalism? How do we see to it that the object is genuinely conceived and produced as a single instance in a series? How do we integrate the architectural object in the urban fabric?" (no pagination in this book, very helpfully, but this quote comes from the essay *Towards a non-standard mode of production* [by Cache and Beaucé] on the page with notes 14-16). To make clear the distinction we are drawing here: for us, the term "architectural object" is the exemplary oxymoron - of all things which might be an object, architecture is *the last possible one the least likely to be one*; and for us, the serial can *never* be an issue to do with an object being a single instance in a series. The series we speak of is the Deleuzian series which, as in all of Deleuze's work from the outset, neither operates within one of the terms of the subject-object split nor respects this conceptualisation, but instead constantly works within what Deleuze in his first published work characterises as irreducible life (in *Mathesis, Science and Philosophy* 1946): "...the knowing mind, as distinct as it might be in itself from the extension with which it appears to have strictly nothing in common, nonetheless deploys the order of things in thinking the order of its representations. At the very moment where unity is affirmed, this unity breaks apart and destroys itself... But in being broken apart, Descartes now remarks, unity finds its true sense in re-forming upon another plane, where it finds its true meaning. In so far as the theoretical disunion of thought and extension is affirmed, so too is the fact of their practical union, as a definition of life. Unity does not come about at the level of an abstract God transcending humanity, but in the very name of concrete life... the unity... is the unity of life itself, which delineates a third order, irreducible to the other two"

¹¹ *Logic of Sense*, pp4-5. The whole terminology here of "states of affairs", "events", "facts" and (as we will come to) "propositions" derives from Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, another serial work where some of the series approximate in number to the 34 in *Logic of Sense*. Take number 2.01: "A state of affairs (a state of things) is a combination of objects (things)." It is also noteworthy that the *Tractatus* also has a brief preface, which states that the purpose of it was that it "gave pleasure to one person who read and understood it". Does that perhaps make it, too, a novel?

5

We can make propositions about “states of affairs”; this relationship Deleuze names “denotation”¹². Propositions are expressed by someone, and the relationship between the proposition and that person is named “manifestation”¹³. Propositions “signify”, which means that the words of the proposition relate to general concepts, that is, to other propositions in turn¹⁴. Deleuze shows in the Third Series that neither denotation, nor manifestation, nor signification is primary, and that we pass in a circle from one to the other.

*Sense is a fourth dimension of the proposition*¹⁵: “*Sense is both the expressible or the expressed of the proposition, and the attribute of the state of affairs*”¹⁶ and as such is the “boundary” between states of affairs and propositions, having the status of an “event”:

“We will not therefore ask what is the sense of the event: the event is sense itself”¹⁷

6

Sense is always presupposed; Deleuze, following Bergson, likens it to a “sphere” within which we always already exist “in order to enact possible denotations”¹⁸. The obverse of this is the paradox of infinite regress, since what we say always therefore relates to a preceding term¹⁹ in serial fashion:

“each denoting name has a sense which must be denoted by another name: $n_1 \rightarrow n_2 \rightarrow n_3 \rightarrow n_4 \rightarrow \dots$ ”²⁰

The first name, or signifier, relates to the second name/signifier, relates to the third etc in a continuous chain of signifiers.

7

It is the novelist’s task to consider this homogenous chain from the point of view of “that which alternates in this succession”²¹. What alternates through the chain are signified and signifier, in a specific manner whereby if n_1 denotes a preceding name, then this act of denotation has a sense – it is an event of sense – and n_2 then denotes in turn this event of sense. n_2 in turn, in effecting this denotation, then also occurs as an event of sense, to be denoted in turn by n_3 .

Thus a homogenous series is seen as two heterogeneous series, occurring between a number of types of element (events and states of affairs; propositions and denoted objects; expressions and denotations²²). The two series must *not* be seen as having a relation of original signified and derived signifier. It is only the signifier which creates the signified, and *vice versa*²³.

¹² *Logic of Sense*, p12. Compare series 3 of *Tractatus*

¹³ *Logic of Sense*, p13

¹⁴ *Logic of Sense*, p14

¹⁵ A fourth dimension not recognised by “those who wish to be satisfied with words, things, images and ideas” (*Logic of Sense*, p20). This may refer to Wittgenstein

¹⁶ *Logic of Sense*, p22

¹⁷ *ibid*

¹⁸ *Logic of Sense*, p28

¹⁹ It is always instructive to see how philosophers and other thinkers deal with this infinite regress. Bertrand Russell uses the theory of types to control this movement (cf his 1908 essay “Mathematical Logic as Based on The Theory of Types” pp57ff in *Logic and Knowledge*) and Deleuze makes (unreferenced) use of the “type” in the Sixth Series on Serialization – the implications of which we do not have time to go into here. Lewis Carol, the subject of the whole of *Logic of Sense*, makes use of regress but in the example which Deleuze cites [“The name of the song is called “Haddock’s Eyes.”” “Oh, that’s the name of the song, is it?” Alice said, trying to feel interested. “No, you don’t understand,” the Knight said, looking a little vexed. “That’s what the name is called. The name really is “The Aged Aged Man.”” “Then I ought to have said “That’s what the song is called?”” Alice corrected herself. “No, you oughtn’t: that’s quite another thing! The song is called “Ways and Means”: but that’s only what it’s called, you know!” “Well, what is the song, then?” said Alice, who was by this time completely bewildered. “I was coming to that,” the Knight said. “The song really *is* “A-Sitting On a Gate”: and the tune’s my own invention.”] this regress is halted by the last statement about what the song “really is”. Taking another example, almost at random, Quine, in his essay “Ontological Relativity” (pp 26ff in *Ontological Relativity and other Essays*, Columbia University Press 1969) begins by stating “I hold that knowledge, mind, and meaning are part of the same world they have to do with, and that they are to be studied in the same empirical spirit that animates natural science. There is no place for a prior philosophy.” Contrast, of course, those such as Derrida for whom this non-place is of interest; and those such as Husserl who hover on the edge of such an interest – hence Derrida’s concern and hence Deleuze’s appeal to Husserl’s concept of *noema* in explicating the pure event of sense (*Logic of Sense*, pp 20-21)

²⁰ *Logic of Sense*, p36

²¹ *Logic of Sense*, p36

²² *Logic of Sense*, p37

²³ “We will not say, therefore.... that the one is originary and the other derived... they are strictly simultaneous...” p41, *Logic of Sense*

8

In the case of Joyce there is a series surrounding “Bloom” which is given as the signifying set; and a corresponding signified series “Ulysses”; between which the author establishes a resonance and relation by various narrative means.²⁴

In the case of Proust:

It is ... a question of two series, that of a former present (Combray as it was lived) and that of a present present. No doubt,..... there is a resemblance between the two series (that is, the madeleine, breakfast)... nevertheless the secret does not lie there.²⁵

Combray reappears not as it was or as it could be, but in a splendour which was never lived... here, Combray reappears in the form of a past which was never present.²⁶

In all cases²⁷, it is for Deleuze the *differences* between the series and their terms which “become primary”, *not* the resemblances.

9

Exemplary architecture, as an event of sense, has the following characteristics which it shares with the novel:

- it occurs in the neither active nor passive moment where states of affairs (ie buildings, environments, cities) effect events. *Not*: the door; *but* the active/passive event *to walk through the door, to be walked through. Not*: the shutters; *but* the active/passive event *to open the shutters, to be opened. Not*: the bell; *but* the active/passive event *to hear the bell; to be resonated*²⁸
- the sense of architecture is what is expressed or expressible in its proposition. A proposition need not be verbal²⁹, but is always manifested³⁰
- what architecture expresses does not get expressed outside this expression; the relations of signified/signifier do not have any original term, architecture is not derived (say from function, social mores etc) any more than function and social mores derive from architecture. The difference between the two, animated by the work of architecture, is primary
- it will dispose elements (events and states of affairs, say) within itself such that a supposedly past reference (the door with sloping sides to the Palazzo Farnese; the drainage grills in Basel's streets and the insult to Loos; the event of sound to the east façade of Ronchamp) reoccurs and resonates within the new architectural event (the entrance doors to Asplund's city library; the shutters to Herzog & de Meuron's Schuetzenmatt Strasse apartment block; the entrance facade of Shaulager)

10

Deleuze, in *Difference and Repetition*, states:

[The novel] opens on to the difference of Being by taking its own difference as object, by posing the question of its own difference

We should expect no less from architecture.

²⁴ *Logic of Sense*, p39

²⁵ *Difference and Repetition*, p122

²⁶ *Difference and Repetition*, p85

²⁷ Deleuze mentions also Klossowski, Robbe-Grillet, Witold Gombrowicz, Poe....

²⁸ In relation to this eventful nature, architecture considered merely as a state of affairs (the window, the door, the building, the environment) is to destructively and naively reduce it

²⁹ See Wittgenstein, *Tractatus* 3.1431 “The essence of a propositional sign is very clearly seen if we imagine one composed of spatial objects (such as tables, chairs, and books) instead of written ones. Then the spatial arrangement of these things will express the sense of the proposition.” p12

³⁰ that is, is eventful and relates to the partaker